

SABERS PHILLIP ISLAND 2007 MotoGP

October 10th - 16th

Report by Bryan White - SABERS Ridescaptain.

Well I know I couldn't sleep. It had been 2005 since I was at the Island for the MotoGP so I was like a kid going to Disneyland (I am a big kid at heart I suppose!)

I had even packed all my gear by Sunday LOL

The bike had a thorough going over. Everything was set.

By the time 4am rolled around on the Wednesday I was biting at the bit to go.

I put on my winter gear as it was very cold and had my over pants ready to go as there was a threat of rain. That's what I kept saying all day ... "Come on guys it's only a threat of rain"

It would prove to be almost correct as we skipped around the rain. The guys that left after us copped a fair bit from Tailem Bend to Ballarat. We were lucky to get very light sprinkles.

I was on the road at 5.30am and soon up to the Toll Gate to meet all the guys.

It was very apparent from the smiles and all the chat that I wasn't the only one that was excited to be going to the Island.

There was as usual a huge mix of bikes and riders. The one bike that caused the most interest was Lachlan on his 1986 GT550. His bike is definitely old school but his enthusiasm was nothing but contagious and he kept us laughing all week.

By 7am we were all eager to hit the road and head to our evening stop at Ballarat.

As we were waiting we had quite a few bikes wave to us... Yep they were all going the same direction, MotoGP. It's funny but all the way there even though you ride with your own group you are actually riding with a huge group that uses the same stops and cafés.

So, helmets and gloves on and away we went up the freeway. The one warning in my head was "for goodness sake use your throttle control!" This was to prove our saving grace as there was a few of the boys in blue on the road watching for speeding motorcyclists.

So the speed limit it was.

Haha, its funny how much you see when you are not speeding.

I also wanted everyone to get there safe.

Enough of that... Our first stop was at the Shell, Tailem Bend.

It wasn't long before everyone was fuelled up, munchied up and then chatting to other guys heading to the MotoGP.



The next leg was the boring section to Bordertown. If it wasn't for the couple of towns that slow you down as you pass through, I am sure that there would be more accidents caused by fatigue in this section of road. At Keith we briefly stopped to say goodbye to Peter as he was heading to the track via Woolongong. When we safely pulled into the BP at Bordertown I was happy. It was another quick splash of

fuel, drink and some more munchies. It was at this time we noticed Lachlan never stops eating LOL - he would give Tony a run for his money! Well I did tell him to bring along road munchies... I just didn't realise how many times he munched out.

Soon after Bordertown we crossed over the border into dreaded Victoria, dropping 10kms. The 100km limit is a drain on the system.

The scenery starts getting a bit greener here too. Yep, it was when we went though Nhil that I admitted defeat and pulled over and chucked on my over pants as it looked like we would get a bit damp.

The one thing that surprised all of us was that we all know that the Victorian Police have a zero speeding tolerance but we were constantly being overtaken by Victorian drivers by at least 10km+. I am glad we were sitting on the limit, as there was no chance of being picked up for speeding.

The next stop was at Arrarat. It was a chance to catch up to Alex who had overtaken us with the Ducatti boys that were going the same direction. (LOL- I think all bikers were)

We were all back together again.

Our next section was to Ballarat and when we were coming into town we were made to feel welcome by the large Victorian Police warning signs warning that they were targeting "MOTORCYCLISTS"

The only police we saw was the one that had pulled over a hatchback that had gone past us ... haha!!!

When we pulled into the Windmill Holiday Village we were greeted by Mark, the owner who apologised about having to squeeze 6 of us into a 5 sleeper cabin. Ollie who was travelling with us decided to get a motel with his dad who also was travelling with us in a support vehicle.

Mark gave us a mattress for the extra person and John opted for the floor. No one really cared as it was only one night.

After booking in we all changed and went out for a meal at the local bistro.

It was so funny that everyone on our table ordered the same meals. The waitress just laughed when she took our orders.

The dinner went down a treat and we were feeling like a drink so we went through the drive though and got a few cans each. When we got back to the bikes we remembered that none of us had brought anything to carry our drinks back in! So we turned Lachlan (who had come down with me) into Lachie the Ocky and once he was on the bike he was turned into the drinks holder. Haha!



In the morning we had planned on hitting the road by 8.30am but the excitement of the whole MotoGP experience woke us early and we were out of the park and into McDonald's for breakfast by 7.30am. The best thing at the McCafe is the coffee.

