

# DESMO LEANINGS



The Official Magazine of the Ducati Owners Club of the United States

Volume 10 Issue 2

Summer 2012



***You Meet The Nicest People On A Ducati  
Duck Weather At DABR • Roebling Road Photo Recap  
Racing The BEARS In New Zealand • Ducks Down Under***

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## Greetings from il Capo

Summer has arrived, and riding season is at its height. It kind of makes it hard to sit down and do the next issue of Desmo Leanings, but here I am anyway. Locally here in the Charlotte area we have reinstated our first Tuesday of the month Italian bike night. We have moved to a more central location at Portofino's restaurant, and we are fortunate that not only does it serve one of the best pizzas in Charlotte, it is run by Josh Coppola, who owns two Ducatis. Our first night had about ten show up, but the second one had over twenty, so it is starting to catch on. If you are too far away to participate, why not start your own Italian bike night? Just collect some emails and send out a reminder a few days before. Early in the week is a slow time for most restaurants, and most would be happy for the extra business.

Once you have an email list set up, you can always expand it to include local rides. Beyond that you could organize a group ride to a major event, like Ducks Head West this coming August 10-12 in Erwin, Tennessee. Sorry, I could not resist a plug for our only summer event. The club has avoided hosting many events in the summer because it is so hot to ride in protective gear, but this location has some altitude, so the temperatures are not the worst and the roads are clearly some of the best. It has always been our smallest and most intimate event, so come out and join us.

Not too many of you responded to my request for your opinions on keeping the hard copy of the magazine or moving to just an electronic one. Of the six or eight folks who contacted me, it was pretty clear the hard copy was first choice, but most said they would understand if finances dictated the switch. For the remainder of this year we will continue as we have, and we will look at this again next year. My preference is to remain with the hard copy, with electronic copies of past issues available on line.

The brings up articles. We are always in need of an article for the magazine. Bike builds are always a favorite because not only does it show off individual creativity but also shows our membership what can be done. Technical tips are always a popular item, so if you have some wisdom learned over the years of wrenching, please share. Road trips and travel stories are always a good choice. Additionally, we still have about two months on the calendar that are not filled yet, so if you have a set of nice high-resolution photos of your bike, now is your chance.

With two rallies and two track weekends remaining on our calendar, there is still plenty to do. Polish your bike and come out and ride with us.

  
Jim  
il Capo



**Jim Calandro** ..... il Capo  
*capo@carolina.rr.com*

**Clyde Romero** ..... Consigliere  
*clyderomerof4@bellsouth.net*

**Bob Lattanzi** ..... Consigliere  
*2f4u2d@bellsouth.net*

**Terry Wyse** ..... Consigliere  
*terrywyse@me.com*

**Larry Haber** ..... Consigliere  
*larryh@Qmarketing.biz*

**David Grogan** ... Revisore di Bozze  
*dgrogan@slk-law.com*

**Terry Boling** ..... Redattore Tecnico  
*tboling\_1968@bellsouth.net*

**Lewis Kirk** ..... Curatore del Sito Web  
*webmaster@usdesmo.com*

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## Ducshop Ducati 848 AMA Daytona Sportbike Racing News

### Jake Zemke Solid In The Triumph Big Kahuna At Road Atlanta On The Ducshop Ducati 848

Braselton, GA (April 23, 2012) – Ducshop Racing's Jake Zemke earned two solid 4th place finishes in Round 2 of the AMA Pro GoPro Daytona Sportbike Series in the Big Kahuna Atlanta at Road Atlanta. After this round, Jake is firmly holding 5th place in the Championship with fifty-one points.

Jake qualified the Ducshop Ducati 848 with a 1:29.601, putting him in a great spot on the outside of Row 1 in 3rd position. He made the best of his qualifying spot by taking the holeshot in Race 2 and leading the first laps.

#### Jake Zemke

Jake said, "The crew did a great job this weekend, and we are making progress every time we go out. This added weight issue really hurts us, so hopefully the AMA will consider taking a look at it. In race one I had a clutch issue; got a rough start and shuffled back a little... had a good battle going with Dane, and then Cory. I told the guys if they could make some adjustments for race two, I knew I could get the hole shot. Dane and I battled it out again and he just edged me at the line by .040. I am really looking forward to Infineon where the Ducati should go good and hopefully we can run closer to the front."

#### Mark Sutton

Crew Chief, Mark Sutton, said, "Jake did a great job throughout the weekend, especially considering he has had no official testing. In addition, AMA regulation requires us to maintain a minimum weight of 380 pounds without fuel. This definitely puts us at a serious disadvantage against the inline 4's, but we will continue to do everything we can to give him a bike he can take to the front."

### Jake Zemke In 6th Place In Series After Barber Round

Atlanta, GA (July 2, 2012) Ducshop Racing and Jake Zemke would like to thank everyone who has helped in our quest to reach the podium! Thanks to your efforts we were able to participate in Round 6 at Barber Motorsports Park, and gain valuable knowledge to push us closer to the front. To all who contributed, and made the event possible; your custom Ducshop Racing merchandise is on its way!

