



Spoke 'n Piston

January/February 2003

Volume 8 No.1



From the Chair...

Dear Fellow Riders,
New Year 2003

2003 is here and presents, once again, another year of shared riding pleasure. This comes with all the potential memories and thrills of good times, friends, roads (both tarred and dirt) and reliable BMW motorcycles within the support of our Club.

Looking back on the past year, we should consider our level of participation in Club affairs and “JUST DO IT” in terms of what we wish for our lives. Life moves on and we are the chief influencers of what we end up doing. Whatever we do decide, we are truly blessed to be able to enjoy riding in our beautiful land with friends. I and on behalf of your Committee, wish you a year of participation, enjoyment and may all your dreams be realised.

Annual Subscriptions

With the New Year comes our responsibility as members to pay our annual subscriptions, which are due on 1 January 2003 for the year to 31 December. I wish to make an appeal to honour this responsibility as soon as possible. Some members did not pay their 2002 subscriptions although they enjoyed the benefits of the Club through the year. I am sure you will agree that this is not acceptable and members will need to update 2002 before renewing for 2003.

Annual General Meeting

I remind you that our Club Annual General Meeting will be held on 7 March 2003, the evening of our March social. Please consider nominations of any new members you would like seen appointed to the Committee and any other issues or suggestions you would like to raise at the meeting.

With wishes for sheer riding pleasure,
Regards,
Mike.

MAKING TRAX WITH COUNTRY TRAX

(DONNA P. CLAUSEN)

For the entire year of 2002 I have had to postpone my aspirations to attend Jan du Toit's off-road course at Country Trax (CT). Finally on Friday, 6th December 2002 I set off for Amersfoort, filled with some apprehension and of course, with great excitement. My apprehension arose from the pictures on Jan's website ... water, sand, falling riders and bikes. My excitement was based on my need for more out-there travel on my GS 1150. I love the back roads of gravel, where the sky domes downward and the road seems to dead-end into it, and where, when I look behind me, a ribbon of dust is scattered, marking my passage.

The weather was chilly and overcast when I left home and when I reached Bethal a thunderstorm broke loose that sent me helter-skelter to the safety of a tiny coffee shop. Lightning ripped and roared and visibility from the stoep of the establishment was seriously impaired. The salesmen at the garage next door were gathered at the display room window, obviously not able to believe what they were seeing – a woman on a bike! In Bethal?! Two of them actually came out to look at the bike. All I saw were shaking heads and furtive glances.

I phoned CT and was told by Jan's wife, Elsabé, no, it was not raining there and should it do so by the time I reached Amersfoort, I must phone again and they will fetch me. Fetch me? Ja, with the bakkie and trailer. A warning bell should have sounded in my thick skull that there would be a reason for that 42km journey from the farm to fetch me in town.

I set off again when the thunder stopped – the rain continued though, in buckets – and upon reaching Amersfoort it was raining there. Being of a stubborn disposition I decided to assess the gravel road that led out to CT. It was hard packed so I deflated the tyres and remounted. The sky seemed to hang directly over me, ponderous with cloud and at 17h00 almost no light. For 26 clicks I averaged 100 kph. And then all hell broke loose! The rain was now a solid sheet and the road surface turned to 'that nose stuff'. Tracks of previous vehicles passing there were destroyed, so I had to negotiate by feel and of course go where the GS wanted to go. She fishtailed (slightly but enough to make me stiffen), the front wheel seemed to have a mind of its own and my pulse rate was close to blow-out. But I kept at it. Stubborn! Eventually after a nightmare of mud, slush, slipping

and sliding I called it a day and stopped. In the middle of the road as the verge was so thick with mud that there was nowhere to put the side stand out. Any attempt would have resulted in the stand being sucked down and the GS going over.



Braam Smit and others practising how to pick up a bike without help. Notice the expression!

Okay, time to phone Jan. Just then a Land Cruiser pulled up from behind, a massive dagga leaf painted on the cab with the words 'WHY DRINK AND DRIVE IF YOU CAN SMOKE AND FLY!' If I was of that persuasion I would have lit up there and then. The farmer – he looked like a farmer – asked me whether I was going to Jan. When he heard my voice his eyebrows lifted. He advised me to contact Jan and to stay right there. Did it look like I was going anywhere? He drove off.