The crew were soon eager to get back on the road so we hit the local BP for a top up of fuel. The freeway to Melbourne is good, double laned and 110km. Only one section of 90km but that was only for about 1.5km. The group stayed pretty close together and that made it easy to get through the ring road and out

to Cranbourne. We topped with fuel here too... my bum was getting sore too. I am glad that Terry and his V-Max had a limited range as it made us stop regular for leg stretches.

The next 72kms is easy as you just watch the signs. It is a great feeling to know that the next stop is the track. It's a great site to ride though San Reno and head to the Island via the bridge. As we rode over the bridge I had to crack up laughing because I was bowing to the Island Gods. LOL - and when I looked back in the mirrors so was Grant! Haha. Normally this time the roads around the Island have police everywhere but we never saw any.

It's a great feeling to actually ride through the main gates and head towards the entrance. We were greeted by girls streamlining the ticket sales. If the tickets didn't have to be collected they just took your ticket vouchers and gave you the correct arm band which gave you the appropriate access to the trackside campgrounds and track.

A couple of our group had to collect their tickets from the main office so we waited.

Poor Lachlan came out very distressed that the girl couldn't find part of his booking so after a couple of calls the guy assisting him was very good and a very relieved Lachlan came out with his arm band and a big smile.

We were all off into the campgrounds to see all our normal sites had been taken. Trackside camping had never been this busy before, but with the Aussie draw cards what can you expect? However we managed to get the last site up against the fence.

I am so glad we got in as early as we did, as the campgrounds filled up fast. We couldn't believe that it was as busy this early. By Friday pm I couldn't believe they could fit any more in but people kept coming right up until Saturday evening!!

Once our site was all set up we headed off on the bikes into Cowes for a look around.



Alex and Lachlan had to buy folding chairs and once we found some cheepies we had to go find me a new rear tyre. That's what you get when you use a sport tyre on long straight roads. The centre gets ripped out! So \$300.00 later I had a new correct dual compound tyre. Now I was looking forward to the Great Ocean Road on the way home. The group had a quick bite to eat, souvenir shopping and then it was off to buy our drinks for that night.

Back at the track it was time to park the bikes and say hello to our mates that we catch up with every year, and make new friends.

Oh yeah, and have a few drinks!.

Once the sun goes down the food vans open up and the bands start up.

You can get a great feed and the average price is only \$10.00.

You can get burgers, chips, lasagne, curry and the food changes every night.

Most of the crew loved the music but Lachlan said it was too old school and not his favourite type of music. After we had had dinner it was back to our site for a chat fireside. A few drinks later the band started to sound even better so a few of us went for a wonder up to listen. They were good... Not so the second band, so we went for a walk around to see a few of the other guys. It's a fantastic experience to stay track side as you see so much more than you would if you stayed off track.

Early Friday morning we were up and showered quickly then off to breakfast in Cowes. Then it was back to the track and hit the displays with the hope of getting freebies.

We soon found that one of the stalls was giving away everything from ponchos , neck warmers to back packs. Some of us went back a few times.

Then it was off to the track to watch the boys going through their paces.

Nothing can prepare you for the speed, skill, noise and smell of these bikes.

It's something you have to see up close.

After all the racing had finished the partying at the campsite starts.

We all decided that with the police presence it would be better to stay here and have a few drinks.

Saturday morning was another early start. We had breakfast trackside then grabbed the SABERS banner and set up on turn one. During the day we took turns to watch our spot and when the big boys came out to play we had the best spot, as it's awesome watching the boys hitting that corner at over 300km's.

That evening the Victorian boys (Hamish, Craig and crew) were out in their new toy ..

A three seater couch and coffee table mounted on a ride on mower base... Haha it was awesome!! This is an addition to their garage of track toys.



Sunday - Race Day.

The Saturday night fireside chat had centred on a free dyno service in the motorcycle carpark so at first light we were up and waiting in the line. Hell another freebie, haha we will be in that. Yes we even took Lachlan and the GT550.

The dyno guy nearly wet himself when he put Lachlan's bike on the dyno but had more respect for him when he found out he rode it from Adelaide and he had to make it back on it. It pulled a whole 33hp! We cracked up when Lachlan said he hoped he would be gentle with the old girl.



Once we had all had a shot on the dyno and got a free t-shirt we went trackside.

