



RELIABILITY RALLY 2018

Deep Creek, MD

Louis Turicik: Reliability Rally Co-Founder and Rules Committee, www.reliabilityrally.com

September 2018. Nine riders converged on a large lake house near Deep Creek Lake State Park in western Maryland. The day was hot and humid, but it was not going to last.



Nine different motorcycles, seven of which were purchased for \$1000 or less assembled to compete in **Reliability Rally 2018: The Original Beater Motorcycle Tour**. A friendly motorcycle tour and competition that determines who is the most craigslist-savvy dealmaker out there. The roster of machines was diverse, touring bikes, sport bikes, a cruiser and an old school muscle bike. A planned 400 mile tour of "Mountain Maryland" and a bevy of contests lie ahead.

RIDER	BIKE	PRICE
Colin	1991 Honda CB-1	\$1,000
Justin	1997 BMW R1100RT	\$1,000
Lou	1998 Yamaha Virago XV535	\$700
Irv	1982 Honda Silver Wing	\$700
Chase	1979 Honda CB-750F	\$800
Charles	2001 Suzuki GSXR-750	\$1000
James	1980 Honda GL1100i	\$600
Jim	Yamaha FJR1300 (tools/supplies)	N/A
Simon	Suzuki VStrom (photos)	N/A

As the machines filtered in, the weather began to deteriorate. We all knew the remnants of a tropical storm were aimed directly at us.



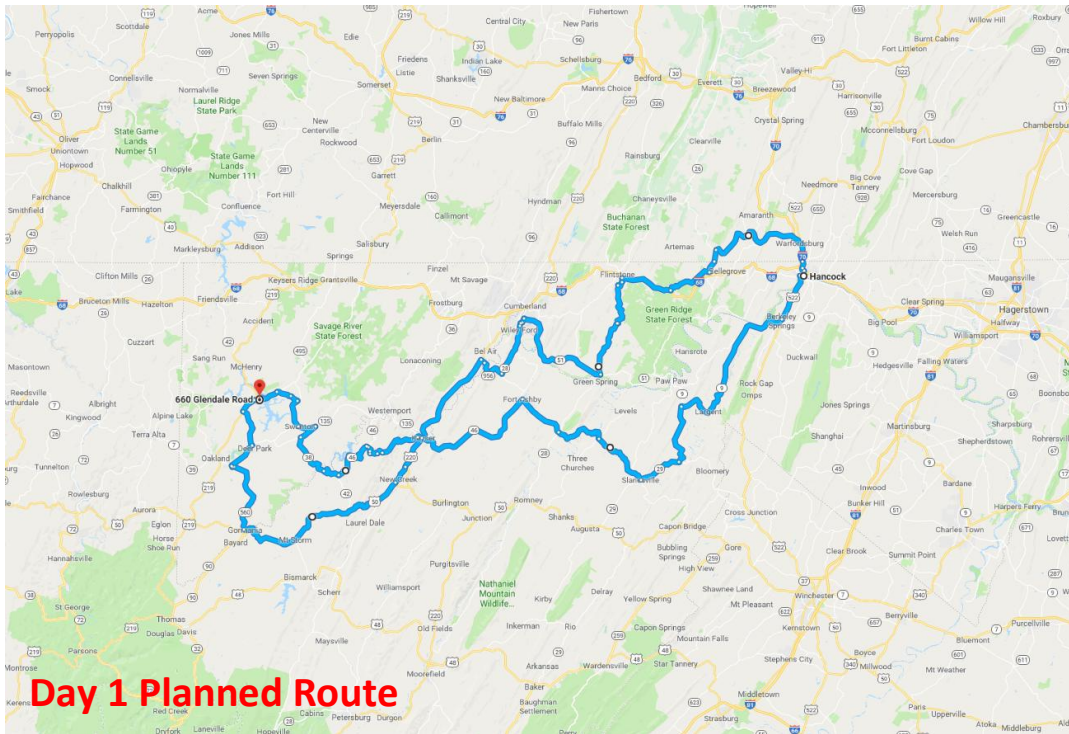
The Sub-\$1000 Steeds

Undaunted, kickstands were up at 8AM Saturday morning. After gassing up, we stopped at Deep Creek Donuts for some hot fresh donuts. They were eaten quickly enough that nobody managed to get a picture of them. At this point the rain began to set in and disagreed with the CB750's electrics. We were close enough to home base that Irv and Chase were able to limp it back and began diagnosing the problem. The remainder of the group set off on the ride route.



Fueled by Donuts

The day's intent was a 230 mile loop, with lunch in Hancock, MD. However, as the miles ticked over, the storm truly set in and temperatures dropped quickly.



By the first gas stop, the group was losing steam. We knew that riding the entire route was impossible given the disastrous weather.



Colin's thoughts on the weather

An audible was called to divert to Cumberland, MD for an early lunch. The waitress at Baltimore Street Grille graciously helped us dry out a bit and looked at us in disbelief when we told her we had all arrived on sub-\$1000 motorcycles! After a hot lunch, we fired across interstate 68 back to home base to dry out and regroup.

At this point we need to discuss the contest portion of the ride. Reliability Rally entries are scored across seven categories: Purchase Price, Fuel Economy, Acceleration Test, Slow Race, Reliability, "Rider's Choice" and Best Accessory. These categories dissect the merits and foils of each bike and provide a loose framework to judge the machines.

