

TASMANIA ODYSSEE Easter 2011

Easter-Anzac-Labour Day

We were closing in on the Easter break, aware that Anzac and Labour Day also come together in a way that only happens every 30 years, so one could easily arrange an 11-day holiday. That screamed out for a decent road trip to somewhere! Well a road trip is like sailing, where the destination is of less importance, it's the "sailing" or rather the road that's the experience. Having done Cairns, Cape Tribulation, Emerald, Roma, Mt Isa, Mackay, Melbourne, Kosciusko, Sydney and so on and even New Zealand both Islands 9000 k in 28 days. The only one worth spending 10 days for was Tasmania. We know the roads are great, from -92 when we did 5000 k on the island with car, dog and kids, but never the bike. The autumn colours should be brilliant as long as the weather is fine. Ten days are a bit tight, but ok. To beat the traffic and give us time to socialise with friends in Sydney in the evening, we left at 4 AM on the Bonneville and Harley, with trailer on Good Friday 22nd April. We were at the highlands past the range, heading towards Ballina before the sun came up over the range behind us. The fog and mist clouds in the valley below were illuminated from the sun behind us above producing a magic effect.



Breakfast on Roadkill! We dodged most of the traffic but Maccas in Ballina was like Caboolture markets after Christmas. So we kept going to Woodburn for breakfast. The Café there was full as well, so I pulled a Thermos and muesli bars heading over the busy road for the tables by the river. I heard a couple of pops behind me and thought them be cans being run over. They were the muesli bars which Ann picked up behind me. Would you believe the tough wrapping was not penetrated, just a pin hole at the end where the

air had escaped. So we had our roadkill muesli bars more tender than normal. We had a great cruise to Sydney in our own rhythm with a break at Grafton. I've never ever seen so many patrolling police in my life on the Pacific Hwy. We squeezed our way through north Sydney traffic, west to Regents Park where friends waited with food, company and a comfy bed. It was a very enjoyable 980 k ride the first day. We left Sydney next day in a drizzle that only lasted half an hour, but it was very cold on the way up to Goulburn where we thawed an hour at Maccas, then we had blue sky all days the rest of the trip. We had to get in time to the ferry in Melbourne and check in by 6.20 PM and made it in time after some confusing ring road works and poor signage in Melbourne city. I had a run in with a drunk guy who wanted to be brave but eventually we got our overnight snooze in recliners, catching about 6 hours interrupted "sleep".



So the third day and the serious touring started with a yawn. We devoured a big bacon and egg breakfast at a dockside café at 7 and then turned straight east. The country opened up with amazing autumn colours and scenery during this round trip in perfect weather. At St Helens we found a great motel for \$69 already at 3PM so we rested early and checked out the little town, then had a great meal at the motel restaurant and made the most out of the accommodation

Dawn Service St Helens.

It's a very special feeling to join in with everyone in a small town like this for the Dawn Service at 5.30 the next day, 26th April and we finished with a small nip of rum. We've walked the track to wineglass bay once before, but didn't want to leave bikes and gear for that amount of time so we after a visit to a vintage motorcycle museum we kept going

towards Port Arthur. The East coast had scenic roads and views reminiscent of New Zealand and were an absolute pleasure to ride. The trip to PA included a small ferry crossing. The penal settlement looked just like last time, but the modern buildings were all different. They were larger and much more commercial than in -92. The entrance fee of \$30 included a boat trip out to the island of the dead and juvenile island (pour island). We spent more time than budgeted at PA, checking out all the buildings and movies. It was almost dark when we for the first time on the trip, headed North!. We had reached our point of return. We managed a quick look at the blow hole just north of PA. Coming in towards the big bridge over to Hobart had an interesting twist.





Ann race me in Hobart

It was dark and not much traffic. Just before the bridge the highway was joined by a northerly entrance, making the total highway look like a horizontal Y. Where they joined there was apparently a traffic light signalling that we should stop. I didn't see that. Ann disappeared from my rear mirrors. I was puzzled. She just vanished. I slowed down. Then seeing that there was no mid strip on the bridge I did a U turn, trailer and all. As I race back I see Ann on the other side racing up the bridge. She didn't see me and was trying to catch up with me, when I was in fact behind her. The race was on. But I did catch her just on the other side of the bridge, with my hazard lights running. Puh! Struth, that hadn't happened since in Sweden in 1979 after I stopped for an air check on a servo, but we need helmet to helmet coms. The bed for the night was in New Norfolk. Different, old style 12 feet ceiling large room and renovated and clean. It was the only accommodation we had booked before we left home, so we were on Schedule.



