

“IF YOU DON'T DESIGN YOUR OWN LIFE PLAN, CHANCES ARE YOU'LL FALL INTO SOMEONE ELSE'S PLAN. AND GUESS WHAT THEY HAVE PLANNED FOR YOU? NOT MUCH.”

JIM ROHN

Lisa asked a new friend recently to sum up our journey, he paused, raised his eyebrows and blurted “mental”.

‘Mental!’ You decide?

Lisa and I have racked up over 500,000 kilometres and explored 78 countries on 6 continents. We've traversed 27 deserts, slurped mint tea with Tuareg nomads, stalked lions with Maasia warriors and talked into the night with Mongolian eagle hunters. We've sipped the air at 17,234 feet, frozen on the ancient Silk-Route in Tajikistan and been boiled alive at 72c in, of all places, Las Vegas! Four bouts of Malaria, 4 cases of dengue fever, 27 punctures in India and... oh yeah a broken neck in the Amazon Jungle have also marked interesting years. Bloody hell, I sound like an advert for old spice and wouldn't change a thing.

We'd only planned on going for 18 months, but those months turned to years, and now - over a decade later - we've lived more than I thought we would in a lifetime and shared our journey with close to 2 million people via our website www.2ridetheworld.com

Those 18 months were supposed to make up for the 18 months I spent lying on my back, bed ridden. My bike had met a car and my right foot

got separated from the rest of me. I wanted it back!

Five surgeries, Lisa's (my wife's) ceaseless support, daily physio and well-channelled anger got me walking again. Eighteen months can change everything! Goodbye job, security, savings and career path, hello unplanned future. Scary right? Absolutely! It was also the best thing that could have happened to us.

Without the clutter of immediate ambition Lisa and I gave ourselves the chance to pause and reflect on what we really wanted out of life. We were relatively successful and had the town house, the BMW, flashy suit and cool toys to prove it, yet we couldn't shake this feeling that we needed more, needed something real, something different, maybe just something of our own choosing.

Looking back from where we are now, I can see that we'd rubbed ourselves so raw with our routine life, that the only thing holding us to it was static cling!

Doing what we'd been 'expected' to do had made us comfortable. But I swear to God, having a great standard of living is nothing like having a great quality of life!

“...HOLD YOUR OWN, KNOW YOUR NAME AND GO YOUR OWN WAY”!

JASON MRAZ



2 RIDE THE WORLD

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Our motorcycle journey started 11-years ago; Lisa and I love to ride, and we love a challenge, so after 2-years of planning we resigned from our corporate lives, sold much of what we owned, closed the front door of our home in Somerset, loaded our bikes and slid quietly out

of the country to start our planned 18-month motorbike journey around the world. A year later we heard Ewan and Charlie were making the concept fashionable!

1. STICKING IT OUT TOGETHER.

There are times when I want to stick a skewer into his head... and I know for sure there are times when Simon's wanted to strangle me! We've been together 23-years, married for 19 with 11 of those on this trip living out of a tent.

We have a very close and explosive relationship and any frustrations we feel are dealt with in the moment and then forgotten. Being together 24/7 just works for us. We've had tough times during this journey when we've relied and trusted upon each other with our very lives. We've lived with each other during the highest of highs and our lowest of lows. Taking each other for granted has never been an option.

2. LADY AND THE TRAMP

The first year was an extended holiday. We'd saved for years, curtailed all our social lives and sold almost everything we owned and set off. However, after the initial 18-months we were forced to deal with our finances more seriously. Now, we wild camp and shop in local markets and cook our own food whenever possible.

When we're forced into motel's we'll choose the budget room and rather than eat out we often picnic in the room. Our budget went out of the window years ago and now we simply try to spend as little as we can. Our most expensive costs are tyres, bike maintenance and shipping, although we've both become photographers, writers, and public speakers, which helps, a little.

3. WHAT ARE WE? GYPSY'S, NOMADS? TAKE YOUR PICK!

Yep we're now homeless. For the first 3-years on the road we rented out our house, but when we made the decision to continue, we had to sell in order to release the capitol. It's scary how fast that revenue disappeared.

4. HOME IS WHERE THE HEART IS.

Home's an interesting concept. Neither of us misses the English weather, but we've noticed that we're both a lot more patriotic now than we ever were when we were living in the UK. We now appreciate being born, educated and raised in the UK in a way that we hadn't before.

The toughest part of our journey is missing family and close friends and missing those once-in-a-lifetime moments like the birth of a nephew or niece, a wedding, the special occasions and sadly even the death of those closest to us. What will bring us home is family and our need to share our lives, past, present and future with them.

5. BACK TO THE FUTURE.

As far as future planning is concerned, these days we rely heavily on the Internet. In today's connected world there's some great sites and forums that allows us to connect directly with people in the countries we are about to visit. In the beginning our research was mainly via books. I (Lisa) plan our routes, researching everything from studying hard copy maps (also these days Google maps), researching political situations, climate and the religious temperature of certain areas we plan to visit. For me the research is all part of the journey and part of the reward.

