



I've mentioned to you a few times the perks to this job are fabulous. One of my favorite perks is being able to talk with true bikers that ride - not trailer - their motorcycles to the planned destination. When Ron Galletti called me to ask me to do a story on Rick Rossiter's trip to Alaska, I couldn't wait to call Rick and set up an interview!

Rick Rossiter has been in the Harley-Davidson business, serving Sarasota and Manatee counties for over 15 years. Here's a guy that is passionate about his business, his customers, and his family. When I called Rick I was able to go to the dealership and meet with him that same day!

Once I got comfortable in Rick's beautiful office, I just HAD to ask him a question; did you trailer your bike to Alaska? To me, asking this question kinda breaks the ice. In my case, the whole room got extremely cold - even though it was 94 degrees outside. Rick looked me straight in the eyes and said, "Young lady, I've been taking motorcycle trips for many years. I DO NOT trailer my motorcycle anywhere!" He definitely emphasized DO NOT. Okay, I get it.

On June 24 Rick and his good friend, Ernie Antonelli, headed out of beautiful, sunny Florida, to take on the majestic and overwhelming beauty of America as they headed their way to Alaska. Ernie, the VP of Rossiter's, rode a new 2009 Tri-Glide.

This bike had 400 miles on it when he left. In fact, it was the first bike of that make and model to make the trip to Florida to Alaska and back! Rick rode a '09 Ultra Classic.

When I asked Rick "Why Alaska?" He said, "I've been mapping this trip out for three years. It was the first item in my 'bucket list.' I created my personal bucket list five years ago. In making out the trip itinerary I wasn't concerned about the recession. This is something I wanted to do and I planned every detail out including gas stops and motel reservations."

Rick got a lot of information from the Alaskan Travel Bureau. As Rick mentioned, "They want people to come to Alaska. They will send you all kinds of information that is very helpful when you're planning a trip of this magnitude."

The temperature in Florida was constant all the way into Ohio. In fact, the 2nd day out it was hotter there than in Florida! A whopping 102 degrees!

Rick and Ernie took a route through Michigan to get into Canada. In Ontario, Canada, they stopped over at some friends' home and enjoyed the beautiful tastes of Canadian beer and whiskey! The temperature highs were anywhere from 40 to 50 degrees! Rick made sure that they had packed cold weather gear and rain gear - just in case! "Canada was cold but beautiful!" said Rick.

Once they hit Anchorage, the weather was in the 70s. Fairbanks was 85 degrees. Off with the cold weather gear and back with the t-shirts!

The trip was exceptional including Rick's addition to his most five beautiful roads in the country. "My top roads include two in the state of Wyoming. Other than the Banff, Alberta, Canada, roads there are the roads in Jasper, Wyoming that are beautiful and sweeping, going for 200 miles or more at a stretch. It's flat and you can see snow-capped mountains. Actually, this wasn't a part of my original mapped destination. When we got to Banff, we stayed at a lodge that had a bar and restaurant. A couple of bikers came in from Edmonton. We struck up conversation and I told them our plans. They said that we had to do this particular road because it was great! So, I looked the maps over and decided to take the route these guys suggested. I'm so happy that I listened to them!"

Rick and Ernie had absolutely no problems on the trip. In fact, Rick made me laugh out loud when he shared with me that while riding and taking in all the beautiful scenery, he was actually riding with his mouth open saying, "Wow. Ahhhh. Ooooooo." I can definitely relate to that myself!

While having breakfast in Ft. Nelson in British Columbia, a trucker told them they

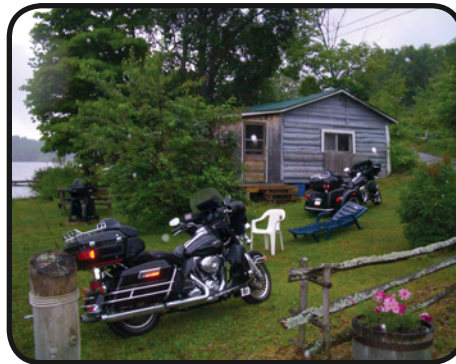
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would be seeing a lot of wildlife. That was an understatement! Rick and Ernie saw bear, moose, elk, herds of buffalo and wild horses, big horn sheep, and deer.

Once they got to Anchorage, Rick and Ernie met their wives, Wendy and Terri. Wendy and Terri flew in from Florida and together they all took a 5-day scenic cruise. "It was a really good time for all of us. We took the Cruise West ship. It specializes in small cruise ships. It was a perfect size boat and I highly recommend it!" While on the cruise, they were in daylight 24-hours a day! As Rick explained,



what a collision with a motorcycle and moose would be like. Nah, on the other hand, let's not think about that!

Rick and Ernie spent some time at the Anchorage Harley-Davidson dealership. At this dealership, they offer free camping and shower facilities for anyone riding a motorcycle - any kind of motorcycle!

As you can tell from the pictures, Rick and Ernie had a marvelous time. With the cold weather, Rick relied on his heated gloves and vest, Ernie relied on his heated gloves, vest, and heated grips! It was a



"We would wake up at 6 a.m. after an announcement came over the PA telling us we were coming up to a glacier. We'd all get up, get dressed, and witness firsthand a beautiful glacier. Once we were up, we wouldn't go to bed until after midnight!" In fact, the Rossiters and the Antonellis saw 25 named glaciers on this trip!

After a few days with the wives doing the tourist thing, the guys were ready to get back on the road! They said their good-byes and headed off to do some more exploring. "I had everything loaded into my GPS," said Rick. "When taking a trip like this you have to really plan your gas stops."

The roads were all great until they got into Toke, Alaska. "We were riding on some very bad roads. There were huge frost heaves that literally threw you off the seat. You are constantly looking left and right making sure that none of the wildlife collides with you." Rick explained to me that if a moose came in contact with a tractor-trailer, the damage to the truck would be extensive - possibly taking the truck and the truck driver out of commission for some time. Just think



remarkable trip and one that they both still talk about to this day!

Asking Rick to sum up his feeling for our Born To Ride readers he said, "I think that everyone should create a bucket list. You can create experiences of a lifetime. Alaska was my number one bucket list item. Wild animals are truly wild; not being held back by fences or stuck in barns. I saw so much and am anxious to go back to Alaska again."

Ernie created some true emotion for me when he shared this following, honest sentiment: "When you're taking a trip of a lifetime, especially four to six weeks, it makes it even more enjoyable when you're traveling with a good friend."

Create your bucket list, my friends. And let me know about the trip of your lifetime!

If you get an opportunity to see Rick or Ernie, let them know you read about their Alaska adventure in Born To Ride Magazine! They will be happy to share their memories with you as they did with me.



Susan Hurst