We've received several inquiries from fans and

friends if the opportunity to donate is still available. Yes! Funding is still needed and your support can make all the difference! All monetary contributions are welcomed, and for donations of \$50.00 or more, you'll receive custom Ducshop Racing/Jake Zemke merchandise. Additional opportunities include tickets to your choice of AMA Pro Racing events, lunch with Jake, and the chance to become part of the pit crew!

Jake is currently in 6th place with five more rounds to go in the 2012 AMA Pro GoPro Daytona Sportbike



Championship. Nothing would make the team happier than completing the remainder of the season.

For those fans, friends and organizations interested in lending a hand to make the rest of the season a true success, please go to [www.ducshopracing.com](http://www.ducshopracing.com) and pledge your support.

### Jake Zemke: AMA Pro Road Racing Featured Rider

Ducshop's own Jake Zemke was in the Rider Spotlight in the June 9th AMA Pro Road Racing Newsletter. Check it out here <http://www.amaproring.com/rr/news/index.cfm?cid=53306>:

#### Support

The team would like to thank Element Case, Rizoma, TPL Racing, Freightliner Manitoba, Rewards4Wellness.com, Troy Lee Designs, FMF, Fast Finish, Drippinwet, Jason Disalvo Speed Academy, Armour Bodies, Fast Frank Racing, EVR, Ohlins, D.I.D., Yoyodyne, Zero Gravity and Vesrah for their support.

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# Roebling Road Track Day Photo Recap

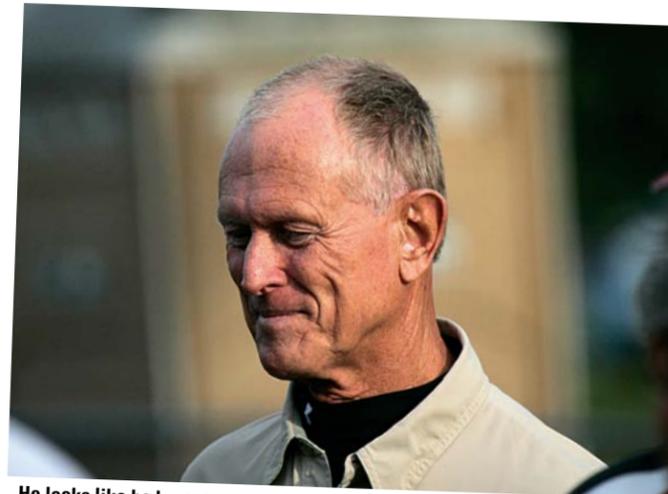
Photos by Neale Bayly, Member #01174 – Captions by Jim 'il Capo' Calandro, Member #00001



A thinking man.



Does he look a little skeptical or is just the sun in his eyes?



He looks like he knows a secret.



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Is that Snell approved head gear?



Concentration.



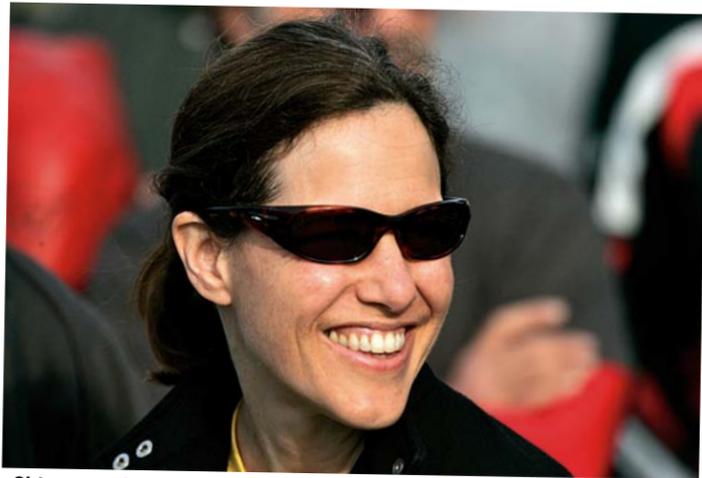
Working on their race faces.



He must be Italian; look at the hand.



The old man of the sea.



Girls want to have fun too!



How come only the woman smiled for Neale?



Tom Blocker: Outstanding Member 2012

more pics on page 23...

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# YOU MEET THE NICEST PEOPLE ON A DESMO



Story and photos by Bill Park, Member #01055 – Illustration by Max Lazzi

**Y**ou meet the nicest people on a Honda. Yoshiro Honda's ad men knew exactly what they were doing when they coined that phrase some forty-odd years ago. And over the years, we have all met plenty of nice people on Hondas as well as many other

motorcycles of all makes and models. But try meeting anyone. I'm talking anyone on a blood-red Italian superbike, and now we are talking very extreme long shot, at the very



best—fat chance, good luck mamma. But herein is where my passion lies and where my story begins.

I had spent the better part of the day with my good friend, Ducati mechanic and owner of Moto-Gizmo, Mark Gillotte, located in Columbia, South Carolina. You get to know your Ducati mechanic like you would an old friend. You will be seeing him more often than you will see your best friend. I



always have a great time with Mark, and he always has a shop full of interesting bikes to look over. I could spend a couple of days each week with Mark, but he would

probably get tired of seeing me and run me off.

