



Grand Sequoia, Yosemite

Two stars heralded the next morning and in the chilly early air we were rewarded for our efforts with stunning scenery and quiet roads, trees, hills, river valleys, wonderful bends, little pockets of mist and silvery frost in shaded areas. We stopped for coffee at Weaverville and rode into Lassen Volcanic National Park. It was 8000 ft at the summit and came complete with fire warning signs, which proved valid when we realised that what appeared to be low cloud, was in fact smouldering wood. There were roadwork warning signs 22 miles ahead of the obstruction: have these folk never tried linked ABS? There were also snow-capped peaks, with Lake Helen a bright blue and just around the corner Emerald Lake a brilliant green. Those roads were oh so lovely and bendy! We rode back down the mountainside to Greenville near Lake Almanor and stopped at the 'Funny Farm' for petrol in Sierraville. Yes, that really is what they call their little menagerie in the middle of nowhere. We took the 70 and 49 back onto the 89. There are no prizes for guessing who should have been in control at this point...but we had no penalty point system for getting lost or brownie points for finding alternative routes. Lake Tahoe was next, and those 'Dolly and Kenny' Country Songs just would not leave my head as we enjoyed the chalets, glistening boats, pink sky and setting sun. After 479 miles and 13 hours we were in Stateline, Nevada's part of 'casino'

world with lake view and Sierra Nevada Mountains in the distance.

In the parking lot the next morning we were fortunate enough to meet an LT owner who was keen to share his local knowledge and with over 100,000 miles on his K we knew his advice would be good! We took the Carson River Road, through Marklee Village and over Ebbetts Pass, stopping at Mosquito Lake to admire the views and yellow aspen, then it was onto Bear Valley for coffee. Often there were signs implying Indians would abound, but we saw none, just stalls by the roads selling their wares.

The locals call them 'Technical Roads'. We were just pleased there was no chance of squaring off the tyres, only our BTM's! We rode through Angels Camp and into Yosemite. After a short bus tour we rode to Glacier Point. Half Dome was a wonderful site although the falls were nearly silent due to the time of year and recent lack of rain. That night we stayed in a beautiful wooden lodge in Fish Camp just south of Yosemite. After a refreshing spa we were too tired to go out, so shared a three-dollar tea of cheeselets and chocolate bar. It was also time to start the postcards before crashing out after 279 miles and 11 hours travelling.

Up at 0630 and back into Yosemite to see the 'Giant Grizzly' in Mariposa Grove: not a bear but a huge Sequoia Tree. Fire smoke



Scotty, on the right, delivering 'Daffodil' to Phoenix Inn Suites Bend.



Lea Vining

was in the air as we rode through Tioga Pass to Tenaya Lake. Lunch was at Lee Vining by Mono Lake, a fantastic deli recommended by the LT Man. After a short stop we took the last of his advice: the 120 to Benton. This must be one of the best roads ever!! Over 40 miles of twisties with dips that made the bike fly and a beautiful scenic backdrop. Benton was real cowboy territory with relics everywhere and hot springs too. From there it was on to Bishop, Big Pine, and Lone Pine; our overnight stop. We had a swim with a view of Mount Whitney (the highest point in California) before a stroll around town.

Friday started with an extra smile when John realised his favourite childhood programme, Lone Ranger and Tonto, were filmed in this very town! Straights and twisties, sand dunes and prairie, hills and heat: all of these accompanied us into and through Death Valley. We had a brief stop at Death Valley Junction, which once must have been a thriving town, but now consisted of just one hotel and many derelict buildings.

Although Las Vegas was not on our hit list, Scotty advised us that it was not to be missed. He had, therefore, included it in our itinerary and, yet again, he was right. John had the pleasure of riding through the traffic, whilst I surveyed the glitz, flashing neon signs, amazing buildings and general buzz. While

doing this I scanned The Strip in search of our hotel the Circus Circus. This hotel is believed to be one of the five largest in the world. It contains casinos, shops, scare shows, fairgrounds, as well as accommodation for thousands. However, with American precision we were soon booked in and relaxing in the pool before venturing forth to soak up the city atmosphere. It was truly fun. The architecture and entertainment, shopping malls (not that we purchased anything of course!), water and music

shows made the two mile walk to the Harley Cafe well worthwhile. At the cafe we enjoyed a meal outdoors, just people watching and chatting to other diners. Only 230 miles today but well planned with so much else to see.

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