

The Pack

Utah Riders Association of Triumph's Official Newsletter

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Winter 2016

The Winter Blahs (and Ahh's)

-David Barth

A motorcyclist's worst enemy is back: Winter. And this year it appears that we are going to have a real winter. This time last year I was catching a few turns on the minimal hard packed snow at Snowbird and then running down to the valley to ride in the balmy weather. The below freezing air and my lack of heated clothing has me thinking twice this year. But at least the skiing is great!



Just because we're not riding doesn't mean that the club has shuttered up and gone into hibernation. Earlier January we had our annual holiday party at La Hacienda. As always the food was great and the company even better. There were plenty of prizes for all attendees. Harrison Eurosport (Triumph of Utah) was generous as always and supplied us with hats, shirts, mugs, decals, DVDs, and many other great prizes. This year we did the old "choose a box" giveaway method; 2 boxes had good prizes, 1 had a consolation prize. Everyone walked away with something good at the end.



January also brought us the "Triumph Reborn" Bonneville release party. A bunch of us traveled downtown to the Beer Bar (a bar owned by Ty Burrell of the show Modern Family) to party with other Triumph enthusiasts and check out the new Bonneville. (Check out



a video from the party here: <https://youtu.be/kh56Y-Q3IKuI>) As you are probably already aware, Triumph has redesigned its entire Bonneville line. All of the new



bikes are liquid cooled and have new motors. The lineup starts with the 900cc Street Twin. The Street Twin is the entry level model and includes features that make it a great starter bike: low slim seat, neutral riding position, slip assist clutch, ride-by-wire, switchable traction control, and ABS. With 59 lb-ft of torque it isn't only a beginner's bike, though. As with all of the new Triumphs,



there is room for much customization with Triumph manufactured accessory kits. The bike was started at the party and had a great, deep sound.

If you're looking for a bit more power look no further than the T120 and the T120 Black. Both carry the new 1200cc eight valve parallel twin that puts out 77 lb-ft of torque at a low 3100 RPM. Unlike the Street Twin, the T120 delivers the power to a 6 speed gearbox. On top of the standard ABS, the T120s get heated grips, USB charging port, LED lighting, engine immobilizer ↔

key, and traction control enabled by the ride-by-wire set-up. The bike also has both a road and rain mode. While

spec-ed the same, the T120 Black gets a brown seat and blacked out parts including the frame, pipes, rims, and motor.



Last in the group (and my favorite) is the café racer's bike of choice: the Thruxton. 2016 brings us the Thruxton and the Thruxton R. The Thruxtons come with a higher per-



formance version of the 1200cc in the T120. The torque is an impressive 83 lb-ft which is a 62% jump from last year's model. The Thruxton as a sportier riding position than it's brothers and comes with adjustable suspension, clip-on handlebars, and a modified chassis that results in tighter handling. As with the T120s, the Thruxtons come with a LED lighting, ride-by-wire throttle, ABS, and traction control. The ride modes include road, rain, and sport.

The R model gets some special niceties such as a rear seat cowl, twin floating Brembo disc brakes,



Öhlins rear shocks, Showa Pig Piston forks, and Pirelli Diablo Rosso Corsa rubber. For those taking the R to the track, Triumph sells a Performance Race kit that lowers the bike's weight and increases power and torque.

All in all, the new line-up looks amazing and will probably sell out quickly. Some of our members had already made their pre-orders prior to the party and were granted VIP status that included unlimited drinks and their own private lounge. While we are in the doldrums of the winter, it's going to be an exciting year for both our club and Triumph in general. February 6th at 2 PM at Triumph of Utah we will screen the not-to-be-missed new movie "Hitting The Apex". I can't wait to throw a leg over a new Thruxton R and put it through its paces. In the meantime, I'll sit on my bike in the garage making motorcycle sounds while waiting for the snow in the driveway to melt. ■



FUEL



Why Did You Put Sugar In Your Gas Tank?

-Jeff Thurmond

One of the really neat things about the motorcycle community is the diversity. For example, how many different motorcycles were produced in the UK? A safe speculation is that the list of different makes and models from England will exceed other countries. The diversity not only means many different bikes but also a lot of the riders still have motorcycles with carburetors and the majority of the two-wheelers – even the new ones -- have metal fuel tanks.

