

# RIDE ISSUE 307 ITALIAN

ITALIAN MOTORCYCLE OWNERS' CLUB NEW ZEALAND (INC.)

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SUMMER 2023 | [IMOC.CO.NZ](http://IMOC.CO.NZ)

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# PRESIDENT'S RAMBLE



WORDS BY **BRIAN HEWITT**

## **GREETINGS IMOCERS!**

We are late again... despite best intentions of getting a Mag out 4 x times a year, we have struggled to get content and everyone in this Club is a Volunteer, so we just have to suck it up. Treasure this one, OK!

I'm writing this in the glow of a returned trip around the Nth Island which I, and few IMOCers tagged on after the NZ Blues & BBQ event. Just reminded me of how lucky we are living here despite the occasional weather event which is pretty much global now it seems. The Napier-Taihape Rd (Gentle Annie) was just fabulous, scenery and a road to die for (well nearly a couple of times). It was great to get out and do what motorcycling does, everything else in your head just falls away and trust me...some of it needs to!

Your Club is looking healthy with existing and newly added Area Coordinators who I know will do a great job in getting members together for fun times. Thank you for this.

I want to thank the hard working Committee Members who front up each month and commit to getting stuff done. It's a real eye opener to how much boring crap they have to deal with... Thank you Guys, the Club appreciates it.

We need more rides put up by whoever can do this, its tough expecting the same people to do this all the time. It's not hard and you'll get a buzz out of completing a successful day bringing riders together. We have some guidelines we would like you follow so please get in touch. The NZ Blues & BBQ was an event ride and I'd like to see more 'Event rides' happening. If there is an 'Event' in your area you think we would like to attend, please put a ride up, or let me know and happy to put this up on HC and FB for you.

While on this subject I will just clarify FYI the role **Hello Club** and Facebook each play for IMOC.

**Hello Club** holds all our administrative stuff, plus we can create Events and email all or customised

groups using it – very handy. It just takes a bit of work to familiarise yourself with it.

Facebook/Messenger is just a straight out advertising medium, simple and easy, but not everyone is a fan.


We duplicate events on both, plus send out Txts, so everyone will get notified somehow, some people say too much, but in Ak we use all three to get cut through.

Please reach out, we can help set you up your region with any of these.

Really looking forward to the 2024 AGM/Rally in March and already the venue is nearly full. We have overflow, so don't be put off. Get in touch if you find the Taipa Bay resort booked out, but act NOW to avoid disappointment.

Happy Hols everyone and I hope Santa is kind...Love you lots!

**Brian Hewitt**  
President

Italian Motorcycle Owners Club NZ 





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**Waikato** Evan Williams 027 362 5171

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**COVER** Photo: Courtesy of Aprilia.com



# SECRETARY REPORT



WORDS BY **DARYL WEST-HILL**

### IT'S BEEN A TOUGH 12 MONTHS.

I'm not only referring to the unkind weather, but more importantly the fact that we lost two of our own.


We sadly said our farewells to Horace, our former president and then too soon after, Christiaan. Both are good buggers, and their absence is still felt.

On the face of it, the club has been reasonably quiet. Short notice rides have been posted in response to brief episodes of fine weather. Our first overnighter since the AGM is locked and loaded for this weekend – Blues & BBQ in Roto-Vegas. I hope to see

many of you there.

Our next big event we're planning is the annual AGM. More information is available on this event further on in this magazine.

Also, a big thank you to Gary Richards for pulling all this information together into what is once again a club magazine that we can be proud of.

Lastly, the weather gods are starting to smile upon us once again. So dust off those leathers, check the tyre pressures, clean lube and adjust the chain and let's ride. 





# NEW MEMBERS

IMOC is delighted to welcome the following new members to the Club

**Andrew McIntosh**  
Wellington

**Jim Fowler**  
Waikato

**Tani Neale**  
Upper South Island, Lower South Island

**Dennis Glenn**  
Waikato

**Pete Cunningham**  
Auckland

**Fraser Clark**  
Hawke's Bay

**Shaun Bromley**  
Manawatu

**John Winkie**  
Auckland

**Royce Fitzgerald**  
Bay of Plenty

**Richard Espley**  
Auckland

**John Kinvig**  
Canterbury

**Craig Smith**  
Upper South Island

**Hamish Leonard**  
Waikato

**Ken Newell**  
Auckland

**Shaun Taylor**  
Auckland

**Paul Sharp**  
Auckland

**Graeme Watts**  
Waikato

**Rachel Guthrie**  
Auckland

**Jonathan Guthrie**  
Auckland

**Tara-Lee King**  
Manawatu

**Thomas Te Kurapa**  
Manawatu

**David Burgess**  
Waikato

**Scott Easton**  
Lower South Island

**Margarette Bushell**  
Lower South Island

**Mike Bushell**  
Lower South Island

**Bill Redman-White**  
Waikato

**Tony Mayfield**  
Waikato

**Karl Christensen**  
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# RIDE ITALIAN

ITALIAN MOTORCYCLE OWNERS' CLUB NEW ZEALAND (INC.)

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### 2022 Magazine Advertising Rates

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Quarter page Horizontal .....	180 x 66

Advertisers are invited to submit advertorials to be published in our magazine. These need to be purely informational about a specific product or service. The written content should be no less than 500 words and must be accompanied by quality photographs and/or graphics.

Rates above are effective from January 2023

All artwork to be emailed to gary@richandco.co.nz

If artwork is too large for email, go to www.wetransfer.com and upload the files to gary@richandco.co.nz

Payment is due 20th of the month following invoice.



## PROFILED

### SHAUN BROMLEY



**Where were you Born:** Auckland

**Relationship to IMOC:** Manawatu Coordinator

**Occupation:** Self Employed Swimming Pool Construction and maintenance

**What did you want to be when you grew up?** It changed a lot but mostly a racecar driver

**If you could invite three people to dinner, dead or alive, who would they be?** Steve Irwin, Will Ferrell and Robin Williams

**What wouldn't you leave home without?** My Sunglasses

**What is your favourite destination?** The road to milford sound, absolutely stunning

**Who would play you in a movie?** Zach Galifianakis

**What's the best ride you've been on?** South island 2023 3608km in 5 days, had a blast

**What's the worst ride you've been on?** Blasphemy

**Three words that best describe you?** Sarcastic, Annoying and mostly ontime

**If you were a bike, what would it be and why?** Whatever it is it would be old and hard to start.

**What is your secret vice?** Probably my riding music playlist haha

**People would be surprised to know that:** Hmmm I have 8 fish tanks

**Favourite Quote:** If at first you don't succeed, slap second

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## MERCHANDISE

Available now at [www.imoc.co.nz/merchandise](http://www.imoc.co.nz/merchandise)







# IMOC AGM 2024

Yes, believe it or not, we're already planning the AGM for next year! That's right - dates, venue - the whole shebang. A stunning venue including dinners on Friday and Saturday.

- The location will be Taipa Bay at the Taipa Beach Resort.
- **Save the date:** Friday 22 - Sunday 24 March 2024
- You have plenty of time to start saving!
- Bookings are open now. Call 09 406 0656 and mention that you're part of IMOC group.





# The Roods

## 2 UP IN EUROPE



<https://tinyurl.com/mbp87zpb>

WORDS + PHOTOS: CAROLYN ROOD



Gorges du Cains; Verdon Gorges which included the Napoleon Road; Gorges of Oppedelette; The Gorges of Nesque; The Mont Ventoux; The Gorges of Toulourenc; Rousset Pass; Bourne Gorges; The Aare Gorges (Switzerland); Grimsel Pass; Furka Pass; St Gotthard Pass; Bernina Pass; Stelvio Pass (huge highlight)!!; The Dolomites (unbelievably amazing)!!; The Giau Pass; The mighty Grossglockner; Gerlosstal Pass (Austria); The Black Forest.

One of the notable highlights would have to have been the visit to Mandello del Lario, on the south-east branch of Lake Como and riding through the snow lined mountain roads but all in all, everyday had highlights and I would recommend anyone who loves twisties, switchbacks, hairpins, mountains, passes, gorges, scenery, history and great food, wine and Belgium beer .... then travel through Europe by bike. Everywhere we went we looked out for the V85TTs of course, of which there were a number of, but obviously the roads were full of BMWs with Ducatis a distant second.