Service work complete, I headed out and turned east on I-20 towards home and hearth. An ominous dark cloud lay out in front of my path. The weather report had mentioned scattered thunder boomers, but then, you can't go wrong predicting thunderstorms in South Carolina in the summer time. I had ignored the warnings to my detriment. As I progressed, the cloud got darker and the first pelting, heavy drops of chilling summer rain began to hit my face shield. The rain intensified into machine-gun fire, and I reduced my speed and moved as far right as possible. With visibility reduced to that of looking directly into the sun on a very clear day, I was forced to continue to slow my progress. I



couldn't see anything in my mirrors, and that is always scary on a bike. I kept my speed at around 50 mph. Trucks and cars passed me generating enough spray to constitute a car wash of sorts. If the rain was not intense enough, the spray kicked it up a notch.

Up front, I noticed debris in the road. Remember, this is an interstate. You don't find too much in the way of debris on interstates. Well, besides the occasional big-rig tire carcass, interstates tend to stay pretty much clear and free of dangerous obstructions. But up ahead, I could make out bits and pieces of a once rather large pine tree. The pine trees are several hundred yards from the interstate. How did this tree get into the middle of the road? Evidently, a small tornado of sorts had lifted



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this tree and deposited it across the east-bound lanes of I-20, just minutes before I arrived at this spot. A tick faster and I may have been clobbered by this huge pine tree or picked up and blown away by the same wind that lifted the tree in the first place. This alone would



send most riders to the nearest underpass to wait out the storm. The tree, luckily for me, had been reduced to shards, like a glass vase broken on a hard tile floor. I simply slowed down

and maneuvered through the bits of broken tree and proceeded to push forward as the rain, and now growing gusts of wind, made every attempt to stop me in my tracks.

I could easily stop under any number of overpasses and wait out the storm. But I was now soaked to the bone, so to speak. No reason to stop at this point. I would just suck it up and keep going. As I turned north onto I-95, the rain began to let up. Safe at last, I thought. Then the little amber light on the speedometer began to glow brightly in my face: running low on gas and my exit still miles away. I had to make a quick decision at this point. Press on or find an alternative exit and risk the danger of a wet off ramp with no gasoline at the bottom. My choice was to press on and risk having to push my bike along the shoulder of I-95, the most treacherous of all super highways along the Eastern seaboard, to the next exit ramp. I would move forward with the intention of making my exit, low-fuel light be damned.



Millennia later, I was relieved to see my exit in the distance, albeit through a much-fogged visor. The rain was now coming up off the interstate in the form of steam, like

sitting in a moving sauna bathhouse—a typical summer thunderstorm found exclusively in the great southeastern United States. My exit was none too soon, as I coasted into the first filling station in sight, running on fumes. Remember, I had passed a dozen exits along my route, and I could have taken the business route through Florence, South Carolina, or a half dozen alternative routes. I had stuck to my guns and made my exit.

I pulled up, soaking wet, to the first pump out of a total of ten available. I dismounted and began to peel off my soaking-wet gear. I never carry rain gear on the

Ducati. No place to put it, and I refuse to be a wimp with one of those backpacks. Come on, give me a break; I am not part of the generation that carried backpacks to school, but now my age is showing. Anyway, I dug out my credit card to run the pump and opened the tank filler lid with the key, and suddenly I heard this lovely feminine voice calling from behind me. Not having the best hearing, I figured someone was heckling me and having some fun at my expense. Wet, stupid motorcycle rider. I could just hear the words piercing the heavy, humid air. I shook the water from my ear and looked around to find a very attractive young lady, in fact young enough to be my daughter, and she was saying something like: “Is that a Ducati?” How did she know a Ducati from the man in the moon? I could count the number of Ducati owners I know on one hand. If polled, I doubt if one in a hundred motorcycle riders could identify a Ducati without reading the logo, rather small block letters on the side of the tank or fairing. And here I was in the middle of nowhere, with a young lady who recognized my bike as a Ducati, and that with only a rear view of the bike.

She walked up, and we introduced ourselves: her name, Caitlin, and her occupation, that of a pharmaceutical rep. She was simply making a random gas stop on her way to another appointment. Caitlin explained that her husband, Greg, was between Ducatis. They

*I shook the water from my ear and looked around to find a very attractive young lady, in fact young enough to be my daughter, and she was saying something like: “Is that a Ducati?”*

lived in Conway, South Carolina, about ten minutes from where my wife, Marilyn, and I live. He had wrecked his Monster and had a 2001 748 on its way from New Jersey, just purchased on eBay. After a brief conversation, where I mostly hung my mouth open and looked more like a soaking-wet Neanderthal, we exchanged email addresses and parted ways. I was able to partially dry off on the way home, but I couldn’t shake the idea of such a chance meeting.

Long story short, Greg is now an active member of our local riding group, the Furtive Riders Anonymous. We have maybe a half dozen Ducati owners mixed in with some late model Triumphs and a Honda or two. Many of us are multi bike owners, but all of us have a deep passion for motorcycling and for those blood-red racing bikes from Bologna.