As I looked up, a vehicle was approaching from the front at rapid speed. Lights on and belting it in a beeline straight at me. He had the audacity to flash his lights! Where did this guy think I was supposed to go to – on two wheels? The next moment the bakkie stopped and out climbed a man, his assistant tumbling out the rear. Then I noticed the bike trailer. Saved! It was Jan. Quick introductions and he took my bike, pushed it around as if it was a child's bicycle and chop-chop the GS was loaded and tied down. For a moment I stood looking at her .. pitch black with mud, not an iota of the silver colouring the spokes, rims, engine or exhaust. This was now seriously an off-road bike!

I gratefully slid into the front passenger seat and found two women seated in the rear of the double cab. It turned out they were the wives of two chaps who had met with Mother Earth and who were now limping towards CT with broken panniers and bruised egos. See, not only women have problems keeping bikes upright in those conditions.

To cut a long story short, we eventually arrived at the farm at 19h00. Even in the rain and poor light the

wooden structure of the lodge was beautiful. Me being the enquiring type, Jan had told me during the drive that he had built the lodge himself with the trees on his farm. It squatted solid and homely amidst the rolling hills of the countryside and beckoned invitingly. Being female, I was obviously to have my own accommodation and this turned out to be the ox wagon drawn up in front of the lodge. I was shown to my quarters where the double bed filled the one end of the wagon, while a small area closer to the door had a kettle, coffee, milk, cookies and a lovely flower arrangement to welcome me. Perfect!

The other riders, predominantly men, and two women were already there, gathered in the kitchen cum living room. Wet clothing was ranged around a fire that blazed in the massive central hearth and coffee was ready. I wondered idly whether I could request a Schnapps to add. Introductions were made and immediately I noticed that an atmosphere of camaraderie prevailed. We were all united by our love for bikes and off-road excitement.

Jan likes to keep the number of trainees to a maximum of 10, allowing him to pay individual attention to each one of us and my apprehension of making a fool of myself in front of a lot of people sank by many degrees. I wanted to wash my hands and was directed to the room of the two women who were sharing, one of whom would do the course. (I would share their bathroom as the ox wagon had no facilities). I was amazed at the interior of the lodge. Careful thought and much planning must have gone into its design. From floor to ceiling, everything was wood. The floor shone in the light of the lamp, the double bed had four posts, solid tree stumps, giving it an air of romance. A kitchenette was incorporated, providing for those who wanted to go the self-catering route. The bathroom had a toilet, hand basin and shower. It was incredible to think that one man had built all this and taken no short cuts.

After a lovely dinner that included apple pie for dessert, baked by Jan's mom, we all turned in, but not before we had decimated the pie. Tomorrow we would be sorely tested.



Donna (far left) and friend at the 'ossewa'.

Rain persisted through the night, pattering on the roof of the wagon, a gentle lull to put one to sleep. Somewhere around 01h00 I heard a car pull up. At first I thought I was hallucinating. I peered out the window and saw two guys emerge from a BMW Convertible. It turned out they were also there for the course but had been delayed and then had got lost in the blackness and the pouring rain. I bet these guys were not popular with Jan and all those who were woken when they were shown their quarters!

Saturday morning broke misty and overcast. Silence, such as you cannot believe, reigned and I took a long walk through the pastures. Said good morning to the horses and watched the herdsman bring the cows in for milking. Breakfast was enjoyed in the main house, an old establishment built of river stones. It had originally been built way back in the 1900s as a dance hall where the local folk enjoyed themselves. I wondered whether their voices still echoed through those rooms in the dead of night. We signed indemnity forms and Jan asked us what our biggest fears were regarding the course. Falling off seemed to be the most common. The unspoken fear, I am sure, was making a fool of oneself.

The course began with all mirrors and screens being removed and flickers on the 650 GSs. Jan then showed us how to set up handle bars to allow for ease of control when standing on the foot pegs, explained the use of the assortment of tools BMW provide to the bikes, and tyre pressures. The tools alone were an eye opener. Some of them looked like pieces of steel only there to rattle and jingle when you are riding. Basic help-yourself mechanics followed. By the time we started with the physical aspect of riding a bike in off-road conditions, many principles of weight distribution, control and getting out of trouble had already settled in our brains.

