



19. Test Ride

On the Bass Strait ferry ride, back to Melbourne, the boys were cornered by some Beemer enthusiast. This guy just wouldn't shut up, and in the end he talked the boys into test riding BMW's fleet of Gelande Strasse motorcycles (Off-road/Street). "You need to learn to say no" said Devil, pointing at Red. "We don't have to tell anyone" said Red. "You're right, we don't" said Dog, "and I don't want my Harley seen at a BMW dealer, either!"

So the boys left all their H-D paraphernalia at their camp site, and much to the surprise of the BMW sales staff, turned up in a taxi. "Where are your Harley's?" asked the salesman. Dog lied and said "we don't like to leave them in the sun all day." The salesman rolled his eyes and mumbled something about "only Harley owners....," then he said "come this way, just some paperwork for you to sign." Dog's eyes were drawn to the \$2000 excess and he gave the signal to use fake identification. "The excess is only to keep you honest" said the salesman. The boys just smiled.

Devil drew the short straw and was allocated the single cylinder G650GS. "If you don't mind me saying, this one's built for short arses like you" said the salesman. "Actually, I do mind you saying" mumbled Devil, but the salesman wasn't listening. Without asking, Red claimed the R1200GS

by tying his little esky to the luggage rack. "Going into competition with Boorman and McGregor are we?" snarled Dog while he attempted to swing his leg over the fast and furious F800GS. Bat willingly took the F800's little sister, the detuned F650GS.

"You've got the bikes all day" said the salesman and then he tapped Dog on the backside in such a way that Dog thought "crikey, the guy's gay!"

The boys slowly made their way out of inner Melbourne. At a set of traffic lights, Bat called out to Red "Don't quote me, but these bikes are pretty funky in their own sort of way." The lights changed to green before Red had chance to nod in agreement. At the next set of lights, Dog mumbled something about looking for inspiration on how to operate the indicators! "I don't think we're going to master the turn signals in just one day" called Devil. Then he zoomed ahead and nearly ran in the back of a semi trailer while fumbling with the switch that turns the indicators off!

Before long the boys were out of Melbourne and having a blast up The Black Spur. Dog led the charge and enjoyed the light, flexible handling of GS, although he'd never admit it. They had a quick lunch stop, with some other bikers, at The Narbethong Pub and then they were back on the road again,

giving the bends on the Reefton Spur some curry. "How cool is this" mused Red, "we've got the bikes all day long and not a cent to pay. That's service for you."

Red seemed thoughtful at afternoon tea and said "you know, somewhere deep in my motorcycling soul I could image owning one of these beasts." The others looked at Red as if he had consumed one cappuccino too many. "We could find the road less travelled" Red continued, "hang out in the desert, meet the locals."

"You wouldn't be saying that if you'd been riding the sin-in-in-gle all-all-day-ay-ay" said Devil pretending to stutter. "I'd rather be trapped in a fox hole than actually own a BMW" mumbled Bat. "You wouldn't fit in a fox hole" snapped Red. Dog changed the subject and said "Drink up; we'd better get these bikes back before they close up shop."

As the boys wandered back to their bikes Devil said "where's the F800?" Dog thought he was joking and said "ditched it down the road, remember?" "No, Dog, seriously, where's your bike?" said Devil. Dog felt in his pockets for the key. "Bloody hell, I must have left the key in the ignition" said Dog turning a paler shade of grey. Then there was silence. No one could believe what had happened. "What do we do now?" asked Bat. "Shut up and let me think" snapped Dog. Red, who usually had all the answers, remained silent, too. After some time, out of the mouth of Bat came "why don't we leave a Bald Bob message and get the hell out of here!"

"In the absence of any better ideas, Bat's right" said Red as he mounted the 1200. "Where are you going?" asked Bat. "No point



leaving the bikes here unless you're willing to pay the taxi fare home!" said Red. Everyone laughed. Red and Dog nearly had an altercation trying to decide who was going to ride pillion on the big GS. "You've hogged that bike all day long" said Dog. "Possession, matie, is nine tenths of the law" said Red, "now hop on."

So the boys made their way back to inner Melbourne. They parked the bikes three blocks from the BMW depot. Red left a note on the seat of the R1200GS which read "F800GS stolen from Warburton bakery!" then they caught a taxi back to camp. The tents were dismantled and the trailer was packed in record time. Just before they rode out of the caravan park, Dog sent a text to the gay guy on the sales desk. "Bikes outside Crown Casino, keys in mail. We apologise for any inconvenience we may have caused you. Yours, The Boys."

Stay Cool
The Skink



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