Hard to imagine, let alone calculate, the insane probability of a chance meeting with anyone remotely understanding the significance of the mystic bond between Ducati owner and bike in such a random location. In contrast to meeting a Honda or Harley owner, I would liken this particular event with that of winning the lottery. The stars and planets had aligned in just such a way as to allow this chance meeting to occur. You truly do meet the nicest people on a Desmo, just don’t count on meeting a Desmo person in a normal, run-of-the-mill way.



# Racing the BEARS in New Zealand

## or “I’m not any faster Down Under on a small bike”

Story and photos by Jim Wright, Member # 00045

For those of you who have seen me acting as a moving chicane on the Aprilia at a DESMO track day, racing the old BMW in AHRMA, or power sliding our kart in a futile effort to avoid being last again at the Charlotte Mafia karting enduro, you may remember that I’m one of the largest folks there (and among the oldest!). You should love the story of the 400cc Ducati.



The author in action!

I have been fortunate to ride twice in New Zealand—the first was reported in Leanings in 2009. As this trip was being planned, Alison Fitzgerald and John Rains, the Kiwis who own Te Waipounamu Motorcycle Tours, Ltd., emailed: “Maybe we can do a track day or race if you come a few days early for the tour.” John later attached information on the BEARS/Sounds of Thunder races at Powerbuilt Raceway in Ruapuna Park, on the outskirts of Christchurch, the weekend before the tour, and he included an entry form. When filling out the portion of the form on the bike, his response was that he’d “taken care of that.”

### Racing

As the need to locate a bike to race developed further, Murray “Muzza” Sutherland and Glen Corson (“mates” down there)

had two 400cc Ducati race bikes. They rent them for NZ\$100 (US\$78) per day, ready to race, including gas. Murray makes some great Ducati fiberglass parts in association with his body shop, and Glen is a contractor. My contribution was showing up with racing gear and money—NZ\$406 (US\$320) to cover rental, a one-weekend license fee, and entry fees. I raced on a one-weekend temporary license (still enough to lay claim to “international racing credentials!”). As an aside, there was never a word spoken about a deposit or what happens if the bike is damaged in a crash or mechanically harmed! Murray and Glen rent the two bikes basically to support the BEARS club. The second was used by rider from the United Kingdom. In Kiwi, the UK guy was a Pom (pomegranate) and I was a Yank.

The weekend began with open practice day on Friday where I could learn the track and pick up some pace. These Ducati twins are normally sold in Italy and Asian markets and were originally Monsters that Ducati began building in 1994. They have a shorter stroke and smaller bore, but have the same bottom end and transmission as the 600 Monster, and the Internet says 24 cubic inches



On the grid.

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The grid

produce 42 horsepower. These race on firm street tires, in part to keep the cost down. Adjustability was minimal: clutch and brake levers were about it, and nothing on the suspension. My bike performed without any problems in three days of pretty hard riding, and the second bike had only a clutch slave cylinder O-ring issue and needed new front brake pads.



Duc — maybe another F1

safety wiring even on “full-race” bikes. Conversely, there were quite a few “kill cords” like those used on personal watercraft, and quite a few mechanics and riders wore personal hearing protection in the pits when idling bikes,



Ducati F1 or replica thereof

The race meet was well run, in some ways like ours and in some ways different. For example, on the open practice day, there was no technical inspection (scrutineering, as they call it), and no segregation into like-performance classes—practice when you feel like it—with some concerns on my part about the safety of that policy. On Saturday and Sunday, there was technical inspection and short practice sessions before the race schedule began. I was surprised at the limited use of

which I haven't seen here.

Actual races were five or six laps on a 3.7-kilometer track. They used, very effectively, a pre-grid in the pit lane. We avoid those because of riders running in multiple classes, but they managed both riders on different bikes in different classes and riders on the same bike in back-to-back races.

Scoring is manual, without transponders. That means not all bikes are



Restored AJS.

on the “official grid.” The first two or three rows were gridded on the basis of results in previous races. All

others—and a grid could have 50 to 60 bikes—were “self gridded.” One hustled around on the warm-up lap to get



Murray's 750 super stock showing the fiberglass tank-seat combinations he builds

as good a grid position as possible. That's an incentive for a quick grid formation! Starts were simple too—only a ten-second board was shown, and the green waived from trackside.

Most riders use tire warmers, even for those using DOT-type street tires. I concluded a hot tire for the warm-up lap was good—one less thing to think about. Also, with only five- or six-lap races, using the first lap to get your tires up to temperature might cost you the race. In my case, however, it didn't seem to make much difference whether they were hot or cold!

The small 400s were a blast to race.



A Harley Davidson with numbers and Supertraps. And yes, he raced it!

With the small pistons, they don't make the torque of the bigger twins, but they rev and pull like a bigger twin.

For small displacement engines, particularly with big riders, corner speed and keeping momentum up were important. Corner speed and the aforementioned hard street tires are not necessarily compatible. In the tight 180-degree turn at the end of the back straight, the front really wanted to tuck several times. Let the revs drop below 7,000, and it killed your power. The main straight was long; a lower gear ratio would have helped the little engine pull me, with a only a modest penalty on the long straight.

