

DECEMBER 2015

Backroads

Volume 21 No. 12

Motorcycles, Travel & Adventure

Westward Ho!

**Touring Western Canada
with Edelweiss Bike Travel**

FIRST RIDE • KAWASAKI VERSYS 1000 LT

GPS TECH TIPS • HOLIDAY GIFT IDEAS

Westward Ho!

Exploring Western Canada with Edelweiss Bike Travel

When the name Edelweiss Bike Travel surfaces in any adventurous motorcyclists' conversation, the talk will inevitably be guided towards the mountains of Europe - the Alps, the Dolomites - and the great riding to be found in and around Germany, Austria, Switzerland and Italy. Rightly so, as this tour company has long been known for its high-end touring through this part of the continent.

But, what if we talked Edelweiss Bike Travel and looked to the mountains, not of Europe, but of North America's west? Instead of crossing the Atlantic to search out some serious mountain passes we simply crossed our own continent to find them. This is what we did last summer when we joined Edelweiss' Canada West Tour and set out to explore the fantastic Rockies with our neighbors in Canada.



words: Brian Rathjen
images: Brian Rathjen + Shira Kamil



Our tour would have its start and finish in the city of Seattle, and Shira and I flew in a few days early to take in the sites of the "Emerald City."

Pike Place Market seemed a great place to start, with a bit of browsing and breakfast on the

waterfront, followed with a visit to the Space Needle and the EMP Museum that, with its wide and varied exhibits, will appeal to almost everybody, before we headed underground to learn about the city's interesting and slightly bizarre past.

That night we notched another Major League Ball Field off our 'to-do' list with a couple of seats at the stadium with the Mariners (Mariners over Angels 5 to 0) and the next day we spent hours seeking out some of the greatest aircraft at the Museum of Flight.

FUEL YOUR HOLIDAY SAVINGS



138 Orange Ave (Route 202), Suffern, NY
845-357-1190

www.locomotionpowersports.com

STOP BY TODAY FOR INCREDIBLE OFFERS AND UNBEATABLE SERVICE.

RESTRICTIONS: *Offers valid from 11/01/15 - 12/31/15 on select new 2010-2016 Polaris® Off-Road Vehicles. Youth models excluded. Does not apply to prior purchases. Rates as low as 2.99% for 36 months are available. Approval, and any rates and terms provided, are based on credit worthiness. Fixed APR of 2.99%, 6.99%, or 10.99% will be assigned based on credit approval criteria. 72 months financing available with rates as low as 7.99% based on approval and credit worthiness. Fixed APR of 7.99%, 10.99%, 13.99% will be assigned based on credit approval criteria. Other financing offers are available. See your local dealer for details. Minimum Amount Financed \$1,500. Maximum Amount Financed \$50,000. Other qualifications and restrictions may apply. Financing promotions void where prohibited. Offer effective on all new and unused 2010-2016 Polaris® Sportsman, RANGER, RZR® and ACE® models purchased from a participating Polaris® dealer between 11/01/15 - 12/31/15. Offer subject to change without notice. An example of monthly payments required on a 36-month term at 2.99% is \$29.09 per \$1,000 financed. An example of monthly payments required on a 36-month term at 6.99% APR is \$30.87 per \$1,000 financed. An example of monthly payments required on a 72-month term with a Fixed APR of 7.99% is \$73.51 per \$1,000 financed. See participating retailers for complete detail and conditions. Approval, and any rates and terms provided, are based on credit worthiness. Applies to the purchase of all new Sportman, RANGER, ACE, and RZR models made via the Polaris Installment Program from 11/01/15 - 12/31/15.

WARNING: Polaris® off-road vehicles can be hazardous to operate and are not intended for on-road use. Driver must be at least 16 years old with a valid driver's license to operate. Passengers, if permitted, must be at least 12 years old. All riders should always wear helmets, eye protection, and protective clothing. Always use seat belts and car seats or child safety equipment. Never engage in stunt driving, and avoid excessive speeds and sharp turns. Riding and alcohol/drugs don't mix. All riders should take a safety training course. Call 800-342-3764 for additional information. Check local laws before riding on trails. ©2015 Polaris Industries Inc.



All in all we really enjoyed Seattle and would like it even more if you could get a decent cup of coffee in this town. That's a joke, as there seems to be a Starbucks on every corner. Wearing Dunkin Donut hat here might be as dangerous as wearing Mets' colors in Philly!

We find that tours like Edelweiss' Canada West will, many times, offer an excellent opportunity to explore a city that we might normally avoid or ride around, as urbanized city fans we are not, and Seattle didn't disappoint.

As I said, Edelweiss is so well known for the Alps, but we felt they would do an excellent job here in the Pacific Northwest. Couple this with the fact that neither Shira nor I had ever ridden this far north in this region and we knew this would make an excellent touring piece for our readers and so we eagerly signed on.

After a few days touring around the city we met up with the rest of our group - made up from a number of riders from Europe, Australia, Mexico and the United States, along with our guides, Marco and Franz, who hailed from Germany and Italy; we represented a nice cross section of Terran riders.