THE BIKES. The bikes. We even named them, Lisa's is called Tarzan and I'm riding... Tinkerbell, she's not fat just big boned!

We had the same bikes since the start of the trip, although I'm not sure now if that's strictly true. Since we've crashed, repaired, upgraded, swapped and fabricated so many parts over years who knows? In essence they're the same bikes!

When we were planning the journey we'd researched bikes and it was obvious that the BMW's had a legendary reputation for reliability. I already had my 1999 R1100GS and I'd take her, whilst we swapped Lisa F650 Strada for her current 2001 F650GS, which we could more easily modify to meet our needs. Remember back then bike choice for a 5ft 2" women wanting to go off-road was way more limited than it is today.

All aboard.

We try to carry as little as possible, although depending on terrain and weather what we carry varies. We use a tank bag to hold our camera gear; Touratech Zega pro panniers hold the kitchen, office, spare parts and pharmacy. Our camping gear gets split between the two bikes and we have a watertight soft roll bag each on the back.

What's next? Hang on I'll ask the wife!

We're still a couple of years from finishing this journey as we're planning on riding to the northerly tip of Alaska next year and then possibly heading back down through central and south America before returning to ride Africa, central and the north east regions. Then Persia, Europe and back to the UK.

The question we get asked the most is WHY?

The glib answer would be "if you have to ask the question you're not going to understand the answer". But it's not that simple.

I'm not sure there is a simple 'one-size fits all' answer. The answer will always change based on whatever day of the week it's being asked.

It boils down to a few things. We realized that the world owes each of us nothing. The nice things we work hard for, earn, cherish and even come to identify ourselves by, can be taken away. We realised that both of us like the finer things in life but at the end of it, each of us are the total sum of our experiences and not just thing things we collected.

Pre-trip who were we? We were meals out, a fancy watch, a German design sedan and living beyond our means. Who are we now? We're just two ordinary people that chose to ride around the world before it became the 'norm', and then chose to carry on living it.

When I'm on my bike, covered in dust and riding in the middle of nowhere and seen by no-one, I know exactly who I am. Lisa, luckily for me, feels the same!

Ride safe, ride far. See you down the road.