Each day I tried to find the time for reflection and to write a blog. I have shared a couple of those below. If you would like to see more posts of our adventure through Europe, you can visit us on Facebook - TheRoods2upineurope and Riders' Rest



We recently joined a Sunday IMOC ride to Matakana and my senses piqued during a coffee stop prior to lunch when I overheard some fellow riders discussing a possible riding trip to France -

**Rider 1:** "Why would you want to ride a bike in France... They ride on the wrong side of the road don't they?"

**Rider 2:** "Yeah but it seems a great place to go and my wife wants to go!" With that I jumped in and reassured Rider 2 that he and his wife will have the most amazing time as I was able to speak from personal experience of our 5 week, 6,500km ride around 7 countries - **France, Austria, Germany, Belgium, Luxembourg, Italy, Switzerland and peeked down on Monaco in the Mediterranean** from which we had just returned from a few days before. Riding the V85TT we hired from Ride in Tours, the same model, colour and year as our own at home added to the adventure.

Our trip involved two guided tours with 'RideinTours' led by Dozias Laurent who owns the touring company with our first tour of 19 bikes (8 Kiwis, 10 Frenchies and 1 Yank).

The first tour was called the "**Grand Alps Road and Provence**" starting from Thonon to Aime to Briançon to Puget Theniers to Menton to Verdon to

Propiac to Vercors and finishing in Lake Annecy which is a natural jewel and has the most amazing old town with a river which meanders through this beautiful village known as the "Venice of Savoy".

The second tour was the "Grand Alps Loop" - With a full Kiwi contingent of 10 of us on 8 bikes we left from Thonon (France) to Innertkirchen to Como Lake (Italy) to Chiavenna to Mendolo Pasco to Grossglockner (Austria) to Garmisch (Germany) to Vorarlberg finishing at the most beautiful of villages in France called Eguisheim. Here the once endangered storks nest on top of the roofs of buildings and churches.

We then kept the bikes for a further 7 days on a self guided tour heading up into Belgium, Germany and Luxembourg where the landscape was beginning to burst full of colourful lavender and other summer flowers and of course it would have been rude not to try at least some of the 2000 different Belgium beers. Our Belgium guide joined us and there is nothing better than having local knowledge, so we visited so many out of the way places we would never have found on our own.

We rode through so many mountain passes and gorges like: Cormet de Roselend; The Iseran Pass; The Izoard Pass; Bonette Pass; Gorges of Daluis;





**JOUR 4 - DAY 4 - TOUR 2 - GRAND ALPS TOUR WITH RIDE IN TOURS**

**Chiavenna to Mendoza Paso - 268kms**

Today we set off knowing the day would involve riding through 8 passes, with the Stelvio Pass being the top topic of discussion during breakfast. Panniers loaded and “on the bus” as our tour guide Dozias Laurent always said, we kicked up our bike stands and headed out of the beautiful Chiavenna. We had only ridden for 5 minutes when our guide took a short diversion so we could view an amazing waterfall with its water pounding from the mountains above. It was a sign that we were in for another amazing day.

Through St Moritz which is more than just an alpine resort, as it is the birthplace of winter tourism (since 1864) and was the scene of two Olympic Winter Games we weaved our way through tunnels and beautiful countryside. The hotels are HUGE and home to celebrities during the winter skiing season and hikers and rock climbers and cyclists during the summer.

I really enjoyed riding through the Bernina pass which is 2328 metres of altitude. We were able to stop to take photographs of the surrounding mountains we were heading for and saw the distinctive red tourist train taking travellers through this very scenic pass. I’m sure they looked out in envy that we were seeing it from our bikes and not through train windows.

We then rode towards the Stelvio Pass, GLITCH ... it is a Saturday and guess what... there was a cyclist race so the pass was closed until 2.00pm. We had 2 hours to wait so we rode back to Bormio for lunch which was packed with other riders waiting for their opportunity to do what we had come for... **to ride this monster of a pass with its 36 hairpins up and 47 down.**

Watch us riding up the Stelvio on FB.

When the pass finally reopened to the public, it was like the whole motorbike fraternity, along with sports cars, the odd camper van and every other cyclist in Italy. To describe the scene would possibly suggest it was total chaos, especially when we arrived at the top.

Descending was not so bad, especially if you had courteous drivers

in front, and we got a really great run. One advantage of riding at a slower pace however was that the scenery was simply out of this world and every switch back sent another shiver down your spine whilst your smile got wider. Even with the chaos of the crowds, I managed to buy a T-shirt to prove “I have been there” ... and when we regrouped at the 46th marker at the bottom, we leapt off our bikes for a







round of high fives. Would I do it again ... you bet!! But next time it would need to be a weekday and not a day where there is a bike race on.

I would best describe this part of the countryside as being filled with apple trees and castles. As we were led high into the mountains we started wondering where on earth we were heading. With an expansive view across to the Dolomites from the hotel we ate well and headed off to bed with the knowledge that tomorrow we will be riding across to this exceptional group of mountains with their sharp shapes and the white sedimentary rocks which began to glow when the sun started to go down.

Oh, did I mention that we are now in Germany... UPDATE - we are actually still in ITALY (it's one of those complexities over land here)

Guten Nicht (good night) - Kel Rood and Carolyn Rood

#### **JOUR 6 (DAY 6) - TOUR 2 - GREAT ALPS WITH RIDE IN TOURS**

I think yesterday was Day 6 of our second trip but I can't check as I accidentally locked the top box with not only my shoulder bag and Kel's shoes but the keys for the bike and my wallet. As I heard the click I suddenly realised! Luckily Laurent had a spare for the bike but not for the top box so my bag, shoes and wallet will remain in there until Colmar.

This slight HICCUP did not mar the day as we hit our first pass within 5 minutes of departure from our hotel; weaving towards the Dolomites mountain range also known as the Dolomite Mountains, Dolomite Alps or Dolomitic Alps, located in northeastern Italy.

The Dolomites form part of the Southern Limestone Alps and extend from the River Adige in the west to the Piave Valley in the east and the scenery was simply stunning. Around every corner, through every cluster of trees and along every valley this magical mountain range provided views of the craggy skyline of the Dolomites against blue blue clear skies and crystal clear lakes.

Following another amazing Italian lunch (spaghetti in olive oil and garlic) the decision was made to go on a Gondola to the very top which the photos just can't do this place justice. The Gondola ride up was probably the scariest thing I have ever done and I







still shiver with the memory of the vertical climb up the rock face. Like all emotions, if you allow yourself to feel fear and uncertainty, they will eventually pass as it did once I planted my feet on the white limestone and cast my eyes around to our surroundings. It was nothing short of spectacular and at the same time almost mystical and scary but so inviting that you didn't want to leave.

There is a short video from the top of the Dolomites on our FB page.


After the adrenaline filled afternoon, our ride into Austria was



where this whole nation seems to venture out either cycling, hiking, rock climbing, paragliding, BASE jumping, nordic skiing on roller skates and walking (dogs included), we were unpacked, showered and enjoying an authentic Austrian dinner by 7.00pm... Big thanks again to Laurent for providing us with yet another fabulous adventure...

Gud Nicht (good night) from

Bill Cooney, Kel Rood, Graham Dwight, Ian Macartney and Carolyn Rood on top of the Dolomites