The entire course for that day took place in the farmyard. We learned how to pick up a fallen bike – alone; how to walk next to the bike with the engine running, engaged in first gear and the clutch used to maintain balance. Keeping up was another affair! We had to take the bikes off their stands and using two fingers only, start at the front and walk around them, all the time maintaining their upright position by only touching with those two fingers. First around the one side and then mount, then in the other direction and mount. What on earth was this exercise going to assist us with, I asked, my kneecaps jumping up and down. Well, if you fell and were in a position where you could not get back on from the usual left side, you had to be able to do so from the other side. Ah!

After much of this type of handling we eventually got to the riding part. At some stage the rain ceased but the earth was soaked and the grass very wet. A sand road leads up from the main gravel road and bisects the yard before winding down to the pastures where I had walked that morning. This little road and the cow pastures became our training ground.

Part of learning balance was various exercises, while in first gear and standing up. The bikes bounced and cavorted like carefree children over the grass and maintaining control with clutch, brake and throttle became a full-time job. One foot on the peg; bring the other over; side saddle; both feet up, too numerous to mention. Yawaaa! I thought I could ride and balance a bike after 24 years of riding. We learnt to ride in tight circles, brake at speed engaging first the front then the rear brakes. On gravel it seems impossible, you expect to keep sliding and sliding until you connect a tree that will terminate your passage. But not to be. Getting the hang of it with Jan's personal attention, his support and continuous encouragement, was easy as pie. Oh, there were a few hairy moments, I assure you, and some connections with Mother Earth. Nothing serious though.

Once we had all navigated our way around and around, and could do the required exercises and controls to Jan's satisfaction we moved on to riding in various conditions. You are not forced to do anything you feel you cannot. You are the judge of your own abilities and this belief Jan religiously endorses. The first obstacle was going between two trees close to each other with the roots exposed and forming a matrix of criss-crosses before passing through a pedestrian gate and into the cattle 'kraal'. It looked pretty okay - from a distance - and Jan made us clearly understand what was expected of us. Until I reached the two trees. I was not sure whether to watch the boles of the trees or look down at the roots or look towards the gate! Look to the horizon, Jan taught us. Never look in front of you, because that is where you will go. Down!

I looked to the horizon and saw the first rider enter the 'kraal' and hit the cow patties-rain-mud. He got up like a jack-in-the-box, mud-mix clinging to him. No-one laughed. I thought I was going to grit my teeth to pieces. The manoeuvre through the trees results in the wheels skipping a bit. There is a slight decline here towards the gate, too minimal to discuss, (but remember it had been pouring) and the first inclination is that you want to brake on the front. That is a no, no. The path then goes through the gate that looks as if it is going to smash your handlebars out of your grip. Then capow! you are into the muddy surface

AND have to make a right turn. Uh-uh. This was just ridiculous. I wanted to do off-road riding not tricks! Anyway, I did it. No, I did not fall. Nothing to do with my own capabilities: Pure luck. This part claimed a few victims before we moved on.

Everywhere in the yard were obstacles. Traffic cones of bright colours for balancing and circles and figure eights; a ramp with a single access wide enough to hold the tyres – only 300mm or so off the ground, but you try it when you know if you put your feet out you have had it, it makes you quake. A metal plate imbedded in the ground, one-tyre width with flanges on either side so if you do not keep a straight line the wheel gets caught; a stump you have to bunny-hop etcetera. All designed to make you sweat and shiver and most importantly, teach you how to handle and control a bike in adverse conditions. The crème de la crème of obstacles was a ramp built over the pasture fence with an ascent and descent that averaged about 45-50°. Now that gave me the heebies. No way, would I do that. That was for lunatics who had no idea of the fine balance between weight and angle!

We had lunch in between and coffee breaks when smokers lit up fervently, smoke billowing around our heads as we gasped for nicotine fixes that would steady the nerves. We were taken out on the road beyond the farm gate where we had to bunny-hop what appeared to be a jackal hole. The GS thundered down the narrow path which lead up to the hole, up and over and crashed back down to earth. I held on for dear life and am sure my eyes were tightly shut. However, again training and encouragement came to bear and I landed perfectly. I did not like the *kuthunk!* of my beautiful machine as she landed though. I know the engineering to be perfect and that BMW created a bike that continued to impress and surprise me with her performance, but I love that bike and so deliberately inflicting crash landings set my jaw on end. After two satisfactory endeavours, I retired to watch.