Seattle to Chelan, Washington

The next morning we shuttled over to pick up the machines, all modern and sound motorcycles, from Seattle's Eagle Rider shop. Like our group, the machines were diversified as well - with a spattering of British, Japanese, American and the ubiquitous German BMW machines.

POLARIS® HOLIDAY SALES EVENT

REBATES UP TO

\$1500

FINANCING AS LOW AS

2.99%



ONE STOP SHOPPING
Helmets • Gear • Accessories • Service
Gift Certificates Available



For this trip we would be two-up on the new 2015 BMW R1200 RT. I had wanted to ride this bike since its faltering introduction last year and this journey around the "Specific Northwest" would be the perfect opportunity to put the RT through its paces.

Picking up the bikes was a breeze and I was more than impressed with Eagle Rider and their Seattle shop; a four-helmet rating for sure.

We were warned about Monday morning Seattle traffic but growing up in New York made this commute to the suburbs a cake walk.

Soon we were heading east along the foothills of the Cascade Mountains. Our first stop was to Snoqualmie Falls. At 268 feet high, 101 feet higher than

1269 DOLSONTOWN RD
MIDDLETOWN NY 10940

CYCLE MOTION

845-343-2552 • WWW.CYCLEMOTIONINC.COM

Cycle Motion is your provider of motorcycles, ATVs, scooters, snowmobiles, and utility vehicles by Kawasaki, Suzuki, Polaris, Yamaha and Can-Am. With a large parts department, qualified service technicians and a full shop full of parts and accessories, we're here to meet all your power sport needs.

For every rider - on or off road, whether they like doing it in the dirt, carving the twisties, or cruising the backroads, we have their weapon of choice.



YAMAHA



POLARIS



Kawasaki
Let the good times roll.



SUZUKI



can-am BPF

Hamlin Cycles LLC

Authorized
MOTO GUZZI
Dealership

Jim Hamlin
Factory trained
Triumph
&
Moto Guzzi
Technician




"Motorcycle storage
long or short term
available for \$80
per month"

www.HamlinCycles.com
Hours: Tuesday to Friday 9am to 6pm
Saturday 9am to 4pm

44 Grassy Plain Street (Rt. 53)
Bethel CT 06801
phone: (203) 942-2232
Fax (203) 942-2687

Niagara Falls, they draw a million plus visitors each year, but the odd truth is that these falls were made truly famous in the opening shots of David Lynch's television show Twin Peaks – an odd show all by itself.

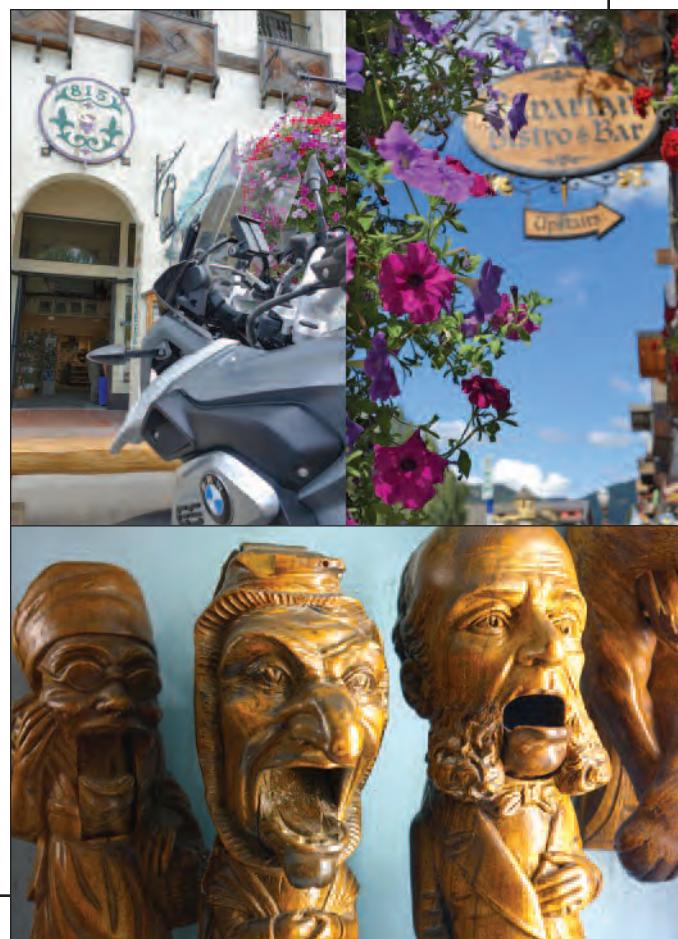
Where's the Log Lady?

Our route choices over the peaks from here were limited but we found our way east doing our best to avoid the Interstate and riding up along Route 2. We crossed Stevens Pass and found a small hotel lunch stop in the train town of Skykomish.

