

HOG'S ADIRONDACK RENDEZVOUS

Riding with some real road HOGs



WHEN THE UPSTATE NEW YORK TOWN OF LAKE Placid is mentioned in conversation, images of snow, ski jumps, the Miracle on Ice, and the 1980 Winter Olympics might arrive in our thoughts. While such memories may be the first you think of, many riders who have visited Lake Placid know that there are some fantastic roads to ride. The Harley Owners Group (HOG) thought so, too, and wanted to bring us into the heart of the Adirondack Mountains for a three-day touring event. Occurring during the Labor Day

week, the ride was aptly named Adirondack Rendezvous.

The Adirondack Mountain Park is a New York state park which consists of 6 million acres (the size of neighboring Vermont) and includes the highest mountain peaks in the state. Many think of the Adirondacks as

an old mountain range, however, they are actually considered young geologically speaking, and continue to rise in elevation each year. Besides the spectacular mountains and valleys, there is an abundance of scenic lakes, notches, towns, and roads to experience. Many roads through this region originally started out as logging access trails, and, over time, became paved due to a growing population deciding to call the beautiful and serene region home.

I had visited the area several times while attending the Americade Touring Rally and was familiar with the locale, so when HOG announced its plans for hosting an event at Lake Placid, I knew I wanted to be there. An opportunity to discover new routes and sights, as well as meet other riders looking to do the same, was something I just couldn't pass up. I plotted my route to the event with an online ride planner through HOG's web site. I left on Labor Day morning;

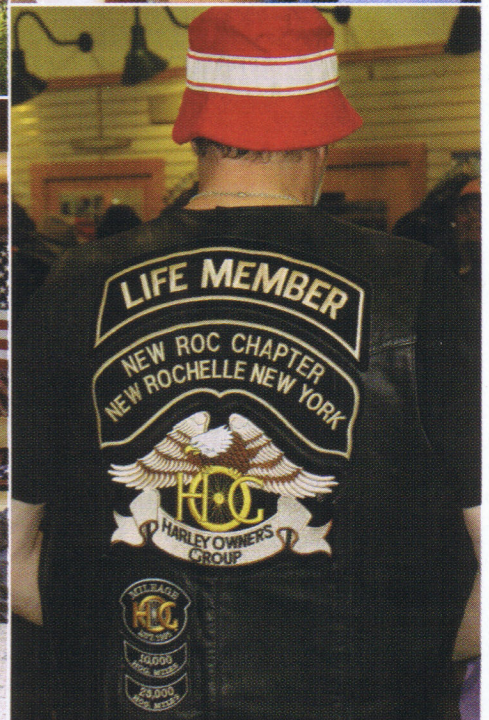


the day was perfect for riding — sunny, warm, and calm. Deciding to take a long ride, I left the Hudson Valley in New York and meandered through the northeastern part of the Catskills. I found my way to State Route 30, which would take me within miles of Lake Placid. The road was filled with long, sweeping curves and scenery even before I got to the Adirondacks. Once I passed through the city of Amsterdam (and, yes, there are windmills all around), I headed into the gateway of the region.

While en route, I stopped at the Adirondack Museum in Blue Mountain Lake. This museum comprises over 20 individual buildings dedicated solely to the history of the region, from the logging industry to activities on its many lakes (boating and fishing) to the historic past (its grand hotels and the socialites and millionaires who visited and lived in the area). Just a short way up the road, I stopped at the Adirondack Hotel in Long Lake for a relaxing lunch. Here, you can sit on the front porch after your meal and view the lake. Plus, you can walk across the street (to the lake), go for a ride in a seaplane, and check out the view from above (I decided it would be better to fly first, then

eat). Once back on the road, I was constantly mesmerized by picturesque mountain vistas, tranquil lakefronts, roadways carved through tall pines, and small, relaxed towns. Even though my chosen route was over 250 miles long, it passed by quickly.

