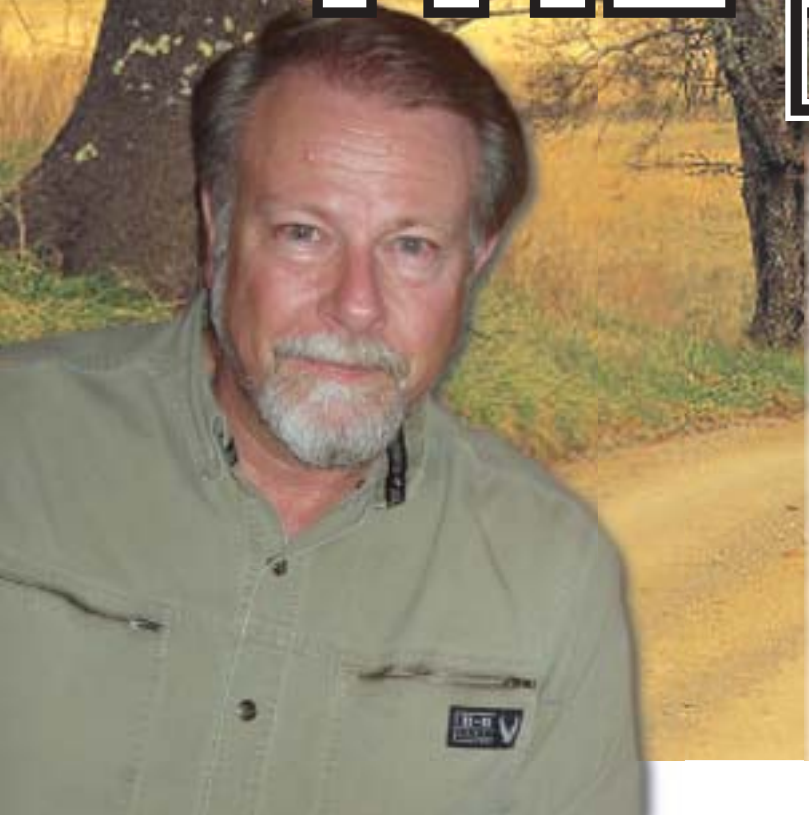


THE ROAD Less Traveled



So, who says you can't teach an old dog new tricks? I was recently reminded of this while riding with the Kirkwood HOG Chapter on this years Spring Ride. The ride was over 180 miles and traveled over roads in central St. Genevieve County. The route passed through an area which stirred my curiosity and had me wondering what else might be discovered there. The area is known as St. Genevieve's Wine Country. The following weekend had me back riding these roads and visiting all the spots I had only ridden past the previous weekend. I was pleasantly surprised to find a number of establishments well worthy of discussion. The St. Genevieve Wine region differs greatly from the widely ridden St. Charles County Wine region in a number of ways. The roads are much less congested especially on weekends. There are a number of back roads which may be taken to get there, and the presence of a strict local enforcement of road checks has not yet been experienced.

Visiting this area makes for an easy day ride from St. Louis. To get there the quickest, from the intersection of I-270 and I-55, travel South on I-55 for approximately 45 miles to exit 150, State Highway 32. Turn right and then immediately Left onto Highway B. You will see the sign welcoming you to the St. Genevieve Wine Country. The first stop to make is not a winery at all but you have to visit it. It's called the Copper Mine Saloon. It's located on Hwy B and will be on your right just after you cross the single lane bridge which crosses the River Aux Vases. This makes for a perfect place to have lunch. I was amazed by the large assortment of steak and seafood selections they have on their menu. The Copper Mine Saloon is reminiscent of an old western style saloon and has an outdoor patio, which is perfect for enjoying a meal. After lunch (remember, if you're going to drink- you have to eat) continue south on Hwy B for about a mile to Hwy P. Turn left on Hwy P and travel 2 miles to Cave Road. Turn right on Cave Road and travel 2 miles until you find the entrance to our first stop, Cave Winery. The road leading into the winery has recently been paved and is an easy ride. At the Wine Tasting House, you will be able to sample the different varieties of wine made here. With the purchase of one bottle of wine, 5 people

may take the trolley ride down to the cave. You might also decide to walk to the cave, which is all down hill and save the trolley for the ride out. The cave is great place to cool off on a hot summer's day and if you're lucky, they may have live entertainment playing. When leaving the Cave Winery, be sure to head back to Hwy B the way you came in. There are maps showing an alternative route but that route is all gravel and is confusing with a number of "Y" intersections that don't appear on the map. After returning to Hwy B, turn left and travel about 4 miles until the road splits. Stay to the left on Hwy WW and travel about 3 miles to the Chaumette Winery. You will pass the Crown Winery, which we will stop at on the way back. Between the Crown and Chaumette Wineries, see if you can spot the herd of buffalos that reside in the pasture on your right. Our next stop is the Chaumette Winery located near the top of the valley. The entrance road is scheduled to be paved by mid June but is still easy to ride even though it is gravel. Here you will find the classiest of all the wineries to be visited. The owner, Hank Johnson, has done a wonderful job in creating the complete winery experience. The wine house overlooks just a portion of their vineyards while offering a beautiful view of the valley. Inside the wine house you will find wine tasting, a gift shop and an exquisite restaurant. The restaurant has recently secured the talents of culinary chef Kevin Sthair, formerly the Head Chef for Balabans Restaurant located in the St. Louis Central West End. Reservations for lunch or dinner are recommended during the summer and may be made by calling 573-747-1000. Musical entertainment on the deck is more upscale and features the sounds of jazz and easy listening rather than rock. It's a great place to sit back and just chill for a while. Be sure to say "hi" to Hank and ask him about the French Provincial Village he is building. The village, which is currently under development, is very impressive. Towards the back of the Wine House, you will find a small Chapel that was constructed for having on-site weddings (wink, wink, nudge, nudge) for anyone looking for the perfect place. You might say, Hank has thought of everything.

Now it's time to head to the Crown Winery. Back to Hwy WW, turn left and travel 2 miles to the Crown Winery Main Entrance. This winery stays open the latest with a closing time of 7:00pm on Sundays. Here you will find the largest of the areas wineries. They have a large deck that wraps around two sides of the building. Walking to the deck will take you through the wine production room. Here you will find huge stainless steel vats with wines in various stages of production. An outside pavilion is nearing completion and will be the site for many concerts this summer. If you're looking for a place that is sure to have a large gathering, this is absolutely the place. Now remember, it's not necessary to drink a bottle of wine at each location. Missouri law allows for the winery to recap your bottle and place it in a bag for you to take home. Don't forget, you are on two-wheels and I wouldn't want anyone to get hurt out there. Stay safe and stay sober so we can all continue to explore new locations around our area. The winery tour does make for a great day ride so buy a couple of bottles but take them home and enjoy them there.

There is one more winery in this area called the Charleville Winery. My suggestion is if you want to visit this one, come back on four wheels. The road has deep gravel and steep inclines which should not be ridden while on a motorcycle. Next month it will be time to get geared up for Sturgis. Stay tuned for some great ideas on where to visit while in South Dakota. So until then, I'll be checking out more roads at That One Place.

Ride Safe,
Doug