



Michigan Sport Touring Report

January 2022

Editor – Rachel Durling

Axis and Allies

By: Steve Gross

Up until 2022, my two wheeled machines (note: this excludes my old Ural sidecar rig that some of you may remember) have all come from Axis powers: Italy, Germany, and Japan. The number of cylinders and knobiness of the tires has varied over the years—from a string of Japanese single-cylinder enduros in the 1980s, to a Japanese sport-touring four in the 1990s, several Italian twins in the 2000s, and finally a return to fours (one Japanese, one German) in the 2010s. But they all shared metric tooling and being on the wrong side of history in World War Two.

Every time I get a four-cylinder machine, I say “for sure this is the last one.” Between the sound (boring) and the width (fat) of fours, I long for a return to narrow twins. Or (hat tip to Rachel) maybe a triple someday. “But don’t you want big monster horsepower?” you ask. That’s exactly why I went from the Honda CBR929RR (125 HP) to the BMW S1000R (160 HP). I have enough horsepower. What I need now is *style*. Yes, that’s right, here in the Michigan *Sport Touring Riders* newsletter I’m going to preach the benefits of being a poser! When is the last time you got a speeding ticket sitting in front of a coffee shop? Wouldn’t you like to be able to use your motorcycle without trailering it 12 hours away? Don’t you want to have a 45-minute conversation with some crusty old guy while he points out all the ways you have incorrectly restored your bike? Uh, maybe scratch that last one!

In the summer of 2021, I added another Axis machine to the stable: a 1968 Ducati 250

Monza. My first Ducati single, my first bevelhead, and my first non-Desmo Ducati to boot. 22 wild horsepower! Ugly as sin! Just check out all that patina!



Photo 1 Patina 4 Dayz

Crusty old guy sidebar, you can safely skip this entire paragraph if you like. Back in the 1960s, Ducati ruled the small sport bike scene in Europe. On a track, nothing could touch them. The US importer saw that success, and thought “What if Ducati’s were more like Harley’s? We bet those would sell like hotcakes over here!” So, they pressured Ducati to slap on some high handlebars and ugly bodywork and ship them on over. It turned out, though, that if the 1960s American motorcycle shopper wanted a Harley, he (or she) just bought a Harley. So, when the second boatload of these things arrived, the US importer refused the shipment. Apparently, it didn’t occur to them to tell Ducati to just not make them in the first place. Stuck with 3500 ugly motorcycles, they finally managed to unload them in UK—infuriating their official UK importer who now had to compete with these cheap grey-market bikes. Many of these ugly

bikes ended up as race bikes, with the ugly gas tanks and high handlebars consigned straight to the trash.

Even though this bike looks like it spent the last 40 years at the bottom of a lake, the previous owner bought it at a swap meet and got it running. He has a collection of vintage bikes, including this bike's twin with only 40 miles on it since new. His plan with this one was to ride it as-is for a while, but he offered it to me when he heard I was looking for a new project. The forks were not working right, but I rebuilt them and now they work as well as any 1960s suspension—that is, still not very well. The charging system doesn't, and neither does the head light. I'll tackle those next, and ride it "ugly" this summer, without even cleaning all the grime off.



Photo 3 Vision Board

I've already got a couple shelves of parts collected for the café racer project, more on that next winter...



Photo 4 Parts is Parts

Just when I thought I had a good plan for the Duc, something weird happened. I was browsing Facebook Marketplace and a Triumph Tiger 650 caught my eye. Being the middle of winter, it was priced to move. In fact, the price was so low that at first, I thought it was a scam. But I sent a message and the response that came back seemed legit. So, on a nice 15 °F Day I dug my trailer out of a snowbank and headed off to Port Huron. Just to be safe, I let my wife know where I was going in case, I woke up in a bathtub full of ice minus my kidneys.

But lo and behold, the bike was there! It was real, it started, and even had a title. I almost couldn't believe it. The seller had bought it from an estate sale but was more of a Harley guy. I offered him a little less than his already-low asking price and he took it. Wishing I had an enclosed trailer, I drove home through an hour



Photo 2 Where's the rest of me?

After that, I don't plan to restore this bike to original condition. Instead, I'm turning it into a café racer. If you aren't familiar with that term, it's kind of a 1960s version of a race replica for the street Lightweight and quick, but not for touring. More like just racing from café to café!

of snow squalls, and then spent a couple hours cleaning all the salt off the bike.



