



Michigan Sport Touring Report

December 2020

Editor – Rachel Durling

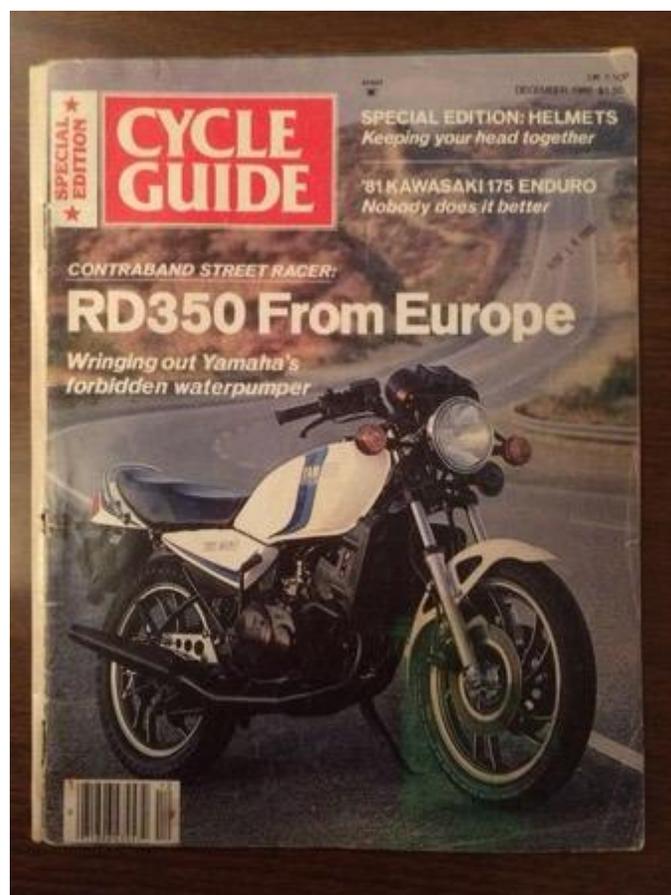
Motorcycles, and Trying to Go Back in Time

By: Neil Wagner

Conversations at MSTR events often lead to reminiscing over motorcycles we once owned. People of a certain age, at least a half-century old, basically anyone reading this, usually have a warm spot in their heart for a bike they owned early in their riding life. Gushing over the motorcycles of our youth is probably some type of psychosis where our love of motorcycles becomes mixed with the brutal reality of letting go of youth, forming an odd, distorted reality. Maybe. I know my dad was guilty of that. He honestly believed his 1964 Harley-Davidson Panhead was the greatest motorcycle ever made, and Johnny Cash was the best musician ever. Period. Of course, that is ridiculous: The Dead Kennedys was the best band and the 1981 Yamaha RD350LC the greatest motorcycle ever made. I obsessed over both in high school, the latter of which was an issue since the RD350LC was never (legally) imported into the States. The law wasn't going to stand in the way of a smug teenager and the motorcycle of his dreams. That right there would make a good Johnny Cash song.

Before the 1985 Suzuki GSXR, there wasn't really an affordable, street legal, race bike replica. That statement right there would start a heated conversation at a MSTR event so let me say, to my adolescent way of thinking, the RD350LC was a TZ350 race bike with lights. That isn't really true but the radiator and mono shock frame of the RD350LC looked a lot like an

early TZ, a quantum leap over the air-cooled RD which Yamaha had stopped importing a few years earlier. Even the riding position, a bit tame by today's sport bike standards, was aggressive 40 years ago. When I turned 16 in 1982, I set out to get one. The fact I couldn't do it legally, strictly speaking, didn't faze me one bit.



The plan was simple: borrow my brother's trailer, drive to Northern Ontario where the bike was legal, buy a used 1981 RD350LC, and talk a U.S Customs agent into letting me bring the

bike across. I was smug and thought I was way cleverer than I was. I filled out the proper EPA 3520-1 form, making up stuff as I went along. I tossed out carbon parts per million figures as if I knew what that even meant. U.S. Customs didn't fall for it. I was told flat out to leave the motorcycle in Canada. Oh crap. My last-ditch effort was to show him my WERA racing license and explain I had no real intentions of driving this bike on the street, it was racing only. The Customs agent paused, looked at me sternly, and agreed to let me bring it over but made me swear, *swear*, I would not put plates on it. He told me I would get thrown in jail or something if I attempted to register it. I promised not to get plates, thanked him for his understanding, and trailered my RD350LC across the Sault Ste. Marie Bridge.

The next day I went to get plates for it. My dad was an expert at getting a title and plates for vehicles that had...discrepancies. The main pillar in his scheme was to go to the Inkster Secretary of State where they don't question much. I handed an Inkster Secretary of State employee my title and proof of insurance, and they handed me a plate, which I installed right there in the parking lot. I rode this bike often through high school and college. I had my dad paint it black, then back to white.



