

Get Ready To Ride

by Cameron Wood

IT WAS IN THE SECOND WEEK OF JANUARY WHEN I SPIED MY FIRST OF 2010 - BRIGHT YELLOW, CLEAN AND POLISHED. Although the gleam wouldn't last long on the salty roads of southern Ontario, some brave soul had decided the best resolution was to flaunt Mother Nature's annual storage season and take to the streets.

It's a tough time of year for motorcycle enthusiasts. Some are die-hards and will ride in just about any condition; bundled up like a kindergartener in a snowsuit, spouting that "snowmobilers ride in the cold." Others long for those first signs of fair-weather riding – the swishing of the street cleaner through the neighbourhood.

But whether you're the type to brave anything for two-wheeled bliss, or have been shining the chrome as your baby rests in the living room all winter, there are some important factors to consider before heading out on the highway.

The following pre-ride inspection checklist, recommended by the Motorcycle Safety Foundation, will help you get your ride ready for the road after the torment of winter.



"Riding a motorcycle on today's highways, you have to ride in a very defensive manner. You have to be a good rider and you have to have both hands and both feet on the controls at all times."

- Evel Knievel



Join us as we get some Road Trip ideas from the lovely AutoShow models. chillonline.ca.autoshow



RIDE THE NORTH SHORE

ESTIMATED DISTANCE – 410KM

Go on your own “quest for fire” through the landscape that was the backdrop to the Academy Award-winning 1981 film. The northern coastline of Lake Superior, with its rugged, primitive environment is home to some of the most breath-taking scenery in Ontario.

The lake, so large it controls its own climate, is also home to the famous Sleeping Giant. Near Thunder Bay, the geological formation is one of the nation's great natural wonders. From here, it's a short ride to the largest amethyst deposit in North America, where you can park the bike and dig for your own quartz gemstone.

In terms of epic journeys, it was in this part of Canada where Terry Fox had to suspend his Marathon of Hope.

Don't forget to pack the fishing gear, as the region is also an angler's paradise.



A GRAND RIDE

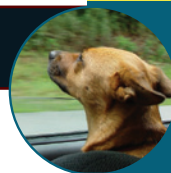
ESTIMATED DISTANCE – 185KM

If the haul north is a bit more daunting, this Grand adventure is geared more towards an afternoon getaway. Following the Grand River from Fergus to Port Maitland takes the rider through the rolling countryside of southern Ontario – from spectacular views of the Elora Gorge to historic small towns along the route.

Keep the saddle bags empty for the stop in St. Jacobs, where more than 600 vendors set up shop indoors and out on Thursdays and Saturdays for the Farmers' Market.

Further along the river, just outside Cambridge, is one of Ontario's premiere restaurants – Langdon Hall, a five-diamond award-winning restaurant. Check the leathers for the Saturday afternoon tea, one of the most popular in the province. Reservations required.

Finally, arrive in Port Maitland, a historic harbour hamlet on the shores of Lake Erie. Home to a British naval base in the 1800s, the community's most recent claim to fame was the Maitland Arms Hotel, a thriving rock 'n' roll venue in the late '60s to mid '70s. ©



“Only a biker knows why a dog sticks his head out of a car window.”

- Anonymous

READY FOR THE ROAD

Controls

- Inspect the levers and pedals to make sure they're still lubricated, and adjusted and fitted properly.
- Inspect cables to make sure they are not frayed, kinked, or folded into sharp angles.
- Check hoses for cuts, cracks, leaks, bulges, or deterioration. Like cables, hoses should not be folded into sharp angles.
- Ensure the throttle moves freely, does not stick and snaps closed when released.



Tires and Wheels

- Check the air pressure of your tires and inflate to the pressure specified in your owner's manual. Look for tread wear-and-tear, cracks, bulges or embedded objects.
- Check the wheels for roundness, cracks and dents, and bent, broken or missing spokes.

FOR MORE TUNE-UP TIPS VISIT chillonline.ca.



HIT THE OPEN ROAD THIS SEASON WITH CHILL

With thousands of miles of highway and scenic side roads, Ontario is ideal for planning summer escapes that are close to home. Visit chillonline.ca/motorcycling to link up to some awesome destinations on two wheels.