1972 BMW R60/5

At a certain point in my life, motorcycles began finding me, even when I am not looking for them. Tom was a good neighbor who moved away several years ago. He is an accountant, not a rider, who had a friend who rode that passed away. Tom called me out of the blue to tell me that his friend’s widow wanted this BMW out of the garage…could I help? I found the house and looked over the bike. It looked like an unfinished project that hadn’t run in many years. The battery was a goner of course, but the (sideways) kick starter was enough to confirm that the motor turned and there was some compression at least. To be fair to the grieving widow, I offered to list it and sell it for her in its current condition, or to refurbish it and then sell it. I gave an honest opinion as to value, and also offered to buy it outright at a well-below-value price while advising her that one of the first 2 options would net her the most dollars. She surprised me by telling me to buy it outright so long as I could get it out of there promptly, which I most certainly did… like the very next day.  
 With its original “Toaster Tank” chrome side panels, this machine fairly exudes classic charm. Getting the engine to run involved straightening a bent push rod (how did that happen?) and a fuel system clean out. No choke for these small bore carbs, only tickler buttons to flood the float bowls for cold starts. A new modern battery for this short frame version of BMW’s /5 line got things cranking, and an ignition tune-up got things running again. The rear shocks were frozen solid, so a fresh pair of Ikons were obtained and decorated with the slightly modified stock shrouds to maintain appearances. New tires and tubes and a handlebar switch got us on the road, then a tire pump, toolkit, and seat lock were added to complete the package. Except for later model footrest rubbers and mufflers, this bike is very original, and these non-stock items will be replaced with correct for ’72 parts when they wear out.  
 We have run R75s, R90s, and R100s over the years, but this is the first R60. The thing is, while the performance is, as one would expect, slightly more sedate, the *feel* is totally different. The smaller motor is smoother by far, and the resulting ride is pure classic boxer-motor. It is a much more pleasant experience than the larger motors. The plush suspension is Cadilac smooth which contributes to the ‘right-ness’ of the package. The drum front brake is surprisingly effective; certainly on a par with earlier hydraulic disc systems. To rush the ride would be oh so foolish and ungentlemanly. Instead, sit up proudly and putt along in Teutonic comfort, hearing the deep, even exhaust pulses, and exulting in the comfort and bullet proof feeling of confidence that this bike provides. Four speeds are plenty for an engine with a mile-wide power band. For touring, nothing more is needed, except *you* as the rider.