



# Sport Touring News

February 08

Editor: Gregg Mitchell

## MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT!

Saturday, February 23, 2008, we will be meeting at **Karl's Cabin** restaurant in Plymouth, MI. Karl's is located on **Gotfredson Road, just north of M-14**. From I-275 / I-96 take M14 West towards Ann Arbor. Gotfredson Road is exit # 15.

**The meeting begins at 8:30 AM**

*However late arrivers are always welcome!*

## Team Speed Research

Webber ponders the preposterous power of new bikes

It's another new year and the holidays, including the overindulgence and consumption that comes with them, are behind us once again. The annual season to eat too much, drink too much, buy too much, travel too much, and generally overindulge has come and gone, but judging by the trends of the Motorcycle industry you'd think it was the season of "too much" all year long.

The wife and I headed up to the in-laws this year for the holidays, which means many things, but primarily it means I was away from the bikes for many days on end. It was like some kind of backward rehab, where I had to remove myself from the things that keep me sane, and then try to remain normal. Since I was essentially "kicking the riding habit" for a week or two, I knew I'd need a little motorcycle methadone to keep me from suffering the very ugly and unfriendly effects of bike withdrawal at a 24x7 family celebration.

To help wean me off of riding, and keep me from going into the shakes and breaking out in a cold sweat over turkey dinner and three or four helpings of pumpkin pie, I brought magazines. Lots and lots of magazines. Sport Rider, Cycle World, Motorcyclist, and Bike (my favorite mag from the UK) all lined my carry-on bag. I made sure not to spoil any of them by reading ahead; If I was going to get through my week of bike-less holiday mania without smothering one of my cousins' kids with a stocking or tying up a toddler with tinsel and ribbon, I would need every article, every picture, and every review.

Maybe it was the holiday excess, but it seemed to me that each bike reviewed was even more powerful and preposterous than the last. The Suzuki B-King is clearly the apple of the journalistic eye this season. Though no blower force-feeds the 'Busa powerplant as we were originally led to believe way back when the B-King debuted as a concept bike, the thing apparently makes more power than nuclear fission. It's basically a Hayabusa with more comfortable ergos, and less plastic. Speaking of the 'Busa, that monster has gained more power than ever, and seems to have been built to punch the ridiculously powerful Kawisaki ZX-14 straight in the jaw. These horsepower wars are enough to make me wonder if we will see a new version of Honda's infamous Blackbird – a bike that was once mindnumbingly powerful and wickedly fast, but that is now only slightly more powerful than a 600 Supersport.

A couple of the mags touched on the new Super Squalo – a supercharged beast that was once a Ducati and has seemingly overcome all the negative aspects of forced induction to make a

smooth idling, clean fueling 200 horsepower bike that runs on pump gas. 200 horsepower!? You know what they say, with that many horses, there is sure to be a big mess to shovel up sooner or later. Okay, “they” don’t say that. I made it up. But you get the idea.

With the advent of all these mega-power bikes, I have to wonder who is actually using 160+ horsepower when they ride. Does anyone actually rev out a ZX-14, or do they short shift at 8,000 RPM and miss out on 60 of those horses? I ride a track bike with just over 100 horsepower at the wheels, and I spend a good portion of my track days working to get around people with way more power than I’ve got. On the street I ride an 85 horsepower, 600+ pound street bike that’s roughly 12 feet tall and as long as a school bus, and I manage to keep up with the race-reps in the canyons. Maybe I am a hero! Maybe I am the fastest rider there is!

Of course it could be that maybe, just maybe, low-powered bikes are easier to ride hard. And when bikes are easier to ride hard, that typically means they are more fun to ride. And fun is, after all, kind of the point of this whole motorcycling thing.

I don’t need more power when I ride, but I can always use another helping of fun. I guess I’ll keep my eyes peeled for a review of that “not that-super Squalo” if it ever comes out, or maybe Suzuki will see to make a B-prince for me. Until then, I’ll keep the revs high, and hope the fun factor stays high, too.