“So what?”, you say. We already know this. With this winter of prolonged cold and spring weather but a few month or so away, starting those older motorcycles may not be as easy as it was a few years ago. And the fuel injected motorcycles also may be hard to start depending on what you did to prep them for winter storage. Looking back at my taking care of the motorcycle(s) over the winter, it has not really changed much except for my awareness of contamination by moisture in fluids. I now know that brake fluid is hygroscopic and absorbs about 3% of its volume in moisture each year. Years ago I would put a fuel stabilizer in the lawn mower in the fall and sometimes did so in the motorcycle but not always because the air here in Utah is dryer and hopefully I could ride a few times each month in the winter. But for the last few years the steps in doing winter-prep for the motorcycles has become more extensive. When I put the batteries from the various motorcycles on battery tenders for the winter, I also put fuel stabilizer in all the tanks. This year for me the motorcycles have not been started between Christmas Day (first major storm) and now. So “winterizing” this year was really important. Especially the fuel stabilizer.



Why more so this year? It is not so much this year but the last few years, since the Ethanol plague. According to the engineers at both the Society of Automotive Engineers and the American Petroleum Institute, the Ethanol we pump into our fuel tanks will absorb about 6% water in a year-period. This is the E10 stuff, not the E15 or the E85. And you have to remember that Ethanol is really just corn-based alcohol. What is one of the byproducts of making alcohol? Yep, sugar. In addition to the other bad qualities of Ethanol, the sugar in the Ethanol alcohol is still there when blended with gas. Yikes.

The mandate to petroleum companies to blend Ethanol into fuel is from your federal government. Where and how did this start? Not too long ago someone in the government with no common sense and obviously no grasp of engineering or chemistry came up with the idea that instead of burning fossil fuel we could diminish the use of fossil-based oil by mixing corn-based Ethanol with the oil-based gasoline. Ethanol is bad stuff -- even during the 1920's Prohibition Era the cheapest stuff was the “corn liquor”. Today's Ethanol absorbs water so fast the ↔

FAA won't allow it to be used in prop planes using conventional piston-type engines. The boating industry has really been hit hard because boats stand for long periods of non-use and the Ethanol in the gas absorbs so much water it is eroding fuel tanks and destroys the fuel system. The same for farm equipment that stands for long periods of non-use. Plus, Ethanol costs more per gallon to make than a gallon of regular gasoline.



To make matters worse, Ethanol is not as efficient as gasoline in producing energy; it takes more Ethanol to make your engine run than gas. In simple terms, here are the basic downsides of Ethanol: 1 - You use more of an Ethanol-gas mixture to go the same distance than if you used just regular gasoline. 2 - A gallon of Ethanol costs more to make than a gallon of regular gas. 3 - Gasoline mixed with Ethanol costs you more at the pump. 4 - It takes more fossil based fuel to extract the Ethanol from the corn than is saved in using the Ethanol. 5 - The cost of corn in food stores is higher because so much of the corn grown is being diverted to the Ethanol program.

Ethanol, like the water it absorbs, is heavier than gasoline. The Ethanol will separate from the gas and ends up residing on the bottom of the tank. To compound the matter, remember Ethanol is corn-based alcohol. The alcohol still has the sugar in it. Remember when you used to put a handful of sugar in the gas tank of someone you did not like? Combine the poor combustion properties of alcohol with the erosion-properties of alcohol, then add the sugar and the absorbed water, and you end up with corroded metal fuel tanks, fuel systems that gum-up, fuel pump failures, plugged fuel filters, eroded seals, accelerator pumps in carburetors that stick, and combustion chambers that have carbon buildup that looks like the bottom of an oven from a bubbled-over pie.

If you have not started your motorcycles this year, before you push the starter button, take a moment to open the fuel tank. See any white or cream colored moisture on the inside of the cap or around the rim? If so this is water condensation and you probably failed to put a fuel stabilizer in the tank. Now if you rode enough over the winter to add fuel a couple of times, you are in good shape. If the fuel you are looking at is the same fuel that was there when you put the bike away months ago, all is probably fine if you added fuel stabilizer like Star Tran or Sta-Bil or some other brand to keep the fuel from going bad. A good stabilizer will reduce the water to micron-size droplets and the sugar will be nullified by a solvent action. Also the stabilizer should be a fuel so it burns in combustion.