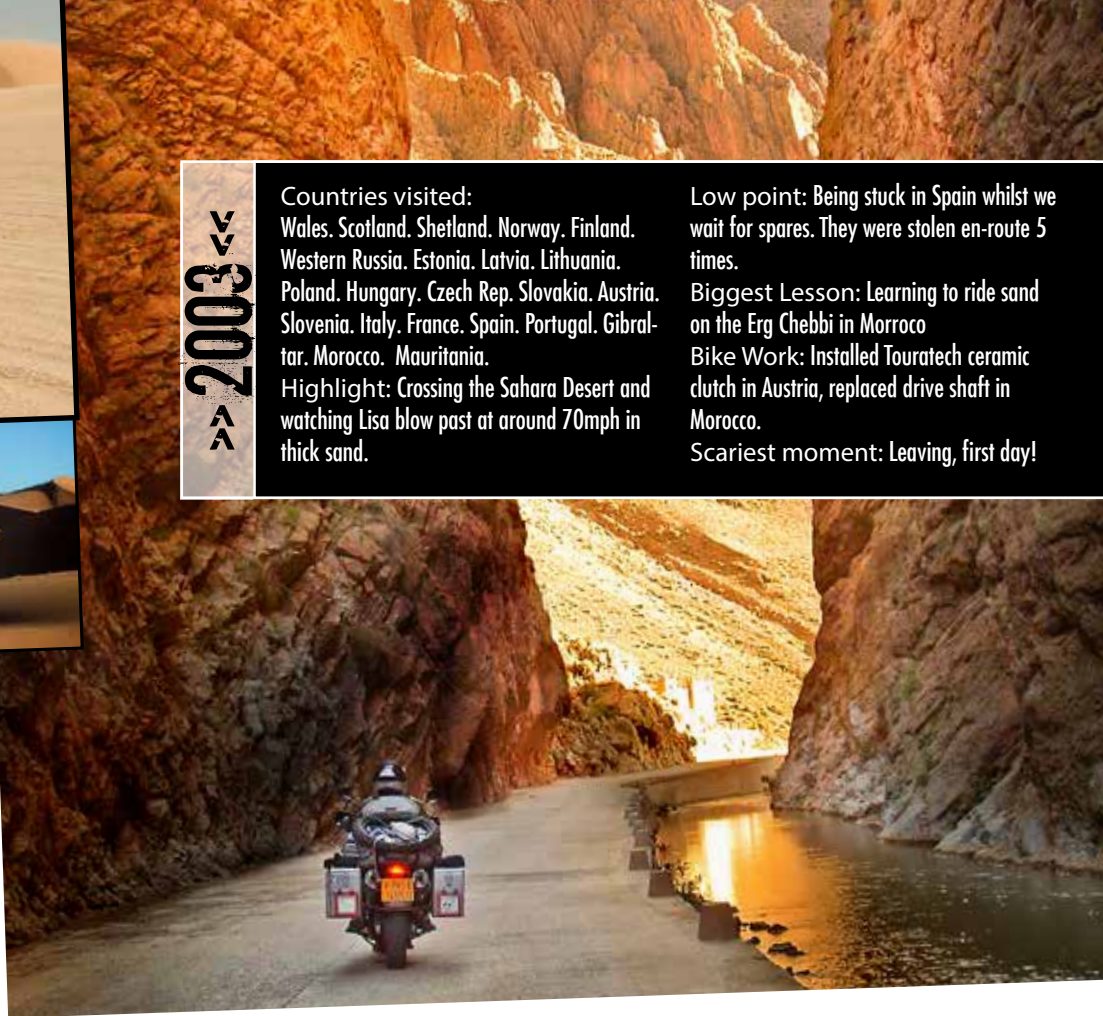




2003

Countries visited:
Wales. Scotland. Shetland. Norway. Finland.
Western Russia. Estonia. Latvia. Lithuania.
Poland. Hungary. Czech Rep. Slovakia. Austria.
Slovenia. Italy. France. Spain. Portugal. Gibralt-
ar. Morocco. Mauritania.
Highlight: Crossing the Sahara Desert and
watching Lisa blow past at around 70mph in
thick sand.

Low point: Being stuck in Spain whilst we
wait for spares. They were stolen en-route 5
times.
Biggest Lesson: Learning to ride sand
on the Erg Chebbi in Morocco
Bike Work: Installed Touratech ceramic
clutch in Austria, replaced drive shaft in
Morocco.
Scariest moment: Leaving, first day!



2003 | LET THE GOOD TIMES ROLL.

The idea was grandiose but it was never complicated. We'd carry only what we needed to live and explore. We'd sold all we owned in the UK and swapped our cozy house for a tent, and dive-bombed into the diverse pool of life. We're on our way to riding all seven continents, from the most northerly point to the most southerly on each. In the process, 122 different countries would become 'home' for a short while at least. 2003 wasn't so much a learning curve as it was a vertical ascent. Those first 12 months turned two adventure riding newbies into hardened adventure seeking junkies.

In the early years we were as wary of the world as captivated by it and things were well, different. GPS units were black and white, Google maps didn't exist, Gmail was in beta testing, Facebook hadn't been launched and there was no twitter or Instagram. Lisa and I were the proud new owners of a new 'high-end' digital camera with a gargantuan 3.2 mega pixels. Stop laughing!

We'd reached Nordkapp (the most northerly point in Europe you can ride to) 1,300 miles from the North Pole in June and patted ourselves on the back. By mid July were sipping Vodka with Carl, our new mafia connected friend outside the Kremlin. A little the worse for wear, I'd carelessly asked him "what do you do Carl?" After a dramatically held pause he'd murmured with a thick Moscovite accent "I manage tings!" The following day Chechen rebels blew up a café 500 metres from our hotel room. Three weeks later a female suicide bomber walked into our hotel and blew it up killing 27 guests. We'd made a narrow escape.

2003 seemed to be all about riding from the frying pan into the fire, and all by choice. It's funny how far a combination of ignorance and optimism can get you.

Exhausted and dehydrated we were sat on our bikes deep in the disputed territories of the Wes-

tern Sahara, and in the middle of a minefield. We were woefully out of our depth and in the middle of a landscape that demanded skills we'd yet to acquire. It's pitch black and almost midnight, when I yell to Lisa "What the fuck are we doing?" Our reality had belted me in the chest like a sledgehammer. This was real, and nothing like the 'adventure I'd imagined for so many years, that saw me coolly handle whatever insurmountable problem came my way.

I was gambling with our lives; we'd been negotiating the minefield with a GPS breadcrumb trail given to me online from someone I'd never

even met, on a promise that he'd made the journey previously.

Four days later and we'd crossed the Sahara and survived the toughest riding either of us had ever taken on. In 2003 there was no road, just endless sand and towering dunes, before the start of the infamous beach crossing; a 3-hour race against the incoming tide to reach the Mauritanian capital of Nouakchott. Hey it's true, desperation really is the mother of all tutors.

2004 | UP THE CREEK WITHOUT A PADDLE.

2004 was a year of extremes. Before then I had no idea you could squeeze two bikes into a hollowed out tree trunk to cross a river.

We'd spent 3 days riding east through Senegal, negotiating boulder strewn cattle tracks to the border with Mali. Africa's west coast ensured we acquired new skills and some perseverance. We'd roasted in some of the highest temps to have ever hit Mali and our walking pace riding speed had meant that the heat rising off our bikes was cooking us alive. Water had quickly become an issue.