*This article was submitted by Hal Kramer – SD WV HSTA. Reprinted with permission of Chris Webber – Speed Research, Inc.*

[www.speedresearchproducts.com](http://www.speedresearchproducts.com)

## Paris Pour Le Motard (Paris for the Biker)

by Pedro Gregorio

It didn’t take long after we landed at Charles de Gaulle airport to realize that the French have a different attitude towards motorcycles than we do.

When was the last time you saw a few Honda Gold Wing taxi cabs parked outside Detroit Metro Airport? As our shuttle bus drove by the three bikes, I couldn’t quite catch the company name on the side but a few days later, while walking near the Champs Elysees, we saw a white Wing with Moto Cab & Jet stenciled on the saddle bags dropping off a fare. Some Googling back home revealed

[http://www.motoservices.com/voyage/moto\\_taxi.htm](http://www.motoservices.com/voyage/moto_taxi.htm), a site with many links to scooter and bike taxi companies. Unfortunately you’ll have to bone up on your French since there is no English version. You’ll also need to leave your 100-lb. rolling, mega bag at home if you plan on taking one of these two-wheeled cabs into town. Still, now that I now they exist I’d love to try it the next time we go. But for the time being, it was a four-wheel shuttle bus that took us the 45 minutes into the center of Paris to our little Internet rental apartment in the working-class Marais district. This would be our home away from home for the next two weeks.

But before I can continue talking about bikes and bike-related things, I need to first dispel a couple of myths about Parisians. Myth number one: Parisians stay thin by drinking lots of red wine as they scarf down on some seriously fatty foods. Bull\$#%. The reason Parisians stay so trim and fit has nothing to do with booze. The real answer is steps. That’s right, I said steps; the thousands and thousands of steps that most Parisians take in their daily lives. And not just the horizontal kind, I’m talking vertical, baby. Our cozy (French for large closet) apartment was on the sixth floor of a 200-year-old apartment building. Elevator? Ha! We don’t need no stinkin’ elevator. Taking a metro, aka, subway, ride can involve hundreds of steps as you transfer between trains up and down underground labyrinths. If you have trouble climbing stairs think twice about coming to this town.

Myth number two: all women walking the streets of Paris are near-anorexic supermodels. Wrong, there are also many American tourists. I’m kidding, I’m kidding, relax. Tourists aren’t the only unattractive and overweight people in Paris but I will say that you will definitely see a lot



more supermodel types than at your local Target or Meijer. If you like to watch beautiful people walking the streets, Paris is a great place to do it.

But we're not here to talk people are we? No, we're here to talk bikes and lord do the Parisians love their bikes. Actually, based on sheer numbers, they love their scooters a whole lot more than their bikes. I'd guess we saw at least a 5 to 1 ratio of scooters to bikes. Why are scooters so popular with Parisian commuters you ask? The cheapest gas we saw over there was 1.38 Euros per liter. To us 'mericans, at the exchange rate of the day we arrived, that's a whopping \$7.10 per gallon (not a typo). How many SUV and truck commuters in the Detroit area do you think we'd see at our local scooter dealers if gas ever hit that

price here? As of this writing my local Meijer is selling gas for just over \$3 a gallon so we still have a ways to go. Scooters not only allow Parisians to go to work without a taking out a second mortgage on their house to buy gas, they also allow them to get to work much, much faster than if they were on four wheels. Why? The answer lies in two magic words: lane splitting. Anyone on two wheels is not only allowed to but is expected to split lanes through city traffic and go the front of every light. It was so refreshing to see this practice for two weeks and so depressing to come back to Michigan and be forced to sit in traffic on I-696 on a 90 degree day. Of course if lane splitting were legalized in Michigan I'm sure hundreds of bikers would die as our Nascar-wanna-be four wheelers purposely opened doors or swerved to make sure we couldn't make better time than they did.

