

THE RIDER'S WORKSHOP AN OLD ROUTE TO A NEW DESTINATION TO BRAZENHEAD INN



I've been riding roads west of Staunton Virginia since my earliest months of motorcycling. It's some of the prettiest countryside in all Virginia. In those early years, I pored over maps discovering interesting motorcycle roads and historic places to visit. The headwaters of the Potomac River found in the Bluegrass Valley, Goshen Pass, and the Jefferson Baths are a few places that are very cool to visit.

The most direct route to Staunton is on the interstate. You'll find that we rarely ride the interstate in the Rider's Workshop and then only out of necessity. With planning, there are always better motorcycle routes.

For mountain riders headed south, a bottleneck is Harrisonburg, Virginia. On most days traffic congestion spells frustration. Therefore, the "key" to the southern routes is a farm route (RT. 613) on Harrisonburg's western outskirts. The road completely bypasses the city to the extent you don't even know the city is there. It was one of my earliest and best discoveries. I use the road all the time since it opens up many riding opportunities.

Another excellent choice of road is along the Tye River in a region around Montebello. A seventeen-mile stretch of road along the river is one of a handful of "very best" roads in Virginia. We'll experience magnificent scenery, and motorcycle smooth, challenging curves. Something to remember for another trip along the Tye is Crabtree Falls where there is a fine hike up

alongside several waterfalls. There is also the excellent barbecue joint called the Blue Ridge Pig!

Once we come down off the mountains, we're within easy visiting distance of Gen. Robert E. Lee's tomb on the campus of Washington and Lee University. For history buffs we can make a brief stop to pay our respects to (right or wrong) the good General.

Further west we'll pass through Goshen Pass, over Shenandoah Mountain and into the village of Warm Springs, Virginia. Their spring *is* warm too—a constant 99 degrees. After a challenging day on the bike you'll appreciate an hour's soak. It's a simple pleasure that's guaranteed to round out pointy joints from a day in the saddle.

Then it's further west, across several more ridgelines on our way into West Virginia on this cherry picked old route to a new destination, the Brazenhead Inn.

The Inn was mostly hand built by the owner, Will Fanning, and his two sons. Will has been involved with West Virginia mountain music for 30 years, so Saturday night is sure to be jumping. Stay up as late as you want.

Sunday is a relaxed affair. We'll saddle up and on our ride home pass through the Bluegrass Valley. We'll ride over several of the largest ridges in West Virginia and by day's end our round trip journey is roughly 700 miles. I've spent over a decade riding roads west of Staunton Virginia, and soon I want you to find out why.

