

# FRIENDS FROM THE ROAD

ON THE PEOPLE YOU MEET, THE PLANS YOU WANT  
TO MAKE AND THE SPEED OF G'NIGHT

**A**n unexpected dinner invitation came the other day. I was in Melbourne and ran into Ray, who'd been part of the group I'd toured Iceland with. He mentioned David and Lesley were putting on a feast, and shortly afterwards the couple tracked me down and extended the invitation. They too had been with us in Iceland. I wasn't surprised when I found out Mike and Denise Ferris — our hosts and guides for that wonderful tour — were also coming around.

Then I discovered that Neale and Viv — publishers of *Heavy Duty* as well as being organisers of biker tours to Sturgis — would be there too. Their connection wasn't Iceland, it was neighbourly. They lived over the road from David and Lesley. Neale's eyes lit up as he described David's prowess with traditional South African cooking.

It was a feast, too. Over dinner, I met someone I hadn't seen in years, others who'd travelled the Road of Bones last year with Ray, and several others. The common thread was motorcycle travel, and we all got on like old friends. David kept the excellent South African reds coming long after we'd declared ourselves too full of delicious lamb stew to eat another morsel. Suddenly it was time to leave and I couldn't believe it was morning.

Good times. I know I've written about it many times,



↑ David and Lesley in Iceland before hosting a South African feast in Melbourne

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but motorcycles and travel make special bonds between people. I've made some fantastic friends through it. I think that's one of the reasons I keep coming back for more. One of them ...

#### ANTICIPATION

Speaking of more, I aim to do a few trips this year. Last year was the year for local rides, and while I have no intention of failing to put miles on the bike at home, it's now time for some foreign roads again. The planning and anticipation are

part of the excitement — the dreaming, if you like. Where, when, how? I'm going through that process now.

I did dream about a long US journey last year, but it fell over because of the two factors that dictate everything: time and money. This year my mind's changed and I'm tossing up Europe, South America and a special place I've constantly wanted to revisit since riding through in 2005, Mongolia.

Wherever I decide on, it's months away. If I start

planning now I might just pull it off.

#### FASTER!

You won't be surprised to hear I support the calls for a 130km/h limit on the Hume Highway. I love the fact the Northern Territory has revisited its imposition of a 130 limit on its open roads, with a view to having no limit again. A strictly enforced 100 or 110 limit on good highways is plain silly and potentially dangerous.

On my last ride down to Melbourne and back, I rode for hours on NSW backroads and felt great; then I hit the Victorian border and the Hume and very quickly began to feel tired, sore and bored. My concentration wandered, even when I had most of it focused on the bloody speedo because of the state's pathetic insistence on policing a low threshold.

On the return journey, I hit the Hume fresh and just as quickly became fatigued. On the Multistrada, I could have safely sat on 150–160, but no. I watched some poor bugger get booked after he passed me at about 125. Off the Hume later in the day, I didn't necessarily go faster (often slower) but the fatigue lifted.

The dominant road safety message out on the Hume is about fatigue. No wonder. The only place I've ever had a micro-sleep behind the handlebars was on the Hume, droning along at 110 with the warm sun on my back. *ARR*

— MICK MATHESON