The bike and scooter parking areas that we saw around town were all jam packed with every kind of two-wheeled vehicle. There is no way to keep bikes or scooters looking new when they're used as city commuters so it was rare to see anything in pristine condition. Parking your ride on the sidewalk away from the pack and locking it to one of many iron railings at intersections might help. This seemed to be a common practice especially for the larger bikes. By far the majority of large displacement bikes we saw were BMW's, mostly RT models. It was weird to see so many R1200RT's with scratches and other scars from urban encounters. I kept thinking, back home that's a near twenty thousand dollar bike and here it is looking all beat up. When I checked in one of the French bike magazines and saw that a Parisian has to pay 16,600 Euros (\$24,400) for an RT it really brought home the point that, even to the well-off commuters who can afford them, they are true car replacements. To give you some perspective, the cheapest new Smart car you can buy in France will cost you about \$15,000. You won't be cold

in the winter or rained on but you'll still be too wide to lane split. We did see a lot of stylishly tiny Smart cars running around town. Economically speaking, scooters really make the most sense as commuter vehicles. Prices range from under \$6,000 for the cheapest 250cc model all the way up to almost \$15,000 for a Suzuki 650 Burgman Executive. That's \$6,000 more than what it lists for in the U.S. A good rule of thumb is that bikes in the land of wine and cheese cost at least one and a half times more than they do here.

Speaking of wine and cheese, one of the most important things that we learned on our trip was that there are only three cheap things in Paris: bread, wine, and cheese. If you can survive on those you'll save a ton of money. Thankfully, those three items are not only cheap but also incredibly tasty. We did the usual touristy things and checked out the famous monuments and museums but as we made full use of our metro passes to roam the city, I

always kept an eye out for interesting bike sightings. When I found out that there was a cluster of bike shops on the Avenue de la Grande Armee, just on the other side of the Arc de Triomphe, Edwina and I had to take a look. The highlight was in the MV Augusta dealer. Sitting up on a pedestal was a bike that I had only previously seen in magazines, an F4 1000R CC. Only 100 of these carbon fiber-slathered beauties were made and the sticker on this one was 100,000 Euros. That's \$136,000 back in September when the dollar wasn't as worthless as it is now. Now you'd be knocking on 150 grand.

Just down the block were two other dealers, Ducati and Aprilia. Right next to the Ducati dealer was a Dainese shop, filled with every goody from the Italian bike gear maker including a set of Rossi-replica full leathers, helmet, and boots. Hey, if you can't ride like The Doctor you can at least look like him. One of the great things about a city where bikes are a way of life is the large number of shops that sell only bike clothing, helmets, and accessories. The grand prize for the one with the funniest name has to go to Dafy



Moto, one of the largest French purveyors of bike stuff. Other two-wheel sightings that stayed in my mind were the sixty-something businessman in a suit walking down a busy sidewalk carrying his briefcase and wearing his open-face helmet without drawing one single stare or the twenty-something beauty riding her scooter to work in high heels. The painter carrying his 5 or 6-foot ladder and bucket on the back of his scooter was also something I don't often see back home. In a city famous for its cafes, people watching is an art form and no one will bother you if you sit at your café table for 3 hours nursing an espresso or tea while you watch the city go by.

One theme that kept running through mind during our two week stay was how much more integrated motorcycles and scooters are in European culture than they are here. I think the main reason is that here, bikes are considered recreational toys whereas in Europe they are also considered regular transportation. To experience this you really need to go. As motorcyclists all of us are infected to varying degrees with the travel bug. We start out with the 50-mile trip, then 100, then 500, and eventually we start talking about riding through a few states or cross-country. I've seen a lot of magnificent natural beauty in the U.S. but for urban beauty, Paris is still my favorite city. It's hard to explain what makes it so special but for me it's the combination of everything: the food, the people, the architecture, and, of course, the two-wheel culture that is so embedded in day-to-day life. I am a big believer in the power of travel to open minds and the farther from home the better. The beauty of a city like Paris is that you'll have no trouble at all convincing your significant other to make the trip with you. It may be known as the City of Lights but, to me, it's also the City of Bikes.

**A special thanks to Hal Kramer and Pedro Gregorio for the articles featured this month!**

**REMEMBER.....**

It doesn't pay a reward, but your articles will be appreciated by all your fellow members and your local editor AND you will earn points toward the **SMOTY Award!**

If nothing else - you'll get to see your name in print, somewhere other than on the Post Office bulletin board!