The next lesson was to perform u-turns in that narrow country road, standing on the pegs and not putting your foot out. Look where you want to go, was the repeated instruction, and you will go there! Ja, okay. I just could not get the turn to the right, right. To the left no problem. Jan even tried to get me to look at him every time he whistled. No, I looked in front of me and of course, did not make it. At least I did not fall.

Later in the afternoon Jan took the guys out on a technical ride, while we two women decided to remain in the yard and work on those issues we felt we had problems with. I made my right hand u-turn! Dinner could not come soon enough! We ate with relish, hungry and satisfied with what we had learnt,

talking animatedly of our achievements, laughing at our failures, united by our efforts.

Sunday morning was a ride through the countryside. We set off at 09h00, the sun watery, but shining. Clouds still lingered, but they were less of a threat than yesterday and it was much, much drier! We took a gravel road that had lost much of its moisture and zinged along. I guess we were all very happy that the previous day was over and we had survived. Now, to test our skills versus our training.

A ride I will never forget. We went from gravel to shale to mud to water (where we played with the bikes) to descents strewn with rock and inclines that had engine and body straining upwards. Right turns, left turns, mud waiting on the turns, rocks deflecting wheels, mud sucking in the front wheel. At times we struck the ground with jarring force, at others, with perfect grace. We whispered amongst trees and thundered on the straights, some guys leaving a rooster trail of mud spewing in their wake. We traversed grass land and followed narrow paths. It was absolutely amazing. Everything we had been taught was applicable, the most important being stand up and look to the horizon!

The guys diverted onto a more technical road that wound its way like the road through the Alps, filled with mud and heaven knows what, while Braam from Bavarian Motorcycles in Pretoria, took us two women on a route over a mountain pass. Again shale, rock and ruts. Great stuff! Eventually we arrived at a dune. It rose approximately 5-8m to the sky with steep sides and looked immensely intimidating. I circled it, round and round, my heart beating, hands sweating in my gloves. I had to ride this if I wanted to be satisfied with myself! Could I handle all that weight of the GS and keep her going and reach the top was the main concern. And then I just did it. Poof! And there I was, as far as I was concerned, on top of the world! I wanted to yell and whoop and swing my arms about. No time straight into the descent. Like doing the roller coaster.



Jan Du Toit standing astride his bike explaining the controls. On the right is author Donna.

We all joined up again and headed for the farm. As we entered the trees surrounding the house, a fence with a ramp over it loomed ahead. Another one! My eyes darted to the path Braam was following, then back to the ramp and I opened the throttle. I hit the ramp, felt the GS change angle, then Freedom! Up and away into the air, back wheel dropping, feeling like slow motion, hold on tight and then down. The rear wheel landed perfectly, the bike's body followed and then the front wheel came down, with nary a waver. Now I was a lunatic and I could go home!!

Through it all my admiration and love for the BMW 1150 GS grew in leaps and bounds. I saw Jan and the guys do things with that solid machine, weighing in at approximately 285 Kg, that I never thought physics would permit. Flight given by speed, the gravity of earth falling away until bike and rider were like a strange bird soaring in weightless space. Power and aggression to meet the obstacles and the toughness to withstand the punishment. I will never read a write-up on bikes again and believe everything they say. I will try it myself and then decide.

Country Trax itself was an experience to be written in a journal for future generations to read. Hospitality from Jan, Elsabé, his sister and mother like you can only get on a farm! Food to warm the cockles of your heart and that Mom would approve of. Most importantly, Jan's ability to gather strangers and make them a unit in two days by mixing their love for bikes with the challenge of the great outdoors and wrapping it solidly in the art of control and handling.

If YOU think you CAN ride a bike, whether off-road or tar, go visit Jan. You may just learn a thing or two.

Editor's comment: Thank you Donna, for letting us ride pillion with you through it all. The realism is unbelievable! Every now and then I swallowed hard, cast a furtive look about me to ensure that I was in a comfortable arm chair in my study, and not on that donga-ed, slippery, rampy, stony, hilly, rainy, muddy, impossible road site that your trainer took you people on. If you handled your steed as well as the words in this story, you must have passed Cum Laude!