The race grids I've experienced in the United States are small compared to the 50-60 bike grids there. The first turn was a decreasing-radius, left-hand sweeper that got really tight and became a 70- to 80-degree turn at the end. It's hard to imagine 60 bikes getting through that turn without a crash, but none happened in the races I participated in. From the big start, it was about a



A vintage Ducati that raced.

quarter mile to the turn, so there was fourth-gear speed in the first turn. Large-field starts, with the big speed differentials in some classes, were a challenge!

I made good starts in each race and had some good head-to-head racing, usually at the back of the pack. The New Zealanders knew the track and knew that the first lap was the key in a five-lap race, as within a half lap those big fields were widely strung out—those large speed differentials, again. In my five races, I was lapped once, by two 750cc super stock bikes.

Since I have a foot in the Ducati/Aprilia camp as well as one in the BMW camp, I need to objectively report that BMW S1000RRs were by far the fastest bikes there. There was a highly modified Aprilia and a 999 Ducati that was reportedly a World Superbike, but a BMW won both Formula 1 races by a mile. In one, a rider stopped to have a small repair done and didn't give up the lead in a five-lap race. In five-lap races, they could lap all but the



Mt. Cook, the highest mountain in New Zealand's southern alps. It's hardly ever seen as it's usually covered in clouds.

top four or five bikes.

I have carefully avoided revealing my results... they are on the BEARS website.

### Touring

Since I reported on the touring portion in the 2009 article, I'll highlight the things that were different or unusual this time:

We rode over 3000 km, all on the South Island, which was better as the roads are more technical and less crowded. The population of the South Island is smaller, about one third that of the North Island. We rode some new roads and some of the same roads as last tour, but in the opposite direction, which made them like new roads. It is as good a place as I've ever ridden, much like what we have in western North Carolina, eastern Tennessee, and northern Georgia. The speed limit is 100 kph, the roads are twisty (not one foot of freeway on the South Island), and surfaces are great. They still have the one-lane bridges, one of which you share with trains. They treat drivers and riders as if they have good sense: for example, they use yellow lines very sparingly; it's your responsibility to think before you

pass. The only negatives: traveling without my pillion, editor, and “vintage pit chick,” some time and distance there and back. When you go, stay for a while.

### **Brittens, Indians and books.**

In addition to the fun of racing and the adventures of touring, there were a couple of other highlights. On one of our two “rest” days, John and I rode out to the bar owned by Tim Hanna in Bannockburn, near Queenstown. Tim has written several biographical books on important figures in motorcycling from New Zealand including Burt Monro, Kim Newcombe, and John Britten. During hours in the air and in airports while returning, I had lots of time to read the Britten biography, which I found to be very interesting and worth recommending. Brittens were built in Christchurch, and most of the testing was done on the track we raced on.

We also passed through Invercargill, the home of Burt Monro and “the World's



The real World's Fastest Indian

Fastest Indian.” In a big hardware store on the main street in town was Bert's Indian, along with a sample of memorabilia from the bike.

*Do you have a Ducati story you want to tell? A technical article? Your motorcycling autobiography? A touring account? A humorous story? Whatever it is, contact Jim Calandro at 704.843.0429 or email him at capo@carolina.rr.com. US DESMO Leanings is published four times a year. Spring issue deadline is February 14. Summer issue deadline is May 19. Autumn issue deadline is August 19. The winter issue is the US DESMO calendar which features high quality photos of member's Ducatis. The sooner you submit your motorcycle for consideration, the more chance you'll get a month!*

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# Duck Weather for Ducks Along the Blue Ridge?

Story and photos by George Smith, Member #01261

## Anticipation

"So where did this 50 percent come from?" I asked Jim. "I've been watching the weather app for Mt. Airy on my phone for over a week, and it's been 10% or even zero.

the road and pretty much on schedule, when I realized that my boots and helmet were still staged to go, at home. By the time I'd turned around and loaded them, it was lunchtime, and I had to drive right by our local Chinese restaurant and its sushi bar. Life is full of may-as-wells, so, after eating, I took advantage of North Carolina's early voting and dropped by the library to do my civic duty. Any thoughts I'd had of hooking up with Jim and other early arrivals was in the tank, so I throttled back and drove north at an easy pace, arriving early afternoon. BTW, this rumor about saving gas if you throttle back a bit seems to have some basis in fact!



Friday-night pizza, beer, rally shirts and bench racing.

## Arrival

Arriving at the inn, I noted a few bike trailers, confirming I was nowhere near the first to arrive. A wounded silver Duck occupied the one front and center. I found out later that Mark Thorogood had gone down in West Virginia on his way to the

So why, the day before the Ducks Along the Blue Ridge ride, are they saying 50%?" It was the classic rhetorical question, but it was still disturbing. Does an unseen power have it in for our Capo and the club? If it rained this weekend, it would make three out of four US DESMO events I've attended that have been wet. With a sigh, I quit polishing the Guzzi and contemplated preparing it for Saturday's ride by throwing shovels of dirt on it.