Walking the banks of the Falémé River, it was obvious there was nowhere shallow enough for us to ford it. "Well there's no sodding way I'm riding back the way we came" Lisa had stated adamantly.

At the bottom of the steep riverbank two ancient pirogues (dug out canoes) rested at the waters edge. "There's got be another way across...right?" I'd bleated pitifully to Lisa in the vain hope that she'd come up with a different master plan.

"I have a boat, it's OK for 1 ton!" Moussa, the pirogue owner had triumphantly stated in heavily

accented African French. "That's not a boat"! I'd murmured flatly. "It's a hollowed out tree trunk".

It was decision time, that moment of truth when you either grow a set or crawl back to the safety of a more predictable life. With the help of 4 local men from a nearby village, we loaded the bikes into the protesting pirogue and held our breath as Moussa paddled to the other shore, one precarious stroke at a time, with each stroke shifting and adjusting his body weight like a tight rope walker, compensating for the weight of the bikes.

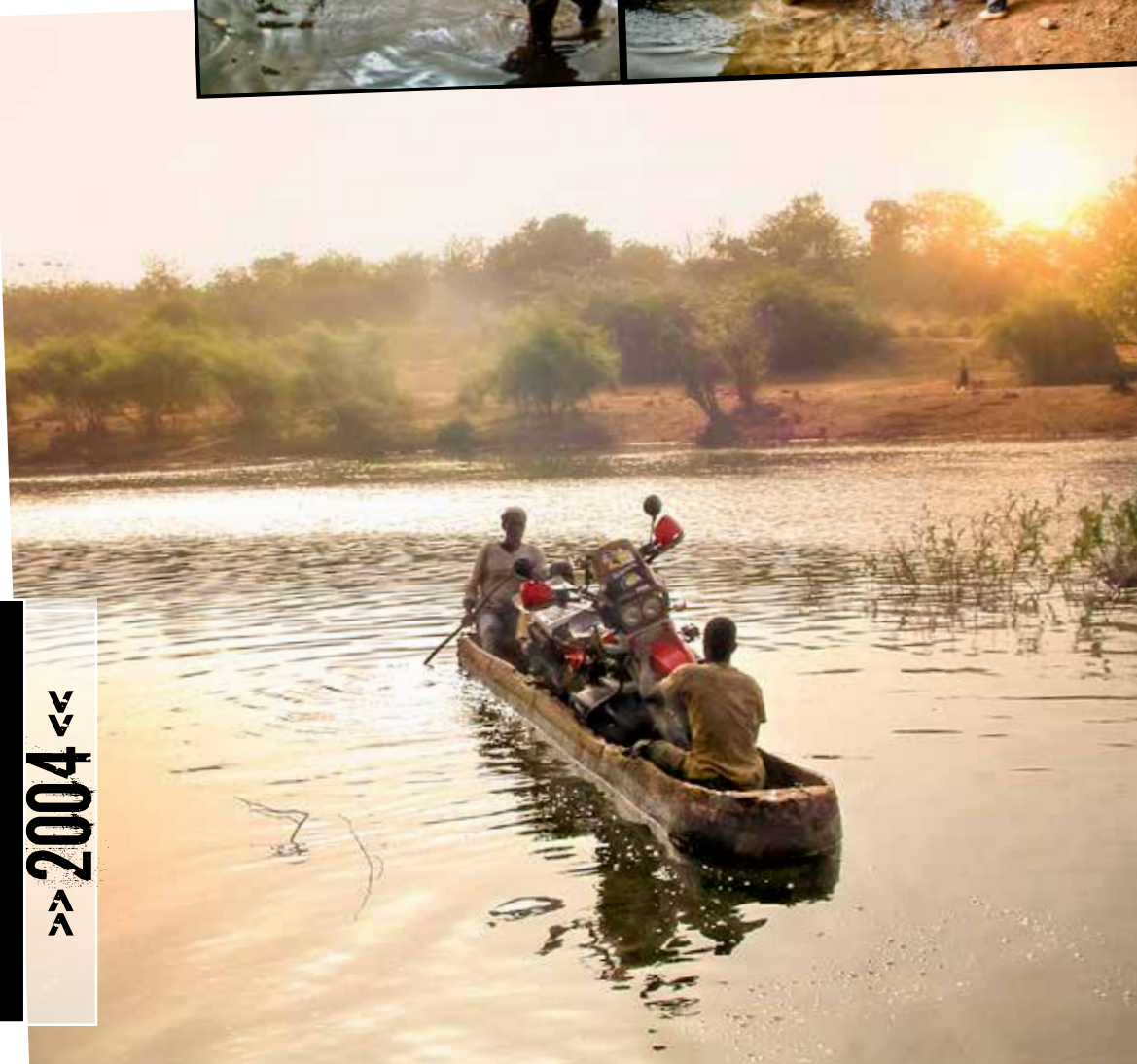
On the far side we paid \$2 USD, 3 crumpled cigarettes and a BMW key fob. The relief of reaching the opposite bank was palpable. The entire process had taken us 2 1/2 hours.