Anyone interested in doing this course should Phone Jan du Toit at 083-669-7283 and ask for a brochure. His E-mail adress is www.countrytrax.co.za

As I see it... **Read the fine print**

(Henri Heyns)

A number of years ago an insurance company, which has long ago ceased to exist, but shall nevertheless remain nameless, used the catchphrase 'We don't haggle, we pay'. A biking friend of mine has recently had an experience with an insurer that could very well use the above motto the other way around. He was involved in a collision with a car which wrote off his bike, but was himself luckily not seriously injured. It was only when he submitted a claim to the company for replacement of the bike that he discovered to what ends they could and would go in order not to pay.

The detail appertaining to the claim refusal is not important, but the one aspect thereof that stands out like a sore thumb is that my friend's loss lies therein that he did not take cognisance of the specifics in the contract or, sadly, chose to ignore them, to his considerable disadvantage.

Rules.

1. Know precisely what your insurance contract entails. *If it says for example, that only you, the rider, may drive the bike, then allowing anyone else to operate it, voids the policy.*
2. Make sure your bike is roadworthy. *The first thing insurance assessors look at when inspecting damage, is the amount of tread on the tyres. If any tyre has less than the 1 mm prescribed by law, they can refuse the claim.*
3. Obey the law. *Any illegal action on your part or allowing a condition to exist, can result in your having to pay for your own damages and perhaps that of the other party, as the case may be.*
4. Fulfill your contractual obligations. *Riders over the age of seventy, for example, must obtain and submit a medical certificate stating that they are physically fit enough to control a motorcycle.*
5. Err on the right side. *Rather be over-fussy when checking over your bike before riding off. A faulty brake stop light can cause an enormous hassle if a motorist tail-ends you for not being warned that you are about to stop.*
6. Consider the excess that you are required to

stand good for. *Excess to be paid by the insured in case of an accident depends inter alia on the rider's age, previous claims, the area where he lives, and so on.*

7. See to it that your premium is paid up to date. *If your premium falls in arrears, an unscrupulous company can use it as an excuse not to pay your claim.*
8. Revise your coverage regularly. *In the event of a write-off, your insurer will only pay the market value of your bike, no matter what you think your bike is worth. So, to save money, reinsure every year only for what the bike is valued at.*
9. Build up a no-claim reputation with your insurer. *No-claim bonuses are still around and it pays not to claim for every bump and scratch your bike receives. Keep your policy intact for that 'big one'.*
10. Report loss immediately to the police and the company. *There is a time limit to the reporting of an accident to your insurer. Before doing anything they will want the number of the police docket showing that you have reported the accident.*
11. Do not be taken in by smooth talk in advertisements. *Shop around for the best deal and don't be afraid to ask questions. Get the answers in writing.*
12. Do not try to save money by not insuring. *Accidents do happen and sometimes you, in a moment of forgetfulness or whatever, are the cause of one and as a result, are at the receiving end of a claim for damages caused by you. If you are insured then at least your insurer's legal team can come to your defence and help you out of your predicament. The uninsured will have to pay for his legal assistance and that can cost some these days.*

Bike helmet for sale

BMW System 3 full face helmet. Mandarin yellow. Hardly used and in perfect condition. Size: Large (X large?) Extras: BMW open face conversion kit (unused), consisting of black peak, cheek cushion side-pieces plus BMW Gore-Tex all weather gloves. Price: Only R2000 the lot. Can be viewed in JHB. Phone Michael Ettershank at 082-962-2772.

Techno Speak for the not so Technical

(Questions by Henri Heyns with answers provided by Bruce Meyers and his technical staff)

Part 4. ABS Brakes

In a previous rendition of this series the importance of two-wheel braking was emphasised as a *sine qua non* for bikers if they wish to stop quickly and safely. This discussion is now continued by looking at ABS brakes.

Q. What does ABS stand for and why is it recommended?

A. ABS is the German for *Anti Blokkier System* (Anti-Lock Braking System) and it does exactly what its name implies – it prevents the brakes from locking-up under fierce application. Remember that stability is retained with both wheels rotating and is lost if one or both wheels stop doing so for whatever reason.

Q. How does it work?

A. A sophisticated sensor at each wheel measures the speed and the braking force applied. In an emergency requiring drastic speed reduction a biker is inclined to ‘grab a fistful’ of brakes which can lead to one or both wheels locking-up and the consequent loss of control. (Remember only the most experienced riders will manage not to lock-up the brakes in an emergency.) Now just before the brakes can lock up (the best braking potential), the ABS will momentarily release the brakes to ensure that the wheels continue to rotate. As the wheels start rolling again and gain speed, the brakes are again applied automatically (provided of course that the rider hasn’t altered his braking stance), and so on until the bike comes to a standstill.