Route 2 offered some great vistas and eventually the road wound down into the Bavarian-style town of Leavenworth. Like most of the old Washington towns along these peaks it was prospecting and the trains that gave them life for years and when both went away so did much of the livelihood in these parts. In Leavenworth during the 1960s some bright fellows came up with the idea of using the mountains that surrounded the town to their advantage and convinced a few of the shop owners to redo their buildings in a more Bavarian Alpen-style.

Today this town is more German than Munich. Yes, it is touristy but still has its charms, ice cream and a museum with the largest collection of Nutcrackers on the planet. You knew we'd find something like that, didn't you?

Fully fueled and sugared we continued east along 2 with the topography quickly morphing from the green and damp mountains of the western Cascades to the drier high desert that you'll find along most of this part of the state.



Heavily irrigated, fruit trees lined the roads for miles with pears, cherries and other fruit just coming into season this time in July.

We made a note to find a fruit stand or two, over the next few days.

We found Route 97 and rode it north into the town of Chelan, named for the lengthy, narrow lake on which it sits.

This remnant of the last ice age is the largest lake in Washington, some 50 miles long, and the deepest with a depth of nearly 1,500 feet in places.

The name Chelan is the native Salish word for "deep waters."

Our first day's ride ended here and with the lake calling we went for a late afternoon swim in the remarkably warm northern lake waters.

Chelan to Nelson, British Columbia, Canada

The morning's ride found us winding our way north along the eastern edges of the Cascades and through the Okanogan National Forest. From there we'd see the first of two passes for the day at Wauconda, just over 4,000 feet and then further east along Route 20 and across Sherman Pass over the Kettle Mountain Range, which is the highest pass in Washington that is maintained all year round.

Here the land changes quickly once again with high desert giving way to miles of ancient pines and hardwood forests.



Coming off the pass, the temperatures jumped from the low 60s to low 80s in what seemed like a few miles, and one of the most important rivers in North America rolled into view as we crossed the mighty Columbia, which would be with us, in one way or the other, for the rest of the day.

Many consider this region both the beginning



and end – as, at one time, the ocean bound Salmon culture of the northwestern tribes would be meeting the High Plains people hereabouts. After Sherman Pass the region took on a distinct

flavor and we had that feeling that two-wheel travel will often give you... of leaving one environment or habitat to enter an entirely different one.

It is something that today's air travel has all but eliminated.

Our Canadian border crossing was quick and uneventful (all border crossings should be so civilized) and we took some time at a small museum in the town of Rossland.



Our route would wind along some picturesque and sweeping roads that showed how this part of British Columbia has found a way to combine big industry and power with nature and beauty.

Late that afternoon we rolled into the small city of Nelson, known as "The Queen City." We had read that there

was an impressive collection of restored heritage buildings from its glory days of the Silver Rush, but this week it looked like most of it was in reconstruction.

Still our room had a great view of Lake Kootenay, and grabbing a table at a shore-side restaurant while scanning "The Kootenay" seemed to be in order and a most excellent idea.

BMW Motorrad
USA



THE NEW S 1000 XR. RIDE WITHOUT LIMITS.

Introducing the **first adventure-sport bike from BMW**: the ultimate fusion of the best we have to offer. The dynamic performance of a sport machine. The versatility of an adventure bike. Welcome to riding without limits.

HOLIDAY GIFT CERTIFICATES AVAILABLE



MONTGOMERYVILLE CYCLE CENTER

2901 Bethlehem Pike, Hatfield, PA • 215-712-7433 • www.bmwparts.montgomeryvillecc.com

Nelson to Vernon, BC

I never wanted to do this job in the first place!

... I wanted to be...

A LUMBERJACK!

Leaping from tree to tree! As they float down the mighty rivers of British Columbia! With my best girl by my side!

Michael Palin – President of the Royal Geographical Society

Here in British Columbia there is a whole lot of beautiful nothing - miles and miles of it. Of course, some of the more popular stops will be swarming with Bus People (damn them), but for the most part it will be you, the motorcycle and nature, just the way we like to travel.



DECEMBER 2015 • BACKROADS

We eventually followed Highway 6 to Nakusp for lunch and then continued onto the short cable ferry at Fauquier across Arrow Lake (actually a widening of the Columbia River) to Needles.

Here the road got all excited again and after passing some slower ferry traffic we had a splendid time making our way to the town of Vernon, with its neat downtown coffee shops, drive-thru corn kiosks and 27 wall size murals, where we would park the bikes for the night.

Vernon to Golden BC

Although you might think with a tour such as this you are locked into riding with the group, the Edelweiss mindset has never been about this. Their paradigm has always been about your own individual ride and adventure. Each night there would be a gathering to go over the next day's ride and highlights and then again a second meeting after breakfast. Since we had routed everything on our GPS, we decided to head out before the rest of the group

It is not that we don't play well with others, and the group ride can be fun, but Shira and I have our own agenda and we, or more I, tend to stop at many historic sites and odd places and things we may come upon on the road; usually quickly and with little notice.



