



**'ON THIS ROAD
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Apart from the first two days when my arms and shoulders ached from holding the high and wide 'bars I would grow so fond of on the Harley, the Road King proved very comfortable and a first-rate tourer in general.

Even a holiday of 25 days was a balancing act between the time available and the choice of what we wanted to see, but that's where the pre-planning and Scott's input paid dividends.

The spectacular scenery and traffic free roads are a world apart from the congested tarmac of Britain, and our time in the 'States truly showed us what the joy of travelling by road is all about. **MSL**

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valley itself, are never to be forgotten. We stayed in Yosemite a day and a half to do a bit of walking.

Tramping up the Misty Trail to Nevada Falls was like walking up the stairs of a 20-storey building, and certainly got the heart rate up.

We also made the 32-mile trip (on the bikes this time) up a winding mountain road to Glacier Point to see the sun set on the Half Dome (a bare granite peak), which was well worth the tension of descending the precarious road in the pitch dark.

After the magnificent vistas of Yosemite, California's Central Valley was uninspiring. They do agriculture on an industrial scale out here, producing much of the world's fruit and vegetables.

Eventually we crossed over the California Aqueduct used to irrigate the valley and headed into the Diablo Range of hills on the Del Puerto Canyon road.

That gave me a new experience - never before had I been on a road that I wished would straighten up.

On this road there is hardly a straight longer than 400 metres, and after some four hours I'd had enough! We eventually found a good motel in San Jose and feasted on Mexican takeaway from a local convenience store.

After 18 days of clear blue skies and sunshine our luck and the weather broke, and we rode through rainstorms along Highway 101 into San Francisco.

That was a good enough excuse to stop two nights at the Star Motel on

Lombard Street, and do all the tourist sites, before heading out over the Golden Gate Bridge for Stinson Beach on Highway 1 and the most expensive breakfast of the holiday.

It was still overcast, but we had some fantastic views of the sun breaking through the clouds, reflecting off the Pacific Ocean as it crashed against the rocky coastline.

James Dean filmed East of Eden at Mendocino, a beautiful Victorian clapperboard town right by the sea, but we couldn't afford to stay at the hotel Scott recommended. Fortunately the receptionist took pity on us and we ended up in a fabulous room with its own fireplace and hot tub.

Down at Dickey's Bar the locals made us welcome, including the salmon boat skipper. She was a lovely young woman of 24, and I thought her mates were pulling out legs - until we tried her arm strength and watched her down several pints of Guinness containing shots of vodka.

Rain was waiting for us next morning as we continued to head north on Highway 1, then 101, hugging the coast all the way and passing through the Avenue of Giant Redwood trees.

But we were rewarded by the sight of a herd of elk crossing the road in front of us, and then at Crescent City we watched the harbour master chase off the huge sea lions which were sun bathing on the jetty.

The minute he turned his back they'd climb back, keeping us

entertained as we ate breakfast and dried our boots and gloves.

Our original plan had been to head inland from Crescent City and visit Crater Lake on the way back to Bend, but the tourist office webcam showed the whole area was under snow, so we carried on up the coast instead.

But we couldn't escape the rain, which turned to snow next day as we climbed to higher ground. It was settling on the road as we made our final climb by way of Cascade Lakes, but the weather miraculously cleared once we reached the summit, and we found ourselves back in Bend warm and dry.

By our journey's end we had covered 4,500 miles, almost all on single-lane highways, and ridden through Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Wyoming, Utah, Colorado, Arizona, Nevada, and California.