Q. Is there any sensation when the ABS kicks in?

A. Yes. There is a slight shudder or vibration as the brakes are applied and released in rapid succession.

Q. Are there any conditions under which it might be better not to use ABS brakes?

A. Yes. GS riders on off-road trips should see to it that their ABS system is switched off when tackling the dirt. (Note: Road bikes do not have the switch-off facility.),

Q. Why is this so?

A. To have ABS brakes work efficiently maximum traction between the tyres and road surface is required. On the dirt such traction is obviously lessened, with the result that the ABS system cannot do its job as efficiently as on tar. This means that the ABS system slows up the braking process, often causing the bike to overshoot its critical braking area. In addition, the ABS automatically cuts out at speeds of less than 4 km/h and should the rider apply additional pressure on his brake controls (as he would

very likely do when faced with an overshooting possibility) the brakes would suddenly lock the wheels, stability would be lost and a spill is highly probable.

Q. Are there other advantages to using ABS brakes?

A. Yes, decidedly so. In rainy weather brake lock-up is especially likely due to greatly reduced traction and here the ABS system would come into its own.

Q. What else can you say about ABS brakes?

A. Many bikers have more than one machine, but if some are equipped with ABS brakes and some not, it is only human that in an emergency braking situation he will not remember whether his bike is so equipped or not. This may lead to an inappropriate decision and consequent lock-up that may cost him dearly.

Q. Is it possible to fit an ABS braking system to a bike not so equipped originally?

A. Regrettably, no. ABS is a factory-fitted extra and although seemingly expensive at the outset, is worth every cent in an emergency braking situation as it takes the responsibility off the rider’s shoulders of maximum braking effort without locking-up.

Q. What about maintenance on a bike fitted with ABS?

A. The ABS system requires no more maintenance than standard brakes. However, due to the delicate work that it does, the system is best serviced by your dealer.

Q. It is said that a bike with ABS brakes applied takes a longer distance to stop than brakes not so fitted. Also racing riders prefer non-ABS brakes on and off the track. Is this true?

A. In a way yes, but only minimally so. Don’t forget that racing riders have a natural and acquired fine sense for doing the right thing at the right time all the time (or they wouldn’t be racing riders for very long!). This means that they will be less inclined to lock their brakes in an emergency, whereas the ordinary rider is sure to do so.

Q. Do you honestly think that ABS brakes are worth the extra R7000 on top of the big bucks already spent on a bike?

A. Certainly. This system is not in an experimental stage, but in its third generation. It has been tried and tested and has proved its worth. That is why it has become standard equipment on all the more expensive machines, bikes and cars as well.

Top of the Heap – Again!

(Henri Heyns from figures released by BMW Financial Services)

Spoke 'n Piston featured Bavarian Motorcycles in February 2002 for having won a number of awards from its BMW parent organisation for outstanding performance during that month.

BMW have now also released the results for best sales during October 2002 (car and bike dealerships) and **Bavarian Motorcycles** has come up with a triple win! It has (again) achieved the first place in the Top Dealerships competition. **Bianche Booysen** beat all competitors and was given the top award in the contest for Top Finance and Insurance Managers. The Top Sales Executive prime spot is filled by **Braam Smit** who drew ahead of all opposition. Bianche and Braam have also each won a trophy for their sterling efforts.

However, the winners readily admit that if it wasn't for the ardent support of all their staff and customer friends, their prestige performance would never have come to pass. But of course, business doesn't rest on sentiment and if it hadn't been for a top quality product, skillful negotiations, attention to detail, and above all, every employee's desire to deliver his/her best, Bavarian Motorcycles could never have featured in the championship stakes the way they have done.

I asked chief whip Bruce Meyers for his comments as to the reason for this repeated remarkable achievement. He boiled it down to three factors in the Bavarian Motorcycles equation: First, you must have stock on hand because seeing and feeling the actual product right there and then is worth much more than a brochure and a promise of having the motorcycle, part, accessory or item of clothing available the next day or week. Second, staff must conclude any deal speedily, reliably and proficiently. When a buyer decides to do the deal, there must be no hassles and the product must usually change hands as soon as possible if not immediately. Third, the right staff must man the areas for which they are responsible. For instance, it serves no purpose to have a bike mechanic answer questions on motorcycle prices, availability, colour schemes and so on. Similarly, enquiries about protective clothing or accessories are best answered by people specifically trained and charged with its sale.