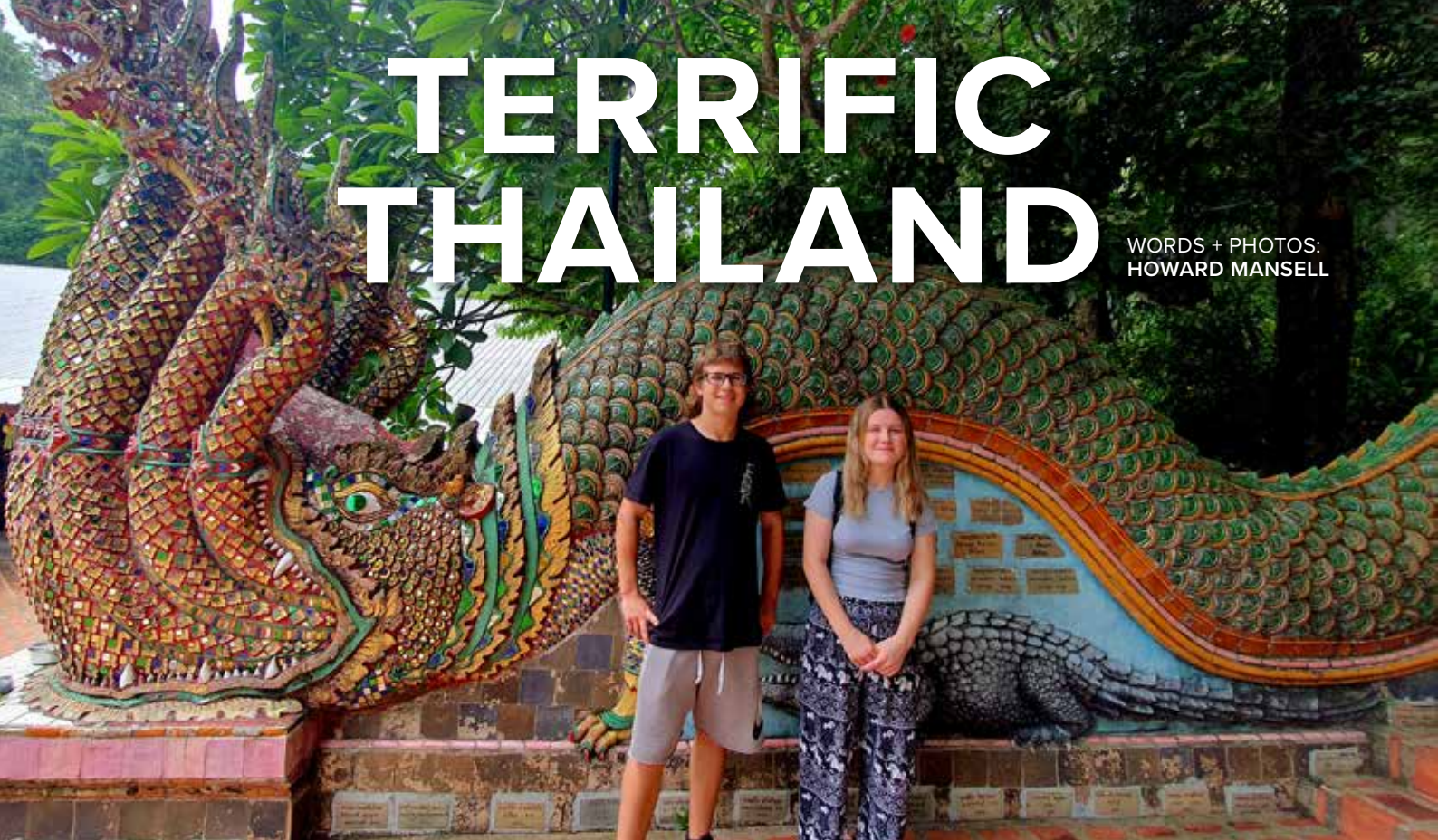
We are now planning for our next year's motorbike adventure which will probably be to the Pyrennees and into Spain. - Regards - Carolyn and Kel Rood (owners of Riders' Rest - "motorbike friendly accommodation in Ruakākā") - [www.ridersrest.co.nz](http://www.ridersrest.co.nz) 





# TERRIFIC THAILAND

WORDS + PHOTOS:  
HOWARD MANSELL



**A little update** on what we are up to at present. Well, we left NZ 7th June and we are planning to return on 16th December.

We have spent the last 6 weeks in Northern Thailand, firstly showing two of my grandchildren, Caitlin and Ethan, around Chiang Mai and its many interesting places, an elephant rescue park and other parts up north, the tea growing area of Doi Mae Salong,

the Golden Triangle on the Mekong River, A quick trip across the Mekong to Laos, the White temple in Chiang Rai and special little experiences like

buying lunch at a very rustic local shop with a dirt floor, shelves made from old pallets and people who probably haven't seen many Phalung (Foreigners) in their lives. Letting them see that there's more in this world that our small corner, they loved it and went home with a new perspective on the world, and a Samurai Sword each (another story). This was easy for me to plan for them because these are the same places that we take our clients on when we run our tours here.

After the kids went home we got busy taking a bunch of Kiwis and one

Ausy on a 2300k tour of Northern Thailand on motorcycles, riding some of the most fantastic motorcycle roads in the world and partying at end of each day. We had 12 riders and 3 pillions and tried out our new VIP luggage service for the first time. Everyone loved getting off the bike at end of day and having their bags waiting in their room and the air con running. We've been running these tours since 2016, its very challenging, but also great fun and we've made so many good friends along the way. One of our riders was on his 4th tour with us and another couple were on their 3rd.

The roads in Northern Thailand are made for motorcycling, great surface, lots of corners, on one of our days we leave the resort-do about 1000 corners -and stop for morning coffee. We try to have a good mix of riding and interesting stops, without doubling up on things, one waterfall, one cave, one temple, one world famous river, one intrepid day where we ride in the wild back country close to Laos.

We're now in Phuket having some downtime at a beach resort. We have an add-on trip where some of our tour people come down to Phuket for a few days at a nice resort for some R&R after the hard work of having a blast in the hills.







I figured that it was time I did), plus Karel wants to visit the Champagne region, I'm not averse to the idea.

Following that on 4th Oct we head to Noosa to our apartment in Ivory Palms Resort for a really good break. Although, we wouldn't want to get bored so there will be the MotoGP at Phillip Is, and a road trip up to Townsville once we have bought a car over there.

December 16 when head back to NZ by then we will have been away just over 6 months from home, and we will be returning to a new home, we sold our house at the lovely Waihi Beach, and bought a bus so we will be "Grey Nomads" for six months before jumping on the plane again, back to Chiang Mai for the next tour.

Its tough but someone has to do it. 

In 10 days' time we will fly to Hanoi to go riding dirt bikes in the hills of northern Vietnam, should be quite a trip, 12 days of off road riding, home-staying in private homes and experiencing a new part of the world.

We are thinking of running one of these rides after the Phuket holiday next year, have to see how it goes, we will keep you posted.

After that we will relax in a place called Ha Long Bay which I'm told is a great spot.

We're debating what to do after that, there are so many options, Cambodia, Laos, Hong Kong, China, don't know yet.

2nd September we head off to Croatia for our second tour this year with 12 kiwis booked on to ride with us, we will visit most of the famous places in Croatia as well as Sarajevo including Tito's bunker, and Montenegro.

Following that we head to France to visit my namesake's grave in a WW1 War Cemetery in Grevillers, Northern France (I've never visited him so at 69



**Terrific Thailand!**



**Exciting Vietnam!**

A 14 day tour that starts and finishes in Chiang Mai, filled with beautiful climbing and descending roads that take us through magnificent limestone hills, steep mountains, lush green valleys, terraced rice paddies, beautiful waterfalls, the famous rivers and interesting villages. This is a real "riders ride" with Karel & Howard as your Tour guides.



Looking for a bit of off-road excitement?

Riding through Northern Vietnam and its spectacular scenery is both exciting and breathtaking. You will climb steep cliffs and mountains and drop down into valleys of beautiful terraced rice paddies, rivers and villages. It's a stunning combination of off and on road riding that can challenge most riders.

 [magicmotorcycling](https://www.facebook.com/magicmotorcycling)

"Howard and Karel are fantastic tour guides, everything about our trip was well organised with amazing roads and locations." - Irene, NZ

[magicmotorcycletours.com](https://www.magicmotorcycletours.com)



## Introduction

The world of motorcycling is about to witness a seismic shift as MV Agusta unveils its eagerly anticipated lineup for 2024. With a storied history that spans over seven decades, MV Agusta has established itself as a symbol of Italian craftsmanship, engineering prowess, and passion for two-wheeled artistry. The new 2024 lineup promises to continue this legacy, pushing boundaries, and setting new standards in the realm of performance motorcycles. Prepare to be awed as we delve into the thrilling world of MV Agusta's latest creations, exploring the bikes' technological innovations, remarkable designs, and the seamless fusion of power and elegance.

## The Renaissance of MV Agusta

MV Agusta has undergone a remarkable renaissance in recent years. Following a challenging period in its history, the brand has experienced a rebirth, infused with fresh ideas, investments, and a renewed focus on innovation. The 2024 lineup represents the culmination of this rejuvenation, a testament to the brand's enduring spirit and determination to reclaim its position at the forefront of the motorcycling industry.

