

PRESS KIT

RIDING
SOLO TO THE TOP
OF THE
World

FILM SYNOPSIS

Riding Solo To The Top Of The World is the unique experience of a lonesome traveler, who rides his motorcycle all the way from Mumbai to one of the remotest places in the World, the Changthang Plateau, in Ladakh, bordering China.

Situated at an average altitude of 15,000 feet, Changthang covers almost 30,000 square kilometers of Ladakh. A land devoid of roads and with temperatures which dip to minus 40 degree Celsius in winter.

As a one-man film unit, he astonishes you, filming the landscape he passes by and the people he interacts with, capturing moments of beauty, pain, love, hardship, self doubt and spiritual triumphs.

As a city slicker, his interaction with the nomads of the region, the Chang pas, who live at the highest altitude used by mankind in the world, teaches him a new perspective on life, as does the religious fervor he encounters.

The Hemis festival that comes once in twelve years, the Tashi Choling monastery where the Chang pas pray to the Rain God and the ever-changing life of the Chang pas, have all been shot in all their splendor and festivity.

The man and his camera travels even beyond the realm of practicality as he films the monastery at Chemur, the very first time a camera has ever entered the said monastery.

Riding Solo to the Top of the World, in essence, is a film about a journey that begins as an adventure and ends with the man, Gaurav Jani, seeking the person within.

Screenings & Awards

Mumbai International Film Festival - India

GOLDEN CONCH FOR BEST DOCUMENTARY FILM / VIDEO

Jury Comment: *With "Riding Solo..." a new form (of film making) emerges which should encourage young filmmakers to explore the world around them. A road movie, which transforms a trekking adventure into a poem, revealing the mysteries of a gentle mindscape.*

53rd National Film Awards – India

BEST DOCUMENTARY FILM

Jury comment: *"Made in the best tradition of cinema verity, personal, vivid and natural. The film leads the viewer from revelation to revelation, giving us an opportunity to come to love and know the 'Changpas' and their unique lifestyle"*

CMS Vatavaran Nature and Wildlife film festival – India

JURY AWARD

Jury Comment by Shyam Benegal: *"Riding solo to the top of the world is a marvelous ethnographic rarely seen in recent years. The film stands in comparison with Robert Flahearty's work, especially 'Nanook of the north'. Jury Award for this incredible one-man effort, which had yielded best ethnographic film made in India in a long time."*

Mumbai International Film Festival - India

NATIONAL CRITICS AWARD

Jury Comment: *For its judicious mix of adventure and ethnographic detail.*

Signs Film Festival - India

BEST DOCUMENTARY – BIOGRAPHY CATEGORY

Jury Comment: *For its sheer spirit of adventure with a compassion that enhances the viewer's perception.*

Kathmandu International Mountain Film Festival - Nepal

AUDIENCE AWARD - BEST DOCUMENTARY

Indian Documentary Producers' Association Awards 2006

TECHNICAL AWARD FOR SOUND DESIGN - DWARAK WARRIER

Jury Comment: *A delightful documentary with simple but good sound of consistent quality, with the sound track adding to the film tremendously.*

TECHNICAL AWARD FOR EDITING - SANKALP MESHARAM

Jury Comment: *The film kept the viewers' interest alive for 94 mins in a feat of sleek editing.*

BEST DOCUMENTARY - GAURAV JANI

Jury Comment: *A true celebration of the documentary, this solo adventure translates into a film that is an experience both personal and universal.*

Llanberis Mountain Film Festival, UK

BEST DOCUMENTARY AWARD

Seattle's 4th Independent South Asian Film Festival

AUDIENCE AWARD – BEST DOCUMENTARY

Sheffield adventure film festival

BEST ON THE EDGE FILM AWARD

Calgary International Film Festival - Canada

NOMINATED FOR BEST INTERNATIONAL DOCUMENTARY
AWARD

Indo American Arts Council Film Festival - USA

NOMINATED FOR BEST INTERNATIONAL DOCUMENTARY
AWARD

Bollywood and beyond' Film festival - Germany.

