

DOUBLE THE FUN

by

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What is more fun than spending a week doing your favorite sport?

Spending a week doing two of your favorite fun things. On Saturday



Roger and Eric getting ready for the adventure.

Morning May 5, 2007, I met five of my customers from Southern Indiana Scuba in Bloomington,

Indiana, who are motorcycle-enthusiasts, for a “Bike and Dive” trip to Key Largo, Florida. We forwarded our dive gear to Quiescence Diving

Services in Key Largo via UPS in order to travel as light as possible.

After a hearty breakfast at a local restaurant the six of us mounted our four bikes and headed south filled with excited anticipation of a great adventure.



Let's go to Florida



Fuel stop, rest from the rain

On the first morning the weather was deceptively warm and sunny as we left Bloomington. Soon after we crossed the Ohio River into

Kentucky, the weather turned sour. We rode

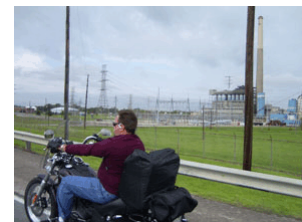
through rain across the Blue Grass State.

Tennessee’s weather treated us more kindly with sunshine that dried our gear. Since half of our group had never participated in a long bike ride, they did not really know what was in a store for them, such as

uncooperative weather and tired derrieres. Smaller fuel tanks on two of the bikes provided

opportunities for rest stops about every 150 miles. Recently, I had purchased a Garmin GPS

designed for bike trips which greatly assisted in planning fuel, food and day’s end destinations.



On the road



On the road to Montgomery

During a rest and refreshment stop we discussed the distance we needed to cover that day in order to reach our destination in three days. We decided that Montgomery, Alabama, was a doable goal which would keep us on schedule. I suggested that we reach the south side of the city to avoid morning rush-hour traffic. Our group of riders proved to be hardy bunch and dedicated bikers who were willing to be cooperative which made the experience more pleasant for everyone. We arrived at our planned destination in good shape but ready for a restful night.



Another great day

My bike, the only Honda Goldwing on the trip, is well equipped with electronic amenities such as a CB radio, an integrated cellular phone, an AM-FM radio, a CD player, an XM radio, and a GPS which made the trip more pleasant. I enjoyed these luxuries even though I had to endure good-natured kidding from the group about my opulence. Another perk of the 500 miles-a-day rides was the scenic byways. On a motorcycle the beauty of the landscape can be savored in a way not possible in any other mode of transportation.

The morning dawned clear and sunny. We felt optimistic because shortly we would be riding through the “Sunshine State.” Sunshine ruled the day, that is, until noon. Ominous, angry, black clouds in the west proved to be harbingers of the storms we



The Sunshine State!?

encountered in the near future. After donning rain gear, we continued along US Route 19 in the rain until a high velocity wind began assailing the highway with every manner of missiles such as service station signs, untethered lawn chairs, and other unidentified projectile that threatened



Storm is blowing in!

to ruin our fun. We found a safe haven at a roadside service station. It was during this episode that my electronics proved to be more than a luxury. I called my wife in Indiana who used her computer get the prevailing weather conditions from the internet. Having updated information on the weather helped us to know when to proceed. When the sky was clear, we headed south once more.

The one factor we failed to consider was the fact that we were following the storm and traveling faster than it was. Before we reached our planned destination at Tampa, we over took the storm. Again we found shelter under an awning at a motel. While waiting for the weather front to pass and the rain and wind to subside, we discussed our options for the remainder of the day. Should we stay the night where we were or make a mad dash to Tampa? The group showed their dedication to motorcycle touring when everyone agreed to ride onto Tampa to spend the night.



Weighting our options



Our steeds resting, getting ready for the day

After a restful night in Tampa the “Sunshine State” began to live up to its name. We had an uneventful ride down US 19, then across Alligator Alley on US 41. We arrived at Alabama Jack’s Restaurant on Card Sound Road just in time to enjoy his famous fried conch fritters for lunch.



On to Alabama Jack’s



We made it to Jack’s

When we had feasted on conch fritters and rested our weary bodies, we were anxious to finish our trip and



Wild Hogfish hanging at Alabama Jack’s

prepare for SCUBA diving. We arrived in at Quiescence Diving Services in Key Largo on Monday afternoon. The evening’s agenda included eating dinner and sharing stories with our friends.



Divers enjoy their 1st dive

Early the next morning we were well rested from our trip and eagerly loaded our gear onto the boat for a day of diving fun. Our group filled one of Quiescence’s six-passenger boat. With air tanks filled and all gear stowed, boat captain Rob Bleser steered the boat to Brody’s Reef, a prime dive site, visited only by Quiescence’s clients.



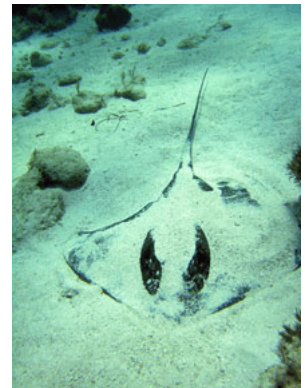
Golden Tail Eel

Brody’s Reef is a underwater photographer’s paradise, a microcosm of the reef-life of the Caribbean. We swam among Nurse Sharks, Puffer Fish, Moray Eels, a variety of sea turtles, Shovel Nose Lobsters, and a variety of other



Nurse Shark

sea life. Upon finishing our dive, we boarded the boat with everyone excitedly sharing his or her experiences. A second dive that day on Spanish Anchor Reef was less exciting. We did see some Sting Rays, a Golden Tail Eel, and little else.



