

BOATING

Hull of a Tour 5 – The Dragon's Roar

Boaterz N Bikerz Kicks Off Today!

MAY 5, 2019

0 Comments

As you read this blog, 36 people and 24 motorcycles from eight states are en route to the Great Smokey Mountains for a five-day motorcycling and boating adventure. It's part of the Boaterz 'n Bikerz of America HULL OF A TOUR 5, "The Dragon's Roar," the fifth in a series of epic adventures that mixes the best of the open roads, the water and the great outdoors.

Our tour kicks off Sunday, May 5, at the event headquarters; the popular [Iron Horse Motorcycle Resort & Lodge](Each of our daily rides have been painstakingly planned and routed in detail by my event partner and our experienced road captain, Jim Krueger. A 46-year marine industry veteran recently retired from Regal Boats, Jim has been the routing mastermind behind all the previous tour's destinations and travels. While we confer on the group meals and sponsored events, he researches for months to choose the absolute best roads and route stops. There are so many amazing sites in this area ... I just can't wait to see what he's got up his sleeve!

Each day, I'll blog about the previous day's ride and share some of the excitement and fun we're experiencing. Blogs are scheduled to run next Tuesday through Friday with the finale on the following Monday. I hope you'll join us daily and ride along! Interestingly, this year's event riders come from all parts of the industry. We have representatives from boat manufacturers, a marine hardware manufacturer, a marina, engine manufacturer, an LED lighting supplier, freelance boating writers, state natural resources/fish and wildlife executives, retail dealers, and of course, yours truly, a career boat marketer. We also have sponsored friends riding along, most of whom are active boat owners, including an offshore poker-run enthusiast. Thirteen of the 36 participants are repeat tour riders returning for more action, while 21 are joining us for the first time. This group enjoys great camaraderie through our shared enthusiasm for outdoor sports and recreation. I've met industry boaters and bikers throughout the years who have become true friends for life! In closing, I'd like to recognize our event sponsors whose financial support and in-kind contributions really make the event something special.

Evinrude/BRP returns for a second year, this time as our title sponsor. We are thrilled to have Sales Manager Andy Lindstrom and Sales Coordinator Jane Brosko riding with us. Brosko rides her own bike and enjoys the distinction of traveling the farthest to get here--all the way from Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Evinrude sponsors our opening night kick-off party and North Carolina-style barbeque feast. I'm already licking my chops in anticipation.

Sea Tow returns for year two and hosts our grand finale steak-out dinner celebration next Friday, which includes a live band. It is always a highlight event as we celebrate our time together. Our boat sponsor is Malibu and they are hosting us for an awesome lunch on the waterfront at Calhoun's Restaurant in Lenoir City, Tenn. Their crew is then taking us for boat rides and will offer free wake-surfing instruction to anyone wanting to experience chills, thrills and likely some spills. The boating event is always a memorable highlight of the tour and we're expecting a full crowd of 36 as everyone is anticipating a great activity.

Jim Krueger Photography, Emerald Coast Marine Group in the Florida Panhandle and Boogey Lights, an LED light manufacturer whose products are used on yachts, RVs and motorcycles, are all new sponsors.

My company, Kenton Smith Marketing, is back for the fifth tour and serves as the event producer and publicist. All the sponsors contribute to event activities and some really great goody bag giveaways. I have written major feature stories in the past for Born to Ride Magazine, a popular biker magazine distributed in seven southern states and producer of multiple TV, radio shows and podcasts. I'm very pleased to welcome publisher Ron Gallati as our official motorcycle media sponsor. Ron is well known in national motorcycle circles and is actively seeking opportunities to better co-promote with the boating industry since there is such a crossover between the two industries and lifestyles. Born to Ride has already published two major feature stories about our tour, with more to come. Ok friends, I can barely wait to unplug from real life for a week, breathe in the fresh mountain air, lean in the curves and slay that indomitable beast!

Next time you see me here, we'll have had our opening event party and a full day getting our sea legs acclimated to new terrain as we ride the Georgia Dragon and catch some waterfalls. See you soon! #) in Robbinsville, NC. – www.ironhorsenc.com We are nestled in the heart of the Smokies in a private compound that caters to the biker community, minutes from the infamous Dragon, a stretch of curvy mountainous mecca with 311 thrilling twists and turns along 11 challenging miles. The lodge is situated minutes away from Deals Gap, the spectacular Cherohala Skyway and Blue Ridge Parkway, Moonshiner 28, Fontana Dam and the Nantahala River Gorge, along with dozens of scenic waterfalls and natural wonders.

The resort itself features a mix of luxury cabins, motel-style rooms and bunkhouses, along with RV and primitive-tent camping accommodations. The large western-style pavilion features a wonderful stone fireplace; casual meeting space in the glass-enclosed Hog's Den; Chuck Wagon Grill and dining area for resort guests with great Yelp ratings; even a massage therapy room. I'm especially looking forward to gathering with fellow riders around the cozy group fire pit at night, or maybe rocking my troubles away on the outdoor deck that overlooks beautiful Stecoah Creek. The resort sounds like the perfect place to chill, unwind, toast new and old friendships and share big biker tales after a long and soul-satisfying ride.

Interesting trivia. I've recently learned that the resort was purchased last year by a couple of boating industry veterans Jerry and Natasha Goss of Southern Yacht Industries in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Besides operating the lodge, which is a long-standing favorite among motorcyclists, they also own the Wolf Creek Café & Grocery and Wolf Creek Motorsport Rentals. The Goss' are active boaters and bikers, and have ridden and enjoyed the area for many years. Their goal, according to their highly capable special events manager Carrie Repp of R & R Promotions, is to "provide bikers with a great experience to ride, eat, sleep and repeat." Sounds like a worthy goal! As the first large group booked this season, we're especially excited to check out the site and meet the crew who share our unique love and passion for both the boating and motorcycle life!

All our previous tours required us to pack up the saddlebags daily en route to the next location. This year, however, since we are base-camped at the Iron Horse and there are so many awesome roads

in the area, we are able to orchestrate day trips and cover three states across the region: North Carolina, Georgia and Tennessee.

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