

Final Ride Report of 2021: "Marc's Custom Tour"

Sometimes a rider wants to do a tour, but nothing on the website schedule fits. Once, a government employee stationed overseas was in town for a few weeks in February and really wanted to ride old motorcycles. Another time, two women wanted to ride in the sidecar and do some antique shopping. This time, Marc had paid in full for a motorcycle tour through a booking agency in Europe that RetroTours *used* to list with. When that overseas tour was cancelled due to Covid, Marc found out, to his surprise, that the agency would not give him a refund, but that he could apply his several hundred dollars towards any other tour listed with them, but within a certain time limit. He was less than pleased with this arrangement, but his research into possibilities led him to contact RetroTours and a Custom Tour was created for him. His negative experience with that listing agency actually caused me to have RetroTours removed from that listing after Marc's Custom Tour.

In any case, RetroTours was located near enough that he decided to use his credit here, except that there were no scheduled tours available before his credit was to expire. Not to worry, we designed a custom tour just for the two of us which fit into his schedule perfectly and allowed him to use the credit. Although we both had our doubts, true to their word, the European agency came through with payment to RetroTours in a timely manner. In the end, Marc and I had a fine ride; actually, a one day rides and two half day rides, as I recall. To be honest, a lot of the details of our rides escape me now, but besides being a rocket scientist (really!) Marc is a prolific photographer, so I am able to review the photo files he generously sent and can reconstruct some of the details of our rides. I do clearly remember that Marc rode very well. I enjoyed his company; he spent a night here and we broke bread together for several days. Here are a few of his photos:

CX500 + CB500T

Near the end of one full day loop, we came up to a 'closed bridge'. After making some minor adjustments to the CB500T, we snuck across. I will generally ignore detour signs until I see what the issue is. If our bikes can get through safely, (and no one is around) we may go for it.



Pairs of bikes were chosen to provide interesting comparisons and contrasts when we switched bikes.



On another loop, we ran the Yamaha RD400 and the Suzuki T500. Another interesting pair for contrast and comparison, shown here at the point of departure.

Do 2 two strokes equal one four stroke?

Riding these oil burners is certainly something to be experienced. Their peaky powerbands provide a thrill that is disproportionate to their diminutive engine capacity.



Marc's personal bike at the time was a vintage Royal Enfield, so we tended to use smaller bikes that would feel more familiar. I believe that he has since graduated up to a new Royal Enfield Interceptor, so maybe this year—he is already talking about doing a scheduled overnight tour—he will opt to ride some of the big twins. I'll bet he would really love the BMW R100/7 (I do!).



On a third loop we ran the Moto Morini 500 Strada and the Moto Guzzi V50. Two 500's, each with Herron cylinder heads—the combustion chamber is cast into the piston crowns while the flat cylinder heads with side by side overhead valves cap the cylinders. The result is an engine characteristic that is smooth but spunky, and oh so enjoyable. Both of these motors are V-twins, with the Moto Morini cylinders in line like a wee Harley, while the Guzzi's V is splayed transversely across the frame, making shaft drive a logical choice. Both machines are light and handle well, but with clunky, long-throw gear change. Again, interesting contrast and comparison.

So those are the bikes that we rode. Here are some of the sights that we saw:



ABOVE LEFT: The Pinnacles, overlooking the mighty Susquehanna River.



ABOVE RIGHT: The Reading Pagoda.

RIGHT: The Haines Shoe House near York, PA.

BTW, did I mention that Marc likes to take self-ies?