Pulling into the host hotel, I noticed an abundance of touring Harleys. With a parking lot full of Ultras, Road Glides, and Road Kings, I knew that the HOG members in attendance were ready to do some riding. After checking in, I visited one of the Group Riding Seminars given by Lieutenant Tim Deluca, HOG's official national rally police liaison. Even though the rides were designed to be self-guided, the information was good to review. You may wind up tagging along with some old or new friends, and you'll never know who you'll meet. Proving my point, while checking out the bikes, I came across AIM's very own Buzz Kanter, who came to the event with his



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riding friend Jim. We decided to head into town to check out Main Street and have some dinner in one of the many eateries that line the town.

Day One, Tuesday, started the event with a riders' lunch and meeting. There were 661 HOG members representing three Canadian provinces and 36 US states from as far away as Texas and Florida. In keeping with the theme of Lake Placid Olympic history, the oldest rider at the rally was a 78-year-old woman who was a Silver Olympic medalist (you do the math to figure out which Olympics she was in). After lunch, we all got ready to do the first day's loop, a 120-mile round trip to North End H-D in Plattsburgh. Riding past Whiteface Mountain, the Au Sable River, various falls, a 2,000' cliff, and the western shores of Lake Champlain were just some of the fantastic sights before we checked out the food and music at the dealer party. On the return trip, we passed dozens of streams known for world-famous trout fishing, breezed by Saranac Lake, and arrived back at Lake Placid.

Once again, the weather was warm and comfortable, with nary a drop of rain.

Wednesday we woke up to temperatures in the low 30s, which slowly warmed to the mid-70s. The weather in these mountains is hard to predict and pack for. After some coffee and a filling breakfast, I was looking forward to the rally's longest scheduled ride (320 miles) to Iron Block H-D in Adams Center, located in the western part of the region along the St. Lawrence Seaway. The route included many scenic byways; the landscape and roads would change from winding mountain twisties to rolling foothills and flatlands with wide-open stretches and magnificent views. The dealer party was enjoyable, as was the food — especially the local salt potatoes. After checking out the dealership, we had the opportunity to view Erik Dunk's



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personal collection in the museum located upstairs. With vintage Harleys, memorabilia, and key items not only from H-D's past, but the past of the Watertown community it was a pleasure to take in a little history. If you're ever in the area, a trip to Iron Block is definitely worth your time.

Remember my mention of the weather? Well, Thursday brought temps in the low 90s! This final day had us heading southeast to the Lake George region and McDermott's H-D in Ft. Ann. Our route took us past the lower part of Lake Champlain to Lake George. This area is known not only for its waterways and locks, but also for its military value. Fort Ticonderoga, Mount Defiance, Fort William Henry, and the town of Whitehall (the birthplace of the US Navy) are just some of the many historic sites to visit. And you'll learn more of motorcycling's past if you have a chance to meet Tom McDermott and talk to him about his racing history.

After a couple of rights instead of lefts, and one or two U-turns, I found myself heading back to Lake Placid but through the western part of Vermont. The Adirondacks looked majestic from the roads I traveled, and, thanks to a short ferry ride, I was back en route to the rally site to enjoy the last evening of the event. A barbecue party, located at the Olympic ski jumps just down the road from the town of Lake Placid, closed things out. The food was great, and conversation was dominated by discussion of the amazing sights and roads traveled in the previous three days.

I've been asked why I attend HOG rallies like the Adirondack Rendezvous, and my answer is that I must visit

new areas and travel new roads. My reply is usually followed with the standard response, "But you can always do that, you don't need a HOG event to head somewhere." True, but what really makes the HOG events memorable are the fellow bikers who attend. You'd be hard pressed to find a group of riders more enthusiastic and willing to share their experiences about Harley, the Harley Owners Group, roads traveled, and sights seen. Sure, they may tell you of a place they didn't enjoy, but they're telling it to you with a smile because they did it riding with friends, old and new, who love to do the same.

A big congrats goes out to the HOG special events team for a fine job. If you ever get an opportunity to attend one of the HOG touring events, you'll surely enjoy it. Until then, why not plan a trip to the Adirondacks and experience some of the finest riding in the country? **AIM**



SOURCES

www.VisitAdirondacks.com

www.Adirondack.net

www.LakePlacid.com

www.AdkMuseum.org