## The Striking Aesthetic Appeal

Every MV Agusta motorcycle has long been revered as a masterpiece of art on wheels, and the 2024 models are no exception. Drawing inspiration from

the brand's rich heritage and blending it with futuristic elements, the designs showcase an unparalleled visual appeal.

### 1. MV AGUSTA F4Z: ARTISTRY IN MOTION

Leading the charge in the aesthetics department is the MV Agusta F4Z, an exclusive limited-edition model that exemplifies bespoke craftsmanship. The F4Z embodies the vision of the renowned design studio Zagato, which collaborated closely with MV Agusta to create this remarkable piece of artistry on two wheels. With a limited production run, this exquisite motorcycle is a collector's dream come true.

The F4Z boasts a unique carbon-fiber bodywork, handcrafted with meticulous

# MV AGUSTA 2024

## REDEFINING PERFORMANCE AND ELEGANCE

Revolutionary Design, Cutting-Edge Technology, and Unmatched Thrill

WORDS + PHOTOS: BRENT TOPINE







attention to detail, and a captivating silhouette that pays homage to classic MV Agusta designs while infusing it with modern flair. The striking twin exhausts and the aggressive front fascia make a bold statement, demanding attention and admiration wherever it roams.

## 2. MV AGUSTA SUPERVELOCE 850: A SYMPHONY OF SPEED

The Superverloce 850 continues to captivate enthusiasts with its timeless elegance and electrifying performance. Inspired by MV Agusta's glorious racing heritage, the Superverloce 850 balances the art of yesteryear with the technology of tomorrow. It's an amalgamation of vintage charm and cutting-edge engineering, allowing riders to experience the glory days of racing without sacrificing modern comforts.

The distinctive round headlamp, classic circular instrument cluster, and iconic bubble fairing pay homage to MV Agusta's legendary racing machines,

while the latest electronics package and state-of-the-art chassis provide a thrilling and dynamic ride. The bike's unique exhaust note further reinforces its status as a true symphony of speed.

## 3. MV AGUSTA TURISMO VELOCE LUSSO SCS: THE ULTIMATE TOURING COMPANION

For the adventure-seeking touring enthusiasts, the MV Agusta Turismo Veloce Lusso SCS represents the pinnacle of travel-oriented performance. With its advanced Semi-Active Suspension System (SCS), the Turismo Veloce Lusso effortlessly glides over varied terrain, ensuring supreme comfort and confidence during long journeys.

Equipped with a powerful 798cc inline-three engine, the bike delivers ample torque across the rev range, making it a formidable companion both on winding mountain roads and open highways. The Lusso variant adds a touch of luxury with premium amenities, including a

top-notch infotainment system, heated grips, and an array of luggage options for extended travels.

## 4. MV AGUSTA RUSH 1000: THE RULER OF THE STREETS

In a world of super naked, the MV Agusta Rush 1000 commands attention with its radical design and jaw-dropping performance. Aptly named, this motorcycle exudes a sense of urgency, enticing riders to unleash its mighty power on the streets. From the first glance, the Rush 1000's brutal yet stylish aesthetic leaves an indelible mark on the mind.

Powered by a thunderous 998cc inline-four engine, the Rush 1000 delivers adrenaline-pumping acceleration and razor-sharp handling, making it a formidable competitor on the urban battleground. The aggressive bodywork, distinctive LED lighting, and sharp lines combine to create an unforgettable presence that demands respect.



## Cutting-Edge Technology

MV Agusta's commitment to pushing the technological envelope is evident throughout the 2024 lineup. Each motorcycle is equipped with the latest advancements in electronics, ensuring an exhilarating and safe riding experience.

### 1. MV AGUSTA SMART CLUTCH SYSTEM (SCS)

The MV Agusta Smart Clutch System

(SCS) is an innovative semi-automatic clutch that allows for seamless gear shifting without the need for manual clutch engagement. This technology not only enhances the rider's convenience, particularly in stop-and-go traffic, but also contributes to reduced rider fatigue during long journeys.

### 2. FULL-COLOR TFT DISPLAY

Across the entire 2024 lineup, MV Agusta has introduced high-resolution full-color TFT displays.

These sophisticated instrument panels provide riders with a wealth of information at their fingertips, including navigation, connectivity with smartphones, tire pressure monitoring, and multiple riding modes, all within a visually appealing and user-friendly interface.

### 3. MV RIDE CONTROL

The MV Ride Control system is the brain behind the 2024 models' dynamic handling. It integrates various



components like ride-by-wire throttle, traction control, and multiple riding modes to optimize performance based on riding conditions. With MV Ride Control, riders can customize their motorcycle's behavior to suit their preferences, making every ride truly personalized.

#### 4. CORNERING ABS AND TRACTION CONTROL

Safety is a top priority for MV Agusta, and the 2024 lineup showcases an advanced Cornering ABS and Traction Control system. This technology provides enhanced stability and control during braking and acceleration, even when leaning into corners. The result is a more confident and enjoyable riding

experience, regardless of the road conditions.

### The Heart of Performance

At the heart of every MV Agusta motorcycle lies a meticulously engineered powerplant, delivering an intoxicating blend of power, performance, and soul-stirring sounds.

#### 1. INLINE-FOUR MASTERPIECES

The MV Agusta F4Z and Rush 1000 are powered by MV Agusta's signature inline-four engines. Known for their ferocity, these engines have been refined to deliver even greater power and efficiency. The F4Z's 998cc powerplant roars with an exhilarating

217 horsepower, while the Rush 1000's 998cc engine churns out a staggering 208 horsepower. Both engines showcase MV Agusta's expertise in maximizing performance without compromising reliability.

#### 2. THREE-CYLINDER MAGIC

The Superverloce 850 and Turismo Veloce Lusso SCS boast MV Agusta's renowned 798cc inline-three engines. The Superverloce 850's power delivery is carefully tuned to evoke the emotions of classic racing, with 151 horsepower at your command. The Turismo Veloce Lusso SCS, on the other hand, provides 125 horsepower of touring bliss, perfect for conquering endless miles of adventure.

### Conclusion

As MV Agusta steps into the future with its 2024 lineup, the motorcycle world can expect nothing short of pure excellence. These machines are more than just motorcycles; they are the embodiment of passion, artistry, and a relentless pursuit of performance perfection. MV Agusta has reasserted itself as a trailblazer, reshaping the landscape of high-performance motorcycles and showcasing the boundless potential of Italian engineering.

Whether it's the awe-inspiring aesthetics, cutting-edge technology, or the heart-stopping power, each motorcycle in the 2024 lineup promises to deliver an unforgettable riding experience. These two-wheeled masterpieces are a testament to MV Agusta's unwavering commitment to excellence, firmly cementing the brand's position among the finest in the motorcycling world. So, get ready to embrace the future of motorcycling with the MV Agusta 2024 lineup—where elegance meets power and innovation transcends boundaries. It's time to unleash the thrill of a lifetime. 🇮🇹





# MAM

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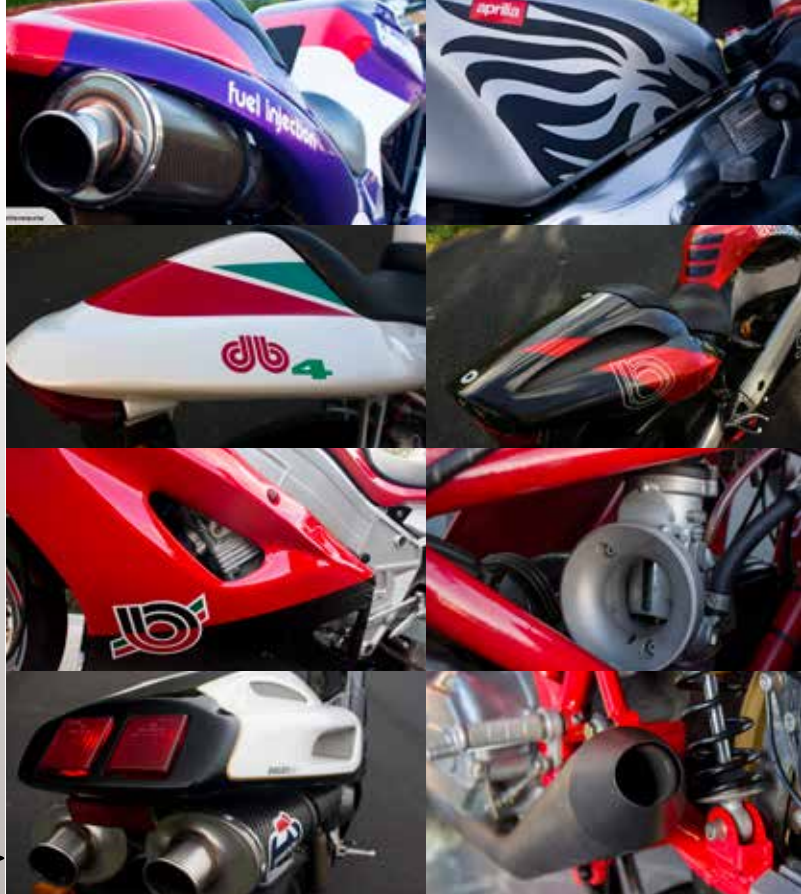
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The Aprilia logo is displayed in white lowercase letters on a red rectangular background.