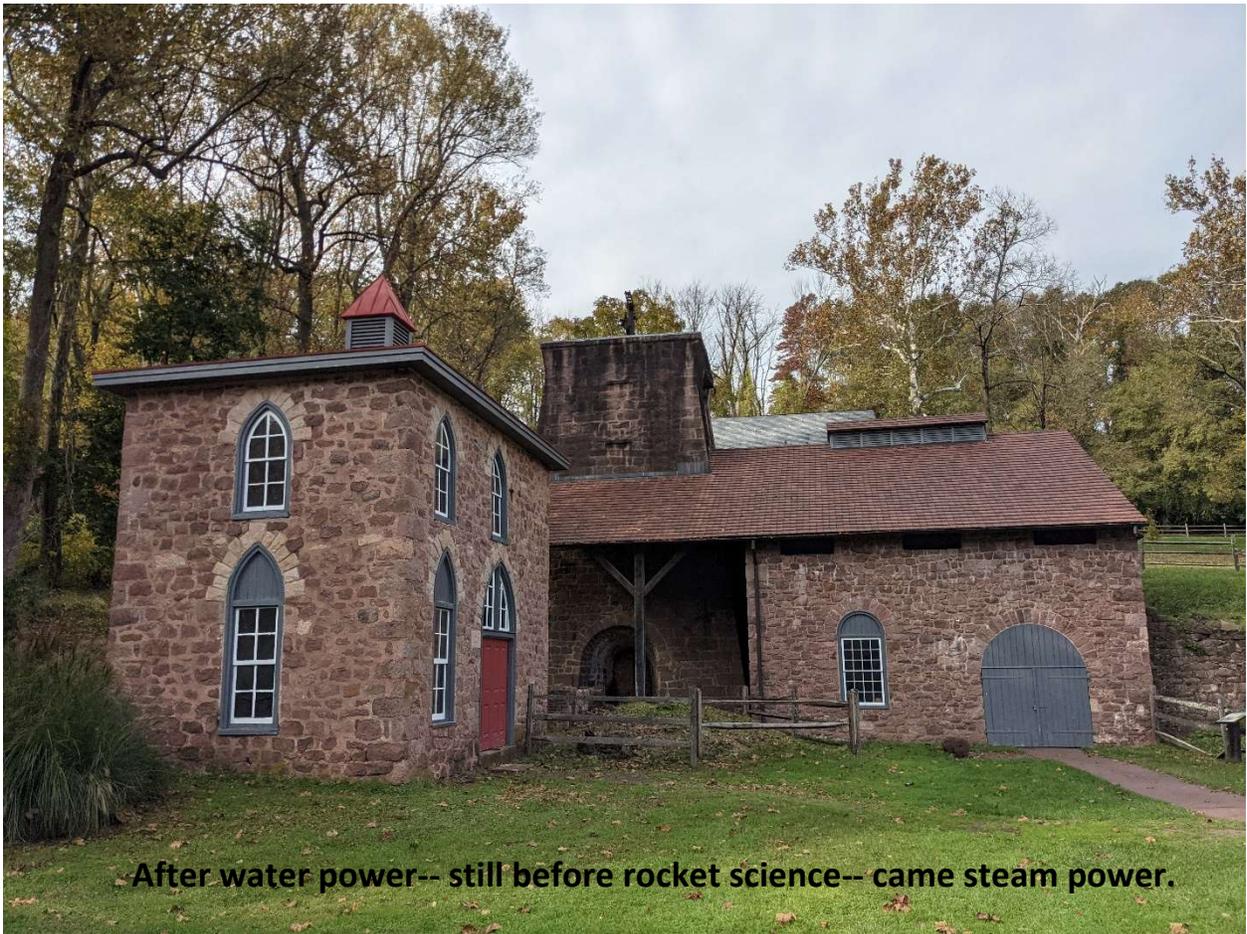
OK, I will admit that I took the bottom picture, but he made me do it, I swear.







Before there was rocket science, there was water power!



After water power-- still before rocket science-- came steam power.



Close-up shot of the Moto Morini transmission, remarkably similar to an early sawmill transmission.



It's not just about the bikes, it's also about the people: enthusiasts all, each with a fascinating story. Oh, and also about the food...thank-you Lynn.

On a RetroTour, especially a Custom Tour, adventure awaits, whichever road you choose.

Thank-you Marc for all the great pictures.

