

President John Smith's 2010 trip to USA

Not sure what the weather is like where you are, but here in Temora, it has been wet. We are water-logged. Every time an opportunity to ride comes along, it rains. The upside, well the garden is looking good.

Near the end of September, I set off to the US, where I met with my fellow Iron Indian Riders over the other side of the Pacific. Once I touched down in Los Angeles, I made my way across to friends I met at the Indian opening back in 2008. He goes by the name of Maldev. Rob and his lovely wife Laurann took me in as if I was a long lost relative. Their hospitality was fantastic. They let me stay at their home and showed me around LA for three days, and in particular, the end of the Cannonball Endurance race, which finished at Santa Monica, where I met up with Chris Knoop (Melbourne) and also Mike the owner of Kiwi Indian. The collection of bikes were superb, even though they had travelled from one side of the US Kitty hawk NC to the West coats Santa Monica Calif. To give you an idea of distance, it takes approx 5 hours to fly. I did notice numerous pools of oil soaking into the timber pier flooring. The bikes actually looked in better shape than some of the riders and backup crew, inc. Chris. I know Chris has some stories of his trip.

Rob's collection of bikes included several Gilroy bikes; one is a 2004 prototype Spirit with a factory wide rear end. He also owns a custom board tracker, with a modern Power Plus 100ci engine.

After spending 3 days in LA, I grabbed my bag and swag and headed for Charlotte North Carolina. After resting up for a couple of days and waiting for some pretty crook weather to pass, I met up with Mark Moses at Indian Motorcycle Charlotte and picked up my new Bomber. Packed the Bomber up with my gear and made my way

down to Sharon, South Carolina for the annual Barn ride. This ride is based around this Barn, owned by two of the nicest people you could meet, Eddie and Donna. Eddie owns a 2002 Chief. Several other Indian owners and their bikes were already there. This Barn is the best Man Cave I have ever seen. I met some new faces and caught up with some old faces. It is incredible to see the different types of people with differing jobs, but once all together, we are all the same with one truly common link – Indian Motorcycles. I spent 4 days at the Barn with day rides to the Indian Factory, which Chris Bernauer gave an intimate factory tour for us Iron Indian Riders, then we set off to Mark's dealership for lunch and check out the new Chief Blackhawk and the Scout concept motorcycle. The trip would not be complete without going to a local Hooters. I can't remember what I ate there, but the girl who served, is still etched into my memory.

It was time to leave the Barn with some more memories, and some I do not remember, but like they say there, what goes at the Barn, stays at the Barn.

I headed North. Rode up to the Blue Ridge Parkway and as I pulled into Blowing Rock located at the top of North Carolina, it started to rain, and no leather jacket or wet weather gear. I found a motel that appeared safe to leave the bike, and based myself from there. It is a beautiful little town, tucked up in the Smoky Mountains, with plenty of Rock dwellings.

I met 4 police officers, all on holidays and riding Harleys, in the motel car park. They were heading home, travelling South along the Parkway. After they checked my bike out, they asked if I would like to have a bite to eat and travel with them. I did so, and then turned back after riding about 70 miles. It was the most amazing riding I have done. The country and scenery was awesome, and especially at that time of the year – Fall, with the leaves changing.

The following day, I had pre arranged to meet with a couple of Iron Indian Riders, one who I met at the Barn, along with his Kiwi wife. I headed North this time and up into West Virginia. I started to think and then sing to myself, the John Denver song, Country Roads, to realise, this is the country where this song was written about “Blue Ridge Mountains, Shenandoah River”. Met with Pete and Bob, we sat and had some typically local fried food – Cat Fish, and then we rode further North to Mabry Mill. Had some more food and jumped onto the bikes and went back down South. Big Pete went his way while Bob and I rode to Laurel Springs, where I met an old guy in his 80’s who had an Indian dealership back in the 40’s and 50’s. He had two beautiful old Chiefs that were like new. His workshop was immaculate and had the old tools, inc. Whitworth for the old Indian bikes made in England, signs and memorabilia from his old dealership.

I was in ore, listening to his stories from the hey day of Indian. Some included his time with Burt Munroe which were favourable and Steve McQueen, not so favourable. After I was told to come back again, and next time to stay for a day or so, I headed back to Blowing Rock. I was told to make sure I was not on the Parkway after dark, as the deer come out. Over the next few days, I made my way back to Hickory then onto Charlotte, where I handed the bike back to Mark Moses. He would then organise a service, prepare it for air travel and pack the bike into a crate, along with a beautiful 2002 Chief, that I bought from a friend and fellow Iron Indian Rider.

If any of you ever get the opportunity to ride the Blue Ridge Parkway, I would strongly recommend you do it. The people are absolutely fantastic, the scenery is breathtaking and the food, well delicious, but mainly fried. My experience with my fellow Iron Indian Riders was exceptional. This US based club has members that spread across the US, up into Canada and across throughout

Europe, Ireland and England.

I met with the President of the Iron Indian Riders Association while I was in Las Angeles. His name is Mike Sarrail. Mike and his wife Heather and their two little daughters met me at the LA Indian dealership. They both, along with several others in the tribal council, work tirelessly within the IIRA. Since we started putting our Australian Iron Indian Riders Association together, I have always wanted for us to be a part of this International group.

Christmas is fast approaching so I would like to wish all IIRA members around the world a very nice Christmas with your family and friends. I also wish you a safe and enjoyable time and let's hope for a great New Year. Thanks for each and all of the members who have worked hard this year. We have seen memberships grow way above what we anticipated, back when we started.

John D Smith