WOW- the organisers had opened the gates earlier than usual and by the time we got down to the track the whole fence was about 5 deep. By the time it was race time you could see that this was a record attendance.

All I can say is that it's an atmosphere you have to experience to appreciate.

Normally there is a mass exodus after the race but most of the campers stayed on.

Good idea, as it's the last chance to get a good sleep before the trek home.

Also it's the last chance for everyone to let off some steam for the last time.

So there was the usual bands, food, campfires, drinking and oh yeah fireworks and burnouts galore.

So much for getting a good night's sleep... Alex couldn't sleep so at about 1am he got up and started packing. By about 3am I was awake and so was Grant. So what the heck, we got up and decided to pack. Alex decided to hit the road early. I must be good at directions as he got home okay. Lol he did have another guy tag along with him. He lived near Apollo Bay so he was able to get through the hard part home. The rest was easy, just follow the coast. The rest of the boys got up at about 5am and the other guys staying up at the other campsite met us at 7.30am. We were soon on our way and when we got over the bridge to San Remo we met up with Peter.

The ride around to the ferry was uneventful and we made good time.

We only saw two radar units on the way around to Sorrento. It's great to cruise around the bay on the ferry and the 40 minute ride gives you a chance to have breakfast and chat to more friends.

As you dock you can sense that you will soon be on the Great Ocean Road.

Helmet and gloves on, doors open and we are rolling.

It's an easy ride as all you have to do is follow the signs.

We were all looking forward to this part of the trip.

I had a smile from ear to ear and settling in to a nice rhythm, then just as we were about 10km into the GOR we came up on about 9 cars that had stopped. We pulled over into a clearing only to see down the road that there was an accident and that motorcyclists were directing the traffic, so we rode down the right hand side and saw that a motorcyclist had come to grief.

Grant and I rendered first aid until the ambulance and police got there.

We handed over to the ambos and left our details with the police and left.

We then set out to catch up with the rest of the boys in Apollo Bay.

The guys were patiently waiting eating ice creams. That was the best idea all day.

We all cooled down and had a few drinks. I also let the guys in Adelaide know that we were all ok and travelling well. Once we were ready it was onto the rest of the GOR and hopefully no more incidents like the one we just had.

So after a photo to mark the occasion we were back on the road.



There is some awesome scenery and fantastic winding roads for the next section all the way along the coast and up through the forest and yes the police were in the exactly the same spot as they were in 2005... Mmm yes, that's where I got busted!

So I gave the police a wave LOL and they waved back! Haha- The guys thought that was funny.

The guys really loved this bit of the road as much as me and that was evident when we pulled in at the Twelve Apostles for a break. Yeah, we did the tourist thing LOL.

After that it was down to some hard riding as there were quite a few kilometres to do before we hit Mount Gambier and a shower and a bed.

We did a few splashes at a couple of petrol stations as the sun was going down. The one thing I have learnt about this section of road is to try and get off it before it gets dark. Too late - the sun went down and we got covered in bugs.

Rumbling stomachs were the next thing to be dealt with, so it was straight to KFC for a quick fix. Once we had our dinner it was off to the cabin and a hot shower and sleep.

In the morning at 5am - (Yes, I forgot to turn off my alarm!) we were all up and packed.

It was off to Hungry Jacks for breakfast. Very nutritious. Not.

The ride up through Penola to Naracoorte is pretty straight and boring. At Naracoorte we collected Ollie and his dad then we were on the home straight to Tailm Bend and home. We did our last fuel stop at the BP Tailm Bend. It was nice to come over the hill and down into the Toll Gate Ride complete, back to where we started.

Safe and Sound, lol and no speeding tickets!

I would like to say thanks to all the guys that rode with me as I totally enjoyed the whole week with you. We covered some 2,200km, saw some great countryside, had a ball at the MotoGP, got lots of freebies, had an awesome time and enjoyed some great camaraderie.

Now for all those people that had bets on Lachlan and how far he would make it:

His little GT550 made it there and back and never missed a beat!!

Mind you he did have to get a new tyre too.



(Cop the new Draggin Jeans and boots)

For those people thinking about going next year, believe it or not tickets have gone on sale now.

If it's like anything like this year it will be huge.

Get in early!

I have posted up some photos from our trip in our gallery.

If you have any photos please send them in and we will post them up there too.

Remember to register and you can add comments 😊