# TUAREG 660

WORDS + PHOTOS: TERRY PARLANE

My RSV4 is getting neglected sitting in the garage. Bought the new Tuareg 660, totally enjoying it so far, but as I have been riding road bikes for a while I'm still getting my head around gravel / off road riding style again, been out a few times and she is a beast in the gravel. Looking forward to adventure and roads off the beaten track.



## SPECIFICATIONS

<b>Engine</b>	659cc, liquid-cooled, parallel-twin
<b>Power</b>	60 kW
<b>Torque</b>	68 Nm
<b>Transmission</b>	6-speed
<b>Seat Height</b>	850 mm
<b>Weight</b>	193 kg (dry)
<b>Fuel Capacity</b>	20 litres
<b>Suspension</b>	Fully adjustable front fork, rear monoshock
<b>Brakes</b>	Dual 320mm front discs, 260mm rear disc, ABS
<b>Tyres</b>	Front - 90/90-21, Rear - 150/70-18
<b>Price</b>	Starting at NZ\$17,999





## Introduction:

The 2023 Aprilia Tuareg 660 is the Italian manufacturer's highly anticipated foray into the mid-size adventure motorcycle segment. With its striking looks, impressive specifications, and a rich heritage of racing prowess, the Tuareg 660 has been eagerly awaited by adventure enthusiasts. It's a bike that promises to blend performance, versatility, and rugged capability in one thrilling package.

## Design

Aprilia has done a commendable job in terms of design. The Tuareg 660 boasts a bold, aggressive stance that's both modern and purposeful. The dual-headlight setup up front, the high windscreen, and the sharp lines give it an unmistakable presence on and off-road. The tall, adjustable windshield and comfortable, spacious seat make long-distance travel a breeze. It's a head-turner, for sure.

## Performance

The heart of the Tuareg 660 is a 659cc parallel-twin engine that produces a healthy 80 horsepower and 50 lb-ft of torque. This engine provides ample power for highway cruising and off-road adventures alike. The throttle response is smooth, and the power delivery is linear, which makes it suitable for both beginners and experienced riders.

The 6-speed transmission is precise, and the bike has a slipper clutch for smoother downshifts. This is a versatile motorcycle that's equally comfortable crawling over rocky terrain or cruising on the open road.

## Handling and Suspension

Aprilia has paid attention to the suspension, with a fully adjustable fork up front and a rear monoshock. This setup allows riders to fine-tune the bike to their liking. Whether you're tackling rough trails or enjoying twisty backroads, the Tuareg 660 handles with confidence and stability.

## Brakes and Safety

With dual 320mm front discs and a 260mm rear disc, the Tuareg 660 has ample stopping power. The ABS system provides additional safety and can be adjusted for off-road use, a nice touch for those who plan to take this bike onto the trails.


## Off-Road Capability

This Aprilia is not just for the asphalt; it's a true adventure bike. The 21-inch front wheel and the 18-inch rear wheel, combined with the long-travel suspension, allow it to handle challenging off-road conditions. It's an excellent choice for riders who want to explore both on and off the beaten path.

## Price and Value

Starting at \$17,999, the Tuareg 660 offers a compelling package in terms of both features and performance for its price point. It competes favorably with other mid-size adventure bikes and should be on the radar for anyone looking to venture into this segment.

## Conclusion

The 2023 Aprilia Tuareg 660 is a captivating addition to the adventure motorcycle market. It combines Italian style, impressive performance, and off-road capability in a package that's accessible to a wide range of riders. Whether you're a seasoned adventurer or a newcomer to the world of adventure riding, the Tuareg 660 deserves serious consideration. It's a versatile machine that will take you on unforgettable journeys, both on and off the road. 









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# THE LONG WAY TO FOR THE IMOC

**FOR SEVERAL YEARS** I've wanted to ride over the Acheron road through Molesworth Station at the top of the South Island, but I don't fancy doing it alone through that remote countryside with around 200 kilometers of gravel – who knows what could go wrong! This year's mid February IMOC AGM in Hanmer Springs seemed like the perfect opportunity, so I put up a ride on HelloClub and got a handful of like-minded participants, so it was all on! Then came Cyclone Gabrielle which brought widespread destruction to many parts of the North Island, and our famously unreliable Interisland ferry service with broken boats that meant even if we managed to get across Cooks Strait, we were unlikely to be able to get back again, so the AGM was postponed until the end of April by which time the Molesworth Station would be closed. Buggar – time to make new plans.

Several people who had originally planned to attend the AGM in February unfortunately could not make the new late April date and pulled out, but that change of date meant a number of other members could now get there. One of those new attendees was David Jones, who rides the same Moto Guzzi V850TT as mine. I've traveled with Davey Jones several times in the past and he was happy to accompany me on this trip as long as there was no gravel involved. Brian Hewitt initially also put his hand as well but then got cold feet when he realized David was coming and pulled out – seems he was worried about potential liver damage!

David suggested we include one of his favorite stops – Takaka. Sounded good to me and I was looking forward to riding over the famous Takaka Hill road for the first time. I hate heading straight to a destination like Hanmer Springs and straight back which to me is like commuting and that's not why I ride an Italian bike. So I planned a non-







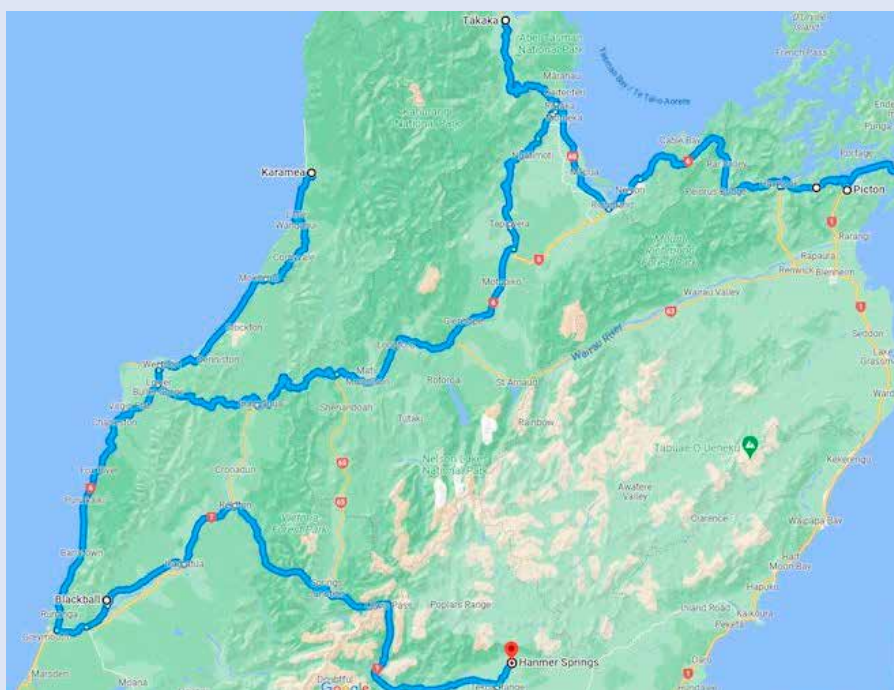
# HANMER SPRINGS

## 2023 AGM RALLY

WORDS + PHOTOS:  
NEVILLE MCGRATH

commuting 'tour', trying not to cover too many kilometers each day – keeping below 400 if possible. The route we agreed upon on was day 1 to Wanganui, day 2 Picton, day 3 Takaka, day 4 Karamea at the top of the West Coast, day 5 Blackball and then to Hanmer Springs on the sixth day.

