

MELBOURNE TO BRISBANE & RETURN: RIDE REPORT

by JAY and LINDA SILVER



BEST ADVICE - BEST TOURS - BEST BIKES

Jay Silver and his wife Linda from the USA were kind enough to supply us with a selection of photographs and text from the custom self-guided tour they recently enjoyed around from Melbourne to Brisbane and back via Sydney. You can read about similar self-guided tours [here](#).

Thanks to Jay and Linda for sending us their pictorial report, we hope you enjoy reading it as much as they clearly enjoyed riding it!

TUESDAY NOV. 26 MELBOURNE TO LAKES ENTRANCE:

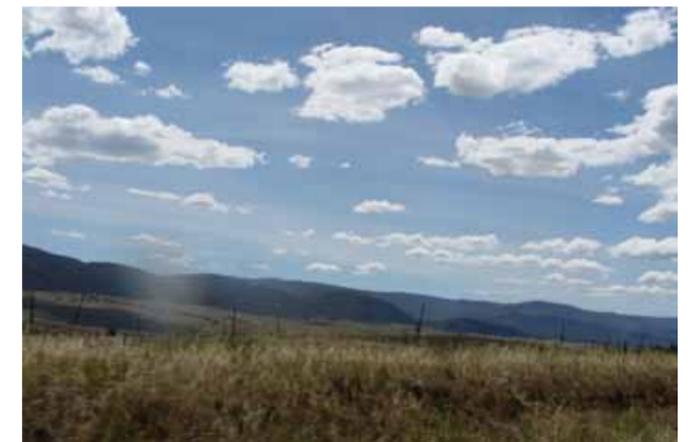
We arrived in Australia after a long flight, but Qantas really made it nice. In Sydney getting through immigration took forever, don't think they wanted to let us in the country. Melbourne is a very cosmopolitan city, downtown is really thriving and at 7 at night people are out eating, walking and biking. We walked around the city centre, crossed the Yarra River, through Alexandra Park and ended up at the Crown Entertainment complex. Casino and restaurants.



Picked up the Harley Ultra Classic Tuesday morning and headed out of the city for Lakes Entrance. Driving on the left side of the road was a pretty easy adjustment, only the slow lane is on the left, everything is opposite of the USA. The roads are free of traffic, in good condition and very easy to navigate. The GPS really helps. Stopped at Phillips Island at the Koala Conservation Centre and saw the Koala's. Stayed at a B&B at Lakes Entrance with a great view of the Pacific Ocean.

WEDNESDAY NOV. 27 LAKES ENTRANCE TO CANBERRA:

The day started with a great breakfast looking out on the Pacific Ocean and then headed out for the capital of Australia, Canberra. The scenery is great and we passed through the edge of the Snowy Mountain Region with tall pine trees. We would go for 30 minutes and maybe see three cars, It was great and a nice relaxing ride. Stopped at a bakery in Bombala which was recommended. It seems every town has at least one bakery, that serves coffee tea and cakes. At the petrol stations you fill up prior to paying (they are more trusting than the US) and the lowest octane they have is 91. Gas is about \$1.52 a litre which works out to be almost \$6.00 a gallon. The towns we pass through are small, any small city or town in Ohio would be larger. No major stores all mom and pops. The larger cities have supermarkets and major stores. The lady who ran the bread and breakfast was travelling to Melbourne for a consultation on a hip replacement 3-4 hour drive. Ended the day by visiting the National Museum for Australia, which had a nice display of Aboriginal art.



THURSDAY, NOV. 28. CANBERRA TO BATHURST HAPPY THANKSGIVING TO ALL!

We had a great day today, the weather has been great although it has gotten hot about 85. No rain and as you know rain is a bad 4 letter word. We started out and headed for the little town of Borrows which was just a small town along the main highway we were travelling. Not much until we reached Cowra, The Australians had a Japanese POW camp during WWII where Japanese and Italian prisoners were kept. During August, 1944 a breakout occurred and 378 Japanese POW's escaped, 334 were captured and the rest killed. They have a memorial and cemetery for the camp. Also stopped at the Japanese Garden and then headed for Bathurst. Bathurst host a grand prix event The Mt. Panorama Circuit, and you can take your car or motorcycle on the track. We are limited to a strict 60 kph, about 32



mph, we went a little faster but the surface could of been better. Checked into the Dairy B&B and Linda's nose went up in the air. It is old, cluttered, and I don't have the picture of the washing machine on the front porch. The best picture is the main one that is posted. She saw two spiders on the bedroom door, not sure she is staying the night or sleeping with both eyes closed. Heading out to see if we can find a Thanksgiving Meal. Well our Thanksgiving meal consisted of Fish, roasted potatoes and salad, and those of you who know Linda here salad wasn't eaten. Finished up the day by seeing a Kangaroo, will post that picture tomorrow.



