

Idaho Rocks

Who cares about famous potatoes?



THERE ARE MANY REASONS TO VISIT IDAHO, but on a recent trip, one of the best may have been watching Joe Knezevic fly-fish for the first time in his life. If we had been in a less spectacular setting, Joe's flailing antics would have absolutely stolen the show. But perhaps I'm jumping too far ahead.

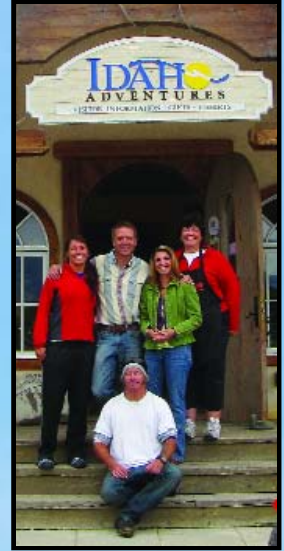
Not surprisingly, Joe and I were a bit late flying into Boise for our seven-day Idaho motorcycle extravaganza. Thankfully, one of our hosts, Diane Norton, was entirely good-natured. She hustled us over to High Desert Harley-Davidson, where Joe had arranged for a couple of bikes — a Road King for him and a bright red Street Glide for me. If you're ever in the Boise area and need some first-rate rentals, Todd Godfrey of High Desert H-D is definitely the man and keeps the whole game hopping in a big way.

Loaded up and hours behind schedule, Joe and I blasted southeast on Interstate 84 bound for Twin Falls. Since we're jokingly known as the Wrecking Crew, it didn't take long before a nonessential part was dangling off my bike. Joe deemed it a luxury item, so I just yanked it and tossed it in my bag. An easy fix. Soon after, we exited 84 at Bliss and hit the aptly named Thousand Springs Scenic Byway, which runs 35 gorgeous miles into Twin Falls, where we spent the night at the Red Lion Canyon Springs Hotel, a fine establishment.

Before we laid our heads to rest, we



(Top) Trout beware: Sam and fishing guide Verlon Herndon ready to wet their lines.
(Right) Might as well jump: The IB Perrine bridge.
(Far right) Go hard or go home: The Idaho Adventure crew and one famous yahoo.



Beauty and the bikes: High Desert Harley's Todd Godfrey and Martha Sexton wishing Sam wasn't in the picture.



shot over to the Snake River Canyon to pay homage to Evel Knievel and the famed jump site where he attempted to launch over the canyon on his rocket-powered X-2 Sky Cycle. We all know the outcome of that debacle. Anyway, Joe floated the idea of my giving the canyon a whirl on the Street Glide. Said he'd buy me a beer on the other side. He's such a sweet guy.

If Evel's now decrepit launch site doesn't grab you, park your bikes near the IB Perrine Bridge and take in the BASE jumping glory. It's the only bridge in the US you can legally BASE jump off without a permit whenever your heart desires. Anyway, checking the horrified looks of people certain they're witnessing a suicide plunge is priceless.

We had a top-notch dinner that night at the Rock Creek Cafe, followed by a prolonged and potentially ill-advised stop at some local dive that left us feeling just marvelous the next morning. Up early (or maybe not), we banged north on Interstate 93, and got pounded by bugs the size of dirigibles before cutting right onto State Route 26/93. There, we grabbed some sandwiches before the Craters of the Moon National Monument. You can travel a long way here without finding anything to eat, so best jump when the moment arises.

Whether or not you're a geology geek (Joe is), Craters is otherworldly in every way. There are ancient seas of ropy lava flows, great mountains of lava, incredible caves, and, of course, craters galore. Though *American Iron Magazine* has yet to do a tour on the moon (can't find a H-D dealership up there) I would venture

to say that this national monument might rival it. Several daily tours are available.

Back on the bikes we cranked west on State Route 20 and hung a right on State Route 75 toward Hailey and the AmericInn, our stop for the night. At this point, it should be noted that we were following (with occasional detours) the Salmon River/Sawtooth Scenic Byways route, one of the so-called "Top 10 Scenic Drives in the Northern Rockies." Rather than blather on about how stunning every stretch was, I'll cut to the quick: every mile we rode blew us away. Period. And it will do the same for you. If not, you're welcome to shoot me at dawn.

The next day brought us into Ketchum/Sun Valley, where Joe is so well-known I'm convinced he's an honorary mayor. Other than seeing friends and taking in some killer Southeast Asian food at Andreas Heaphey's can't-miss Rickshaw restaurant, we were largely there to catch an annual Old West festival called Wagon Days. It's mainly a lot of wagons and livestock

being driven through the center of town, circa 1860. Joe arranged for us to ride in one of those remarkably uncomfortable wagons during a sort of slow-moving, dusty, high-plains dress rehearsal. When the ride was over, I promptly got myself arrested, but that's another story.

After our Sun Valley soiree, we packed up and hit 75 north, cruising over a few outrageous summits before dropping down to Stanley. There we met Verlon Herndon (say that name three times fast) of Silver Creek Outfitters. Droll and definitely on top of his game, Verlon was our



Thai me up: Don't expect Andreas Heaphey and the Rickshaw team to deliver their sensational food in this yellow tuk-tuk.

Cutting a sharp look: A little Sawtooth Mountain for you.





