

Thanksgiving in the Texas Hill Country.....One Arm Wonder



From the Joplin region bikers can find fun, frolic, and warm riding south about 14 hours though the calendar says late November. The claim of the “new Napa Valley” was alluring. Hilly roads, wineries, and fine dining waited down the

road toward Fredericksburg.

This was the year for sunny weather and tolerable riding temperature after the first three hours. Southward of I-40 Oklahoma roads were smooth and fast. Leather gear was comforting through the brisk rush of the plains mid-50s.

School gave us the entire week off so Tena had us packed to get gone early Saturday. Family was waiting for us the next Thursday, in L.A.(lower Arkansas) so we figured we could get some miles in and take a refreshing break from teaching/coaching at our local junior high school. The Bowling team was given the week off so this coach had a reprieve to return to bad-ass-biker-dude. The Valkyrie was primed and needed miles since school cut into our quality time together.

One thing is true about Texas. It is a big, big state! We wanted to take fast roads and avoid the spider web of the Dallas/Ft. Worth metroplex. A brief veer on I-20 set us up on 281 to Stephanville for the night. Ohio and Michigan were playing so a motel with a TV-stocked watering hole was digs-of-choice. The next day was a delightful run on fine roads through Lampasas on into Johnson City. Westward on 290 had us in Stonewall by 12:30 at a wonderful B & B set back 2 ½ miles from the highway. No noise, long views, and close proximity to the rolling roads that make up this unique region of our 28th state.

Mornings were for riding after coffee on the front porch watching deer graze in meadows below our cottage. Smooth daily starts through back roads took us along the Perdenales River, Fredericksburg, Luckenbach, and Kerrville. Along rolling route 16, south of Kerrville, is the most beautiful place in the region. Turns slowed us to 15 M.P.H. picking up the Medina River and lakes outside the burg of Medina, population 250 (at the most). A stop at the local Apple Bakery is a must for taste treats incomparable. Returning from Bandera, the “Cowboy Capital of the World”, we headed toward Utopia, Vanderpool, Hunt, and a beautiful ride along the upper Guadalupe River.

Now I can’t endorse the “new Napa Valley”, nor posture a fine-wine palette but there are plenty of tasting stops throughout the entire region. Equal to northern California? No way, Jose! Tasting rooms attested alcoholic beverages, grapes, fruits, and no telling what else (asparagus and lichen) grown throughout the state. The wine trail sports over twenty establishments but only Texas Hills Vineyards showed vines on their property. This place was the best with a great “Kick-Ass Cab”, Sangiovese, and a sweet Orange Muscato.

The time away was great. Life existed without us at home as we returned with a great experience and memories that’ll get us to the warmth of Spring rides in the Ozarks. The “new Napa Valley”, we don’t think so, but it sure was a great November destination with a lot more to experience....next Thanksgiving sounds good! rider_writer@sbcglobal.net

