

North To Alaska

The Hogs on the High Seas seek new wildlife

story and photos by Dain Gingerelli

Our resident party animal Marilyn Stemp has twice written accounts about one of the wildest biker cruises ever concocted. Of course, I'm referring to the Hogs on the High Seas Rally, which we showcased in our May/June 2004 and March 2005 issues. To paraphrase Marilyn's dispatches from the lost lagoon, "a good time was had by all," meaning, of course, that there was some serious partying during those two Caribbean island-hopping excursions. Marilyn's tired blood-shot eyes, coupled with a sketchy memory, validate her statement, too.

I'm here to report even more Hogs on the High Seas wildlife, but of a different nature (literally and figuratively). This time the seafaring rally-goers set sail for the north country, the Inside Passage leading to Alaska's sparsely populated stretch of coastline along Canada's western border. And for seven days and nights our cruise ship, the *Serenade of the Sea*, scoured some of the most scenic seafront real estate on earth. Shipping out of Vancouver, British Columbia, our journey took us first to the Hubbard Glacier, the biggest chunk of ice that a ship can approach anywhere on earth. There we stood in awe on deck, watching a centuries-old glacier thaw right

before our eyes. Oh, the whole thing didn't melt, but huge chunks of ice randomly fell off, exploding into thunderous roars as the mother glacier "calved" huge pieces of ice into the chilling waters around us.

Next stop was the former gold-rush town of Skagway where, more than 100 years ago, hordes of "stampedeers" in quest of gold gathered for the arduous trek over the White Pass that led to Yukon where the precious metal could be found. Our inland journey to the Yukon was much easier, taken aboard the White Pass Train, a narrow-gauge built during the early 1900s and considered to be among the 17 industrial wonders of the world. The three-



A happy Christine Pence celebrates with Debbie and Dean Anderson, bike builder Efrem Mah, and Accurate Engineering's Barry Wardlaw who built the engine.



The stop in Juneau included a barbecue hosted by Taku Harley-Davidson. The dealership caters to slightly more than 400 owners in the area.

hour train ride took us through some of Alaska's most scenic country (and there's plenty of that!), and later we gathered at the Red Onion Saloon in Skagway to enjoy our own wildlife before re-boarding the ship to head south to Juneau, the only state capital that has *no* roads leading in or out of it. There we were met by the good folks at Taku H-D for a barbecue and to enviously watch as some of the local Harley riders set out on a cruise of their own. They didn't get very far, though; there are only about 40 miles worth of roads in and around Juneau that will take you to... nowhere. Another interesting factoid about Juneau: with more than 400 Harley riders, it has one of the highest per capita Harley ownerships in the country. As for Juneau itself, its gayly painted buildings and narrow city streets make it among the most picturesque and quaint little cities in the world, resembling something you'd see in Denmark or Holland rather than North America.

We weighed anchor again, this time for the seaport village of Ketchikan, where you'll see more Native American totem poles and bald eagles than any other port of call. As with the previous two stops, there are plenty of excursions available to take you inland where you really should go to fully enjoy Alaska adventure and experience. Before heading back to ship, we paid a quick visit to the bawdy Creek Street district, where trendy tourist-trap shops have replaced the bordellos and speak-easies that once cluttered this part of town.

The final leg of the cruise took us to Misty Fjords National Park. As the name suggests, the park is comprised of glacier-formed fjords that rise into jagged saw-tooth peaks that form narrow waterways. Waterfalls aplenty cascade down the cliffs, and a perpetual mist in the air gives the place its surreal mood. Much like the city of Juneau, access to this park is limited to air and water. At one point the captain stops the cruise ship, allowing pas-

sengers to absorb the vista in silence. It's an inspiring moment, allowing you to truly appreciate the experience.

At that point the ship does a complete 180-degree turn, then heads back for the return portion of the cruise, taking us through The Narrows where the massive cruise liner sails within yards of the jagged shore. Sit at one of the ship's cocktail lounges and enjoy your favorite beverage while you watch the shore go by, and if you're lucky, like my wife



The Red Dog Saloon on Juneau's waterfront district is a favorite haunt for locals and tourists. As you might guess, it was SRO when the Hogs came into town.

