

## **RIDING SOLO TO THE TOP OF THE WORLD**

*Indian Filmmaker Gaurav Jani's Excellent Adventure*

**By: Steve Werner**

Hey man, Do you like to travel on motorcycles? Me too. I swear, the more I ride, the more I want to ride. Trips where all you do for weeks on end is wake up and ride all day are pure Heaven on Earth. At the risk of being a hippie, I've come to find my motorcycle to be a spiritual tool to carry me closer to whatever that big thing in the sky is. On the road, out there in the perfume and the stink of the world, not a spectator but connected to it, the captain of my own vessel. In motorcycling we can discover our nomad soul.

Gaurav Jani is a biker/filmmaker in Mumbai, India, who gets this in the same way that you and me get this. And he's gone and done us one better. He's made a kickass award-winning documentary about his amazing adventure called, "Riding Solo to the Top of the World" and I've watched it 17 times.

Gaurav and his bros in the 60kph Club, a mostly Royal Enfield motorcycle traveling club, cooked up the idea of making a big documentary of them making a huge ride to the far outposts of northeast India

But who ever funds things in India didn't exactly see the coolness of what they were up to, and gave them the old biker heave-ho. This left the club with some meager funding from family and friends, but nowhere near enough dough to get the job done.

Not wanting to let down the people who believed in the film, Gaurav decided to go it alone, make the journey and shoot the film himself, acting as cameraman, director, soundman, stuntman and subject all rolled into one.

On his 350cc Royal Enfield Bullet, he rode from Mumbai to one of the remotest, highest, coldest deserts in the world, the mysterious Changthang Plateau on the northeast border of India and China. He went as a lone biker to beyond where the roads end, and had the adventure of a lifetime in an exotic place frozen in time that most of us never knew existed.

Along the way he witnesses an ancient Buddhist festival, gets lost in truly the middle of nowhere, visits a forbidden Tantric monastery and pushes his bike to the highest motorable pass in the world, (pushes it, because there's so little oxygen there, fuel wouldn't fire properly in the chamber) Fighting altitude sickness, freezing cold and his own fears, Gaurav presses forward with pure grit and determination. You gotta admire the guts of this guy.

In the high Changthang he hooks up with a tribe called the Chang-Pa's, nomadic sheepherders who have been on the go for a couple thousand years or so. They adopt him into the family and the film shifts into another gear. It becomes not so much a road movie, or even a bike thing necessarily, but a poem about the traveling life, the ancient nomads meeting a modern nomad biker and finding that they share the same spark.

Gaurav is not just some hack either; he's a bonifide filmmaker. The camera work is as beautiful as the wild land he was riding through. The photography is brilliant, especially since he was learning to work the camera as he went along,. What he went through to set up riding shots proves his dedication to his art. This dedication pays off in spades because

what you've got here is a very professionally crafted documentary about stretching the boundaries of where a bike can take you. It is road inspiration of the highest order. (One DVD tech tip; be sure to turn the subtitles on so you can understand when they're speaking in Hindi)

For most it will be real entertaining in a two-wheeled, National Geographic, armchair explorer kind of way. However, for someone who feels that call to adventure, it's much more. In such a person this film could plant a deeper seed. It could make you start to look at your bike in a whole new way, maybe start dreaming about some distant place, some far horizon that calls your name. Answer that call and find faith in action, baby, all motion and moving, out there in the sun and rain, with discovery, adventure and maybe even some greasy enlightenment as a reward.

If you're online, check out the trailer at; [www.dirttrackproductions.com](http://www.dirttrackproductions.com) There's a couple of ways to order this DVD: if you've got Paypal you can buy it directly off the website for \$21.99, including shipping from India. Or you could also get it from [www.touratech-usa.com](http://www.touratech-usa.com) with a credit card.

Whatever way you buy it, man, get this thing and check it out.

**Steve Werner**  
**Easyriders Magazine**