Southern Ray

On shore we cleaned our dive gear, then decided to participate in



Welcome to Royal Palms Visitor Center

our “other” most favorite sport, that is a bike ride. Still saddle sore from the trip to Key Largo a unanimous decision was made to take a short ride to the Everglade National Park.

The visit to the park disappointed me. Several years ago I visited



Gator watching the visitors watch them.

the park and found it a rewarding experience. Now Flamingo Visitor Center has been devastated by recent hurricanes, and little effort had been made to restore it. We saw several alligators and other swamp creatures and birds.



Checking out the wild life

After a short visit we headed back to Key Largo. En route to back to Quiescence we encountered a massive traffic jam. In fact, traffic was at a standstill. We presumed that the tourist crowd was alligator gawking. We had seen our fill of the scaly creatures earlier so we looked for a way around the cars. With the bikes we were able to squeeze through the traffic. We kept our eyes peeled watching for

a ‘gator. The thought of running over a large reptile with a motorcycle brought visions of disaster. When we made our way to the front of the car jam we discovered the cause of the mess. Right in the middle of the road



Coming home the Everglades

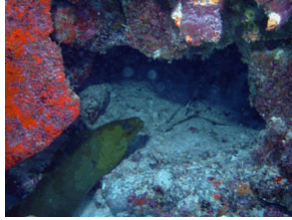
was a rattlesnake, six feet long, four inches thick, coiled and ready to strike. My fear of reptiles caused me to skirt the beast as far as possible and still get past it. Some less fearful gawkers squatted within striking distance of the snake snapping pictures. Not wanting to see a hapless tourist meet his doom, we hurried along to our destination.



Another Great Dive

For our second day of diving Captain Bleser took us to the Winch Hole in the morning and City of Washington ship wreck after lunch. At the Winch Hole we checked out the old windlass and enjoyed see Parrot Fish, Damsels, and an assortment of tropical fish.

On the second dive, we spent time exploring the City of Washington ship wreck. We



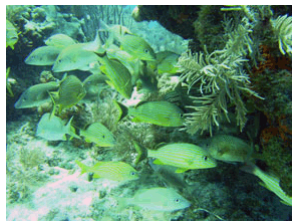
A Moray Eel hanging out

enjoyed visiting a Giant Nassau Grouper who had been hand fed by previous divers. He amused us with his friendliness, doing all kinds of antics in anticipation of a free meal. As we made our way back to land, we planned an afternoon ride to Key West.

Our group enjoyed the leisure ride to the southern most point of the United States. Members of our group who had never been to the monument marking the point and telling tourist that they were 90 miles from Cuba wanted to take pictures. After touring the sights on Duvall Street we attended The Festival of the Sunset at Mallory’s Square. The festival itself is worth the trip to Key West. It is a New Orleans’ Bourbon and a San Francisco’s Fisherman’s Wharf rolled into one. We headed back toward Key Largo following a delightful meal of local cuisine.



On to Key West



Walls of Fish

Our next dive was a different experience. We did a “drift dive” across the Molasses Reef. This type of diving has been described as being like a motorcycle ride without the effort. The trip



A Balloon Fish

did not reveal any unusual sea life, just a pleasant SCUBA event.



You can't see me says the little Puffer Fish

After the third day of diving and the reality of a 1300 mile trip back to our homes, our evening’s agenda changed. We did not take an evening motorcycle ride. We spent the evening cleaning and packing our SCUBA gear for shipping to Indiana.

Everyone wanted to get in bed early.

The highlights on this first day of travel included a



Homeward Bound

scenic ride past Lake Okeechobee, one of the world's largest inland natural lakes which is visible from the space station. The second highlight was an encounter with Florida's infamous Love Bugs. These pesky insects came in swarms. Their squishy little bodies plastered themselves on our bikes. The solid layered of bugs on the windshields obscured our vision. Frequent stops were needed to remove them from our windshields. In spite of our "debugging" stop we reached our projected destination at Tallahassee.

As we neared Tallahassee we encountered the acrid smell of smoke caused by Florida's wildfires. We never felt any threat from the fire, but the smoke made breathing difficult and aggravated persons with bronchial conditions.

The next day dawned clear and pleasant. According to our projected agenda, this was the second of a three day trip. The weather was great and the trip uneventful. Making better than expected milage, we ate dinner in Bowling Green, Kentucky. Someone suggested that we make an extra effort to get home rather than spending another night on the road. Everyone concurred so we continued toward home. We arrived home about 10:00 PM.

Since the group had seen the movie, "Wild Hogs," we felt a similar name would be appropriate for us. As SCUBA divers the name "Wild Hogs" seemed extreme, so, we settle "Wild Hogfish." From this day forward we shall be known as "Wild Hogfish."

Everyone agreed that more "Bike and Dive" trips should be planned for the near future. Several other divers/motorcyclist have expressed an interest in participating in a "Bike and Dive" trip. I would like to make an open invitations to all divers who are motorcyclists to join us on future trips. Interested persons can



Our Colors, Our
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