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ROLLING THROUGH VERMONT RALLY

by Don Gomo

When it comes to motorcycle rallies, I enjoy smaller events. When it comes to larger ones, like Fred and many others, I am a big fan of the Americade Touring Rally held in Lake George, NY every June. So, when they announced at this year's Americade that they had put together a rally to be held over the Labor Day weekend, called Rolling Through Vermont (RTV), and were limiting the size to 300 people for the first one, I knew I wanted to take part. Bill Dutcher and staff do an amazing job with the Americade event that caters to over 50,000 attendees with constant

positive remarks, outcomes and memories. To do an event for 300, knowing the experience of the staff, I figured this would be one that would be truly a rider's dream experience.

I have always taken pleasure in touring through Vermont. The great twisty roads, beautiful scenery and the openness of the valleys, the mountain region, the people and everything the state has to offer. Ok, I'm not too keen on the long cold winters; you can have that part. So, to be able to head to a place that I already enjoy and have an agenda of events and routes planned



to explore by those familiar with the area is definitely a good deal.

When registration came for the rally I was not disappointed. In true Americana fashion there were options to choose from to customize your experience. There were choices for lodging, added events to the weekend's baseline,

up to even having maps and routes provided in the event you wanted to ride the journeys on your own without being part of a group. The base package included such things as guided rides through Vermont and the upper Lake Champlain region by Road Captains that live and ride in the area, lunch stops



with fantastic meal menus at Stowe Mountain Resort, with optional gondola rides available, an evening enjoying a VIP lounge aboard the 100-year-old, 220-foot Ticonderoga steamship for coffee and desserts to view the Vermont Balloon Rally's Balloon Glow, and a private tour of the Full Throttle Motorcycle Exhibit that displayed wild customs, choppers and vintage bikes, all located in a round Shaker barn located on the Shelburne Museum property. And this was only

the events and riding for the first day of the event! How cool is that? As I read more of the agenda I really knew that this would be a great time. The one thing I was hoping for was the weather for once to work on our side.

Here in the Northeast, this past summer has not been a rider's dream. Rain was the word of the season, and plenty of it. So, when I saw the projected forecast of the rally as it came closer, I was ecstatic; sunny skies, comfortable temperatures in



the morning warming up to the 80s during the day – a rider’s dream. When the weekend came the weatherman was for once true to his prediction. Friday was sunny, no wind, and temps in the mid-eighties; a perfect day to head out and travel. I meandered from the Hudson Valley up through western New York along the Connecticut/Massachusetts borders to get to Burlington, Vermont, which was the home base for the rally. The ride was pleasant and very scenic, espe-

cially when crossing the Vermont state line. Vistas of New York’s Adirondacks Mountains and Vermont’s Green Mountain ranges flanking both side of the roadway were stimulating for the visual senses.

When I got to my hotel, which was the host hotel, I was greeted by staff members with event information, maps, times for meetings and a bag with a T-shirt and some of Vermont’s specialties (maple syrup and candy – love that stuff).

Friday night kicked off the rally with a Welcome Party to review the weekend’s itinerary while enjoying hors d’oeuvres, dessert and beverages. The Rolling Through Vermont Staff, lead by Christian Dutcher, went over the weekend’s events and information. They certainly

did a lot of work on this one to make sure everyone was in for a great weekend, even down to having chase vehicles with trailers and cell phone numbers to reach them. The evening was capped off with \$300 worth of gift certificates donated by TourMaster.

Saturday morning arrived with another unbelievable weather day. Everyone met after breakfast to head out and ride. The RVT staff had Road Captains ready to lead us out in separate waves. For those with CB communication you could also listen to the information being described through the airwaves. Besides directions and any possible hazards, the guides would inform and talk about points along our route. Now, if you're not really into riding

with larger groups, you always had the option of following the provided maps and directions. I've already listed the events planned for us on Saturday, but the riding and routes chosen were perfect. The Road Captains travelled us through some of northern Vermont's most scenic roadways leading up through Smugglers Notch, kind of Vermont's mini-version of the Dragon, to our lunch stop at Stowe Mountain, with a gondola ride to the resort for a tasty lunch with a view overlooking Vermont's high peaks. We then headed down to the Ben and Jerry's Ice Cream Factory just down the road for a tour and, of course, some of their delicious flavors. Some folks also opted to take the option of a gondola ride to the top of the mountain to take in



breathtaking views. After the tour at Ben and Jerry's, we were once again guided back to Burlington for the

evening's events. The only change to the night was the rescheduling of the balloon glow to Sunday night due to winds. The



rest of the evening with the private motorcycle tour and the steamship sailed smoothly.

Sunday morning started off with cool, crisp air, not a cloud in the sky and temps to climb into the eighties again. Boy, this RTV staff really owes someone big time for this fantastic weather. The day's ride was taking us through the Lake Champlain region along with riding through some of the northern islands. It was cool to see the view from

our route of the high peaks that we rode just the day before. With lunch you had a choice of attending the scheduled BBQ-style picnic at the Abbey Restaurant (once again, great food)

or go on your own in town. After lunch we enjoyed lakeside rides to a local apple orchard for a quick visit and cider tasting, then off to Burlington for the evening's events. For Sunday night there was dinner cruise on Lake Champlain with an option to take a later cruise, which includes an 18-piece big band-- that's the one I went for. The meal was superb, the views from the ship as the sun set over the Adirondacks were amazing and the band

sounded great. Plus, we shared the cruise with a wedding party. It's always good to see a new couple enjoying their day to start their future.

Once back to dock I decided to spend the evening in Burlington on its famed Church St., which is a pedestrian street filled with restaurants, nightclubs and shops galore. The downtown area of Burlington can be an adventure by itself to explore.

Monday had all of us enjoying breakfast at the Catamount Country Club, with photos taken throughout the weekend by the staff projected on the wall, closing thanks and thoughts and a few door prizes donated by Cardo Systems. For a different twist to closing an event, the RVT staff had routes



mapped out and guided to take you towards home. Everyone I spoke with loved the weekend and were already looking forward to returning next year. That is certainly a testimony to Christian Dutcher and the RTV Staff on the fine job they did putting together this rally. I for one, will definitely be there again next year. Want to know more about this great new rally? Well, head on over to www.rollingthroughvt.com and check it out. Might as well mark your calendars now; you won't be disappointed.