Steve Allan-Wright decided to accompany us as far as Whanganui, and possibly on to Wellington the next day where there was a bike he had put an offer on and was hoping to pick up for a bargain. The day we left was overcast and threatened rain several times, but we got nothing more than a sprinkling a couple of times. The route took us from Auckland, down through Tuakau and onto Highway 22, turning right at Waingaro to head towards Raglan, then left onto Highway 23 for a few kilometers and right onto Te Pahu Road just before Whatawhata to get to Pirongia, then to Otorohanga for coffee and a snack. From there we headed back a bit and up the Waitomo Valley Road (my favorite) and then Fullerton Road to come out near Te Kuiti from where we travelled towards the place formally known as Bennydale (now Maniaiti which confused me). I've been this way a couple of times before but only following others who know the route and I wasn't sure how to get to the road that dissects the Taumaranui / Te Kuiti road (I only knew it's where the Timber Trail bike track comes out). There was, like, one person in Bennydale – a toothless truckie who gave me half his life story as well as directions back to the road we should have turned up. Taumaranui was the next stop for fuel and then to National Park for refreshments at the Schnapps Bar (met another Guzzi rider who works at the 'Park' and remembered Davey Jones from the time he and a bunch of IMOCers drank the bar dry of Jägermeister – they have special reserve



bottles now for the next time!) before carrying on through the Paraparua to Whanganui to stay at the Grand Hotel.

Unfortunately I might have mentioned to Davey Jones that Steve doesn't mind a 'drop' (sorry Steve). If you have ever travelled with Davey Jones you would know that he too quite likes a drop or five – particularly the afore mentioned Jägermeister. By the time I had sorted myself out and wandered down to the bar at the Grand, David already had a round of Jaegers waiting. Can't say I remember too much about the evening after that but looking at the photos David provided I obviously enjoyed myself – at least until the following morning!

I can't figure out how Davey Jones does it – he seemed his usual cheery self the next day while I had difficulty moving, thinking, talking, and the several Panadol I took did little to resolve the problem. Luckily the road from Wanganui to Wellington is boring so I didn't miss anything interesting. Steve headed back to Auckland while

David and I headed to Wellington to catch the 2:30pm ferry. Got there in plenty of time but the boat was late, and then they told us the crossing was cancelled due to high seas and we had to re-book the next available boat which turned out to be 2:00am! Shit!! No way we would be stopping over in Picton that night so David and I booked into a local motel to have somewhere to rest and put our gear. The only conciliation was that we couldn't get on the piss again because we needed to ride to the ferry at 1:00am. I don't think I could have taken another session like the previous night, but David was disappointed to miss the Jaegers.

In the evening we walked to an Indian Restaurant where David admitted that Wendy doesn't like spicy food and he does, so he ordered 'VERY HOT' curry. I've enjoyed curry all my life and don't mind it hot – but what we got was extreme and neither of us could finish the meal, and we couldn't complain because we got what we ordered!

We turn up at 1:00am at the





Bluebridge terminal and the boat was late again, and in the end it didn't leave until about 4:00am. The crossing was normal – no big swells that they had been worried about earlier, and we got off the boat some time before 8:00 I think. Whatever time it was, it was bloody cold and got progressively colder until my bike registered 4 degrees as we passed through Rai Valley. We had put on our wet weather gear before leaving the boat just to keep the wind out but my hands were so cold and numb (despite the heated grips and Barkbuster hand covers) that I had real trouble unzipping my gear to have a piss, and then... well I will leave that to your imagination. After a coffee (David often has two or even four double shot espressos!) it was back on the bikes and on to Motueka for fuel before we tackled the Takaka Hill.

If you have not ridden over that road it's probably one you should put on your bucket list. I know there have been issues in the last few years with slips and road closures, but they have done a great job at sorting that out and the road was in great condition and a joy to ride. Unfortunately, half way over the hill my bike threw up a red warning triangle on the dash which worried me and disrupted what should have been one of the best rides of the trip. It's still doing that from time to time but now I just ignore it – seems to be some issue with the Cruise Control.

We get to Takaka mid afternoon and were staying in the old Hotel across the road from Roots Bar which is a favorite haunt of David's. No time to settle in – it's straight across to Roots Bar for the

first of many rounds of Jägermeister. David is a very social guy and it wasn't long before we had joined in with a bunch of locals who had obviously been there for some time – seems they don't mind the Jaeger either. We were having such a good time (I think) that we forgot about dinner and continued with the liquid diet into the night.

At some stage I was getting a round and the barman told me I couldn't get one for one of the local guys – but I sort of ignored him and bought the guy a shot but gave it to his mate to pass on. The barman saw that and was pissed off – ended up banning me. I was well cut by that stage so it was probably a good thing, but then I went on to get off my face with one of the locals and ended up not being able to enter the code to get back into the Hotel we were staying at. I was sure I entered the right code but the lock wouldn't work for me so I phoned Davey Jones who came down in

his underwear to open the door for me. Thanks for that David.

The next day I was again under the weather (now I know why Brian had pulled out), but the actual weather was great and the roads were fantastic. On the way to Westport there were a few stop-go roadworks and, as I had told David and Steve at the start of the trip, I always move right to the front of the line because there is always clear road for a reasonable time once you get away. On one particular instance there was quite a long queue and we were there for ages with the road closed in both directions, but David didn't come up to the front so I got off and wandered a little way back down the road until I could see him and waved him up, but he didn't move. Turns out that while he was parked there a guy came up to him and knew his name but David didn't recall the guy so asked if he was from the truck behind. No, he was from the








and interesting with some fantastic views up the coast. We fueled up in Greymouth and headed back a few k's to the other side of the Grey River and onto the road to Blackball. Nothing wrong with that bit of road either.

The pub (let's just call it the Blackball Hilton) is always welcoming and a popular stop for motorcyclists. It may not be the most salubrious accommodation, but the beds are comfortable enough and the meals are good. And they have Jägermeister! They also have a framed letter on the wall from the law firm that Davey Jones used to work for, telling them to stop and desist from using the 'Hilton' name. The other highlight of Blackball is the Blackball Salami Company – well worth dropping in there to sample some of their product.

Fortunately Mike Noonan arrived later in the afternoon as expected, having ridden over Arthurs Pass from Christchurch to meet us at Blackball. Now there were two of us to keep David company at the bar and I could take it a bit slower for a while.

Next day was foggy and quite cold, but not raining and we made good time through to Reefton for the mandatory stop for coffee at one of David's favorite cafés. Just down the road is Nana Ni's Pies shop and I can confirm they are worth a visit. By now the sun was out and we were able to enjoy a glorious day for the ride from Reefton to Springs Junction – another fantastic bit of road with almost no traffic, which seems to be the case all over the South Island. Then on over the wonderful Lewis Pass and on to Hanmer Springs where other IMOCers who had done the commute from Auckland were starting to turn up.

The trip may only have taken six days but it felt much longer, I'm sure that could be due to having killed of quite a few unnecessary brain cells! At least that made room for the memories of this trip and the times shared with David Jones to lodge permanently I hope. David returned to Auckland after the AGM to get his guns and other stuff together for the start of the Duck shooting season while I remained riding round the South Island for another week with Brian and Geoff Daddly from Bay of Plenty – but that's another story. 

unmarked cop car behind the truck! He had noticed David who passed him earlier – but Davey Jones figured it was probably me that had passed the cop because we have pretty well identical bikes. This was a CIB car that apparently doesn't have radar.

The road through Murchison and the Buller Gorge is a joy to ride. We stopped in Westport for fuel and had a great pie from a specialist pie shop (unexpected in Westport) before heading up the coast to Karamea which is basically the end of the road up the West Coast. The road from Westport is initially flat for quite a while before heading up, tight and winding over the hills to come out at Little Wanganui, then mostly flat to Karamea where we booked into the 'Last Resort' for the night. I continued the last 20 k up to where the road actually ends and the Heaphy Track starts. I was there last year and the last five k had been gravel

but now it's sealed all the way.

The Last Resort has good accommodation and reasonable food and a bar, but they don't have any Jägermeister! What a relief – I couldn't have gone another night like the last one.