The hard way round: These wagons are pretty but they sure ain't no cowboy Cadillacs.

guide for a day of stalking cutthroat trout on the bucolic Salmon River. But first, Joe's fly-fishing lesson. "Allow your inner Einstein to bubble through the surface," was one of Verlon's cryptic tips. Though he eventually got the hang of it, Joe's first half hour was a like a frantic lesson in bondage wrapping — a sight to behold. On the river, he did catch a fish, albeit one that was hooked and set by Verlon. Not exactly the stuff of *The American Sportsmen*. Truth told, Verlon rocked, was kind, and seemed to have a keen sense of the river's honey holes.

Fished out, we retired to the Idaho Rocky Mountain Ranch, an authentic and extremely accommodating spread on the National Register of Historic Places. It features clear, shocking views of the unbelievably dramatic Sawtooth Mountains. The food was great, the cabins amazing, the staff cool, and the activities never ending. Or you can just relax in one of the most beautiful spots you may ever see. Pass this place up, and you're a fool. Just don't do burnouts after the sun goes down. Quiet time starts at 10:30 pm.

Back on 75, we zinged up to Sunbeam and met park rangers Melissa Fitzgerald and Dan Smith for a tour through a huge,



The deadliest catch: Joe and Sam show those cutthroat trout no mercy.





(Top) Blazing saddles: Riding hard at the Idaho Rocky Mountain Ranch.
 (Right) Whitewater wild woman Martine Troy.

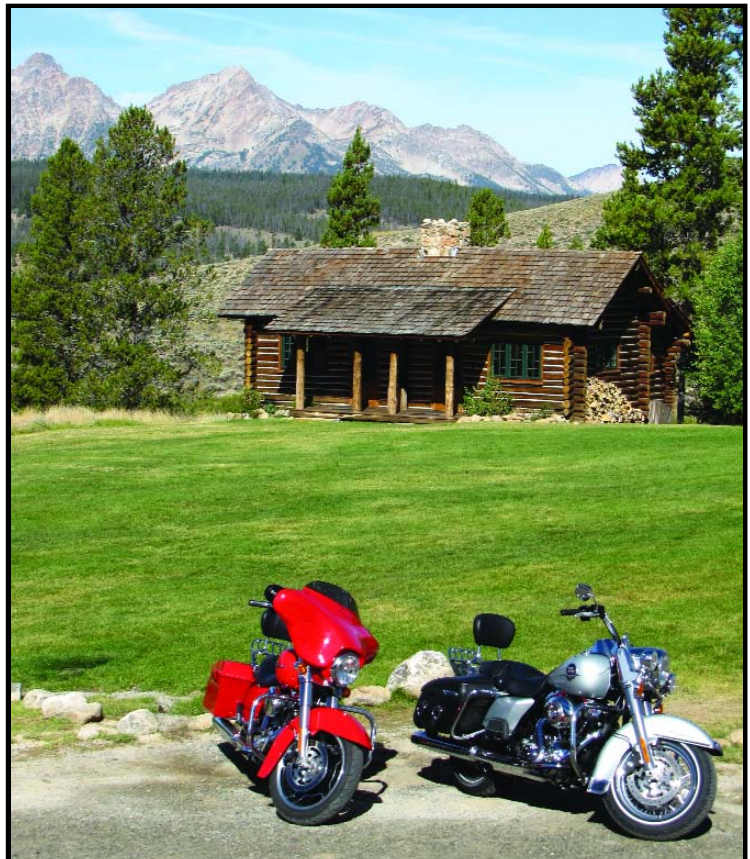
abandoned gold dredge and the ghost towns of Bonanza, Custer, and Bayhorse. Feeling appropriately spooked, we retreated back to 75 north, seeking Challis and the Creek Side Inn Bed & Breakfast. Our hosts that night were Jim and Becky Harwood, two of the most generous souls. We didn't know them, but they welcomed us with a hug, a hand with our bags, and parking for the bikes. Then they made us a serious dinner in celebration of Jim's birthday and of us! We got the same treatment the following morn. These two are bike-friendly and the real deal. And I'm not generally one for bed and breakfasts, but ...

Motoring up 75, we braced ourselves for our final activity — synchronized swimming. Come on. Not on a trip like this. We hit the town of Salmon and Idaho Adventures for a rainy-day rafting trip on (surprise!) the Salmon River. Watching Joe reluctantly pour himself into a wetsuit while drilling Marlboros didn't exactly remind me of Milan Fashion Week, but it certainly held its own riotous charms. Our guide for that exhilarating river run was Martine Troy, an awesome young woman and a terrific guide. Ask for her if you go.

Though Joe sidestepped our last obligation, retreating to the warmth of the Stagecoach Inn, I joined Judy Barkley, director of the Sacajawea Interpretive, Cultural, and Educational Center, for a brief, compelling tour of the center and its attractive grounds. If it's your thing, by all means ...

As it so often does, Armageddon struck on our final day, the longest one of the trip. We awoke to sleet, snow, 30 degree F temps, pounding rain, fog, and 500 miles of twisty canyon roads punctuated by several mountain passes. And we had a plane to catch. As Thomas Paine once said, "These are the times that try men's souls." There was nothing but joy that day.

By the way, Joe is now a crack fly fisherman, and he recently made the cover of *Field & Stream*, Orvis 12-weight in full action, so you missed your chance to see him flail in Idaho. But don't let that stop you from going. Idaho is huge, rugged, singular, and almost empty — a motorcyclist's dream. Just try not to get arrested in Sun Valley. Or anywhere else for that matter. **AIM**



O cabin! My cabin! Not exactly roughing it at the Idaho Rocky Mountain Ranch.

SOURCES

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