Good public relations features highly in the Bavarian Motorcycles stable. Bruce Meyers and his people are also renowned for their customer care, as was again illustrated the other day when a bike broke down in the bundu somewhere, far away from Pretoria. The hapless biker got onto his cell phone and dialled Bruce's number. Within a few hours the bike had been trailered in, the fault rectified, and a now happy biker was on his way again. Bavarian believes in the motto that good friends become customers, or is it perhaps also the other way around?

Extreme Success, the publication from which the winners in the various categories was extracted, has the slogan 'not a flash in the pan'. With this appropriate saying we, the loyal supporters, congratulate the winners, and wish Bavarian Motorcycles, the award winners and the rest of the staff well for the future in the hope that the winning performance will be repeated again and again. May we in turn also quote a slogan, perhaps equally as appropriate as that above: Nothing succeeds like success. Go for it Bavarian!



Bavarian Motorcycles awards winners Bruce, Braam & Bianche putting on their winning smiles

Bikers' Sustainable Rights

(Jan van Oosten)

With last year's summit on sustainable development as a trigger, my thoughts are with that part of nature that I enjoy best as a biker, being the freshness of the spring mornings and the wonderful smell of flowering plants. As a city commuter these smells are quickly doused by diesel fumes and smoking trucks. Getting irritated won't help as it will effect my riding behaviour, so I pass these unsustainable

vehicles in order to get back to the sustainable smells.

During weekends bikers enjoy their rides as traffic volume is lower than normal and there are fewer unsustainable vehicles on the roads. Conditions on the back roads are not sustainable and we are sometimes forced to make use of the sustainable freeways. Although not in the least interesting, you know that the road will be in a good condition and as far as biking is concerned, to an extent safe.

As we are all aware, toll roads are part of our driving and riding lives. Stopping at the gate, my two-wheeled motor-driven autocycle is charged the same toll as a four-wheeled motor-driven auto vehicle with a two-wheeled attachment. My built-in calculator jumps to six against two! Suddenly I am an activist. Thoughts of unfairness, value for money and all of a sudden “BIKERS` SUSTAINABLE RIGHTS”. Bingo! Now is the time for bikers to unite against this unfair treatment.

Why can't the SA authority follow the First World with a slipway at every toll plaza? Although we live in a Third World other people's ideas do work. I am of the opinion that we are entitled to non - payment of toll monies as we are most definitely not unsustainable and we do not contribute in any large measure to the unsustainable roads. In my forty years riding and driving I have not yet seen a tar road that was dilapidated because of biking. On the contrary, we have such little effect with our two wheels on roads that it can almost not be measured, let alone the fact that we contribute to an easier traffic flow.

I feel sorry for bikers who have to ride to work each and every day via toll roads. Biking saves fuel and thereby makes a fair contribution to our dwindling economy, yet we must also pay toll. This is unfair and I cannot see any valid reason for toll monies to be levied on bikers. How about a bikers' protest by way of a massive gathering at the Union Buildings and presenting the authority with a petition as to bikers' sustainable rights?

PS. Jonas, my gardener, also asked me the other day whether he will also have to pay toll on his bicycle. My reply: Join the protest!

Editor's comment: Jan van Oosten's suggestion deserves serious consideration. Could the motorcycling fraternity with its many clubs and people from the industry not band together and make a strong representation to the powers that be, or is our collective voice too weak to be heard? What do readers think?

Cogitating On A C1.

(Gigi Delahaye)

C1 !!!

C why !!!

This article is about my experiences on the BMW C1, from the very start.

When I saw the lovely, cute 'little' machine that my husband, Richard, came home with, I fell 'in love' with it and the idea of riding one of my own. I sat on the parked C1 and imagined myself going off to the shops and wherever else with it. Then reality struck, when my dear, sweet Richard coaxed me for a ride on it with his assistance, only around the garden, mind you. My fear sprang at me like a 'crouched tiger'. I have no objection to admiring motorcycles when they are someone else's. I have this fear of me on one of those machines even as a pillion passenger. IRRATIONAL, no doubt, but it was there and I had not done anything about it previously. I have a car and a bicycle, and that suited me just fine. Untrue, after having seen this cute machine, there was a seed of fun, adventure, naughtiness growing – call it what you wish. I decided that I would invest in one and I did. When the time for delivery arrived, the 'crouched tiger' struck once more, and I insisted that Richard ride it home and I would take the car.

