

OVER THE HILLS AND FAR AWAY

Matej and Martina Malovrh started Adriatic Moto Tours to take you under the radar through the secret and untapped beauty of central and eastern Europe. Matej speaks to *Rider*

I started the business in 2003 with the first season in 2004 motivated by a love of motorcycling and a desire to show the uniqueness and beauty of Slovenia and surrounding countries to other riders. I started off on my own with just a couple of bikes (BMW F 650 GS Single and the new BMW R 1200 GS that had just come out). The garage that I worked from was my home garage. I parked the car outside so that the two bikes could go inside. Over the years the garage got too small and a couple of years back we moved into a bigger – business only – garage and office building.

Since then Adriatic Moto Tours has been running guided and self-guided tours in central and eastern Europe, including tours to Italy, the Alps, the Adriatic Coast and the Balkans all the way down to Greece. In the early days, I led the tours on a motorcycle and Martina drove the van.

The company grew because satisfied guests from the first few years kept coming back. For them, we added more tours and

we carefully hired experienced, fun-loving, local guides. Our first customers told their friends, and today we are who we are mostly by reference. We continue to strive to offer personal, high-quality service in every tour we run, so our customers will keep coming back.

Our best seller among the tours is our Beautiful Balkans Adventure. That really

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gives a rider great insight of the area! It takes you through Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Montenegro. It is a tour of great diversity, amazing landscapes,

outstanding historical sights and fantastic riding. Or as American journalist Greg Drevestadt said after doing the tour: “Balkans is a perfect, off-the-radar motorcycle destination.”

As a student I travelled a lot as well as riding my motorcycle all the time, so I decided to combine the two. I thought it would be a great idea to take Slovenian motorcycle riders to places that they don't know like Greece and Turkey and so on, but it occurred to me that I didn't know these countries myself! It'd be hard to play smart there! The next big step was a bit uncertain: did we start to bring foreign riders into Slovenia to ride? We did.

I bought myself a decent camera and started riding around Slovenia on an old Yamaha Tenere 660 to discover new roads and take photos. At the same time I started working on my Guide's exam and passed that after a couple of months, and in 2003 I registered the company.

The fleet has grown every year and we are currently working with a fleet of 45 bikes. In 2004 we started off with riding just Slovenia and Croatia but we have since expanded to ride through 18 countries in central and eastern Europe.

My personal highlight was riding into the mountains of Montenegro for the first time back in 2006 and realising that some of the best and most scenic riding that I'll ever do is so close to Slovenia. It's not in the Alps or some other place in western Europe, but in a small Balkan country with a population of 600,000. 🇲🇳

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