Photo 5 Yes that's a snowmobile in the background



Photo 6 Mr. Yuk

Crusty old guy sidebar part 2. Back in the 1960s, the British ruled the big bike scene in Europe. They saw the Japanese making small commuter bikes and figured “who cares? No way will the Japanese ever compete with us in big bikes!” Then in 1969, Honda launched the CB750 four cylinder with disc brakes, electric start, and no leaky crankcases. Triumph immediately responded by... designing a new frame for their old leaky 650 twins. The old frame was fine, but no matter. Electric start remained almost a decade away, but they did design new brakes for the new bike. New *drum* brakes, not disc. The new frame was taller and wider than the old frame, because they decided to put the engine oil inside—much like Erik Buell did 3 decades later with the fuel. Triumph was simultaneously ahead of and woefully behind

their time! The redesigned 650 was 15% more expensive than a CB750. It was, uh, not a success and within a few years the entire British motorcycle industry was on life support.

Back to the future, though. This bike is a “bitsa” -bits of this, bits of that. The frame started life as a 1971 Bonneville, but the engine is from a 1966 Tiger. Half of the fasteners are Whitworth, half are SAE. None are metric. It's been lightly customized, also café racer style: side covers removed, clubman bars, solo bum-stop seat, no gauges, mirrors, or mufflers. Rear fender chopped. The engine has clearly had some work done, but I have no idea if it's hopped up or just cleaned up. It kick-starts super-easy, so I doubt it has high-compression pistons. It leaks the usual amount of oil from the usual places. It's been converted to negative ground, with a modern regulator-rectifier and electronic ignition. Nice custom paint job. It's all pretty similar to my plans for the Ducati!

I plan to clean up some of the wiring and cable routing, fix a leaky fuel line, and re-tighten all the engine bolts (once my newly ordered Whitworth wrenches arrive). Also, it needs mufflers—even though the muffler delete is a common café racer mod, I prefer the look with mufflers. Then ride it to bike nights in Plymouth and Royal Oak! Posers of the world unite.



Photo 7 Axis and Allies

A special thanks to **Steve Gross** for his 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 **2022 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 East Breakfast Meetings

Our East Side Breakfast meeting will be on Saturday, on March 26th, 2022, at Coach's Corner, 36000 W Seven Mile Rd, Livonia, MI 48152 at 9am.

MSTR West Breakfast Meetings

Our next West Side MSTR meeting will be on March 12th, 2022, at the Alibi Bar & Grill, 1394 East Riverside Dr, Ionia, MI, 48846 at 9am. Please email Gala at gschip@me.com to let her know that you will be there for breakfast, so that she can plan to have enough food for everyone.

MOTY Banquet

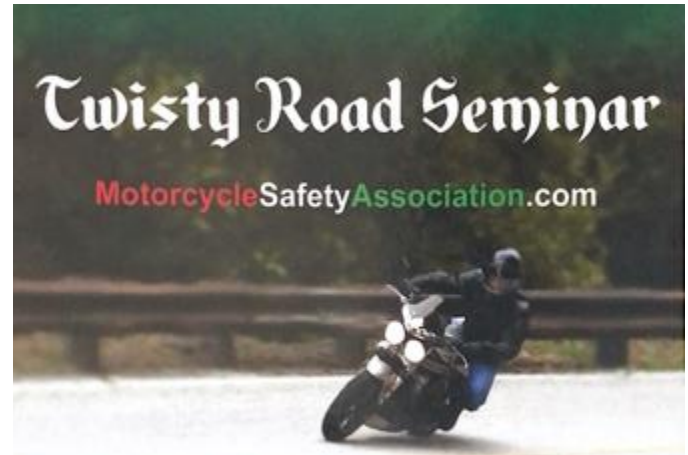
Saturday April 2nd, 2022

Our 2021 MOTY (Member of the Year) Banquet will be held on April 2nd, 2022, at Lena's Kitchen starting at 4:00pm located at 28345 Beck Road Wixom, MI 48393. We are working on the details and should have a form to participate sent out soon.

All Clubs Ride

Sunday May 1st, 2022

Meet for coffee and donuts in downtown Stockbridge from 9:00am to 1:00pm.



What a Professional rider says about the Seminar

"The Twisty Road Seminar offers sound advice to all street riders, regardless of experience level"
Mark Miller, Isle of Man TT – 1st Place Winner

About us

The Motorcycle Safety Association is a State of Michigan Non-Profit corporation. The U.S. Treasury Department has determined the Association is a charity under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Donations are therefore tax deductible to the extent the law allows.



info@MotorcycleSafetyAssociation.com

If you are interested in the Twisty Road Seminar, please contact Bill Webb at the email address above.