Continuing deeper into British Columbia we crossed the Kootenay and followed the road that closely mimicked the shoreline, weaving in and out along a perpetual ribbon of asphalt with two stupendous views – the lake to the



right and Kokanee Glacier Provincial Park to the left.

We stopped for coffee in the town of Kaslo, which is also the home of the S.S. Moyie, the oldest existing stern wheel paddleboat on the planet.

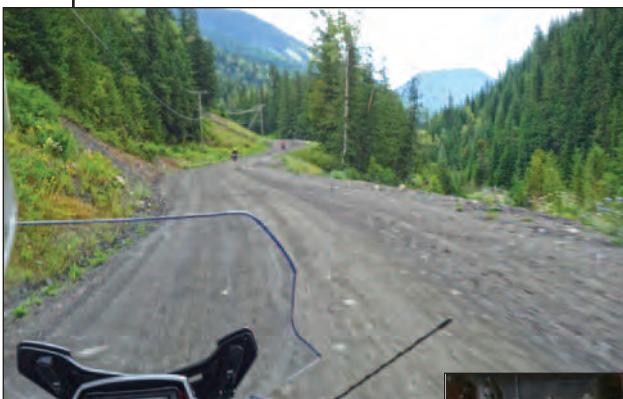
Built in 1898 she steamed on Kootenay Lake until 1957. She was the last passenger carrying sternwheeler operating in Canada and is now a National Historic Site and BC Landmark.

While chatting with a local she commented on the fake mountains that surrounded us. Fake?

"Yes," she said, "The real mountains are to the east – you'll see."

I guess we would.

This region has a true silver lining, as ore was found in 1891 and a rush was on. The town of Sandon grew to monumental size in wealth and wildness; a boomtown ripe with cash, brothels and a reputation.



When the boom went bust so did the town and Sandon faded away to become one of the best known and real-life ghost towns in western Canada. A short gravel road brought us to what is left of Sandon and we spent some time investigating the old genera-

tor, that is still running and creating power for what is left of the town, as it has since 1897, making this ghost town one of the only self-supporting powered towns in the BC.

Admission to the Silver Smith Generating Station, located just above the town and remarkably small as power plants go, is free and the machinery and turbines that still run here are a true modern day marvel. There is also an old train and a fleet of ancient and semi-restored buses to grab your attention.



This day it didn't take us long before we pulled into the Log Barn, tourist ensnarer indeed, but with a fun twist - dinosaurs, dragons, mountain goats and some of the best cherries this side of Romania.

The goats were especially entertaining, as they would climb up a terraced goat walk and then "hoof" up food folks were piling on the goat-waiter.

The goats actually brought the food up to themselves.

Was it schlocky? You know it... but fun.



As I have mentioned the railroad was fundamental in the growth of the Pacific Northwest and British Columbia. Not too far to the east we made a stop at the site of the driving of the 'Last Spike,' at Craigellachie. It was here that the completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway took place in 1885 with a large ceremony and the final railroad spike driven in - welding the east and

the west forever. As you would think there was a monument to be found here and, as if on schedule, a train came rolling by right on time for emphasis!

Our big stop for the day would be the town of Revelstoke, British Columbia. Situated at a strategic crossing of the Columbia River, and bordered by both Mount Revelstoke National Park and Revelstoke Mountain Resort, this Kootenay Mountains' city is surrounded by the impressive and towering Selkirk and Monashee mountains.

It would be our gateway east to the Canadian Rockies.

Right outside the city you will find 'Meadows in the Sky' and the twisting and steep 26 kilometer road that heads up Revelstoke Mountain through



forests of cedar and hemlock, spruce and fir to one of the most amazingly beautiful places I have ever visited. In late July through mid-August the summit of the mountain is awash with wild flowers - red paintbrush, pink mountain heather, arnica, arctic lupine and pink willowherb.

With the rugged mountains and glaciers, along with the mighty Columbia River rushing far below for a backdrop, both Shira and I agreed, it truly was one of the most beautiful and humbling places we have ever seen.

We could have spent the rest of the day here, but we still had another 100 miles to travel this day and we'd lose an hour as we rode east into 'mountain time.'

The only road going our way was the Trans-Canadian Highway, but we'd sacrifice some of the backroads for the vista to be seen on Canada 1 any day.

The day before we were told that we would see real mountains and that statement was true. The Columbia Mountains of British Columbia were awe-inspiring and had us in sensory overload.

Just east of Rogers Pass in Glacier National Park, we just gave in and stopped below one god-like mountain to drink it all in.

Spectacular.



Golden to Lake Louise, Alberta

Today might almost have been called a rest day as our next stop was just one range to the east in Lake Louise, but what a range – The Great Divide, crossing from British Columbia into Alberta. In the United States it is better known as the Continental Divide with rain and snow falling to the west meandering to the Pacific and to the east, the Atlantic. Up here it also will flow to a third ocean – the Arctic - far to the north.

Our first stop was the little whistle stop called Field and then over the Great Divide into Alberta and Yoho National Park.

