A MOTORCYCLE TRIP THROUGH TUSCANY, SARDINIA AND CORSICA

SEPTEMBER – OCTOBER 2022

I headed off to Europe to join another Adriatic Moto tour. This trip had been booked since before Covid, so it was good to finally get away. Due to a delayed flight, I arrived in Venice on the day the tour started. There was a briefing plus the handover of the bikes, and a dinner to meet the riders who were to be my companions for the next two weeks or so. My choice of bike was the BMW R1250GSA which proved ideal for the tight roads and performed faultlessly.

The group comprised of myself and another Ulyssian couple from QLD, Lindsay and Sharron Glynn-Armstrong plus six more riders from the USA, one of whom had his partner as pillion. Add our tour leader and the support van driver and we numbered eleven, a good number for such a ride on the tight windy mountainous roads of Corsica and Sardinia.

The route took us across from Venice to Porto Venere, the gateway to the Cinque Terra. The major stop for the day was at the Ducati factory and museum where we followed the production line as they put together all sorts of Ducati models. The first part of the ride was on the motorway as we had to meet our appointed time at Ducati, but after that we hit the narrow winding roads and things got much more interesting.

The next day was spent on ferries visiting the five towns of the Cinque Terra which cling to the mountain-sides and are best approached by sea. We explored three of these delightful towns on foot before heading back to Porto Venere for the night.

The real riding started the following day as we took to the mountainous roads past La Spezia and across to the west above Genoa, heading for Savona near the French border to catch the ferry to Corsica. Lunch stop was to be at Portofino but when we got there it was Sunday and we could not find any free parking spots so we rode back to Santa Margarita where we had a very tasty Italian meal overlooking the stunning Mediterranean.

The overnight ferry took us to Bastia in Corsica where we rode on to Porto. It was only 226 kilometres but, it was on amazing narrow, mountain roads which are not always in great condition, so it took all of eight hours and provided some practice around switchbacks and tight bends, for those of the group not used to sustained high speed cornering.

Then it was on to Bonifacio on the inland route via the Corsican Alps. Great mountain roads, but populated by wild pigs so we had to be on alert for these suicidal creatures. The night was spent in this beautiful seaside town with another great dinner of Corsican delights.

Morning held an early start with the short ferry ride to Sardinia for the next leg of the trip. The Sardinian landscape is similar to Corsica but Italy maintains its roads a bit better than France so while it was just as curvy the ride to the beautiful city of Alghero was a little less stressful. The next leg was 260 kilometres to Cala Gonone which again took us some eight hours due to the winding roads and the lure of the Italian coffee, pastries and ice creams which lurked in every little village.

A bit shorter the next day to Olbia, only 230 kilometres and eight hours, to catch the overnight ferry to Livorno back on the Italian mainland and the start of our Tuscan adventure. An early morning arrival around 5am and a short ride to Pisa to see the tower and other sights and to get some breakfast started the day. We then continued on to Siena, the most beautiful of medieval towns,

where we took a rest day to see the sights and recover from all the corners. Tuscany has rolling hills rather than the tight corners we had become used to so the riding was a little easier but unfortunately the traffic was also heavier. We did manage to find lots of back roads with less traffic however, as we made our way to Florence for another rest and sightseeing day. This wonderful city is certainly worth a few days stay with its ancient buildings and famous statues and art works.

Our last day of riding took us back to Venice via the Apennine Mountains with their dense woods and twisty roads as a last hit out on the exciting mountainous roads of Italy. We stopped at Maranello to visit the Ferrari

Museum which was a big hit with most of us. Then it was on the autostrada and back to Venice to return the bikes and celebrate a great ride with dinner in a really good Italian restaurant.

This is one of Adriatic's signature trips on some of the best motorcycling roads in Europe and should not be missed by riders looking for challenging riding combined with a well-designed 16-day tour of Italy and France (Corsica). Without exception, the riders enjoyed the experience and the challenge, particularly those who ride big cruisers at home in America and here rode mostly BMW adventure bikes. The company was great and the weather good apart from a little rain and hail for a couple of days along the way.

I look forward to the next ride, wherever that may be!

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Melbourne Branch Secretary