**FRIDAY, NOV. 29.
BATHURST TO KATOOMBA:**

By this time everyone has had their Turkey dinner, mashed potatoes, dressing and fixings and are ready for the Black Friday specials. Shop well!! Linda and I are jealous. We started out the day with our rain suits, riding in a light rain and drizzle, just enough to be irritating. Today was a short ride but with lots of scenery. Heading through the Blue Mountains, like the Smokeys, they get there name from the fog which has a blue tint. When we were sight seeing one of the neatest things was you could see something one minute and literally the next minute it was covered in fog. I am going to post 2 pictures both of the 3 sisters taken 3 minutes apart. The rain started to fall harder as we pulled into Katoomba, got off the bike, had a pint in one of the local taverns, walked the town and headed for our B&B. The Lurine House is very nice,

Linda is pleased, no spiders, very elegant.



**SATURDAY, NOV. 30 & SUNDAY DEC. 1.
KATOOMBA TO CESSNOCK AND THEN TO
ARMIDALE Great Brk:**

At the Lurline House, we ate our fill pancakes, French toast, omelette, eggs fruit and headed out for Cessnock. What a great two days of motorcycle riding. Started our day riding in the Hunter Valley, wine country with great wineries and rolling countryside. Then part of our route went through the Wollemi National Park for a distance of about 130 KM which is about 80 miles and the road was a combination of deals gap and cherochola skyway. Great sweeping curves and some tight corners. Paul Lowe would love this road, you might go straight for about 120 meters and then a new curve. There was absolutely no car traffic, they all take the faster highway. Plenty of bikes, the speed limit is 100kph which is great. Met a group of dirt bikers who are out for the weekend and they actually have a chase vehicle with gas as there is no gas station for quite a while. On Sunday ride took us on the Thunderbolt way which is pretty much the same except the road is not as smooth. Linda would like the sewing machine (that is what Bill King Harley rider calls the Gold Wing) as the bumps are pretty severe at times. The suspension on the Ultra Classic leaves a little bit to be desired as least with my experience. Ended Sunday by seeing some Kangaroos and eating at the Wicklow Pub in Armidale which is the centre of New England, Australia, the highest city in the continent for dinner, Salmon for Linda and I had Lamb shanks, enjoyed a jug of Fat Yak Ale, and listened to music. A lot of the Aussies are drinking Corona's. Some of our observations so

far are that food cost are so much more here, about 50-70% more, gas is \$1.54 a litre about 6\$ a gallon and everyone is friendly and very helpful, talked with a guy at the pub and he was telling us good motorcycle routes and what to see. Tomorrow we head for Byron Bay on the coast.



**MONDAY DEC. 2 & TUESDAY DEC. 3.
ARMIDALE TO BYRON BAY TO NOOSA HEADS :**

Armidale where we stayed last night is located in the region of New England of New South Wales and it is a huge plateau. It is the highest point in Australia. Saw two great waterfalls, the Wollomombi Falls and Ebor Falls. As we went to the Wollomombi Falls, we had to compete with the free range cattle for road space. The Ebor Falls is fed by the Guy Fawkes river. As we travelled out of the high plateau you enter a more tropical climate where sugar cane becomes the main crop. The roads were great travelling through the forest down towards the coast. We arrived in Byron Bay which was nice, has a great beach with many surfers, but the water was like ice. It has a functioning lighthouse which was built in 1901 and can be seen 42 KM out to sea. B&B was nice and we had dinner on our patio with take-a-way. Some of our perceptions of Australia are the people are very friendly and there are many terms which are different: take-a-way=carryout, overtaking=passing cars, give way=yield, terms like No Worries, It's All Good, One thing that is different is the price of food, It is approximately 70% higher. Gas is about \$1.55 a litre, \$6.00 a gallon. Headed out from Byron Bay towards Brisbane, worst section of the trip, lots of traffic as we approach Brisbane, the trucks are huge they have 34 wheels, went through Brisbane and stopped in Beerwah, Home of the Crocodile Hunter's Zoo-Steve Irwin Pretty cool for a privately held zoo, started by Irwin's parents. Had kangaroos, koala's, big saltwater crocodiles and nice snake exhibit. Ended up

at our motel in Noosa Heads on the coast of the Pacific. Tomorrow Wednesday is a no travel day, just relaxing, lay on the beach, and I need to do laundry, can't take much on the motorcycle.



WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 4, NOOSA

Just a nice relaxing day, didn't even get on the bike, it stayed parked all day, walked into town, went to the pool, did some laundry, and just enjoyed the day. Tomorrow we head south on our way to Sydney.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 5, NOOSA TO LISMORE:

Left Noosa Heads and went south towards Brisbane, Going through Brisbane has been the worst of the riding, hot, and roads are typical of any big city, cars and more cars with construction going on the motorways. But once we left Brisbane behind it opened up into some fantastic roads, I have trouble picking out the pictures so I included many more today. The scenery and roads were both great today. The town of Murwillumbah is pretty typical of the small towns in Australia a main strip which has grocery store, chemist, clothing and cafe's. Rolling through the forests with speeds of 100 kmph works well, you will come upon a small town with a sign saying reduce speed now, Usually drops to 50, and that is where we met the police shooting radar. Luckily I have been really following speed limits. We stopped at a little town Nimbin, it started in 1973, they had an event like Woodstock and many people just stayed and started a collective, reminded me of my college days in the late 60's, nothing worse than an old hippie, I sat and talked with one, hilarious, one eye looking right and one looking left and stoned out of his mind. I was crossing there street and some girl asked if I needed weed for the day. I told her I had enough. 50 kilometres down



the road we came to LISMORE and found our B&B.



**FRIDAY, DECEMBER 6.
LISMORE TO PORT MACQUARIE:**

Nice ride down the coast from Lismore to Port Macquarie small coastal town. Stopped at the Yarrowarrah Aboriginal Gallery with a lot of aboriginal paintings and artifacts. On the way Linda wanted to stop at this store she saw on TV, the Big W, looked nice on TV, but turned out to be a glorified Kmart. In the process I lost my camera and we went back and luckily a worker saw it drop off the bike. When we returned he had it and I was lucky to get it back or no. Pics. Tomorrow we are leaving early to head for Sydney to get as much time as we can in the city.

**SATURDAY, DECEMBER 7.
PORT MACQUARIE TO SYDNEY:**

Left early heading to Sydney. On the way we hit a road by luck with the sign "Motorcycle Enforcement" next 40 Km = Great road pics included., It seems that everywhere we go we have found some great roads to ride. Stopped at a local Harley Dealer on the way and they have a bike for sale \$47,000 would be about \$32,000 in the States. Sydney is crowded- lots of traffic, lots of people, reminds me of New York. Went to the Quay, walked around - Sydney Opera House, The Rocks: Fortune of War Pub, Oldest Pub in Sydney, Harbour Bridge and other sights. It was a great day.



**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 8.
SYDNEY:**

Had fun on public transportation no bike today, parked amongst all the scooters. Took a ferry from the Quay to Watson's Bay and had lunch at a street café. Johnny fixed Linda a plain turkey sandwich and I had a lamb kebab. He makes a homemade dessert called a Littman's yellow cake with chocolate icing and shredded coconut, melt in your mouth. Nice sitting on street watching people walk by. Afterwards climbed a lookout at the harbour and ferry back to Quay. A subway got us to the bottom of the Harbour Bridge where we walked across and got some great pictures of the harbour. A train took us back over and under the harbour to the central station. Subway back to hotel. Linda drew the line on a bus. Ferry ride was really nice because it showed the eastern portion of the harbour and city. All kinds of watercraft, kayaks, small sailboats, to large yachts. Even small pontoon planes. Sydney is a neat city, very easy to get around and Aussies very friendly, don't know if we would get that in Chicago or New York.



