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By: Liz Keener  May 23, 2013



What happens when you ignite a group of boating industry folks who are passionate motorcyclists, with a yearning for adventure? In my case, the result shifted from the top dream of my bucket list to Boaterz N' Bikerz Across America: A Hull of a Tour, a nearly 3,000-mile epic trek from Florida to California held May 4–13.

I've been jonesin' to go cross-country on my bike since earning my motorcycle endorsement seven years ago. I put 10,000 miles a year on my Sporty before trading up to my beloved Screaming Eagle CVO Fat Boy three years ago. Late last summer, I decided if I was going to do this trip, the time was now. And why not invite some friends to join me? I chatted it up with several boating industry rider pals, and the concept gained traction. In a matter of two months, I had created an event logo and tagline, and hit the streets in early fall to promote and publicize the event.

The unique aspect of my ride was that I wanted to mix my two lifestyle passions – boating and biking. I pitched some colleagues and asked them to sponsor a boating activity along our route and secured three great partners in Legendary Marine, in Destin, Fla., the No. 1 ranked boat dealer in North America by *Boating Industry* magazine; Marinas International in Dallas; and South Coast Yachts in San Diego. I then conferred with my former agency client and good friend Jim Krueger of Regal Boats and asked him to use his considerable skills to plan the ride route. We brainstormed about desired daily distances, sites we'd like to visit and the types of activities and experiences we'd hope to enjoy, working around the boating stops I'd arranged. He created an amazing run, starting in Destin and winding through Natchez, Miss.; to

Dallas and Lubbock, Texas; Santa Fe and Farmington, N.M.; to Williams, Ariz.; Las Vegas; and Palm Desert to San Diego, Calif.

We ended up with a group of 21 participating in our inaugural ride, some going the full distance and others picking up a few legs. Of interest, one of our riders was Cam Arnold of the Motorcycle Industry Council, a former 20-year marine industry marketing veteran. She and her husband Phil Arnold, who runs engineering for Nordhavn out of Dana Point, Calif., were an integral part of our team, as Phil served as our road captain for the Vegas to San Diego stretch, leading us through the Mojave Desert and its blistering 107-degree heat, through the lush and winding twists of the San Jacinto mountains and into our final splash down in San Diego. Our crew really appreciated the dinner hosted by Cam and the Motorcycle Industry Council the night we toasted our spectacular ride along the Grand Canyon.

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I'd love to share all sorts of stories about what we encountered on our ride, ranging from our visit to antebellum homes in Natchez, to white-knuckled navigation through the nightmarish road construction of downtown Dallas, to our pilgrimage to Madrid, N.M., to riding 10,000 feet in Taos and experiencing everything from snow and hail, to a rain-drenched guzzler with lightning, to our grand finale sailing and boating aboard flashy Beneteau power and sailboats in San Diego Bay. Suffice it to say, the ride was awesome!

The trip was drama free with two minor exceptions. One rider took his new bike in for an adjustment at the Santa Fe Harley dealership after experiencing some unusual high-speed bounce. It was a quick fix, thanks to a great service crew that stayed open late to get the job done. And I had a hornet or wasp shoot down my shirt and sting me while I was flying down the interstate at 75 mph, but I lived to tell about it.

My little adventure helped boost the economy and sales in your industry. Of interest, our group collectively has 288 years of motorcycling experience among us, and has owned a total of 85 motorcycles. We rode BMWs, Harleys and a Gold Wing for this tour, with three new motorcycles purchased for this trip alone, not to mention a whole host of additional gear and equipment ranging from riding clothes, leathers and boots, to new seats, gel pads, rear lights, helmets and GPS units, along with new tires. In addition to professionally detailing their bikes, others invested in pre-ride maintenance and service work. Two folks flew out to Phoenix and rented bikes from local shops to join the latter leg. We stopped at five motorcycle dealerships along the way for T-shirts, trinkets and riding advice, hooked up with other riders en transit and took turns taking pictures and swapping stories.

All in all, Boaterz n Bikerz Across America lived up to its name: it truly was one Hull of a Tour! And if I had to guess, I wouldn't be surprised at all to see a Deuce in our near future.

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