

KING OF THE ALPS

TEXT & PHOTOS BY JOHN HERMANN



10 On the Nuerburgring, 1980. Herm, snug in new Dainese leathers and with a racing number on his smoke red R100S at the start line of the Ring. Note some rain drops on the wind screen.



Jim and Kathy Benge at the SDBMWMC Oktoberfest open house. Their K100RT sidecar rig has a Herm connection. In 1985 or thereabouts, Herm's K100 was totaled by a pickup on the old Carmel Valley Road. Pieces

of the bike scattered all over the tomato fields. Twenty years later, the engine and transmission mass were still collecting dust somewhere, and the transmission wound up as a replacement on this rig.



Just back from Switzerland, Lee Steinauer got a 100,000 mile certificate from Gary Orr. Lee's gonna have some work done of the values of the faithful R100GS. In Switzerland he rode Maloja pass and Julier Pass in a bus!



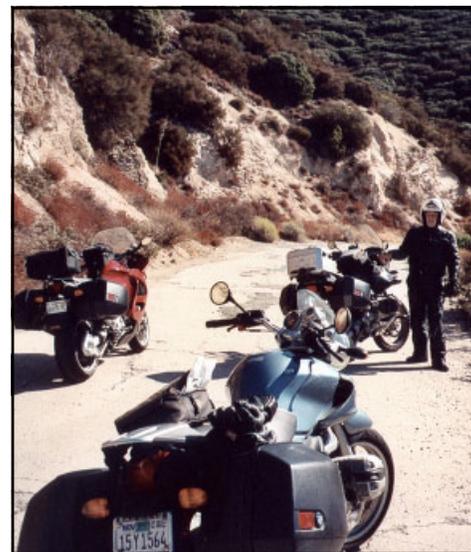
Butch Hays got to Margarita's on Newport recently on the R100, vintage

1988. He says it started out an RT belonging to Ash West. Then went to Mike Randall.

Butch has it working good, in spite of the customized tank. Some Wednesdays, Butch meets Reva Randall at Denny's on Sports Arena Blvd. for breakfast.



Two Soracco's and an editor out in front of Margarita's. Bill, center, has a new GS and is unhappy with the several seats he's tried, so he's getting the low down from Fulton Martin about his custom seat from Rick Mayer Saddles. Bill's son Bob was riding a new K1200S.



Equipped for off road riding, on his K1200 RS, right, Don Walker parked in the middle of the old Grapevine, Ridge Route. That's Gary Walker beside his Adventure, and Herm's 1150R in the

foreground. There was nobody else about. Unknown to these worthies at the time, they were being watched from high above by dirt riding friends, Gary Kepple, Mick McGirr and Rich Amiton, who claimed that a steep rocky trail took them out to Lake Elizabeth.



This is as far as we can go. We, Don Walker and Gary Walker and Herm, were south bound from Gorman on the old Grapevine road. We passed the 'End Of Maintained Road' sign, and were over the hump, headed down toward Castaic, when we came across these cones at the site of the old time Tumble Inn. Just past the cones was a formidable gate, posted with a sign reading, "\$5,000 fine for proceeding beyond this point." We did not proceed. The old concrete road, about 20 feet wide, opened about 1915, is pretty broken up today. It was replaced by a four lane version in 1933, which in turn has been replaced by the I-5 freeway we know today.



Ask our glorious leaders about Pine Flat Lake. "The restaurant must be here someplace." And gas was getting low. So all circled and circled and turned up a 'No Outlet' road marked 'gas.' There indeed was the 'Last Chance' gas station. The folksy proprietor suggested that the closest restaurant was about 15 miles toward Fresno.



Well north of Porterville, Tulare County, everybody has to know, you take the route toward Badger where you pick up 245 to Pinehurst. Very tight and twisty.



At an unknown site looking for Portuguese Pass. Let's have a meeting. But Mark Pohlson's still on his mighty K1200S. A couple of years ago, Hugo Schreiner brought the gang through snow and ice to Portuguese Pass from east to west.

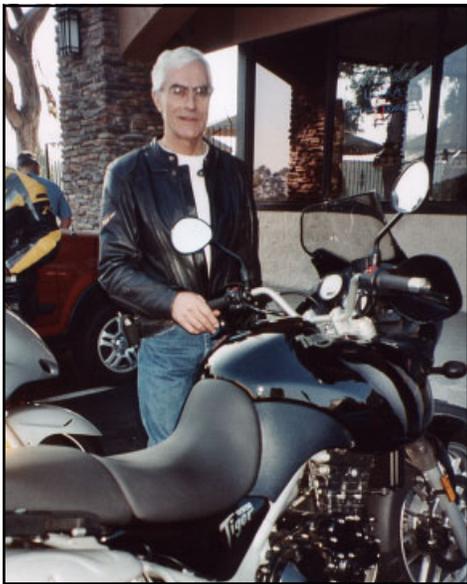


At last, Portuguese Pass. From the west, the narrow one-laner winds up through dark forests. What signs there are, point to "Sugar Loaf." Tony Cash and Bill Blaylock survey the scene. Lunch had been at Glenville, a village with a bar and a barn, which has to have been more than 11 miles away.

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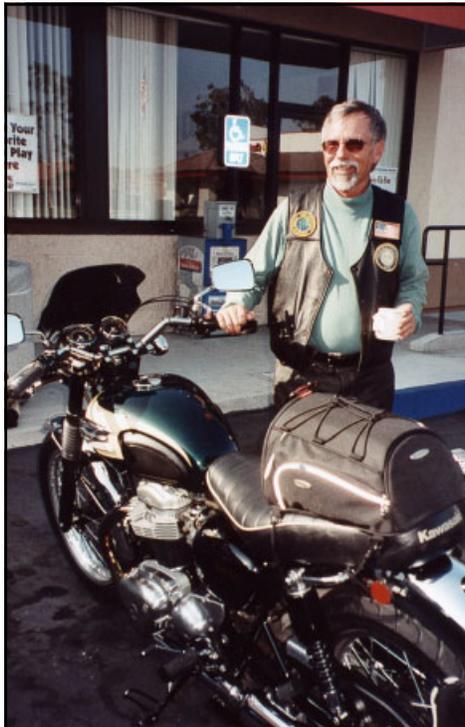
12 Old hands on new bikes. Ron Spicer and Bill Siebold both have new black 1200GS's.



Some BMW clubbers prove their loyalty by riding Triumph's.



And some try Honda's. Mark Pohlson's checking with Ariel Silveira about Ariel's new bike.



Bill Edwards has a Kawasaki looks-like-a-Triumph.

As we speak, Chuck and Kate DuVivier are in Ghana, like in Africa, on an 'eradicate polio' project.



Can we get there from here? Who's leading? Rex Neilson, Garry Kepple, Fulton Martin, Ron Spicer, Bob Ingram, Bill Siebold, Bill Taylor and Don Picker.