If you have old fuel with no stabilizer - meaning there may be moisture in it, especially with Ethanol - the engine may not run very well when you get it started. Hopefully you will not have to drain the tank and replace the fuel with new. If you failed to fill the tank and only have a gallon or so of fuel, and if you get the engine running but it runs badly you may just need to fill the tank with fresh fuel. If you do drain the old fuel, you can use it in your lawn mower as Briggs & Stratton does not seem to care about fuel quality. If the engine does not run well under load at mid to high rpm, replace the spark plugs as they will probably be burnt black and fouled from trying to ignite old fuel with water and old alcohol content.

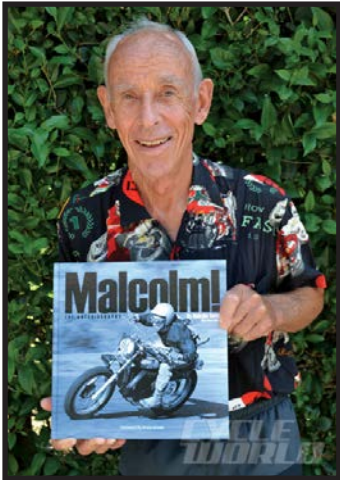
Some of the new automotive engines are called "flex" meaning the fuel systems were designed to run on E85 (fuel with 85% Ethanol). Currently, vehicle manufacturers, including motorcycles, say their engines are OK with 10% (E10) Ethanol but your warranty is void if you run E15. Is it worth it to locate and ride to a fuel station selling non-Ethanol gas? The answer to that is obvious. What do you do if you have a vintage car or motorcycle? Just plan on having to rebuild the carburetors every few years. And even if you have a new motorcycle, you may consider using a fuel stabilizer year-round because the Ethanol plague is constant. And if you can figure out why Ethanol is still being touted as acceptable by the idiots in the federal government, let me know. ■

The Last Mile

Book Review

-Craig Mossberg

Winter sucks since I gave up skiing but it does give me time to catch up on my reading. At least, it's something fun until the snow and ice on the road melts and I can get back on my bike. My favorite book this winter is Malcolm Smith's new autobiography.



Most of us know Malcolm from the classic film "On Any Sunday" with Steve McQueen and Mert Lawwill but there is so much more to his life. Malcolm was born in British Columbia to an American mother (from Provo, Utah) and to an eighty year old explorer and gold miner from Scotland. They moved to San Bernardino, California when Malcolm was very young. Malcolm's first bike was a Lambretta scooter which he promptly stripped down, painted and started riding the fire roads and desert near his home. He soon graduated to BSA and Matchless motorcycles and started racing locally in TT/Scrambles near Riverside. He also started working at a local motorcycle shop after school.

From then on, motorcycles became his passion and means of support for the rest of his life. Most of his early desert racing was done on a Greeves until 1966 when he was offered a ride on a Husqvarna 250 from the U.S. Importer. From then on, he rode Huskys exclusively and even became a franchise dealer for the Swedish bike. During 1966, he was chosen to participate in the International Six Day Trial (ISDT) being held in Sweden. He received a silver medal for the first event and gold medals for all the subsequent ISDT events.

There is a great chapter on "On Any Sunday" and his relationship with McQueen, Lawwill and Bruce Brown, the film's director. Malcolm initially told Bruce Brown that he could not participate due to the demands of his new motorcycle shop. Luckily, Brown was persistent and Malcolm played a major role in the film. Who can forget the segment on the Elsinore Grand Prix in which Malcolm did not officially win due to a scoring error in spite of finishing almost a lap ahead of the second place finisher? Another classic segment is Malcolm riding back down the hill in Utah's famed Widowmaker Hill Climb. Malcolm thought the film made him famous but Bruce Brown felt Malcolm made the film successful.

Smith successfully raced bikes and off-road cars throughout the world. He won the Paris to Dakar rally and the Baha 1000. At the same time, he was a successful businessman with a motorcycle dealership and a racing gear product line. All of this, as well as his charitable efforts are covered in detail in this amazing book. If you are interested in this motorcycle icon, you need to buy this book. You will find it hard to put down once you start reading it. The book is available from www.themalcolmbook.com. ■



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