Queenstown Impress.

The next day (day 5) was first 200k through the Tassie central highlands and down to Queenstown which has an impressive approach. Later we realised we were almost stuck in Tassie, cause we hadn't yet booked a return Ferry trip. On 3G internet (work Laptop) and phone, with great difficulty, we got the last possible available booking in the next 6 days, leaving the day after next. Heading north, we found a pretty new holiday village at a Hydro Electricity site where we tried to figure out how far we could go this day. If the road straightens and flattens out, we should make Burnie and the road turned out to be fast with majestic mountain ridges at the horizon.

So there was no trouble getting to Burnie. In fact we kept going in the dark to Stanley (out north west) where we improvised and found a great backpacker cottage right next to the Nut. We were now almost done with Tassie. The big Stanley Hotel was the right place for a scrumptious restaurant feed. My bike had some electrical fault. But after some check of cables it started ok. But we prepped for a quick stop at the Harley dealer next day just for a checkup.



The Nut i Stanley!

At 7 AM we climbed the Nut. People go up by chair lifts, but this was early, so we "walked" it. See some pictures and links on <http://www.ozemate.com/tasmania> You gotta check it out. We filled my tank with fuel from Ann's for a non stop ride for me to Launceston. After initial misfires, we rode to Burnie and towards Devenport. Just after Burnie it appeared to just fire by compression. A quick call to Richardson and they were on their way, 130 k with a big van. This was a new experience for me, in 190,000 k, I've never had to request tow or assistance. But being the afternoon and a critical "must be on ferry next morning", there was simply no time to fix it myself.

Richardson were extremely helpful and picked me up, fixed what turned out to be a broken battery terminal cable connector, which must temporarily have cracked then

fused so I missed it and I still got 75 k ride from it before it broke off. Richardson also worked overtime to make sure I got a new rear tyre put on. Meanwhile we walked around with our jaw dropped. This place, what a Taj Mahal of a Harley Davidson disneyworld. The museum, the show room, the restaurant, caffee, bar, games room with pool tables and so on, all in wood panel décor and Harley decorations from the world. You gotta check this place out, my word.



Cold return to Devenport

We had a night ride and very cold one back to Davenport. Ann collapsed in a warm bed at the motel I booked through wotif.com on my 3G connection. I made use of the big laundry at the motel. The next day we were first in line at the Ferry and had a restful trip across Bass Strait. But what to do when we came to Melbourne at 7PM? Planning on the laptop we figured we'd ride max 2 hours, which would place us at Euroa. On

Wotif.com I found and booked a motel and printed to a pdf file which I got printed on paper at reception. We now had confirmation of a bed waiting. It was dark and cold and tiring those 170 k that late, but nice to know it was just to warm up some food and crash to bed.



The next day was a breeze cruising towards Sydney with a stop at the Ettamooga pub at Albury and a stop at Glenrowan, feeling the atmosphere of Ned.

After all the perfect weather, at dusk Golburn served us, cold temperatures and later towards Sydney, drizzle again. Ann's rear tyre was too much worn for such wet, so we took it real easy. We checked in with friends again at Regents Park and had a gander at the Royal Wedding on TV. Next day was a wind down. We only did 500 k and checked in early at a motel at Gunnedah (2.5 hour south of Moree). Travelling via Moree and Goondiwindi was a 200 k detour, but locals confirmed that the straight fast road, no weekend traffic, no rain (as up on the range), so it was worth it.



We had constant blue sky, hot spring bath in Moree and a nice day ride home to Burpengary. At 07.10 PM we parked the bikes at home and then had all of Labour Day to rest and prepare for a working week. All the camping gear we carted wasn't used a single night. When I added up all the kilometres, times two bikes that take about half a litre per 10 k, it added up to 600 litre of fuel, three 200 litre drums on the 10 days through our carbies.

For a serious scenic road trip, we really recommend Tasmania. **Royal and Kickan**