I loaded the bike in my son's truck under cloudy skies on Friday morning and headed up to get some seat time in the beautiful Blue Ridge mountain roads that lead north and west out of Mt. Airy. Besides enjoying the roads, my plan was to get some photos during a time when I didn't feel pressured to stay with a group of other riders. That way, I wouldn't feel compelled to pull off for pictures on Saturday unless a really extraordinary shot presented itself. I was 20-plus miles up



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John Gerber welcomes Charlie Clancy even though his vintage Triumph isn't Italian!

rally from Ontario. Unfortunately for him, his bike was unrideable. Worse, he had spent the night in the hospital. But he was released by the next day and was fortunate enough to have a girlfriend following with the trailer on which to load his bike and continue the journey south. That he chose to do so speaks volumes about the camaraderie at the club functions, or possibly that the pizza served at the traditional Friday night dinner is just that good! Or did the accident cause him to lose his sense of direction?

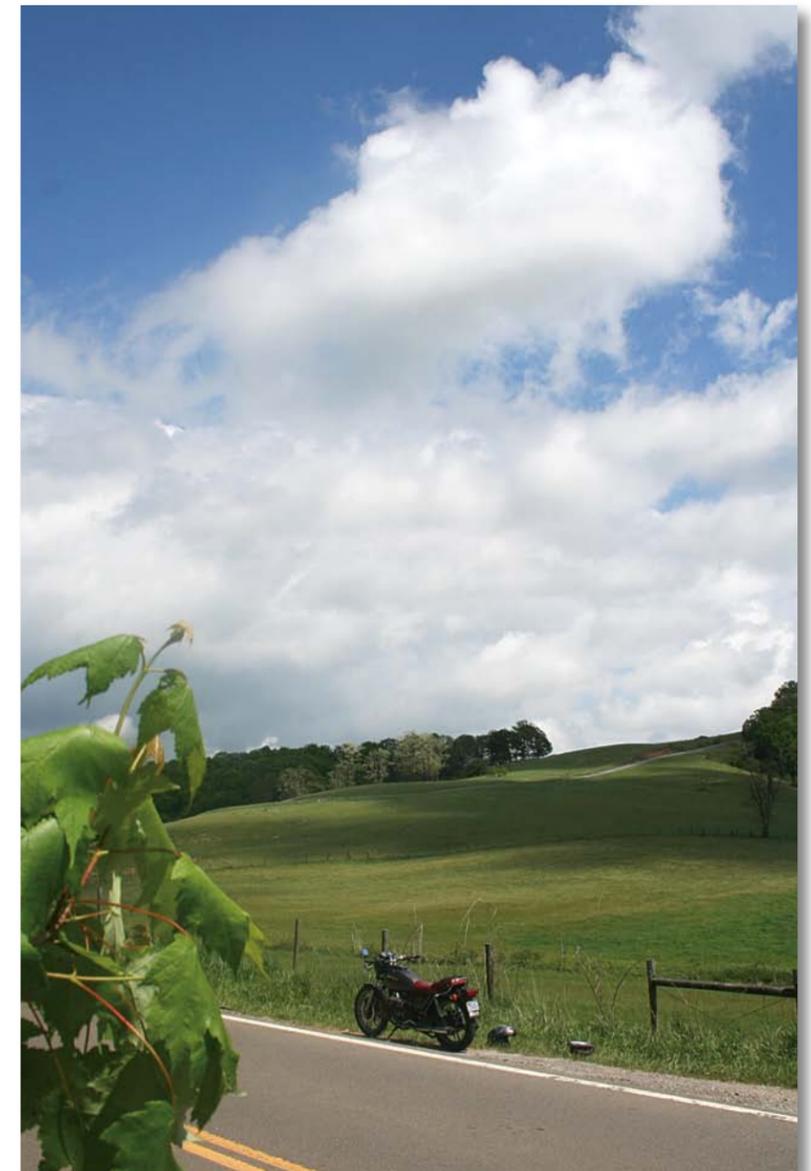
That afternoon, rain turned me back twice from trying to climb Piper Gap and get some pictures, so the bike was parked and the rest of the afternoon I spent greeting new arrivals and enjoying cold adult beverages. Late in the afternoon, the trickle of riders turned into a steady stream, and the line to check in was sometimes two or even three deep. Most of them made it a point to get to Mt. Airy in time to enjoy the Friday-night pizza and collect their rally shirts. This year's shirts were polo-style with the US DESMO patch on the breast. They are probably the first club shirts that would pass muster for Casual Fridays at work.

### The Big Day

Saturday morning was dry, but the skies were dark and gloomy. The Weather Channel showed lots of green with patches of yellow to our west and predicted an 85% chance of rain in our riding area. I opted for weather protection at the expense of crash protection and hung the leathers back in the closet. Instead, I spent the next few minutes dealing with the brass snaps and buckles on my old Barbour waxed-cotton suit. Substantial enough to almost qualify as a dwelling, it is waterproof enough that German operatives smuggled substantial quantities of

them out of England during the War to outfit the U-boat crewmen in the North Atlantic. Still, I knew in the back of my mind that while U-boat sailors faced plenty of dangers, road rash was not one of them.