The following few days saw us run out of water, hallucinate, and ride through bush fires. Like I said from the frying pan into the fire...literally!

Countries visited: Mauritania. Senegal. Gambia. Mali. Burkina Faso. Ghana. Sao Tome & Principe. Namibia. South Africa. Botswana. Zambia. Tanzania. Malawi. Kenya. Uganda. Mozambique.
 Highlight: Finding a feeding lioness and her cubs close by whilst we picked up firewood for our camp spot.
 Low point: Running out of water in Mali, severe cramps, and hallucinations kidney issues.
 Biggest Lesson: You can cross a deep,

fast flowing river with two BMW GS bikes in a dugout canoe.
 Bike Work: Creating folding mirror stems for Lisa's 650GS out of old chain link in Mali.
 Scariest moment: stripping the inner-walls, seats, and flooring from of a 'non cargo bearing' prop-plane, so we could cram in ourselves, gear and both bikes, to fly us past Nigeria, where 300 had just been machetted to death on the border.

2004





2005

Countries visited:
 South Africa. Namibia. Lesotho. Swaziland.
 Argentina. Uruguay. Brazil.
 Highlight: Being alive at the end of the year
 Low point: Realising I couldn't get my wife to safety, whilst I was paralysed from a broken neck deep in the Amazon Jungle and she was suffering malaria. The 3 week ride to hospital was hell!
 Biggest Lesson: That we have depths of physical and mental reserves we'd never

imagined were there. Lisa is the strongest most determined person I've ever met.
 Bike Work: Stripped and repaired 34 separate breaks in 6 feet of fried R1100GS wiring loom, with duct tape and a Leatherman in the Amazon. Fabricated brake pads from a crashed and abandoned airplane.
 Scariest moment: The second I decided I couldn't fix my bike in the Amazon and get Lisa somewhere safe.

day. In 100% humidity it was less like breathing and more like being water-boarded. Exhausted we chose to face this obstacle the next day.

she'd have no choice but to leave me there. Five hours later and I'd managed to get to my feet. I was blind in my left eye and paralysed on my left hand side. Passing out from the pain 4-6 times a day became the norm. We spent the next 4-days by the mud track repairing a totally fried wiring loom and a fractured sub-frame. We then pushed on through a mud hell that I never want to revisit and 3-weeks later we limped into Sao Paulo. At the Albert Einstein Hospital we received the startling news. Lisa had full-blown malaria and my neck was broken and dislocating. ½ millimetre of further dislocation would have severed my spinal cord and would have killed me. Following a 9-hour emergency operation and 6 weeks of recovery we hit the road and headed south to Ushuaia.

2005 | THE YEAR OF LIVING DANGEROUSLY.

In 2005 we swapped Africa's dry heat for the sultry eastern coastline of South America. I couldn't have imagined the obstacles we'd face that year. Lisa and I thrive on a challenge and we found it in the Amazon Jungle. After a year of research no one, as far as we could tell, had successfully negotiated the jungles north to south route on large capacity bikes. Fuelled with a new sense of confidence after our Africa ride we thought we'd be up to the task.

Loaded with 100 litres of fuel, 50 litres of water, rations, extra rope and newly bought pulleys, we'd left the jungle city of Manaus. On day one we'd managed 250km before being stopped by the worst bridge we'd had to negotiate that

We'd rushed to build a fire having seen a black jaguar cross the track just 100 metres from where we'd stopped. Heavy rain through the night meant we'd slept little. The next morning before sunrise we'd walked the bridge a few times determining that the left side looked stronger. We'd normally walk the bikes over anything this precarious, but here that wasn't an option. The wood was so rotten it crumbled at the lightest touch, leaving nowhere to walk alongside the bikes. Besides, we'd needed the engines just to get the bikes up onto the structure from the track. We agreed I'd ride both bikes over, I'm 6ft 3" Lisa 5ft 2".

In a moment the unthinkable happened, the wood gave way and I flung 3 metres into the wet rocky foliage of the river bank. I was out cold for 45 minutes, leaving Lisa time to face a few unpleasant realities. If I didn't regain consciousness



2006 | RIDING HIGH INTO THE SKY

It's easy to recant the tales of tough times, but if the truly spectacular moments didn't vastly outnumber the tougher stuff, we'd have stopped years ago. In 2006 we rode north from the southernmost tip of South America, criss-crossing the Andes north en-route for Colombia. Sure, every day had a highlight and the experiences were priceless, but what sticks in my mind, is the colour, vibrancy and freezing desolation of the Bolivian Altiplano.

For Lisa and I this was special. There's no one to see you ride, no kudos or envious glances to relish, this is real. It's just you, your bike, the challenge and the raw unfiltered pleasure of a ride through an intoxicating landscape!