Here you will find Kicking Horse Pass that was chosen as the place for the railroad to cross east to west and vice-a-versa. The one problem was the steep grade, which engineers surmounted by constructing a series of spiral tunnels that would allow the trains to pass safely.

Riding around Lake Louise we headed onto the Bow Valley Parkway and through Banff National Park.

This scenic road offers spectacular views and



the best chance of running into wildlife – sometimes literally – so we rode appropriately and did our best to save the Grizzly and Elk population.

Banff Park was everything we thought it would be and the town fun to visit as well. Yes, it was a tad crowded, but nothing outrageous and a visit to Bow Falls, beneath the splendid Fairmount Hotel, was well worth the effort.

We ran into the rest of our group as they were riding in and we out of Banff and we doubled back along the Bow Parkway, which looked completely different heading in the other direction.

Here we found a bit of unusual and unfortunate Canadian history when we ran across the Castle Mountain Internment Camps.

During World War One Canada felt it a necessary step to confine hundreds of immigrants, and some Canadian citizens as well, who hailed from the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Most of us know that the US did the same thing to thousands of Japanese during the Second World War.

I'm not here to judge what happens at these times, but I was surprised to find this piece of history here amongst this beatific local.

With plenty of time left in the day (sun set around 10 pm at this time of July) we rode back over Kicking Horse Pass and the Great Divide and returned to British Columbia to see the Takakkaw waterfall.

The 10 miles to the falls is packed with superb views and deep colors this time of the year, the confluence of the Yoho and Kicking Horse Rivers; distinct in their two different colors – the Yoho being bright green, almost like glycol and the Kicking Horse far more clear. On this road you will also run into a set of double hairpins that were designed by a drunken Satan.



Fun stuff to ride if you are ready for it.

Takakkaw meant "it is magnificent" in the native Cree; and this was an understatement. One of the highest waterfalls in Canada - this 800 foot, glacially fed, waterfall runs heavy and hard until each winter sets in and it then slows to a trickle only to become magnificent once again with the spring sun. This day it was a torrent and the walk to its base was brisk in many ways.

Our afternoon coffee was had at the Great Divide Lodge, overlooking O'Hara Lake and the snowcap peaks and glaciers.

We decided right then it would be difficult to return to riding our usual haunts with any great enthusiasm; as we had come down with a bad case of Canadian Rocky Riding Fever, and it might be a systemic and life long affliction.

Well, we all gotta have something.

Lake Louise to Jasper AB

I have a friend, Mike, who likes to say "It just keeps getting better." That about sums up this day's ride from Lake Louise to Jasper.

There was just one choice for this morning ride, and that was Highway 93, which heads north along the Great Divide, through the heart of the Canadian Rockies.

This road is more popularly called the Icefields Parkway for obvious reasons that I will soon get into.

But first this day we took a ride to the town's namesake of Lake Louise. This pristine glacial fed lake was once called the Lake of Little Fishes by the First People but the British, in their great name giving way, called it after Queen Victoria's fourth daughter Louise, who was feeling a bit left out as far as the namesaking was going.

While in the area we also headed up the road to Lake Morain, another great vista beneath the mighty peaks of the Rockies.

With the two lakes visited and checked off our list, we vectored to the Icefields Parkway and the 140 miles north to Jasper.

I have ridden many highways that claim to be



the most scenic, the most picturesque, the most stunning. I am not writing this to say that Alberta's Highway 93 is the best on the planet, as that is far too subjective. I will say it is surely one of them.

The peaks and the rivers. The bear and the elk. The wide open roadway and stupendous never-ending views.

Each mile brought something else into view, just a tad more spectacular than the last few miles we had just passed.

More than a drive, the Icefields Parkway is a journey through natural history and captivating landscapes. The scenery is simply jaw-dropping. Any ride to the Canadian Rockies would be incomplete without experiencing the sights of the Icefields Parkway. Along the way we spied dozens of ancient glaciers, cascading waterfalls, dramatic rock spires, and emerald lakes which kept my head turning to the left and right as the R1200RT went sweeping through valleys thick with pine and larch forests.

Simply put – this part of Canada should be – must be - on your bucket list!



**INDECISION BAILED EIGHT MILES BACK.
IT'S TIME TO RIDE.**

Ride with Rider. Get your quote today.

Visit rider.com or call (844) 586-0046.

Available in Delaware, Indiana, Maryland, Michigan, New Jersey, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia and West Virginia.

RIDER
SINCE 1971
INSURANCE



As is Edelweiss' way they had the first of two picnics we'd have along the Saskatchewan River. It could hardly seem to get much better as we had a leisurely lunch on picnic tables with visiting ground squirrels who knew, instinctively, that Shira was an easy target for a free lunch.



We made a stop at the Columbia Icefields, the headwaters of the mighty Columbia River. Just as the name implies these glaciers or fields of ice straddle Banff National Park and Jasper National Park and are the largest south of the Arctic Circle. They are over 200 square miles in size and nearly 1,200 feet thick and get nearly 300 inches of snowfall per year.

Like the mountains that gave them birth these icefields, and the many glaciers that they form, make you feel small and a bit inconsequential.