**MONDAY, DECEMBER 9.
SYDNEY TO BATEMAN'S BAY:**

Woke up at 6:00 am today and it is Sunday back in the States, NFL Bengals vs. Indy is on TV, Great and the Bengals are kicking Indy's Butt!! Had a little problem with the Harley, I parked in a motorcycle only parking spot in front of major hotel in Sydney, park perpendicular to the sidewalk, plenty of room on Sunday/ Went out and it is 9 o'clock Monday, a work day I am crushed with mopeds, smaller bikes on all sides, I don't even have room to set the bike upright off the kickstand, got another man to help hold the bike up while we walked it out on an angle, As soon as I left another bike went into the spot. Without his help it could of been, Wild Hogs all bikes going down in a domino effect. Got out of Sydney fairly easily going south out of town, once out of town picked up the Grand Pacific Drive. Gorgeous, great views as well as curves, 1st part in forest and then breaks out and follows the coast. Neat bridge "Sea Cliff Bridge" which extends out from the cliff over the water The Coastal drive is fantastic compatible to the Pacific Coast Hwy in California but not as spectacular. Saving that for the Great Ocean Road into Melbourne. On the way we went to the largest Buddhist Temple in the Southern Hemisphere, NAN TIEN TEMPLE only problem it is closed on Mondays. Went to Kiama Blowhole, an opening in the rock where waves crash through sending a geyser of water up through the hole. Nice lighthouse on Kiama point. Check out how the postman dresses and what he drives, The US postal service could take a lesson and save a few bucks.



**TUESDAY, DECEMBER 10.
BATEMAN'S BAY TO JINDABYNE:**

Today wasn't a whole lot to stop and do or see. We left



and headed south and then headed west to the Snowy Mountains, it was windy and chilly. Went through and over Brown Mountain and the riding was fun. When you get to the top of Brown mountain it is like a huge plain, it reminds me of Kansas with the wind blowing Had to lean the motorcycle into the wind to hold it steady. As we travel we see huge concentrations of sheep and cattle but no crop farms, such as wheat, corn or soybeans.



**WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 11.
JINDABYNE TO BRIGHT:**

Sunny but very windy when we started, winds were whipping through the mountains. The Snowy Mountains are a large range which provide a large portion of electricity to southern Australia through hydro electrical power. They also provide recreation in the form of skiing, sledding, mountain biking, and dirt motorcycling. Great views exists through out the Mountains. Stopped and visited the museum The Man from Snowy River, remember the movie. Also Buffalo ranch on the way. Had dinner at a local Bright Brewery.



**THURSDAY, DECEMBER 12.
JINDABYNE TO CASTLEMAINE:**

We have been so fortunate, another sunny day, it has only rained 1 day, and that was for about 3 hours a light drizzle. I hope I don't jinx us. Warm and sunny we set off for Mount Buffalo National Park and the Mountain. It is about 20 Km up the mountain from the base to the top. Beautiful views, I tried to capture the drop off, hope you can visualize from the pictures. Stopped at the butter factory, nothing like the Ohio State Fair and it's cow. Every town we travel through is like from the 50's, Modern conveniences, buildings, shops exist in the city but out in the country it is like happy days. The pub is the centre of activity, dinner, games of chance and drinking. I saw a man who had a soft tail Harley and asked him where he had it worked on, and he said a man out of his back yard, if he needs parts has to order and wait two weeks.



**FRIDAY, DECEMBER 13.
CASTLEMAINE TO HALLS GAP:**

Easy ride to Halls Gap, flat and actually land being used to produce wheat and crops. Got to Grampians National Park early checked in and went exploring, Went to the Brambuk Aboriginal Cultural Centre which has a history of the Aboriginals for this area, In reading their history it sounds like a combination of the American Indians (losing their land to progress) and African American (oppression and discrimination and loss of culture). The young children were taken from the parents and simulated into the Australian culture, by white parents. The Grampians are granite mountains, a top climbing spot for Australians., Went to Boroka Lookout, Check out the picture of Linda, (she needs to be taken to the woodshed) she climbed the protective fence to get this picture! Literally a 200 foot drop to the bottom. Met 3 young mates, an Italian, a German and a Frenchman, nice young men, in talking with them asked what language they spoke, answer, English in the car except if we cuss, then in our native language. On the way back down the mountain had a close encounter with a wallaby, a foot from taking us or him out. Check out the pics of Ararat it is a major regional town. First Kangaroo is out the back patio of motel, the rest are at dusk eating at large open recreational area near central part of town where they just congregate. The birds Carrilla's are abundant. Had a taste of Kangaroo meat, (doesn't taste like chicken) actually really tasty. Weather continues to hold although it looked iffy in the afternoon today.