We'd ridden deep into the Eduardo Avaroa Andean Fauna National Reserve, and were surrounded by vast deserts of beige and rust coloured Andean Mountains. We sped by as lava burred in tall, jagged volcanoes; on their flanks, baby mud volcanoes would erupt and hiss through the frozen soil. I remember being stood speechless on the shores of Laguna Colorado, a wide but shallow lagoon of iridescent red water framed by copper mountains. In the acidic waters thousands of pink flamingos stood motionless as if posed for National Geo-

graphic. That afternoon I snatched a glance at my GPS, which I'd set to show our altitude, the screen read 17,323 feet!

The next day we raced through a desert of orange shale before stopping at the Arbol de Piedra (Rock Tree) a stone monolith carved by the unforgiving hands of the weather. It looks more like a forgotten alien artefact. The frozen air was a constant reminder as to our altitude. Drinking enough water was tough; all the litres we were carrying were ice.

The Salar de Uyuni is the world's largest salt desert, and well, just has to be seen to be believed.

2006

Countries visited:

Brazil. Paraguay. Argentina. Chile. Bolivia. Peru. Ecuador. Colombia. Venezuela. Panama. Costa Rica. Nicaragua. El Salvador. Honduras. Guatemala. Belize. Mexico.

Highlight: Riding from the Argentinian Patagonia up into the clouds of the Bolivian Altiplano.

Low point: 4 days of riding in thick clay mud in the snow on the Ruta 40.

Biggest Lesson: Learnt that the best people to crate and pack our bikes ready for shipping is us.

Bike Work: BMW Colombia replaced Lisa rear shock when hers blew apart outside of Bogota.

Scariest moment: Being in the blast-zone of an active volcano whilst its blowing its top.





2007

Countries visited:
Mexico. USA. Canada.

Highlight: Riding the CDT (Continental Divide Trail) off-road from Colorado to Canada
Low point: Being stopped for 4-hours at the US/Canada Border, when a US official demanded we return to the UK before being re-allowed to enter the US. WTF?!?!

Biggest Lesson: Out-thinking, out-articulating and out-waiting officialdom gets you farther than getting upset.
Bike Work: Welded and reinforced rear sub-frame of the R1100GS in Dallas, TX.
Scariest moment: Being on the receiving end of 3 surprising road rage attacks in the US.

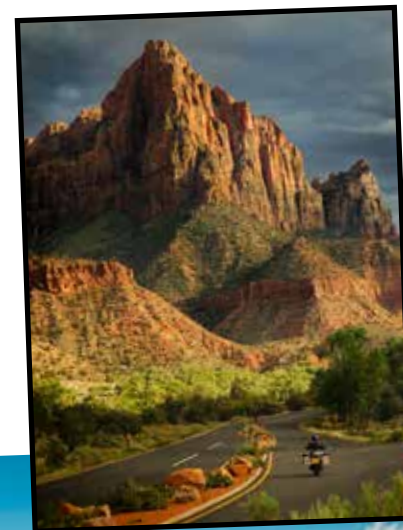
2007 | THE STAR-SPANGLED BANNER.

By the time we reached the USA we were in need of a little familiarity. We spent the next 17 months exploring the USA. It's a fair comment... "explore USA? Hasn't it all been discovered?" To our surprise there are still unspoiled, under commercialised, regions and backwater towns in the good 'ol US of A. With our back wheels spinning in the loose dirt we joined the CDT (or Continental Divide Trail to give it its full title) in Steamboat Colorado and rode it north. Often referred to as the spine of the USA, it's also the longest off-road route in the world. I didn't think it possible to drive in the USA all day and not see another

soul. We stopped for a night in Atlantic City and not the one you're thinking of. This one has just 27 inhabitants and one saloon, with a bar rack and swing doors that dated back to the days of Wyatt Earp. God bless America. Before this ride I didn't think it was possible to ride all day in the US and not see a soul.

2008 | THE HIGHS AND LOWS OF LIFE.

2008 was a year of highs and lows. We enjoyed the simpler riding amongst some of the USA's most spectacular National Parks and made friends that will remain so for life. However, Lisa had been ill for a couple of years and in 2008 I almost found religion when she was rushed to hospital for surgery.



2008

Countries visited:
USA. Mexico.

Highlight: 3 weeks of camping on a white sandy beach on Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula.
Low point: 3 weeks of riding in cold heavy rain in the USA.
Biggest Lesson: Learning how many

people are disenchanted with their lives and want to learn how to break free.
Bike Work: Replaced the OEM bike dashboards with Touratech IMO Rally computers
Scariest moment: Lisa rushed to hospital for emergency surgery.

2009

Countries visited:
USA. Japan. (Eastern Russia) Siberia. Mongolia.
Central Russia. Kazakhstan. Kyrgyzstan. Tajikistan.
Uzbekistan. Turkmenistan. Iran. Pakistan.
Highlight: All of it! Riding across
Mongolia's Gobi Desert and traversing the Silk
Route.
Low point: Severe food poisoning in
Mongolia.