It is okay to feel small and a bit inconsequential from time to time - it's good for the soul.

We made another stop at Sunwapta Falls, a powerful cataract that plummets with incredible power (Class 6). These falls are fed by the Athabasca Glacier and are just another reason the Canadian Rockies impress.

We arrived in Jasper by early evening and took our room that we would call home for the next two nights, as we had a free day coming up tomorrow.

R 1200 RS
MAKE LIFE A RIDE.
Now available for your enjoyment

WAKE UP TO LIFE EVERY MORNING WITH YOUR ENGINE RUNNING.

Life is good. That's why you want to be the best. You can't break the rules of physics, but that just makes you try harder. You don't listen to anyone except the clock that ticks away your precious time. Here's your chance to defeat it. Ready? Go.

Frank's Motorcycle Sales & Service
120 Center Rd • Essex, VT
802-878-3930 • www.FranksMotorcycleSales.com/BMW.htm

Free Day in Jasper AB

Although we caught a glimpse of grizzly and mule deer the previous day, today would be 'animal day' as we ran into wapita, or elk, along the river; the male standing mighty and extraordinary, well within camera shot of the BMW.

Impressive animal.

We rode east to Miette Hot Springs. These waters were discovered about a hundred years back by miners in the area who made makeshift log pools to catch the natural flowing hot water for a quick soak after work.

Today there are four pools –two that are fed hot water from the springs and sit at about 105 degrees and two that are fed by a brook and are a chill 60.

Going back and forth was just a bit refreshing!

When we arrived, Shira was stowing her gear on the RT when she felt something come up behind her. She turned to see that a big horn sheep had come up to check her out. Looking behind her there were a dozen others. These male beasts can weigh up to 300 pounds and their horns can weigh as much as 30 pounds each.

I thumbed the starter button and looked for our escape



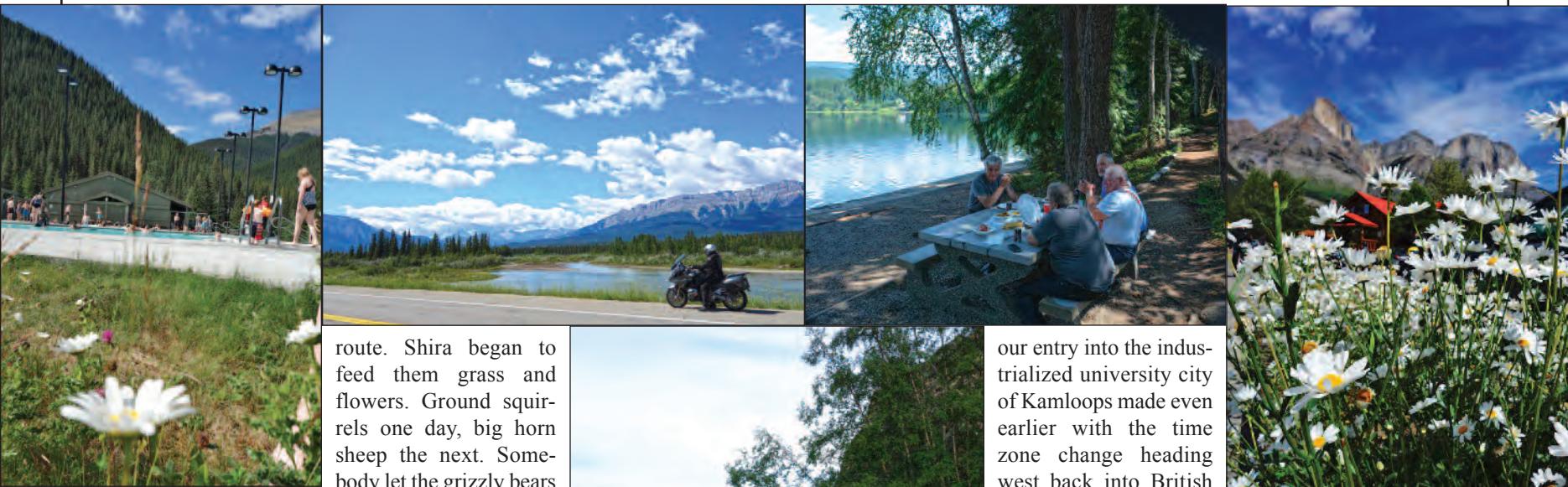
LET THE ADVENTURE BEGIN.

The NEW 2015 GIVI range is now available.