Terry Shiels had ridden from Charlotte early that morning to join Dennis Melton and me, leaving before most of the other riders. We needed to stop and get some pictures, and I wanted to avoid getting left behind all the other groups. My baby Guzzi has to work really hard to stay with the bigger bikes, so catching a group I'd stopped to photograph would be pretty much out of the question. We were surprised that no one had passed our trio nor even caught us until we stopped at Volney, the start of the US58 segment. Highway 58 between Volney and Damascus, Virginia, is one of the Blue



Blue skies after lunch.



Terry lookin' all business.



George going the wrong way on 58.

Ridge's premier motorcycling roads, both technically and scenically. The sign in Volney cautions trucks to use an alternate route, as the next 40 miles may be too much for them. It's a smart trucker who pays attention, as the curves would be pretty challenging for even a full-sized car in some stretches. A clear, swift stream tumbles alongside the road for much of the first segment, then 58 climbs away from the water and skirts Whitetop Mountain and Mt. Rogers, Virginia's highest peak. The last dozen miles are some



Rolling hills and great roads.

of the most spectacular that you're ever likely to ride. Swift water, rolling over smooth rocks, rushes alongside the twisting pavement. The presence of the stream is likely the only way nature could improve the verdant, dense forest that envelops the road. As you close on Damascus, the Appalachian Trail descends from the right, and the Virginia Creeper Trail gets gradually closer on the left until it parallels the highway just a few meters over. The old railroad trestles haven't seen a

locomotive for years, but now allow a steady stream of hikers and cyclists to enjoy the old railbed.

Turning left off of 58 at Damascus, we rode the dozen or so miles into Mountain City, Tennessee, to a Mexican



Mountain-style erosion control!

lunch. Some groups were leaving as we arrived, and others trickled in after we sat down, so it was a good chance to stir the mix of groups for the afternoon part of the trip. The line of bikes outside the restaurant had that road-grime patina that comes from 100-plus miles of wet roads, but amazingly, though it had just finished raining everywhere we had been, nothing had actually fallen on us. From the look of the morning weather radar, we were sure we had about the same chance of staying dry as the U-boat captain without his Barbour.

Halfway back to Mt. Airy, a few blue patches appeared overhead, the roads dried, and we could finally relax about the predicted 85%. Dennis and I decided to throttle back and look for some photo ops, and I finally sent him on ahead when I turned around, after spotting some old cars doing erosion-control duty outside Sparta. I'm sure they were worthless when first buried there, but now some of them would surely be quite valuable, were they not buried in the creek bank.

I had ridden alone for quite a while when I decided to top off my tank. Not having a working odometer, my route sheet wasn't all that useful, and I'd depended on just following people for most of the ride. I'd almost inserted the card in the gas-pump reader when a group of Ducatis and Beemers flashed by. Pulling my helmet on quickly, I left without getting gas, and, risking license and limb, chased them for a few miles on US21 to get back on track. Fortunately, the tiny Guzzi seems to thrive on abuse, but it still felt good after

catching up to throttle back to an only mildly extra-legal speed. Imagine my shock when at a stoplight in Dobson, one of the group pulled up on my right and said he could tell from following me that I had cord showing in my rear tire! I sent the rest of the group on, and slowly and carefully rode the remaining 10 miles, making me among the first to depart and the very last to arrive.

### Aftermath

At dinner in the motel meeting room Saturday night, Jim caught us up on the latest club news and upcoming events. Dave Gooch, representing the Canadian DOCC, invited everyone to attend their summer events. I understand that with their abbreviated riding season, they know how to fit a maximum of fun into the shorter riding time. As dessert was being served, everyone pulled out the raffle tickets distributed the night before. This was actually a great chance to learn a bit about other members, as each person was razzed and teased when his number was called. One was attending his first event

with his dad, a long-time Ducati owner. Charlie Clancy, a cancer survivor, received a round of applause as he celebrated his fifth year of remission. The winner of the Ducati sign had garage walls in dire need of decoration.



Boys and expensive toys!

Not everybody won a prize, but quite a few lucky ticket holders went home with hat pins or even paper weights!

One of the most attractive aspects of a weekend like this is that everyone was made to feel welcome and a part of the fraternity: Desmosedici or ST. Triumph or BMW. MV or Guzzi. We partied. We told lies. We rode. And we didn't fall down. THAT, is a 100% chance of a good time!



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# Roebbling Road Track Day Photo Recap

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# DUCK? DOWN UNDER

By Clyde Romero, VP US DESMO, Member #00003

Yeah, yeah I know I wasn't at DABR this year. Marvin the Mad Scientist (you know, the guy who always asks you if you're an organ donor) was tired of seeing me at this rally, so I skipped this one and went to Sydney, Australia, instead. (But I put a rain turtle in his tank bag. Did it work?)

Anyway, I went to the Land Down Under for around 10 days. LOOOOOONG airplane ride, and most of you know what I do for a living, so when I say it was a long trip, it was (20 hours ATL to SYD). You lose a whole day getting there, so I left on a Sunday and got there on Tuesday morning. Enough on the marathon airplane ride.



Sydney is a wonderful place, BUT very expensive though—think of NYC on steroids! Everything is expensive and taxed to the hilt! Food was excellent and so was the weather, as I was there as the season was changing from spring to fall.