Donna and I were, you'll see orca whales surface within yards of you. It's like having Shamu as your guide.

I've given just a sampling of the Alaska wildlife that you'll enjoy on this cruise. And being a cruise ship, there's more wildlife to be had, too, after hours aboard ship. You'll also be treated to all the luxuries you'd expect, with one exception—the dress code for the two “formal” dinners during the week is to wear leather of choice, and that's it. Blue jeans and T-shirts with a black leather vest are perfectly acceptable, and that suited this guy just fine, thank you. But if you're a night owl who enjoys the nocturnal hours, be

prepared for a short night; this time of year the Alaska sun doesn't set until near midnight, and it pops up again a few short hours later.

Whether the sun shines or not, though, the High Seas Rally vendor exhibit opens its doors practically every day aboard ship. This year's exhibit was held in the Vortex Lounge on Deck 13, the highest level on the *Serenade of the Sea*. Participating vendors donate products for giveaways, and as it turned out, each of the 412 cruisers won at least one prize. In fact, nearly \$100,000 in product was handed out during the seven days! But the biggest winner of all was Christine Pence of Sanatoga, Pennsylvania, who won the giveaway bike built by Kustom Culture Motorcycles (for a riding impression, see page 70).

The seafaring bikers gave back, too. Traditionally the High Seas Rally supports a fundraiser for dialysis. Known as the HOHS Dialysis Fund, the money is given directly to Dialysis at Sea to underwrite the expense of doctors and nurses for kidney patients on vacation cruises. This year HOHS Dialysis Fund enabled three patients—Susan Murphy, Rob Steiner, and Don Hagerling—to join the Alaska cruise, and the \$16,831 raised during the cruise through the Inside Passage will enable more patients to attend the Caribbean cruise this November.

IronWorks will be there, too, promoting the Third IronWorks/Caribbean High Seas Rally Bike show, plus we'll be handing out free subscriptions and ride pins, and simply wasting away in Margaritaville where there's booze in the blender and soon it will render... Well, you know the words, so join us there and we'll repeat the chorus together.

Resource

Hogs on the High Seas Rally
Caribbean Cruise:

November 6-13, 2005

Alaska Cruise:

June 25-July 2, 2006

800-444-8795

www.hogsonthehighseas.com

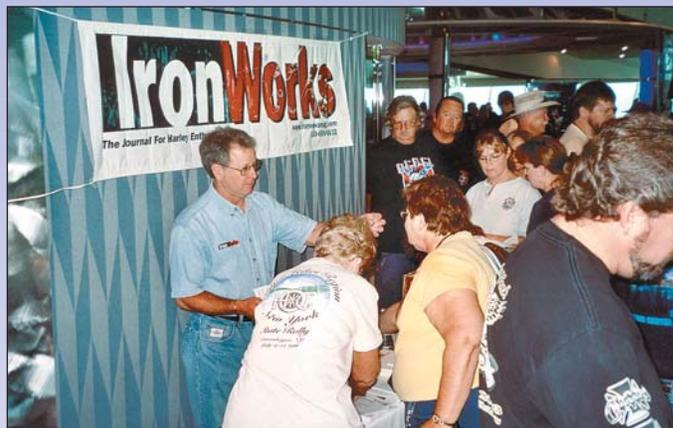
IronWorks/Alaska High Seas Rally Bike Show

Presenting our 2005 Alaska cruise winners

When the cruise ship *Serenade of the Seas* pulled out of Vancouver harbor for its seven-day voyage through Canada's Inside Passage, 412 people who comprised the High Seas Rally cruisers left their bikes behind. But that didn't mean they forgot about what's nearest and dearest to their hearts, and many brought along brag pictures for the Second IronWorks High Seas Rally Bike Show.

