

## **Reno II - May 24-26, 1997**

Once again, the long jaunt down to the barren state of Nevada has proven to be magnificent! This time, I was not alone, and have witnesses to the great experience. I was able to con Kirby and Mark into going with, and now they are the ones trying to get me to do it again!

Saturday - Having done the freeway drone the last time, we decided to leave at the same time as I did (4am) but that we would head over the hills in Washington, rather than cut over from Mt Shasta. We took I-90 to Ellensburg, encountering rain, fog, and cold temps, then headed south along I-82, but after only one mile, I remembered a road that Dan Meekhof and I took on our way to Yakima last year, so I quickly flagged Kirby and Mark to follow. I'm sure they were wondering, "Where the hell is he going? We have 11 more hours to ride, and he's making side trips already!"

Well, it proved to be a worthy side trip! I took us through the canyon along SR-821 that runs alongside the Yakima River. High-speed sweepers (HSS) for about 35 miles, and we did that stretch in about 15-20 minutes! Normally, it is well patrolled, but at 5:45 am, I figured that the chances were nil, so with radar mounted on my bike, and earphone "ON", we opened up! The campers were still asleep as we raced past, and the sun had already started to come up so visibility wasn't a problem. This proved to be the best stretch of road on the way to Reno.

Back to the trip - we got back to I-82, and exited shortly to US-97 and this would take us for the next 200+ miles to Bend. After having stopped for lunch, we waited out a hail storm that had blown through Bend. It was a good time for a nap, but we pressed on after it cleared up. From here to Reno, the weather was overcast, but dry, with a few spots of sun breaks (very few).

From Bend, we headed south 32 miles to La Pine. There we headed southeast along SR-31 for the next 110 miles. This also was a good stretch of road. So good, that I don't think we ever dropped below triple figures, stopping only for gas, and to talk about how great it was to run as hard as we did, and to not see more than a dozen cars per hour. The State police were busy on I-5, we assumed, that was our reasoning for going to Reno by this route in the first place, but you don't realize how nice it really was! For over 4 straight hours, we ran at 100mph+ on smooth roads, with HSS and no traffic! It felt like being on the track!

Oops - I spoke too soon! As we came up a straight stretch, I came upon a white van, and a white pickup in front of it about 50 yards. At my speed, I hopped in the other lane, figuring it would take about 2 seconds to pass both. I got around the van, and as I came up on the truck (at 120mph+) I noticed an "E...." on the license plate. That caused me to look up at the rear window and I saw mini red & blues mounted behind the driver. Instantly, I thought back to last year when I rode with Kirby and Kevin to Leavenworth and Kirby blew past a park ranger in a pickup with the same setup. Man, did I hit the brakes hard to slow down to slip in behind him! I know he saw me in his mirror, and just then Kirby slipped in behind me, wondering why I didn't pass, I'm sure. We flashed brake lights to get Mark's attention, and he caught on and hanged back. Close call!

Only one other incident of "pucker-factor 5" was found on this trip. Coming around a corner at 105mph, we came onto a straight stretch, where there was a CHiP that had a small Fiesta type car pulled over. As the cop was writing him a ticket for what I assume was speed, he gave us the evil eye the whole time as we went past at 65mph. I know what he was thinking... "I could've had three bikes, if I had let this damn car go!"

After SR-31, we headed south along US-395 the rest of the way into town. It was pretty uneventful along the rest of the trip. It took us 14 hours and change to arrive, but one hour was accounted for in Bend, and probably another 1/2 hour along I-90. That cuts the trip time to 12+ hours, which is right on schedule. We took a lot of breaks, and they were longer than I took when I was alone - that makes up the difference for the high rate of travel. The trip was 775 miles going along US-97 and US-395, as opposed to 760 along I-5 through Susanville. The fun factor of the ride was not even close. I would recommend to take the eastern route any day if you're not looking to stop in towns for shopping along the way!

Sunday - we got up late and headed for Lake Tahoe. Going there, there are two ways of going - US-50, or SR-207 (Kingsbury Grade) from east to west. Having tripped over SR-207 last month, I thought it would be a neat surprise to take Mark and Kirby this way. Just ask them what they thought, but I'll give you an indication - they couldn't shut up about it! It was just as I remember it last month - completely smooth, no ruts, no traffic, and no enforcement! There is one turn as you head east to west that just when you think you are exiting and getting on the throttle, the turn keeps going! I'd swear that it turns for 540 degrees!

We pulled into Tahoe - sun shining, and warm temps - we decided to circle the lake after a brief lunch in the sun and talking bikes with the passers by. One guy came in on a 900RR just like mine - same colors, and claimed to have the same leathers too - though he wasn't wearing them. My twin? nah...

We took SR-89 then SR-28 to get around the lake. Unless you're into the tourist thing, the road isn't worth riding for fun, but it is very scenic and pretty! We took a lot of pictures along here and when we made it around the lake, we took US-50 west to east to see show Mark and Kirby the difference in that vs SR-207. No comparison - US-50 is a four lane highway, similar to I-90 going up Snoqualmie Pass. This excursion was a total of 169 miles.

Monday - After taking 14+ hours to get there - I knew that going straight home by way of Susanville would take 12 hours without a radar detector, maybe less with. Factoring in the long weekend tourist factor, we figured 12 hours. Getting home was kind of a destination ride, in that we wanted to take the least amount of TIME, and I-5 would probably be the most direct route.

After pulling out at 6am from Reno - we proceeded along US-395 at a rate of 105-110mph, trying to make good time - and that we did! We stopped for breakfast, ate croissanwiches, and hit the road again. Taking SR-36, to SR-44, to SR-89 to Mt. Shasta we rode around 95mph to Mt Shasta. We calculated that we covered about 240 miles from Reno, in 3 hours, including the breakfast stop of about 30 minutes - you do the math... (hint - it's 96mph!)

We were informed that the CHiPs were in place, so we took that into account with our pace - we slowed to 90mph. Actually, didn't see and CHiPs but saw a few sparsely placed in Oregon. Did you know that they are driving white Camaros these days? You do now... They were working the southbound lanes of I-5 and only saw one about every 80 miles or so. We took a lot of breaks, and our pace slowed to about 75-80mph and we lost a lot of time stretching our legs out.

One concern on the way home would be the durability of Mark's rear tire. Looking at it when we pulled out of Reno, it was at the wear bar. Every stop, we looked at it get thinner, and thinner, and ... well, you get the picture. Once in Portland, and seeing he still had some rubber left, we pretty much forgot about it realizing that we WERE going to make it home.

We were looking at an ETA of 6-6:30pm so we were right on schedule, including the motorhome factor on the freeway. We cruised along in Washington and didn't see a single WaSP! No bees, means the bears raid the honey! Our pace kept fast even though I planned on slowing down in Washington - why risk getting a green award so close to home? The detector kept quiet, and I'm glad I bought it. It definitely allowed us to ride and enjoy the road, without constantly wondering where we were going to get tagged from.

Hope you consider doing this ride with me sometime - I know Mark and Kirby are already wondering, "So, when are we doing this again?"

One recommendation before I leave you - stay in Tahoe! Much more scenic, friendly, and relaxing - gambling is still present, but all the other factors make it more appealing than Reno!

Hope you enjoyed my little tale, ride safe.