

Taraneh's first ride, a Mother's Day Present

Taraneh and I have been married 18 and a half years. She knew when we got married that I had been a racer for many years, but had never been on a motorcycle and was a little afraid of them. At the time, I only had my ATK 250, and a non-running Yamaha RD400D, so there was nothing to take her for a ride. She did not make me give up the bikes, but I sold the ATK after our second child, and found a good home for the RD400 when we moved to Iowa eleven and a half years ago.

Since then, I have wanted another bike. Two summers ago, I got to borrow my uncle's Honda 650 Hawk when we visited St. Paul. I took my daughter for her first ride, but my wife was “too busy helping to fix dinner”. Last summer, I bought a helmet and got to test ride some Victory and Triumph bikes, and at least got her to sit on a Victory for a photo.

This year, I finally found a bike I liked and could afford, a 1975 BMW R90/6. It took a couple weeks to get Taraneh to take a ride around the block. On Mother's day, I finally talked her into taking a little longer ride. She was worried that her back would not take it, since on the around the block tour we had to stop and start, and holding herself still with the rail was bothering her. I told her to relax, she could lean back on the sissy bar pad, and I showed her how to get on and off more elegantly than the first time.

To find where to go, I started looking for notices of roads, but all the roads listed on the AMA web site in Iowa were too far away. I ended up looking on Google Earth, and found some roads to the South and West of where we live in West Des Moines, in the area of Madison County and Winterset. I found a website with a map <http://www.madisoncounty.com/Map.html> on Google. The map showed paved and dirt roads, and from studying that and Google Earth, I thought I found a decent trip that would get us out, on some slightly curved roads, and we could see some of the historical bridges. We never saw the movie, but it looked like a nice ride for a first experience.



I have wanted to take her for a ride so she could feel the wind, see the world around us, experience the acceleration and feel the freedom that I knew. My wife made me promise that we would turn back if her back started bothering her, and started from West Des Moines down I35, about 20 miles to St. Charles to see the **Imes Bridge**. Her back was fine, it was not as scary as she thought it would be, so we set off to the next stop. The road from St. Charles to Winterset had some mild curves and there was little traffic. We just passed the turn to the gravel road to get to **Holliwell Bridge**, though. I hand signalled right and then made a quick stop to the shoulder of the road to let the pickup behind us go by. We then turned around and set off down the gravel road to Holliwell at a slow 25 MPH pace. After all, we were on a slash 6, not a GS model BMW.

After a few twists and turns, we arrived at the bridge. We went around the bridge and back to the far side. Taraneh decided it was too much trouble to take off her helmet. After taking a couple pictures, we met a couple on the bridge with their dog and I offered to take their picture together. I asked if they could take a picture of Taraneh and me with the bike and the bridge. They asked if we had found the Cutler-Donahoe Bridge, and I explained that we did not get that far yet, we were coming from the opposite direction. I did have a map from the internet.. They had a map too from the local tourist office, but it did not have the detail of Winterset that showed which street to take. The wife commented that her husband would probably prefer our mode of travel instead of their Honda minivan. We talked a little about the bike, that I recently bought it, that this was my wife's first ride as a Mother's day present.





The couple left and we went and looked at the bridge a little more before heading out. We followed the gravel road to town, still keeping it slow. The City Park was just near the East side of town, and we pulled into the parking lot for the **Cutler-Donahoe Bridge**, next to the van from that couple. We walked through the bridge and took a couple pictures, then on to the **stone bridge** nearby.





After that, we stopped in town for some ice cream and a break before heading back.

We went North to where we had to choose to go North on highway 169 with a lot of traffic to I80 or head East on highway 92 with none. We went East to where there was a sign for the **Cedar Bridge**. There was a closed motorcycle shop on the corner. After a short ride on a gravel road, we came on the last bridge we would visit. We got a couple last pictures before riding over the bridge.



The ride on Cummings road from Winterset was actually kind of fun, a two lane in good shape with enough sweepers to give Taraneh some experience with them without wearing us out. I slowed on the straight parts so we could accelerate through the curves. She said it reminded her of a roller coaster, a little scary but exhilarating at the same time. We got home about 2 and a half hours and 70 miles from when we left.

By Alan Prosser

AMA Charter Life Member #516175 (since 1973)

West Des Moines, Iowa

1975 BMW R90/6