Next morning we cruised down to Little Wanganui where the pub (may have been the only building) does quite a good Whitebait Fritter. Then retraced our route towards Westport but detoured up to the Denniston plateau which could have been a fun ride except for the grit that had been spread on much of the road and was hard to see in the bright sunlight. Great views from the top though – only problem was that we had to go back down the gritted road as there is only one route up to Denniston.

From there it was on down the coast to Greymouth. Westport to Greymouth is a great part of the coast road from through Fox River, Punakaiki etc, with lots of curves but not too tight





# I'M FAIRLY SURE IT



**QUITE OUT OF THE BLUE** back in March 2017, Oliver (our youngest) decided that he would buy an investment bike and, silver-tongued cavalier that he is, convinced his older and clearly non-the-wiser brother, that they should jointly purchase a 1998 Ducati 748 SPS in yellow.

Neither had bike licenses at that stage and the bike was in Cambridge.

I was roped in to drive us all to Cambridge to view and potentially test ride said machine. Only trouble was, the guy lived down a 100 metre metal driveway, I hadn't ridden a bike for over 35 years and had never ridden a sportsbike. With the then owner's words ringing in my good ear "if you drop it you own it", I started to putter down his driveway, dragging both feet

like trainer wheels. Turned out onto the thankfully quiet road, managed to hoist my fat little legs up onto the aftermarket pegs (blingy things giving away its imported from Japan origins – presumably the former Japanese owner also riding racehorses in his spare time) and by the time I'd completed the first two gear changes, I was as sold as the boys clearly were when they first laid eyes on it.

To cut a long story short and get back to the intended narrative, the boys bought the bike and a couple of weeks later it was ensconced in the shed at Alfriston. The boys then took turns to learn to ride it up and down the quiet cul-de-sac. Learner LAMS bikes were purchased – a 650 Hyosung for Mitch and Oliver ended up with a very original

Kawasaki ZX250R 250 4 cylinder screamer, which he bought from club member Nick Ploeg. Apparently Nick couldn't work out where to hang the sidecar after ending up with the bike on a trade.

Lessons for all 3 of us were had with Pro-Rider, licences were obtained for the unlicensed and rides were ridden. More bikes came and went, many of them in very poor states when they arrived, but leaving with gleaming paint and running well. The bug seemed to have bitten and the shed was big enough unfortunately to accommodate multiple machines.

Track days for Oliver were probably where the rot really set in.

Both boys had raced karts from an early age, and whilst they were





# WAS THE MILKMAN...

WORDS + PHOTOS: RICHARD PYKETT



both were smooth and fast, Oliver was emerging as the one who would stick his nose in going into a turn and brake just that bit later.

Mitch by this stage had bought Oliver out of the 748 and Oliver wanted something a bit quicker than his 250 Kawasaki for doing track days. Enter a very tatty but mechanically solid GSXR600 Suzuki track day bike. We tidied it up, made a new alloy tail and hit on painting it in Petronus Green – Foggy’s team colour. This happened to line up very well with the rebrand Oliver had done of the Elan Brokers insurance practice since joining us.

On running the GSXR, Oliver was immediately running 15’s at Hampton on the National circuit. Bike was still on road tyres and no tyre warmers etc...







Now the bug had really bitten and the only antidote for the itch it seemed, was to join a proper race series.

A friend of Oliver's had a Hyosung 250 Cup bike sitting in the shed which happened to be the series winning machine from two seasons back. Again it was pretty tatty, covered in insulation tape and cable ties, but a couple of weeks of massaging in the shed, another litre of Foggy Petronus Green Glasurit and some Elan stickers, it looked like a race bike.

The Carl Cox Hyosung Cup series is a great starting point we were told – virtually stock bikes, road tyres etc... no horsepower to mask the lack of talent, massive fields (40+) and drafting is a must. There are 5 rounds, 4 at Hampton Downs and 1 at Taupo.

The first round was September 18th at Hampton, thankfully a dry day. Very nervous Mum and Dad looking on, Oliver obligated to wear the orange 'rookie' vest as it was his first time out in a race.

Like I said at the start of the article, pretty sure it was the milkman...

He only went and stuck it on pole in qualifying!

We were both speechless, and you could just see a number of the seasoned riders in the field of 42, querying as to 'who was that guy in the orange vest'?

#### Race results for the day were:

Race 1	6th
Race 2	3rd
Race 3	4th
Race 5	5th which gave him 4th overall for the day.

Here is a video from Race 1 which was put up by the organisers.

<https://www.facebook.com/ttkiwis/videos/1148182292575131?idorvanti=206087312738648>

A stunning start to the series for Oliver and we figured that some of the other riders must just have been having an 'off day'.

A month later we would see how things panned out for Round 2, again at Hampton Downs.

Oliver qualified on pole again by nearly half a second from the series leader, Ben Cook.

#### Race results for the day were:

Race 1	2nd
Race 2	DNF in race 2 (unfortunately tangling with series leader Ben Cook at the slowest corner and taking both of them out – which Ols was mortified about)
Race 3	4th
Race 5	5th which gave him 9th overall for the day due to his DNF in Race 2

Rounds 3 and 4 followed a similar pattern with 2nd and 3rd overall for each round.

Round 5 (final) was at Taupo, which Oliver had never even been to previously. But he qualified well and ended up 2nd for the day which gave him second overall in the championship. A stunning result for his first season, an unscathed body and largely unscathed bike.

Buoyed by his first season results, a spare bike has been purchased, he is scouring the Vans for Sale on TM and has been roped in as an instructor for new riders wanting to join the series. He just needs to rattle his dags now and make a whole bunch of insurance sales to fund his new passion. 🇮🇹









# WHAT'S NEW?

WORDS + PHOTOS: DARYL WEST-HILL

Here's a sample of the latest and greatest our Italian designers are offering us in 2023.



**WHAT DO YOU GET** when you cross an armchair with a rocket ship? The answer is a Ducati Multistrada V4 RS. In plain English, Ducati unsurprisingly have released another limited-edition bike... kind of.

While each Multistrada V4 RS sports a personalised plate stating its manufacturing number, rumour has it the numbers built will match demand.

Enough gossip, what makes this Multi different is rather than the adopting the Granturismo engine which delivers 170 hp at 10,500 rpm, Ducati instead used their 1103cc Desmosedici Stradale V4 that you would normally find in the Streetfighter V4 or Panigale V4... BOOM!

If you add the optional Akrapovič exhaust system, peak power is 192hp. Add more carbon and titanium makes this the lightest of all V4's Multi's. What you end up with is a track bike capable of touring.

How much? Estimate is \$65,000... plus \$8,000 for the optional Akrapovič exhaust system... plus panniers... plus heated grips... almost enough for an average Auckland house deposit.













## DUCATI HYPERMOTARD 698 MONO

**DUCATI HAVE WEAVED SOME MAGIC.** They have produced the most powerful mass-produced single cylinder engine ever. Allow us to introduce you to the Hypermotard 698 Mono (659cc).

Derived from the front cylinder of a 1285 cc Superquadro engine of the 1299 Panigale, the limiter is set at 10,250 rpm (no other single-cylinder engine can achieve this rotation speed). Max power is 77.5 hp at 9750 rpm. All weighing in at around 150 kg dry, it screams fun.

Fingers crossed we'll see it in NZ mid 2024 onwards. You'll find the Mono in two trims: classic Ducati Red with powder-coated frame (est. \$27,000), or in the RVE version with dedicated graphics, black frame and DQS quickshifter as standard (est. \$30,000) – go for the RVE.

How beautiful is this bike? The Hypermotard 698 Mono RVE just won the title of "Most Beautiful Motorcycle" at EICMA 2023.



# NAMASTE NEPAL



**AFTER NEARLY TWO YEARS** of planning, multiple visits to the doctors to have nearly every vaccination known to mankind the date was finally here!! 8 kiwis from the length and breadth of New Zealand and a couple from the other island met up in Singapore before the final 5 hour flight to Kathmandu – Nepal.

Our goal was to ride from Pokhara in the lakes district of Nepal up to just

under 4000m to the Muktinath temple in the Annapurna Ranges.

Being fortunate enough to share this adventure with my son made this extra special, and is one that I am sure we will talk about for many years to come!!