Biggest Lesson: Irrespective of status,
race, creed or religion, everyone, the world
over wants the same thing; to look after his or
her family.
Bike Work: Major overhaul of both bikes
courtesy of BMW Motorrad USA especially
Peiter de Wall the then VP
Scariest moment: Being held by the
Secret Police in Iran.

2009 | MONGOLIAN MADNESS.

2009 was about shock, and mostly in a good way! 2009 saw us push ourselves physically in a way we'd not done since the Amazon.

Japan was a wonderfully bizarre experience. Sure, we ate great sushi and meandered around the ancient shrines, but riding there was surprisingly frustrating. The motorways we're prohibitively expensive using the A and B roads made for some very long days; no one drives faster than 30-mph. and the country breed's traffic lights. With traffic lights in place every 2 miles we never did find a riding rhythm. I think you could spend 100 years in Japan and still not understand it, that's part of the draw, part of it's charm. It's the most honest country we've ever visited. Honour and personal conduct dictate the lives of generations, although to our western eyes Japan is also the most emotionally sterile country we've visited. Emotions are hardly ever shown.

Siberia had been a shock, Siberia is a frozen landscape right? Wrong! We rode thousands of miles cruising through desolate tundra in temps of 35+ C. We donated litres of blood to the region via black clouds of elephant sized mosquitoes.

In Mongolia's Gobi Desert, we sat physically spent and stared at a sea of dunes. We'd been riding hard for 16-hours and knew we were bea-

ten, there was no way we'd ride the extra 60 km we needed to get to our planned next stop. That afternoon two men and a woman had approached us, and in spite of their weather worn and ancient faces, and their stoic demeanour, they shocked us with a child-like enthusiasm that was contagious. In spite of their tough lives, they fed us with genuine warmth and immediate kinship. They offered their help, their water and their food, without any expectation of return. No agenda, it's just the Mongolian nomad way.

There was no common language and we didn't need one. They took turns sitting on our bikes and in equal measure gestured that we sit on their stocky saddle-less ponies. They wouldn't take no for an answer. It was a meeting we'll never forget.

Lisa was suffering altitude sickness her lips were blue and her eyes were sunken. At 15,300 feet atop the Kyzyl-Art Pass in Tajikistan I wasn't shocked that she determined that we grab as

many photos of the moment as possible. Monolithic snow-covered mountains, blood-red earth and midnight-blue sky do make for some incredible images. Speaking of incredible, so's my wife!



>> 2010 <<

Countries visited:

Pakistan. India. Nepal. Thailand.

Highlight: Camping in the Annapurna Himalayas in Nepal.

Low point: The daily indescribable insanity of riding India and picking up 27 punctures between us.

Biggest Lesson: How India actually got it's name – I (I'll) N (never) D (drive) I (it) A (again)

Bike Work: Welded a cracked engine frame on Lisa F650GS in Thailand.

Scariest moment: Riding in the outskirts of Quetta (a Taliban sympathetic city) in Pakistan with a fully armed military escort, when suddenly our 8 guards all raised their automatic guns, jumped from their vehicles and ran out into the desert scrub in a dozen different directions.

Overwhelmed! That's how we'd describe 2010.

We'd entered India from Pakistan and were riding into a landscape that 1.2 billion people call home, and where sights, sounds, and smells come at you full force and non-stop. India is the place where absolute poverty plays side-by-side with the obscenely wealthy.

We were asked last week in a random conversation "so, what's India like?" I paused and answered...

"India is a country where you become intoxicated by the cultural cocktail being poured down your throat. It's one of the craziest and most vibrant places on earth... India is alive. India is music, love, prayer, and fragrant spice. India is 'in your face' 24/7. India is a tiny rickshaw carrying 16 people, chai wallas, and cows sleeping in jewellery stores. India is ritual and rhythm unlike anywhere else on earth. India is where the impossible isn't just possible, it's the norm! Love it or hate it, make no mistake—India demands an opinion. Indifference isn't an option."

2010 | NOWHERE ELSE LIKE IT ON EARTH.



>> 2011 <<

2011 | HUMBLLED BEYOND WORDS.

It's funny, 2011 was about being hurt, humbled and more thankful than I have words for.

On the island of Borneo I (Simon) fell foul of a family in a Toyota Hilux causing accidents to claim the insurance. At speed, I'd had to lay the bike on its side, and then slid 60 feet pinned under it before slamming into and under his parked (in the middle of the road) 4x4. The bike was totalled. The left cylinder was cracked, the front frame bent. The cockpit, instruments, stanchions, triple clamp, handlebars, levers, para-lever and front wheel were destroyed. We got back to Kula Lumpur in Malaysia and started looking for solutions. To our astonishment, we had an overwhelming response to our news from thousands of people from around the world, many we'd never even met. All were offering some kind of assistance. BMW Motorrad Malaysia has told us it was going to cost near \$11,000 to buy the parts we needed to repair the big GS.