**SATURDAY, DECEMBER 14.
HALLS GAP:**

A great day at the park, we are tired, hiked out. The day started with a hike to the Pinnacles, a great lookout which you walk about 1 1/2 miles steadily uphill with some steep ascents to reach the pinnacles, as you know I don't like heights, so even with the railing I wasn't very comfortable. Some great pictures, the water in the long shots is Lake Wartook. About 3 hour round trip, and then went to McKenzie Falls, some great pictures at the falls, Linda counted 1000 steps down to the bottom of the falls at a 60^ descent, and then of course we have to walk back up. We ended the day going to Reid's Lookout and the Balconies. We have worked up an appetite for dinner. I think it could be Kangaroo. Tomorrow is the highlight of the trip for me (I hope) The Great Ocean Road. After we head south to Port Fairy we will head southeast on the Great Ocean Road which parallels the Pacific Ocean (this part is called the Tasmanian Sea). As a sidlight we are staying at the Kookaburra Motel and the owner comes out this morning as we are ready to leave and says he got a call from the police of Nimbin, he has it all written out on a piece for paper and says they want me to call them. I look at him kinda concerned because I have no idea what might of happened, I ask if I can use his phone, he starts to laugh. He really got me. Also on the news was the school shooting in America, the newscasters are flabbergasted at Americans and their guns, the lack of gun control and not having better background checks. Always interesting to get a different perspective.





with only 2 survivors 6. Twelve Apostles, there are only 8 left, We then stopped at Cape Otway filled with Eucalyptus trees and the Koalas check out the mother with the baby. Last picture is Apollo Bay our stop for the night.



**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15.
HALL'S GAP TO APOLLO BAY:**

Today was a busy day, we were on the bike for 9 hours, with stops and sights to see. It was overcast but no rain, our luck is holding, hoping for lots of sun to make the coast really shine. Started our day leaving the mountains behind and entering forests and then pasture land down to the coast where we stopped at the Tower Hill Wildlife Reserve. It is an old volcano, which is inactive, and has been developed as a conservation area. Spotted two Emu's and then headed down the GREAT OCEAN ROAD. Some great twists and turns as it follows the coastline. The limestone formations are created by erosion of the rock. In order the sights are 1. The Bay of Islands, 2. The Grotto 3. London Bridge, it is only 1/2 collapsed with 2 people on it, they were rescued. 4. The Arch 5. Loch Ard Gorge, Ship of same name shipwrecked



**MONDAY, DECEMBER 16.
APOLLO BAY TO MELBOURNE:**

Apollo Bay was a very nice small little town, great beach, and crystal clear water. We rolled out of Apollo Bay heading for Melbourne on our last day with the motorcycle. It has been a great time on the bike. The clouds looked threatening but we are hoping for one more day of clear if not great weather. From Apollo Bay to Torquay the Great Ocean Road was fantastic. The road hugs the coastline with great views and awesome scenery. Traffic was light so we could let the Harley run at least to the speed limits. Going into Melbourne was like traffic in any large American city, a nightmare, the M1 was at a dead stop then inching along, 3 lanes into 2 at the tunnel, lucky we didn't have to go through, exit was just at the entrance. Linda took one picture with our reflection in the hubcap of the wheel. Check out the last picture, one way alley, which connects two streets, our hotel is at the other end of the alley, GPS says turn, so up the alley to the hotel.



SATURDAY, DECEMBER 21. CINCINNATI, OH, USA:

Well we are back in the states after a long flight home. It was a fantastic trip, we saw much of Australia, but only about 1/5 of the country. We didn't get into the Outback or to the Western part of Australia. Overall we had a very positive impression of the people, and the country. The motorcycle performed flawlessly, however wouldn't trade it for my Honda Goldwing. We met many fantastic individuals, stayed in great B&B's, saw fantastic sights and overall had a wonderful time. Always good to be home. Thanks for following our trip, We enjoyed sharing the pictures and our adventure with you. ENJOY LIFE AND KEEP THE RUBBER SIDE DOWN. JAY AND LINDA.

Thanks again to Jay and Linda for booking their tour with us and sending through their ride report so we could share it with you. We hope you enjoyed reading it as much as they clearly enjoyed riding it!

You can read more about Jay and Linda's adventures on their website: <http://jay-silver.weebly.com/>