GIVI

www.giviusa.com or call 704-679-4123



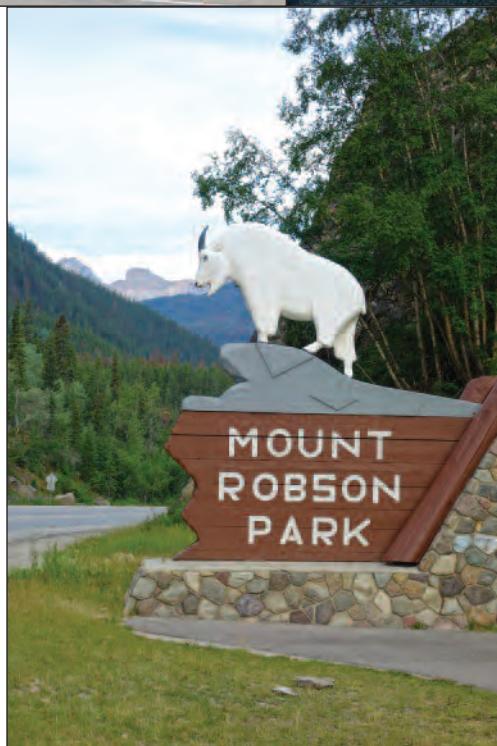
and cougars know we're in town, we wouldn't want them to miss out on a meal.

We spent some time at the hot springs, which were very relaxing, and departed once the pools got too crowded. Good to get up and out early for both the animals and the solitude. We rode back to Jasper for lunch, marveling at a small group of people who seemed to be standing Christ-like in the middle of the azure river.

It seems the sand is very high here and the water, not so much, so standing around in the middle of a river, surrounded by nature's exquisiteness, is the thing to do on a sunny and warmish Sunday.

Jasper to Kamloops BC

Today was a "small miles" sort of day and the nearly 300 miles to Kamloops were done in good time with



our entry into the industrialized university city of Kamloops made even earlier with the time zone change heading west back into British Columbia.

Along the way we passed in the shadow of Mount Robson, the most prominent mountain in North America's Rocky Mountain range and, at nearly 13,000 it is also the highest point in the Canadian Rockies.

We found a bit of shade along a well-childed lake for our second Edelweiss picnic and then Shira and I made quick time towards Kamloops, with the fantastic Rockies getting smaller in the RT's mirrors with each mile. The temperatures this day did run amok, from a brisk low 50s in Jasper that morning to near 100 along the Thompson River as we rode into the town of Kamloops.

As rugged a town as it is, its name still reminded me of some sort of Canadian breakfast cereal. Instead of Toucan Sam on the box, it would have a beaver with a toque on!



Plan now for your Ireland Adventure.

Visit our website for full details

*Multi Award-Winning Company
Officially Approved by
Tourism Ireland and Fáilte Ireland.*

Visit one of the most beautiful islands on earth.

Haunting landscapes, rugged coastlines, extraordinary roads and renowned Irish hospitality.

NEW for 2016
21 Day Wild Ireland & Highlands of Scotland Tour

Now Open - The 'Wild Atlantic Way'
The longest defined coastal route in the World.
2500km along Ireland's Western seaboard.

Our award winning, self-guided tours leave the exploring to you while taking care of all the details.

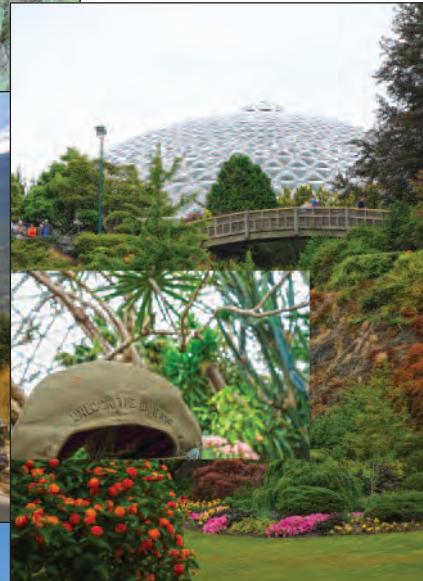
www.celticrider.com

Kamloops to Vancouver BC

The heat of the previous day broke with a good windstorm that evening and the morning found us in high 60s and sunshine as we rode on the south side of Kamloops Lake.

We followed along on the large road from the city and then took a left on the far more motorcycle-friendly Route 99, which carried us for most of the rest of this day. Along the way a large male big horn sheep, with massive sweptback horns, eyed us from the roadside.

He needn't have worried that we'd come anywhere close to him.



Free Day in Vancouver, BC

We all know Vancouver, even if you haven't been there.

For a number of reasons, mostly economical, many U.S. television shows are filmed here. MacGyver, Supernatural and Arrow among others. But for me there were three shows that really stood out that were Vancouver-made and all three had used our first main stop – the Bloedel Conservatory – for filming. The X-Files, Battlestar Galactica and (the most important) Stargate SG-1 were all created here. "Come for the tax breaks / stay for the marijuana," said one tee shirt.

Atop the highest point and the very geographical center of Vancouver, in Queen Elizabeth Park, you will find the Bloedel Conservatory.

This lush, triodetic-domed aviary (second largest in the world when built) has over 200 exotic birds and 500 unique plants in its huge aluminum and glass structure.



Near the town of Lillooet we crossed the Bridge of 23 Camels. There was no way we would pass up this marker and the huge piece of Jade standing next to it, nor the curious Kilowatt sculpture next to that.

Shira and I, with our friend Jim in tow, made a quick u-turn.

