

The Riding Compromise

By Wally Wersching

I've been riding for over 45 years. When my wife and I were first married, we went on long day trips in and around the Chicago area. We mainly rode as far away from Chicago and its congestion as we could. We liked the back roads of northern Illinois. After our son was born, she didn't ride with me very much and I got used to riding solo. During this time, we moved to "God's Country" - the western Carolinas. This is the most beautiful riding area in the country. Now our son is grown but my wife has a bad back and only rides short distances with me a few times a year - so I'm still riding solo.

I also prefer riding alone. I like to go down roads that I haven't been before and I don't want to ask others if they want to go or not. I'm kind of a loner that way. What I'd like to do every weekend is to take off early Saturday and not come home until late Sunday. There are so many great places to see and roads to ride. There's only one problem with this. I'm still married and I want to keep it that way.



I have found a solution to this dilemma. I go for early morning rides on Sunday. I love to ride the back roads when there is no traffic. On the weekend, this can only be done early in the morning. After about 10:00AM, the roads get cluttered. I leave at or just before first light on Sunday morning. Most of the time I'll have my route all planned out but sometimes I just "wing it" and go whichever way the bike wants to go - especially if there is threatening weather in the area.

I like to get to the mountains early and sometimes I'll get some great pictures. Also being so early, the mountains could be covered in dense fog. It's still a beautiful ride but the pictures aren't too good - you can't see anything. Then I'll stop at one of the many trails that I have found over the years and go for about an hour hike. Most of the time it's to a beautiful waterfall. I like being the first on the trail in the morning. It's almost a religious experience being with nature early in the morning.



After my hike, I usually head towards home but a different way than I came. I always like making a circle route. If all goes as planned, I'll be home right before lunch and I'll spend the rest of the day with the family or doing chores around the house. This is the only way I can have the best of both and still be happily married after 26 years.