

One Crazy Ride

Going off the grid in India

By: Steve Werner

No sound in this dank, sweating jungle but the shrill keening of a billion insects. Barely visible, a worn path winds through this dense undergrowth. It may have been a path between remote villages for a thousand years. In the 20th century it was built into a proper road for trucks and supplies and modernization, and has been slowly swallowed up by the jungle ever since. Out here the jungle wins, period.

Slowly above the blanket hum comes a new sound: Paka-paka-paka-paka-paka-paka-paka-paka-paka-paka. Seemingly out of nowhere a ragtag rider emerges on a heavily-laden Royal Enfield Bullet 350, sliding between ruts in the muddy path. Then follows another, and another and another and another. Paka-paka-paka-paka-paka-paka-paka-paka-paka-paka.. The cacophony of small engines rises and crescendos as the motorcyclists disappear one by one like ghost-riders into the green mist.

Welcome to India.

These ragtag riders are members of the 60KPH Club. Serious motorcycle adventurers, bent on exploring the forgotten and forbidding backwaters of India. This is what they do for fun. That they do this on small-caliber, single-cylinder street bikes, never meant for any kind of off-road duty is just flat out crazy. Somebody ought to make a movie out of this. Actually they did.

One Crazy Ride is the brainchild of one Gaurav Jani, a self-taught documentary film-maker outta the mean streets of Mumbai. His previous documentary, "Riding Solo to the Top of the World" is a wonderment of guts, determination and the will to risk it all for the sake of exploring forgotten lands. No funding, no back-up crew, no satellite phone, no safety net, just one guy alone on his beloved bike riding off into the Himalayas. It's a beautiful film that won all kinds of awards, and every biker worth his boots oughta see it and be inspired.

One Crazy Ride started with a map and a plan to follow a route that everyone said didn't exist through one of the remotest parts of India, the Himalayan state of Arunachal Pradesh. Five friends, four guys and one girl, all members of the 60KPH Club dreamt up this expedition, saved their money for years, (no wealthy movie-stars on this trip). And took off into the wilderness, their little bikes loaded to the gills with equipment and supplies. No GPS, no support and no way out but by their own wits. This is motorcycle adventure with a capital A.

The film follows every rugged step of their journey, through high mountain passes, jungles, swamps and river-crossings. Witness the trials of washed-out roads, landslides, getting lost, leaches, flat tires and roadside engine repairs in the middle of nowhere. Imagine riding a motorcycle across a decrepit and swaying 100-foot high suspension bridge made out of bamboo.

The crew rides into some very remote villages and mingles with the tribesmen, who are clearly pretty surprised to see five bikers come barreling out of the woods. They are welcomed into the tribes and allowed to experience the ceremonies and sometimes heavy

scenes of these forgotten people. Here is life in the raw, lived totally off the grid where the only law is the guy with the biggest machete.

The film is beautifully shot by one-man film crew Gaurav, who as a motorcyclist/film-maker is a real hero. The photography and the scenery is just stunning. I think it would be impossible to see this thing and not be inspired by the sheer poetry of its vision. It's a testament to the courage of rough travel and the spiritual wisdom of real explorers. The real beauty of One Crazy Ride is in its inspirational message. It's not saying "We are this exceptional group and we are here to show you what you will never experience." The message of the film is that you can do it too.

Here in the days of GPS, umbilical cel/web connections and safe, easy travel, we need this film for what it shows us. That adventure is for anyone who will take the risk. You don't have to be rich, famous or have unlimited credit. All that is bullshit, man. All you need is the desire to go. Life is for living to the fullest. It's a wild adventure for all who are willing to roll the dice. See this movie, see Gaurav's first movie too, and GO.

You can check out bitchen trailers of both films and score the DVD's off of their website: www.dirttrackproductions.com While you're at it check out the 60kph Club's website for even more inspiration; www.60kph.com

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