It was all very nice, but it was the camel story that grabbed Shira and my attention. Way back when, in 1862, it seems that a local portage company had the bright idea that camels would be ideal pack animals, and so 23 two humped Bactrian camels were imported from Asia to BC. But the brilliant idea soon turned into a nightmare as the high-strung beasts ate miners clothing, kicked at anything or anyone who came close, frightened other animals with their unique odor, and had their soft feet cut to ribbons on the rocky mountainous roads. So, they were abandoned by their owners and left to roam in the wilds of British Columbia.

The last of them reported to have passed away at the turn of the last century. Yet, another 'camels come to the Americas' story gone bad.

Route 99 rode into the coastal mountains and the Stein Valley Nlaka'pamux (Squamish) Heritage Park with its peaks and streams easily rivaling Jasper in many ways. Route 99 was, by far, one of the best and most funnest road of the entire trip. It's a word – trust me.

We did have a bit of rain at the summit, but the combination of clouds and light just added to the magic that was the Coastal Mountains.

The Sky to Sea Highway, as Route 99 is called, brought us closer to the coast and through Whistler, home to the 2010 Winter Olympics as we headed into Vancouver by way of the Gulf of Georgia.

Before we did, we did stop at a Tim Horton's for dessert. How could we not while in Canada?

We had a free day in Vancouver coming up and I was looking forward to exploring this Pacific Canadian city.



Yes, they have filmed many sci-fi shows here, but beyond that the conservatory is one of the neatest places and the amount of diverse birds and fauna make it a must when visiting the city.

We bussed over to Granville Island, with its large public market and shops and met George and Cheryl, friends who we met during our first Edelweiss tour of the Alps back in 1997.

Lunch right on False Creek was excellent as was the Aqua Bus we hopped, taking us back to the BC Center and our hotel.

That night we headed to Gastown, the city's oldest section and the original name of Vancouver, for dinner behind the statue of Gassy Jack (I swear), not far from one of

the world's only steam-powered clocks.

Tomorrow we'd head south across the U.S. border (if they let us) and back to Seattle on our last day of what was a memorable two weeks.

Vancouver to Seattle, WA USA

Looking to avoid the morning rush we took mostly surface streets out of Vancouver which was like riding to Long Island on Northern Boulevard in Queens, New York; it moved, but was slow.

We did finally pick up a bigger road and crossed back into the United States easily at Aldergrove.

Our first thought was to take a coastal route, but weekday traffic changed

our minds and we headed back into the foothills of the Northern Cascades and south for a good way, along Route 9, through some serious agriculture and delightful smaller towns.

After lunch we began to encounter Seattle traffic but, other than a bit of confusing signage, we all got our machines and ourselves back safely to the Seattle Eagle Rider where the motorcycles were looked over and signed off on. Ten spectacular and, at times overwhelming, days on the road were now over.

Summing it all up. . .

*There's a feeling I get when I look to the west
and my spirit is crying for leaving -*

Seriously, I have to source this one?

The few weeks on the road really enlightened, and sometimes startled me, as it had become one of our most memorable trips ever.

We expected to be impressed, but both Shira and I were blown away with this journey.

Yes, the Alps are phenomenal, the Pyrenees impressive and the Andes are so striking, but the sheer stunning vistas, topography and raw Earthy beauty of the Pacific Northwest and Canadian Rockies could very well top them all.



And, for those of you who have told me so many times that you will not leave the United States, then surely you must be willing to consider riding the northwest of the US and our neighbor above the 45th parallel?

Edelweiss offers tours all around the planet, but for right now it will be difficult for us to ride anywhere less than the Canadian Rockies...eh?

With the cold and snow coming to the northeast, it's a great time to start planning where you'll be riding in 2016. The date for the Canada West Tour is July 24 through August 5. For more information on the Canada West Tour, or any of Edelweiss' fine global travels, point your browser to:

www.edelweissbike.com.

IN LACONIA... WE RIDE
AMERICA'S ORIGINAL RIDING RALLY® ONE OF THE BIG 3®

Presenters PROGRESSIVE

HOT LEATHERS

AMSOIL
The First in Synthetics®

WEIRS BEACH

New Hampshire
visitnh.gov

Sponsored in part with funds from the Joint Promotional Program of the State of Division of Travel and Tourism

Sponsors

Official Hotel of Laconia MC Week!
Nashua RESORT

Bank of New Hampshire
New Hampshire's Bank

TWISTED TEA Hard Iced Tea

LACONIA ROADHOUSE

Pepsi

104.9 HAWK THE LAKES REGION'S FAVORITE

SYSSCO Good things come from

Budweiser The Great American Lager

For info : AMA Sanctioned National Gypsy Tour, Vintage Races, Flat Track Races, Road Races, Tours, Camping, Lodging, Vendor Space, and more check out:

WWW.laconiamcweek.com

Laconia Motorcycle Week® Association • PO Box 5399, Laconia, NH 03247-5399 • 603-366-2000

AMA

YouTube **Twitter** **Facebook**