Like the first bike show that we promoted during the 2004 Caribbean High Seas Rally, the Alaska show was open to all rally participants. Entry was free, and about the only rule laid down was that the pictures submitted had to be no larger than 5"x7", so they'd fit on the wall of fame where the bikes were displayed for judging.

What did the winner's receive? Well, not much, really, but that's not the point. Each winner did receive, however, a free subscription to this rag, the following 15 minutes of fame you'll read about here, and the accolades of



their cruising peers. But perhaps the biggest reward was shared by all; everybody had a chance to participate and share their personal rides with other cruise members. After all, when you get down to it, it's all about the bikes, no? So without further ado, here are the winners of the 2005 IronWorks/Alaska High Seas Rally Bike Show.

People's Choice:

Bob "Wizard" Kessler
Gainesville, Florida

2003 H-D Heritage Springer



It was somewhat of a surprise that a rather stock-appearing Harley-Davidson earned our People's Choice Award, but it wasn't a shock

that the bike turned out to be an Anniversary Edition Heritage Springer. The '03 Heritage Springer will, undoubtedly, go down as one of the all-time classics for two reasons: First, it's among the elite group of 100th Anniversary models. Secondly, the FLSTS's traditional styling evokes all that is good about a Harley, mixing the heritage of yesteryear with the Twin Cam technology of today.

Bob "Wizard" Kessler's FLSTS checks in with a few upgrades that separates his bike from other Heritage Springers. Those wide whitewall tires are wrapped around multi-spoke Hallcraft wheels, and H-D backrests assure he and his passenger arrive in comfort. Finally, Wizard equipped the TC88B engine with a set of Kerker's true-dual exhaust pipes, giving the bike a rumble that helps remind him every time he fires up the engine that heritage, as much as technology, is what has been keeping The Motor Company going for all these years.

Twin Cam Co-Winner:

Kenneth Randell
Bay Shore, New York

2002 H-D Electra Glide

This year Harley-Davidson has expanded its line to include custom baggers. And it's bikes like Ken Randell's that prompted the folks in Milwaukee to think in terms of combining the words "touring" and "custom" in the same phrase. Clearly Ken—and now Harley-Davidson—are on to something. In Ken's case, his slammed '02 Electra Glide elevates the custom touring look to a whole new level.

In terms of modifications, the FLH sports treatment from Cycledelics to the tank, fenders and saddlebags. All bodyware was shaved and

smoothed, and the license plate was frenched into the rear fender. Corbin supplied the seat, and the Kerker Slip-ons route beneath the stretched saddlebags. A set of Lindby bars were affixed to the front downtubes, and the rich candy burgundy paint was applied by Cycledelics before final assembly. A final touch is the personalized license plate that reads "HIZZZ," to complement the plate on Ken's wife's Road King. As you might guess, hers reads "HERZ."



Twin Cam Co-Winner:

Patti Eason
Chestertown, Maryland

2000 H-D Softail

Patti Eason will be the first person to attest to the saying, "You can't win unless you enter." See, Patti hadn't planned on entering her 2000 Softail in our contest, but prompting by her husband and a few other individuals found the picture of her bike on the Hogs on the Highs



Seas' wall of fame, and in the contest. It also earned her bike a tie for first place in the Twin Cam category.

What swayed our judges most

about Patti's FXST is the manner in which she blended the aftermarket parts to her bike. A 150-series rear tire mounts to a 15" Thunderstar wheel that's matched to a 21" front. The tank and fenders were treated by Wizard Graphics, and the Corbin seat appears as if it were designed especially for Patti's ride. The billet headlight compliments the Carlini bars, and Pro Art painted the cool candy color. She topped it all off with a Vance & Hines exhaust. Nice, very nice.

Evo Winner:

Joe Nagy
Roanoke, Virginia

1996 H-D Road King

Joe Nagy happened to have a few—half a dozen, to be exact—'59 Cadillac taillight lenses lying around when he got the idea to do something unique to the rear section of his '96 Road King. So he made filler panels between the rear fender and saddlebags that would accept the six Caddy taillight lenses.