Now, having got it home, I was not quite sure what to do with it. It stood for 21 days and was admired and nothing else, and that was in the very beginning of March 2002. Then Richard came home with information regarding a Mobility Training Course presented by the BMW Driving Academy. I mentally noted this information as well as reading it, and I decided that was the route I would take and I said as much to Richard. I also requested of him not to push me as I would do this at my own pace or not at all. He acknowledged this and although gently coaxing and encouraging me, he was true to his word and did not push at all. I nervously went for the course and the instructor James and his assistant Matthew gently put me at ease throughout the day. By the end of that day I was riding around the grounds, albeit in one or the other direction in either a straight line or a wide circle, but I was RIDING !!

I decided to get my learners licence even before I went on the first course. I was going to do this correctly and try not pick up any bad habits. One month later I attended the advanced riding course and I have not looked back since April 2002. I now go to work with my cute "ZOOT SCOOT" everyday, which is a round trip of 75 kilometres, and anywhere else I wish to go. I can even do some of my shopping with it as well, and having the time of my life and such fun.

In my view and opinion, I feel that the course is the best thing I could have done for myself and it also gave me the confidence to overcome my 'crouched tiger'. As a woman and from my personal opinion, there is no reason to fear riding the C1, since I have found it to be very safe and reliable. The biggest challenge is to get going, and the next is always to remember what you have learned and not take anything for granted.

What I find rather strange is that I have not seen any further advertising, except the one in the Top Bike magazine once, extolling the advantages of the C1. As you go from strength to strength, you find that there are a lot more advantages than disadvantages. For example; you are far safer on the C1 than on a conventional scooter, due to the safety shell in which you are enclosed. You do not have to dress like the abominable snowman before proceeding on your way. It is basically: GET ON and GO, GO, GO. I have found it the most fun I am having on two wheels, and I have no wish to stop anytime soon.

I would suggest that anyone getting themselves a C1, should go on the courses. I would say that they should be mandatory, as you learn and acquire more than you realise.

What I have also found is that the C1 makes a lot of economic sense. I get between 30 and 32 kilometres to a litre of fuel, depending on my travelling speed. I have not gotten wet when riding through the rain, except for the slight splashes from other vehicles when they pass you, but that can be solved. I now use my bike more than I use my car. My bicycle is now being a bit neglected. I find it such super fun to share these riding times now with my husband.

I also now have a couple of nicknames at work such as: 'Biker Mama' and 'Hell's Angel' which are my colleagues bright ideas. All done in fun.

A WHOLE NEW WORLD OF ADVENTURE HAS OPENED UP FOR ME.



Gigi in parking area at work.

Editor's comment: There you have it folks, a completely unsolicited (and unedited) account from Gigi on her progress from a leg muscle-driven two-wheeler to a power-driven one and the fun she is having since overcoming her original trepidation. But, as she emphatically states, it makes good sense to attend a specially designed BMW Riding Academy training course, if you have become a proud owner of a C1 or any other BMW motorcycle. Congratulations to Gigi for being man enough (pun intended) to get on and go. Her husband Richard also deserves an accolade for sowing the seed in Gigi's mind about the advantages and fun in getting around on two wheels instead of four. To you who have not yet tried this sensation – go for it! You'll wonder what took you so long to discover the joys of motorcycling.

The BMW Motorrad Rider Academy, situated in Johannesburg, offers a whole series of courses and may be contacted at tel:(011)805-7673 and fax:(011)805-3629.

INDEMNITY

Although reasonable care has been taken to ensure the correctness of all material contained herein, the publisher cannot be held responsible for any inaccuracies that may occur or damage/loss sustained as a result of advice given.

CLUB ADDRESS:

Bavarian Motorcycles & Accessories cc,
7 Ockerse St., ARCADIA 0083
P.O.Box 23848, INNESDALE 0031 Tel. (012) 323-4865/6
Fax (012) 323-1630 E-mail: Bavarian@mweb.co.za