I raced it a few times in the WERA Production D Class against bikes like the Honda 400 Hawk. The bike was competitive. I wasn't. After college I got a GPz 1100, which I sold to get a BMW K100RS, which I sold to get something else. I kept my RD350LC and milk crate full of Dead Kennedy albums, but only took them out occasionally. I parked the RD in my shed when my daughter was born where the bike sat for 20 years.



Last winter I restored it. It is an easy bike to work on; finding 40-year-old NOS parts for a motorcycle that was never imported into the States was a bit trickier. My timing was good. I bought all the parts I needed, got the frame out to a powder-coater and engine cases to a vapor-blaster, right before the Covid lock down. A friend painted the tank and panels in his garage.



I had free time on my hands for the first time since high school. I took my time putting it together while listening to Classic Punk on Amazon Music. I miss 1981, but having my RD350LC, sitting proudly in the living room, helps.



A special thanks to Neil Wagner for the article and pictures featured this month.

Remember... All published articles earn a free breakfast, entry into the year-end newsletter drawing AND your fellow members and the newsletter editor will appreciate your articles. You will also earn points toward the **2020/2021 MOTY Awards!**



MSTR Heads Up

Here is a listing of some of the upcoming local events and meetings within the next few months. If you know of a local motorcycle event in Michigan or Ontario the MSTR would be interested in send Rachel Durling an e-mail to Communications@mstriders.com with the details.

MSTR Combined EAST and West “Breakfast” Meetings

We will be combining our east and west side meetings for the winter months. Our meetings will very likely be Zoom meetings due to ongoing Covid 19 concerns throughout the winter months. Please check your email for Mailchimp announcements for updates and links for the Zoom meetings.

Our December MSTR “breakfast” meeting will be on December 19th, 2020 at 9am which is the third Saturday of the month due to Christmas.

Our January MSTR “breakfast” meeting will be on January 23rd, 2021 at 9am which is back to the fourth Saturday of the month.

Twisty Road Riding Seminar Updates

By: **Bill Webb**

wwebb@motorcyclesafetyassociation.com

Reminder to those who have already taken the Twisty Road Seminar...one training slot in each seminar is held back for those who have taken the seminar previously who want a free refresher. That list is created on a first-to-request basis. Therefore, if you want to retake the seminar in the Spring, send me an e-mail.

For those not familiar with the Twisty Road Seminar program, it was started in 2019 by formation of the Motorcycle Safety Association, a non-profit corporation that has since been determined to be a charity under Section 501(c)(3) of the I.R.S. code. More information about the program and what others who have taken the seminar have said about the program can be seen at: <https://motorcyclesafetyassociation.com/>



If you may be interested in signing-up, you can learn more about the program at the website link above and you can sign-up online at: <https://motorcyclesafetyassociation.com/sign-up-for-training>

It is advisable to sign-up now if you want to attend one of the first available seminars as persons are enrolled on a first-to-register basis.

Because of the Motorcycle Safety Association’s charity status, Amazon has agreed to donate ½ of 1% of the Amazon purchase amounts people

make. Your participation in this program is without cost to you. It is a simple two step process, first go to: <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/84-3799306> where you acknowledge the amount above will be donated to support the Association—without cost to you. Then when you make future purchases, you need only bookmark or start typing: **Smile**.amazon.com instead of Amazon.com and 1/2 of 1% of your purchases will be donated to the Association. This no cost to you way to support the program will certainly be appreciated. If you sign up on this Amazon program, please drop me a note and let me know. Thanks.



MSTR 2021 Rides

Please check the MSTR website for an updated list of the rides and events for 2021. If you are interested in

volunteering, please send an email to the address below. A complete list of events is on the Events page of the MSTR website (www.mstriders.com).

MSTR Newsletter & Website

The MSTR Newsletter and Website (www.mstriders.com) belong to you, the riders. They both can only be as good and as interesting as you make them. If you have something to say about a ride, your bike, perhaps a trip you are planning, whatever, send it in for the newsletter and/or website to:

Rachel Durling:
communications@mstriders.com

For Your Information

Regarding politics; the MSTR does not and shall not support any political party. Political discussions are not allowed during MSTR meetings or events.

Regarding human rights; the MSTR does not and shall not discriminate on the basis of race,

color, religion, gender, gender expression, age, national origin, disability, marital status, sexual orientation or military status in any of its activities.

You are free to have whatever political views you desire, but please leave them at home or on Facebook. Please don't bring them to the MSTR.

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MSTR Photo Gallery

The MSTR maintains a Smug Mug photo gallery (<https://mstriders.smugmug.com/>) to allow riders to upload and download pictures of various club events. Upload and download passwords are sent out to participants for each event. Click on the above link or visit the MSTR website and select the MSTR Photo Gallery link to check out all the event pictures.

Pictures from 2020 MSTR happenings:



Please patronize the following businesses owned by your fellow MSTR Members and Dealers whenever possible.

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