**MICHIGAN SQUADRON  
RIDING EVENTS  
2008**

One of the traditions of the Michigan Squadron of the HSTA is to organize a few events each year specifically for our State Squadron. These events are not sanctioned or

official events of the HSTA, but are limited to those who are current members of the HSTA.

**NoArk Adventure**

**April 17-21, 2008**  
Missouri / Arkansas

Mark your calendars – This “new” event on our schedule is going to be a “curve-chaser’s” delight. Three days of riding (1100 tire shredding miles) in the Ozarks, to start your riding season out.

This ride begins in Park Hills, MO. We’ll meet there for dinner on Thursday April 17. We’ll be staying the night at **Rosener’s Inn** and we’ll have a rider’s meeting there around 9:00 PM. To make a reservation at Rosener’s for Thursday night, call **573-431-4241**.

On Friday we’ll be taking a twisty route from Park Hills, MO to Russellville, AR. We’ll be staying Friday and Saturday nights at **The Best Western in Russellville**. To make your reservations there, call **479-967-1000**.

On Saturday we’ll be riding on some of the best roads in Arkansas that are north and west of Russellville. We’ll return to Park Hills, MO from Russellville on Sunday.

If you plan on making this trip, make your hotel reservations and let me know that you’ll be joining us.

**There are 12 riders planning on this trip so far**

Event Organizer : Gregg Mitchell  
**MI\_HSTA@ voyager.net**



May 14 - 18, 2008  
Mountain Brook Resort  
Sylva, NC

A Michigan Squadron Hallmark - 12 years and counting -- May in the Smokies! Ride Headquarters will be at the Mountain Brook Lodge near Sylva, NC at

the edge of the Great Smoky Mountains - (605 miles from the I-75 I-275 interchange). We'll be riding on the best roads found in Western NC, North GA and Eastern TN for three glorious days.

This event has limited space and reservations are required. There is space for approximately 25 people, with accommodations in cabins ranging from a private bedroom to hide-a-beds and rollaway beds.

GENERAL RESERVATION - \$ 165.00 + \$ 15.00 =  
**\$ 180.00**

Covers lodging, taxes and landfill fee for the 4 nights. You will be given your choice of cabin and sleeping arrangement (bedroom or hide-a-bed) in the order in which your reservation is received. The additional \$15.00 covers a catered dinner at Mountain Brook - on Saturday evening - our last night there.

**STATUS:**

There are one or two General Reservation spaces left at the resort at this time - we have **23** people signed up to stay at Mountain Brook so far, leaving only **2** hide-a-bed spots remaining

If you'd like to attend this event there are three alternatives --

Contact me and check for space at the resort. If there is something still available I'll ask you to send me a check ASAP. If all the space is taken, I'll put you on the "Stand-By List". I would contact you if there is a cancellation at the resort.

Contact me and request one of the added cost options at the resort that are listed below. You would need to send me your money for the reservation and I would secure the spot at the resort for you.

Find and reserve a Motel/Hotel room for yourself off-site from the resort. You would still need to contact me and advise if you are planning on going to the event, but you will be staying off-site.

If you wish to join us for the traditional Thursday evening picnic and the Saturday evening BBQ at the resort, you will need to send me \$ 15.00 per person per dinner prior to the event taking place (\$ 30.00 per person for BOTH dinners)

The added cost optional space left at the resort is the following:

#15 House w/ Queen Size Bed, on hilltop w/ gravel drive – For Couple – \$ 420.00 for 4 nights

**Romancer Cabins \$ 500.00 for 4 nights**

# 12 King Size Bed, Whirlpool and Sauna, Covered Parking

# 14 King Size Bed, Whirlpool and Sauna, on hilltop w/ gravel drive

**NOTE** - Add \$ 15.00 per person to the above pricing for the Saturday night dinner.

Local Motels / Hotels

In Sylva / Dillsboro - 8 - 9 miles north of MB  
Holiday Inn Express, Azalea Motel, Comfort Inn, Blue Ridge Motel, Best Western River Escape Inn, Jarrett House