## **KATHMANDU**

Crikey this place is “busy” – nothing had prepared us for the mass of people and vehicles all on the move, no traffic

lights, no stop signs just a functioning horn and what we later learned extreme politeness mixed with a whole lotta craziness, what we didn’t realise was that it was festival season and we had arrived on day 5 of a 15 day festival – so this added to the experience as people were moving to temples resplendent in prayer flags and families celebrating together.

Fortunately we had planned day 1







WORDS + PHOTOS:  
STEVE ALLAN-WRIGHT

was going to be a “tame the jet lag” day and would spend the day sightseeing some of the many world heritage sites in and around Kathmandu – this included the monkey temple which was still in the process of being reconstructed after the 2015 earthquake which had devastated many of these heritage sites. The monkey’s, like all creatures in Nepal, had free range of the site, people simply moved in and

around them; the next thing we noticed was – man it was “hot” 28 degrees by 10am – we had definitely packed the wrong wardrobe!!

### POKHARA – THE RIDE BEGINS!

Not quite yet – to get to Pokhara, we had chosen to fly on one of Nepal’s domestic airlines, flying in the day before you can only describe the areas surrounding the runway as an aircraft grave yard – this is definitely where old aircraft came to their final resting place, it was also apparent that the Nepalese people were very resourceful, and were able to keep equipment going well beyond what other nations might call safe operating life – this applied not only to the fleet of buses which transported you from the terminal to your aircraft, but also to the planes themselves – we had paid a little more to fly on “Yeti Airlines” and at least this was a plane that we recognised as still flying in both New Zealand and Australian domestic routes.

Finally though the time to meet our trusty steeds arrived – the venerable Royal Enfield Himalaya was the ride we had chosen to take us on our adventures and in a nice touch; we were invited to “name our bikes” and to place prayer flags between the mirrors which had been previously blessed by a monk from one of the temples we would later visit.

We also were introduced to our guides. *See above right.*

Later to be affectionally known as “Praven - The Destroyer” and our Mechanic “Suri - The Doctor” - there was nothing on a Royal Enfield that this guy couldn’t fix and could change a punctured tyre – tube and all in 8 minutes – all though to be fair, we had no major mechanical failures which is testimony to how well these



machines are put together. We were given a list of Nepalese phrases to help us communicate; to be fair “Malai bhok chaiyo” or “I need a beer” was the one that got used the most as many Nepalese are multilingual and learn English as part of their school curriculum. A new phrase “Jam-Jam” which was code for its “time to move on” was added – perhaps something to consider on future IMOC rides? I cannot recommend this crew enough; they really turned it on to ensure that our trip was “once in a life time” and as well as the tour we did “Into Thin Air” - they offer several tours in Nepal, Tibet, India and Georgia – so if a bit of adventure riding with an added challenge of high altitude is your thing – check them out: [www.heartsandtears.com](http://www.heartsandtears.com).

And given a rough outline of where we would be going.

Finally – we are off 7.30am start “to beat the traffic” – check the bike out all safety equipment functioning - “Horn Works” – you are good to go road rules in Nepal – “ride on the left...ish” and





correct use of the safety device “one beep” – let people know you are near, “two beeps” – I intend to overtake you.

Luckily we are using “local roads” which means motorcycles and the occasional lorry and or bus...what they failed to explain was that on an ordinary two lane road, there could be up to 4 lanes of live traffic moving in opposite directions, and that as you could get a motorcycle license at 16 but had to wait until you were 21 to get your car license, that the motorcycle was the transport of choice, most under 150cc could carry up to 5 members of the family ranging from new borns to mum sitting side saddle, on her cellphone or calmly brushing her hair...only the rider had to wear a helmet.

Guides worked out that we were all competent riders and changed the routes for the rest of the tour to the “more challenging” this included the first suspension bridge crossing – which was the “test” to see how we got on...no traffic or pedestrians so was considered one of the easier bridges. We were still below 1000m at this stage so scenery was generally lush and green.

Overnight was at a BnB style accommodation with a home cooked meal on a private farm, in share twin style rooms – very western in style except the beds were incredibly firm, this turned out to be pretty standard for the remainder!

None of us got past the entrée such was the size and variety of foods that were laid on for us to try, we also made a donation to the owner to take an

injured dog living on the property to the vet the next day.

The next morning we walked out of the accommodation to be greeted by a vista of hills and valleys, none of this had been visible when we arrived because of the cloud/haze which had built up during the day – this was a taste of things to come!

Today we enjoyed a lot of single-track riding; including some seriously steep down-hill sections, my bike was idling at nearly 3000rpm and I cooked the back brake about third of the way down the first decent, front brake only combined with no effective engine braking – was extra glad to reach the bottom – the doctor poured cold water from his drink bottle on the caliper and turned the idle down to 800rpm – no such mishaps again. The day was spent with many river crossings, narrow paths and riding alongside hydro schemes. And small shrines which dotted the country side.

Another first which was to continue for the remainder of the trip was that kids would line the side of the road as we passed through so that we could slap their hands as we rode past – seriously humbling – also the way the older kids looked after their younger siblings was delightful.

Accommodation that night was at a place called the “Cliffs” in glamping style tents. This is the Nepalese equivalent to Queenstown with the “second highest bungy” in the world and featuring a number of “adrenalin” based challenges suspended along the sheer

cliffs on which the resort was built to keep punters amused. There were no takers from our group, having had our full of adrenalin on the ride there.

Finally we started to climb reaching just below 3000m and started to get peaks of the mountain ranges we would be spending the next 3 days exploring.

The roads were becoming much more rugged and narrow, but as these were the main passages up into the mountains, there were all manner of travelers sharing the road – no time to relax as you never knew what might be around the next bend, the roads for the most part were formed gravel surfaces consisting of mainly larger river run rock, this was okay when dry, but the smallest amount of moisture turned the surface slick, and if it rained too hard, fines were pumped to the surface turning instantly to a paste like mud – if in doubt, gas it out was the mantra of the day.

The scenery began to change as we climbed, green pastures giving way to forest, water falls and vast river plains.

A late change of plans had us keep riding further up the mountains to Kagbeni. This place had been decimated by mud slides which had swept through the village wiping out the centre, while leaving buildings on either side mostly untouched; fortunately, this included several Buddhist temples, the home of the monk who had previously blessed our prayer flags – entry into this temple was by invitation only.

The statues and figurines inside the newer temple built alongside this were







something to behold.

The views were now nothing short of breath taking from every angle; majestic snow-covered peaks and vast baron landscapes.

The highest peak in this range is 8,580m, not far below Everests' Peak at 8,800m.

The cliffs were dotted with ancient caves which were home for many people 1000's of years ago, believed to have been dug out by hand.

Accommodation that night was at "Yac Donalds" and the meal for the night was the famous Yac Burgers...a t-shirt had to be acquired!

Another phenomenon were the goats coming home at night, they had been grazing as a single herd but at night these clever animals returned home and took themselves off to their respective shelters; mainly underneath their owner's houses – this is the main street of Kagbeni.

### FINALLY - MUKITINATH

A sacred place for Hindu, but also visited by other faiths, one such person, who also gave his permission to a local hotel and café owner to use his name – lunch time venue sorted.

Put first – the temple; strangely the roads after Kagbeni were all sealed, these were paid for by the Chinese government and run all the way through Tibet to the Chinese border, this is allegedly to encourage tourism, but in reality, would aid the mobilisation of their military forces should conflict break out with India.

The scenery as we climbed higher continued to astonish, and no it wasn't still cold!

Kujo - had lived his entire life on the roof of this building, probably because of his very poor attitude – strangers were not welcome.

Finally we arrived at the entrance to the temple, and as they say – the only way is ... up; hadn't really noticed the

effect of altitude until facing this climb. Supporters to give you encouragement as you climb.

The statues at the top of the stairs were immense and can only imagine how challenging they were to construct while I waited to catch my breath for about the 200th time since starting to climb those stairs!

The reason so many come to this temple are the cleansing fountains which draw their water directly from glacial streams, these are seriously cold, and just holding your head under them for the briefest of time is enough to invoke an instant ice-cream headache, the braver (or younger and more foolish) amongst us walked the 89 fountains followed by a plunge into two pools fed by the same water.

After lunch it was time to begin the trip down, an "alternate" route was chosen for the descent, happily not a sealed road in sight - see you out there!! - Steve. 🇮🇹







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#### **How awesome is the IMOC committee?**

Very awesome thank you.