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HULL OF A TOUR: Pilgrims in the land of 'Wild Hogs'

Posted on May 10th, 2013 Written by [Wanda Kenton Smith](#)



The only consecutive two-nighter during our 10-day tour is in Santa Fe, N.M., which was a great choice by our ride route planner and Regal regional sales manager Jim Krueger.

"The Land of Enchantment" is all that and more. Our team rolled in late Tuesday afternoon, took quick showers, then headed to the historic Old Santa Fe district for a delicious Mexican dinner at The Shed, followed by a leisurely moonlit stroll around the town.



What an amazing place! There are 240 art galleries, 220 restaurants and a dozen museums in Santa Fe — particularly impressive when you consider that the combined city and county of Santa Fe has a population of only 145,000. Truly this was a cultural mecca, with so many fabulous things to see and explore.

Wednesday was our "day off." Riders could sleep in, shop, wash clothes or do whatever tickled their fancy. No surprise — considering the composition of our group — all were booted up and ready to ride at 9 a.m. We welcomed two new additions to our crew, Kristine Otte, of Northern Wholesale Supply in Lino Lakes, Minn., and her boyfriend, Dick. They had trailered all the way from Minnesota, leaving a foot of snow in their wake, to be part of this adventure.

Everyone agreed that we had a single destination at the top of our hit list, so we loaded up and rode to Madrid (*pronounced Mad-drid*), N.M. If you saw the cult motorcycle classic "Wild Hogs" you know Madrid, the location of Maggie's Diner and the scripted chili festival that brought all of the bikers and the Del Fuego gang for a showdown.

One of the restaurant owners told me that bikers from all over the world have descended on Madrid since the movie's release in 2007. As we thundered into town, we were greeted warmly by the locals, who are very biker-friendly. We pulled up to the famous diner, which has since been converted to a "Wild Hogs" gift shop, and went shopping.

We walked the town, then jumped on our bikes and rode all around the area, which boasted truly

breathhtaking vistas at nearly every turn. A few in our group took a designated scenic route and climbed above 10,000 feet, with plenty of twists and turns in the road. Others cruised into Albuquerque for the afternoon.

Several met back in Madrid for lunch at the famous Mineshaft Café, a treasured relic and restaurant that beckons tourists by the busload and bikers alike for good grub, served with New Mexican flair. We toured the neighboring Madrid Museum, a hodgepodge of memorabilia, including movie props from several feature films shot in the area, historical documents, machinery, the first dental chair ever used in New Mexico, the first toilet of Madrid, old trucks and cars, even a railroad car.



Originally a coal mining town, Madrid became a ghost town for many years when the coal mining industry closed its doors and left everything behind. Today, however, Madrid is a thriving artistic community peppered with fine art galleries, coffee shops, boutiques, antiques stores, jewelry shops and more. I wish I had more room to stash souvenirs and trinkets; such is the bane of traveling with saddlebags.

We cruised back into Santa Fe to take a midafternoon trolley tour and were treated to a great overview of the city and its history by a local guide. Afterward we walked the town and enjoyed seeing a rich tapestry of Native American art and jewelry proudly showcased by original craftsmen. We also toured the local basilica, with its impressive stained glass art, beautiful grounds and inspiring sculptures and figurines. Wish we would have had more time to visit the galleries and museums. Next time!

Our next stop is Farmington, by way of Taos and Chamas. I've been told this will be some of the most spectacular scenery yet. Can't wait!

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Thanks to the "Boaterz n Bikerz Across America: A Hull of a Tour" sponsors joining presenting sponsor Kenton Smith Marketing, including Legendary Marine, Marinas International, South Coast Yachts, My-Villages, Southeast Marine Sales & Service and media sponsor Soundings Trade Today.

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