As you can see, the filler strips were chrome plated, and the license plate frenched into the fender, giving the bike a classic lost-in-the-'50s look. The muffler extensions to the Screamin' Eagle exhaust system help balance the look.

Joe mounted a black, studded Corbin seat, and a fender rack offers additional storage space for long hauls. The familiar Road King windscreen was chucked in favor of a full FLH handlebar fairing. All that was left to do during the rebuild was splash on the wild '50s-era paint, which Randy Williamson dutifully did before final assembly. The finished product is a bike that we wouldn't mind riding while lost on some lazy country road.

Pre-Evo Winner:

Jesse Larison
Columbus, Kansas

1969 H-D FLH

In case you haven't noticed, Shovelhead engines are making a dramatic comeback among diehard Harley enthusiasts. Moreover, the AMF-era engines—and bikes—have gained classic status among motorcyclists throughout the world, so when a restored FLH of '60s vintage shows up, people in the know stop to look.



Jesse Larison restored this bike after it sat for 30 years in a barn. "It's now a daily rider," he tells us, and he reassures us, too, that it's stock, right "down to the original cloth wire." The old bagger got a fresh coat of paint, too, compliments of Jesse who based the colors on factory original formulas. A stock bike never looked so nice.

Sportster/Buell Winner:

Etta Dura
Rorked River, New Jersey

2003 Sportster 883 Hugger

Sometimes all you need to do is dress a bike with a unique paint job to give it the character you seek. That's basically the approach that Etta Dura took with her '03 Sportster 883 Hugger. "I wanted to match it to my PT Cruiser," she said, and as you can see the "match" included a few Betty Boop caricatures on the bike's fenders and bags to match the mini-murals on the convertible's trunk lid. Even her helmet couldn't escape the big booper's airbrush.



Additional mods to the Sporty include relocating the rear turn signals to make room for the lockable plastic saddlebags. And about owning a Sportster and convertible car, Etta says, "Whether I'm riding the bike or driving the car with the top down, I always feel the freedom of the road." Sign us up—or down.

Scratch-Built Winner:

Kenneth Randell
Bay Shore, New York

2004 Custom Soft-tail

You're not seeing double, Ken Randell won two classes in our High Seas Rally Bike Show. His Scratch-Built winner is based on a Hurricane



Custom frame that boasts a 36-degree rake and two-inch stretch to the backbone. A stock-length fork with 5-degree raked triple trees and 21" front wheel (18" rear) gives the bike its classic stance. He shoehorned a stock-with-S&S-carb engine into the frame, capping it with Radium exhausts.

Ken called on Custom Chrome for the gas tank and controls. The front fender is from Russ Wernimont and the rear is by Phoenix. Most of the fabrication was done by Ken and his friend Frank Scineca, and Gary from Rocky Point, New York, applied the platinum-silver paint. Next time you get the itch to build a scratch-build, you might consider Ken's bike as your role model.

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Other V-Twin Manufacturer Winner:

Dale Buck
Cedar Park, Texas

2003 Big Dog

When it's time to run with the big dogs, then you get...a Big Dog. And that's exactly what Dale Buck did when he purchased his



2003 Big Dog Chopper, the first year for what has turned out to be the Kansas-based company's best-selling model. And rightfully so, when you consider the heart of this big dog is a 107-cubic-inch S&S engine linked to a Baker 6-speed overdrive transmission (left-side drive; the RSD wasn't introduced until 2005).

Dale's dog has all the other right pieces for a pure pedigree, too, including a soft-tail frame that forms the backbone for a 77.7-inch wheelbase. And at either end of that long stretch you'll find Avon rubber—a 21" up front while the 250-series Brit tire forms a big paw print at the rear. You can't argue about the factory black-with-silver-graphics paint scheme, and for two-up riding this Chopper is equipped with Big Dog's optional passenger pillion. Proof that a Dog's life ain't so bad.

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