What happened next left us speechless. Touratech Germany had somehow heard of our situation and had decided to offer us a one-stop solution. Basically they purchased

Countries visited:

Thailand. Cambodia. Laos. Malaysia. Borneo.

Highlight: Being absolutely humbled by the warmth and generosity of people around the world who owe us nothing.

Low point: Falling victim to a family on Borneo that were creating accidents as an insurance scam. They'd created 5 crashes in one day, I was the second and it totalled my bike and bust my right shin.

Biggest lesson realisation: Our journey now belongs to so many people around

all the BMW OEM parts and supplied us all the Touratech parts we needed to get the bike whole again. OK, so what did they ask in return? Nothing, nada! There was no contract or demands for stories or photos, no signing over the religious choosing of our first-born child. We spent 3-months at Sunny Cycles, the best motorcycle workshop in Asia. When we came to pay their presumably huge labour bill, they said "NO!" They wouldn't take our money. What may have started off as 'our' journey, has morphed into something else. It now belongs to so many people and one day we want to say a proper thank you.

the world and no-longer to just Lisa and I

Bike Work: Total rebuild of the front end and left engine cylinder of the R1100GS. Overhaul of both bikes in readiness to ship to Australia.

Scariest moment: Being forced to lie down my fully laden GS at 50mph on tarmac and sliding 60 feet into a stationary 4x4 and waiting for the impact and crunch I knew was coming.



2012

Countries visited:

Malaysia. Indonesia. East Timor. Australia.
Highlight: There's two that jump out – Riding up the ashen flanks of a live super volcano on Java Indonesia and crossing Australia via it's longest axis and 2,500 miles of orange sand, dust and deserts.

Low point: realising how vastly expensive Australia has become.

Biggest Lesson: Not everyone who acts like a friend is one!

Bike Work: Installed Touratech Suspension.

Scariest moment: Watching Lisa high-side her bike and knock herself out in the Australian Outback. Pinned under her bike, litres of petrol then leaked from a broken line into her helmet, goggles and eyes.

2012 | SIZE REALLY DOES MATTER.

In 2012 I learnt that 'size really does matter!'

Australia's 'BIG!'

I'm ashamed to admit but past Crocodile Dundee, big knives, kangaroos and a big red rock in the middle of it, we didn't know what to expect. We also didn't comprehend just how big, big really is!

After riding 2,500 miles through its centre from Australia's northeast coastline diagonally

down to Perth on the southwest shore, we'd got the idea.

Sure, Australia is mates drinking tinny's (cans of beer), Sheila's, surfers on Bondi beach and the Opera house, but it's so much more. We found the real Australia in its blood red centre, in the Outback. I swear, that landscape's so big and so ancient it whispers to you.

2013 | IN SEARCH OF DRAGONS AND WIZARDS.



We didn't find any hobbits or dwarves but we have to admit New Zealand offers some of the best scenic riding in the world. How do they cram so much varied terrain into two tiny islands is beyond me.

2013

Countries visited:

Australia. New Zealand. USA. Mexico.
Highlight: Riding the endless curves of the 'Forgotten Highway' on New Zealand's north island.

Low point: spending 5-full days cleaning both bikes to clear New Zealand's quarantine inspection

Biggest Lesson: After all these years Lisa and I love riding with each other on this journey more than anything else on earth.

Bike Work: Installed Clearwater super-LED light system.

Scariest moment: none.

2014 | BEYOND THE TV PERSONA.

Mexico

People see beaches, big hats, cartels and dodgy moustaches. Don't be fooled. Beyond the mundane stereo-types, Mexico is a rich cultural blend of native rituals and colonial influence. Throw in for good measure spectacular rides along either its west or easterly coastlines or across the Sierra Madre Mountain Range and you can get addicted to Mexico. Taking a peak beneath the TV persona of this vast country has just left us thirsty for our next ride there. "More Tequila vicar"?

We've explored jungles and rainforests, hilltop pueblos (small villages) and even dived into the mineral-water clear cenotes (fresh water submerged caves) on the Yucatan Peninsula.

Sat, as we are now on this white sandy beach approaching the end of 2014, we're looking ahead to 2015 and wondering where we'll be for our next Christmas. Maybe it's time for a white One? Northern Canada and the Aurora Borealis are beckoning.

See you on the road, ride far, rides safe.

All the best
Me and her

>> 2014 <<

Countries visited:

USA. Mexico. Belize.

Highlight: Returning to ride stunning Belize for the first time in 8-years.

Low point: Lisa suffers from some coronary heart issues and we ran out of her medication and couldn't purchase or obtain more.

Biggest Lesson: Family come through when you've nowhere left to turn.

Bike Work: Large general service on both bikes.

Scariest moment: Lisa was ill for 4-days with chronic arrhythmia (no regular heart pulse rhythm)