MSTR 2022 Rides

Please check the MSTR website on the events page for a list of the rides and events for 2022 (www.mstriders.com). If you are interested in volunteering, please send an email to the address above.

Note: MSTRider membership is required to attend an MSTR riding event. We will not be able to add your name to an event sign-up list unless you are a current MSTRider or until your New MSTRider Form or MSTRider Renewal form and fee are received. Go to www.mstriders.com, then navigate to the Resources page and scroll down to the **New MSTRider Form** or the **MSTRider Renewal Form**.

MoArk Adventure 14

April 13th to April 16th, 2022
Missouri/Arkansas



This ride is a “curve-chaser’s” delight. There are three days of riding, with 1,000 tire-shredding miles in the Ozark’s to start out your riding season. Check your tires for tread prior to this ride, the roads here will chew them up aggressively. Many riders have shown up with “I think” tires and ended up buying expensive tires mid-ride and losing a day of riding. If in doubt, mount new tires.

The MoArk event begins in Farmington, Missouri. We’ll meet there for dinner on Wednesday, April 13th. There will be a mandatory **point** rider meeting around 8:00 or 8:30pm and then a mandatory riders meeting at 9:00pm to sign a waiver and put riding groups together. On Thursday morning you can choose one of three routes from Farmington to Mountain Home, Arkansas. We’ll then be staying Thursday, April 14th and Friday, April 15th in Mountain Home. On Friday you have a choice of five loop routes (or make up your own) but no matter which you’ll be riding on some of the best roads in Arkansas. On Saturday you

again have a choice of three routes to return to Farmington, Missouri from Mountain Home, arriving mid-afternoon and then prepare for the ride or trailer trip back to Michigan.

To join us for MoArk 14 get your name on the sign-up list by sending an email to lan as shown below. Event information including hotel information, a rider package and GPS routes will only be provided to those who have signed up.

Event Organizer: lan Orr
Email: mclorr1198@gmail.com

5th Annual Ladies Day Ride

Sunday May 1st, 2022

Please join us for the 5th Annual Ladies Day Ride at Zukey Lake Tavern at 10:00am on May 1st, 2022, address 5011 Girard Drive Pinckney, MI 48169 for breakfast. If you would like to skip breakfast, meet us at Zukey Lake Tavern at 11:00am, kickstands up at 11:15am to ride a loop around Stockbridge then stop in Downtown Stockbridge for All Clubs Ride. All MSTR riders are welcomed to join.

International Female Ride Day® (IFRD) the first Saturday in May, is a global day celebrating the cultural, social and active lifestyles of women who ride and enjoy motorcycling. The day also marks a call to action for fast-tracking gender equality, awareness, and respect for women in motorcycling or motorsport.

Ride Organizer: MJ Campbell
Email: vtxchick@hotmail.com

1/2 K Ride

Saturday, May 7th, 2022

Bob Komjathy has agreed to organize the 1/2 K Ride again this year. Lunch is planned at Shipshewana, IN. More details to come soon.

mr2

Michigan Renegade Mountain Ride May 15th to May 20th, 2022 Waynesville, NC



There will be two days of travel and five days of riding on some of the best motorcycle roads in the US. We stay at one location and, each day, chose from any one of 20 different routes. Most MSTRiders will ride 1,000 to 1,500 miles so be sure to have good tires with lots of tread.

The ride begins in Waynesville, NC at the mandatory rider's meeting at the hotel on Sunday, May 15th at 8pm to sign waivers and put riding groups together. The rider's meetings continue each evening until Thursday.

The hotel's remote location ensures a quiet and relaxing stay. Participants can bring or purchase food to make their own onsite breakfasts and dinners or drive/ride 5-10 minutes to one the many restaurants in Waynesville. There is an onsite BBQ grill available for our use. About one week before the event starts, we'll select one warm and dry evening to have an onsite group cookout. Those who want to join in can either bring their own food for the cookout or pick it up at a local grocery store.

To join us for **mr2** send an email to lan as noted below. Event information including hotel & local restaurant information, Rider Packages and GPS routes will only be provided to those who have signed up. Be sure to make your hotel reservations early.

Event Organizer: lan Orr
Email: mclorr1198@gmail.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 based on 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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www.bmwdetroit.com

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.

Let's make some great motorcycle memories in 2022! Here's some 2021 pictures of our adventures.




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

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