NOMINATED FOR BEST INTERNATIONAL DOCUMENTARY
AWARD

Festival Director's comment: Part travelogue, part ethnographic study, and part "how to make a movie all by yourself," Riding Solo is a truly unique cinematic experience. Wm. Brian Owens

Himalyan Film Festival – Netherlands

INVITED ENTRY

ENCORE SCREENING

Indianapolis International Film Festival - USA

INVITED ENTRY

High Museum of Art, Atlanta - USA

INVITED ENTRY

Buddhist Film Festival – USA

INVITED ENTRY

Mill Valley Film Festival, San Francisco - USA

INVITED ENTRY

Pesaro Film Festival – Italy

INVITED ENTRY

UNESCO's Open Frame Film Festival – India

INVITED ENTRY

ASFF- Bangladesh

INVITED ENTRY

Karachai International Film Festival

INVITED ENTRY

Rawanda FilmFestival, Africa

INVITED ENTRY

Sonoma FilmFestival, USA

INVITED ENTRY

Ethnographic Film Festival Eyes and Lenses, Poland

INVITED ENTRY

Himalyan Film Festival – Japan

INVITED ENTRY

Vibgyor Film Festival – India

INVITED ENTRY

Aranyam Wildlife Film Festival – India

INVITED ENTRY

**Moscow International Festival of Mountaineering and Adventure
Films**

INVITED ENTRY

CREDITS

One-man unit – Gaurav Jani

Executive Producer – P. T. Giridhar Rao

Project Co-coordinator – Rajiv Menon

Editor – Sankalp Meshram

Music - Ved Nair

Mixing Engineer – Dwarak Warriar

Recording Engineer – Music: Shantanu Mukherjee

MUSICIANS

- **Keyboards** – be da Veda
- **Indian Bamboo Flute** – Milind Sheorey
- **Acoustic And Electric Guitar** – Pinku Joseph
- **Back up Vocals** - Rajiv Menon, Pinku Joseph

DIRECTOR'S BIOGRAPHY



Gaurav Jani started his career at the age of 21 as a fashion choreographer in Ahmedabad. After a 2-year stint in the fashion industry, he moved to Mumbai to pursue film-making. Gaurav assisted the noted film maker Ram Gopal Verma for the feature-film, "Jungle".

During the shoot of the film in the jungles of south India, he realized that all he wanted to do in life was to travel and be with nature.

After finishing the film, he quit the industry, bought a motorcycle, and hit the road; doing odd jobs in between to finance his travels. He also founded a motorcycle travel club called 60kph (<http://www.60kph.com>), to form a network of travelers across the country.

Gaurav traveled to various parts of India for four years, often solo and also with fellow 60kph members. The more he traveled, the more he realized how little he knew about India, her people and their customs. Travel soon became a passion and a way of life for him; it also satisfied his need for adventure and curiosity to explore remote regions of the country.

But he missed being behind the camera as well. He came upon an idea that combined his passions, filmmaking and travel. He approached producers, television networks and marketing agents with the idea. A travelogue about five bikers on a two year motorcycle ride experiencing India - without the essential support vehicles and film crew. Unfortunately, everyone he met was skeptical if such a thing was possible.

With neither the experience of operating a professional camera nor recording sound, Gaurav set off on a solo motorcycle journey to one of the coldest and remotest deserts of the world, the Changthang plateau in Ladakh. The only support he got was from friends and fellow 60kph members. Some chipped in with money, and others offered their expertise.

Learning from camera manuals, he functioned as a one-man film unit. Filming his travel experiences as he rode through some of the most difficult terrain in the world, Gaurav finished his first film, "Riding Solo to the top of the World". But ironically, the toughest part for Gaurav was not the hardships he faced on the ride but rather, coming in front of the camera.

"Riding Solo To The Top Of The World" has received critical acclaim from various quarters. Gaurav continues to go on long solo rides as a one man film unit, recording his experiences and the thrills and spills of travel, not only to fuel his passion for Film making and Travel, but also to promote adventure travel in India; although he's still camera shy!

CONTACT INFORMATION

Address:

Gaurav Jani

Dirt Track Productions

63-J, Gitanjali Society,

Raheja Township, Malad (East),

Mumbai - 400097

Maharashtra,

India.

Phone : +91 9833013039

Email : info@dirtrackproductions.com

Website : www.dirtrackproductions.com