In Franklin - 8 - 9 miles south of MB  
Days Inn, Hampton Inn, Microtel

Event Organizer : Gregg Mitchell

**MI\_HSTA@ voyager.net**



## **SPARKLER "3"**

**Come celebrate your independence at the next  
Michigan "SPARKLER"**

**July 10 – 13, 2008**

**Beckley, West Virginia**

**Phone or email your intent to attend before**

**May 1, 2008 to:**

**Bob Proctor at (248) 842-8843 or**

**[bobproctor@comcast.net](mailto:bobproctor@comcast.net)**

**Then find a roommate and reserve your room  
at the event hotel:**

**Country Inn & Suites by Carlson**

**2120 Harper Road**

**Beckley, WV 25801**

**(800) 456-4000**

**or (304) 252-5100**

**This is the Inn with the "rocking chair front  
porch" where we've stayed before.**

**Room Rates (double): \$89 Thursday, \$102**

**Friday & Saturday**

**Block of rooms being held under the name**

**"SPARKLER" until May 31<sup>st</sup>.**

**(All rooms at the Inn are now smoke free)**

**Mandatory rider's meeting Thursday, July 10th 9:00 PM at the hotel.**

**Come enjoy southern hospitality and fantastic sport touring roads with us in West Virginia!**

**NOTE: There will be a group ride organized down to Beckley from Marietta OH on Thursday July 10. Details for this will be announced soon.**

## **WOMAN'S RIDE**

**August 8 - 10, 2008  
Hocking Hills, Ohio  
Event Organizer – Jan Pennington**

Please contact Jan Pennington if you wish to participate in the event.

**eMail - [jampennington@comcast.net](mailto:jampennington@comcast.net)**

**Phone - 734.482.8188**

**NOTE:**

Riders of the male persuasion are also welcome on this event – provided you meet one of the following requirements –

1. You are accompanied by a woman pillion rider.
2. You are riding pillion with a woman pilot.

## **M.O.B. - 2008**

**Michigan's Ohio Blitz  
Sept. 19 - 21, 2008, SE Ohio  
Event Organizer – Gregg Mitchell  
Details to be announced!**

## **HAZARDOUS TOUR**

**Hazard, KY, Oct. 2 - 5, 2008  
Event Organizer – Gregg Mitchell  
Details to be announced!**



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**February 23, 2008 – Saturday 8:30AM  
Michigan HSTA Monthly Meeting  
Karl's Cabin Restaurant  
Gotfredson Rd., Plymouth, MI**

**March 8  
OPEN HOUSE – BMW SE  
39933 Ford Road, Canton Michigan  
A HSTA Member Owned Dealership**

**April 6 – 9, 2008  
STAR '08 – HSTA National Event  
Y.O Ranch Resort – Kerrville, Texas  
Contact: Jim Buckerfield  
<http://star.ridehsta.com>  
206 HSTA Members have registered so far!**

**May 4, 2008  
Spring MC Rally – Holly, MI**

**May 5, 2008  
Track Day – Grattan  
Sponsored by BMW SE Michigan  
Contact Audrey Wicke for details  
734-981-1479**

**June 8, 2008 – 2:00 PM  
Pennington's Bar-B-Que  
Ypsilanti, MI**

**June 13 – 15, 2008**  
**Demo Days – Open House**  
**Triumph Detroit**

**June 20 – 22, 2008**  
**RCR 08 (aka “STARlite”) – Carrollton, KY**  
**HSTA Regional Event**  
Event Hotel – Comfort Inn  
141 Inn Road, Phone 502-732-6661  
Special rates are available

**August 22 – 24, 2008**  
**Mail Pouch Fly-By – Marietta, OH**  
**HSTA Regional Event**  
Pre-registration forms will be available at our  
monthly meetings and are also downloadable  
from the following web site:  
<http://www.freewebs.com/trophyrider>

Please note that the event headquarters will not be  
the Best Value Motel as in past years. For 2008  
the Event Headquarters will be at the **Holiday Inn**  
– Marietta.

## **MEMBERSHIP INFO**

### **Welcome to the HSTA**

Please join me in welcoming the following  
new member(s) to the Michigan HSTA Squadron:

**Deanna Stohl – Howell**

**Current Squadron Membership – 102**