So after doing all the touristy stuff, I just had to find a Ducati shop down here, just had to do it. I hit the internet and located two shops that I could get to in a reasonable amount of time. One of the shops is a Harley-Davidson shop with Ducati as a sideline, but the other shop, GOWANLOCH, is a genuine Ducati shop from days of old. If you have ever been to Cycle Specialties in Athens, Georgia, back in the day, this is that shop (see photo).

What a great bunch of guys. If you own a bevel-drive as Craig Hunley does, this is the place. Lots of old and new stuff here. What a shop. Loads of T shirts and stuff.

The owner was a great guy (see photo) and took time to show me around the shop. Motorcyclists in Australia tend to keep their bikes a long time since there is an



import duty of 40% on bikes and cars in this country.

All in all, it was a great trip Down Under. I am planning on another one next year and possibly going to New Zealand to ride the great roads there as well, so stay tuned for an article on that trip.

As a side note, I plan on another trip to Alaska (Fairbanks, Anchorage, Dead Horse?) in August of 2013.



So if there are any of you out there who feel adventurous and want the bragging rights of riding your bike to Alaska, let's talk. Until then, see you on the road.

*Buckles by Tom Rolland*



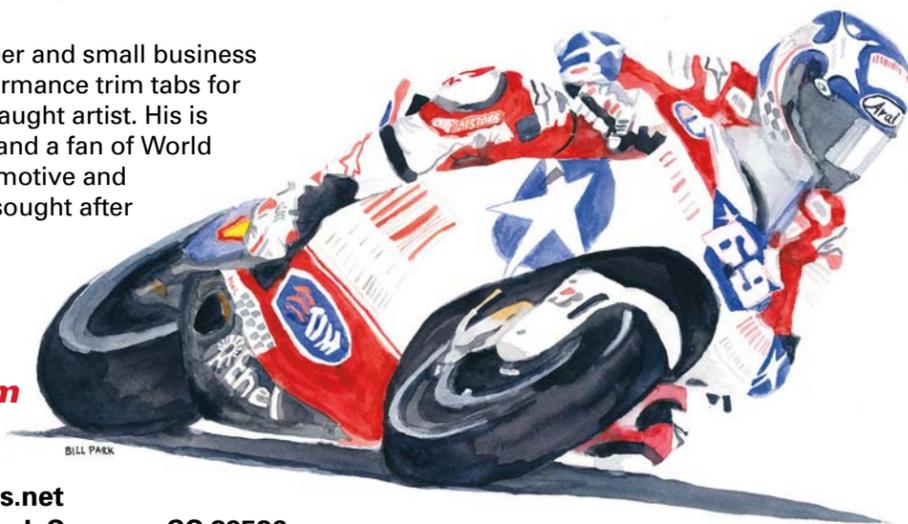
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*James 'il capo' Calandro*

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# BENCH RACING

Tall tales of fact and "friction"

## Bonding by Ducati

by Jim 'il capo' Calandro, Member #00001

When I was growing up, my father was a strict disciplinarian, and we never were that close. He had played semi-professional baseball and had great hopes for me to follow his love of the sport, but unfortunately my best play was catching a pop fly with my nose. :( I enjoyed other sports and did much better at them, but I never played much baseball. My father did attend all the sporting events in which I participated and was my biggest fan; but we never had something to enjoy in common. Additionally, my father would come home from school where he was a guidance counselor and immediately turn on the Yankee games. To this day, I can never sit through baseball on television.

practice, but eventually he got his own bike (1995 SS/SP) and moved back to the Charlotte area. We got to share the Ducati Experience more frequently. He and I attended several club rallies together and had lots of fun. However, I spent much of my time running the rallies, so that kept our time together at a minimum. Tony attended one of the club track days and rode my track-day bike. Unfortunately, he turned faster lap times on his first day out than I do. Figuring in that my suspension was set up for my 40 pounds of extra weight, this is quite impressive. I may not invite him back. :-)

Tony got married and asked me to be his best

*Throwing him a bachelor party just seemed inappropriate, so I proposed a week-long motorcycle tour to the Canadian border and back.*

Flash forward a great number of years, and I am now the dad. My son Tony, named after his grandfather, and I are very much alike, so it was difficult for us to live together. Someone once said something about two "alpha males" making it hard to share a small space. History was beginning to repeat itself. As my son became a man, I worried that he and I would head down a path that was far too familiar to me. But as luck would have it, he liked motorcycles, specifically Ducati motorcycles. I bought him a small dirt bike to ride on our property, and later, when he got his driver's license, I signed him up for the MSF course.

After a few years driving a car, he got his motorcycle license, and we began to ride together. College and life made it hard to keep up this

man. Throwing him a bachelor party just seemed inappropriate, so I proposed a week-long motorcycle tour to the Canadian border and back. For the first time, we shared the ride, meals, and a room without having to share it with sixty other friends. We talked more in one week than I think we had talked in years. After twenty-seven years, we had reached a new plateau in our relationship, and it was a good one. Mutual respect and exchange of ideas on an equal playing field was something new for us both. It really made me very happy.

Tony is about to become a father himself, and I hope he and his new son come to find a common ground or interest that will unite them forever. I just wish my father and I could have ridden together down that road.



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