New to this year's RR is the "Best Accessory" contest. Motorcycles are rarely kept factory original, so this year we decided to award bonus points to the best modification, determined by rider vote. Colin, not satisfied with his Honda CB-1's torque output, added a booster rocket to aid in acceleration.



The boost to speed was minimal, but the showmanship and engineering were outstanding! It was an easy rider favorite.



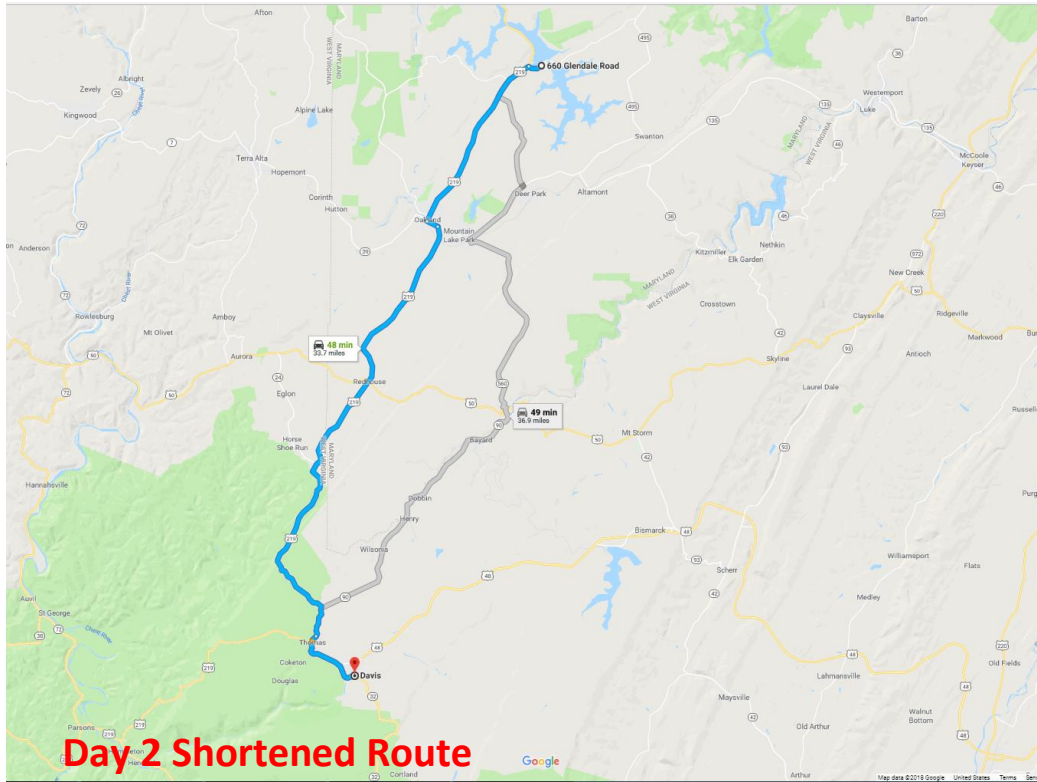
I (Lou), am new to the cruiser scene, with the Virago 535 being my first foray into the feet first, fists in the wind riding style. Therefore I really wanted to fit in while still riding safely. My idea was to modify a helmet to LOOK like I'm not actually wearing a helmet. I think the aesthetic is bang on, compete with chin-strap beard, flat brim Alpinestars hat and diamond stud earrings. What do you think?



Saturday afternoon brought a slight break in the weather, inspiring the group to attempt the acceleration test. We measured each willing participant's 0-60 mph time via phone app while safely merging onto a highway. Charles' GSXR-750 walked away with the quickest (safest?) highway merging time. Chase's CB750 dried out enough to perform the acceleration test, it along with Colin's CB-1 were about a second behind the mighty GSXR. The remaining non 4-cylinder bikes were just plain slow.

At the end of day 1 we had 120 miles ridden, acceleration test completed and rider's choice vote waiting in the wings. Each rider had to choose their favorite machine of the group, but could not vote for themselves. Chase's CB750 classic muscle bike aesthetic won the hearts of the reliable riders. Colin's CB-1 and Justin's pinstriped/popeyed/tassled BMW were honorable mentions.

Sunday, day 2, began with more torrential rains. After a lazy breakfast and hawk's eye on the weather, we identified an afternoon window of little to no rain. The group set out once again this time with the target painted on Davis, West Virginia, a unique small town in the state's lower panhandle. Everyone fueled up in anticipation of the fuel economy challenge, set to take place on this 70 mile round trip.



Our convoy of low-buck machines rumbled south, motivated by clearer skies on the horizon. The roads dried enough to truly enjoy the swooping curves of route 219. Even James and Irv's heavyweight Gold and Silver wings were able to indulge in the corners. A quick stop in Thomas, WV allowed a good photo op.



Hardcore Reliable Riders



RR2018
Lineup/Pile of Scrap



I'm dry-ish...

A few miles past Thomas is Davis, WV. A small town that must set some sort of record for number of breweries per capita... We saved the beer for later and settled in for lunch at Hellbender Burritos, named after the large Appalachian salamander. The food was delicious. Davis is a neat little town definitely worth coming back to!



**Hellbender Burritos.
Excellent!**

After lunch we began the trip back to Deep Creek Lake. Two challenges remained, the slow race and fuel economy test. For those unfamiliar, a slow race is a skill competition where the rider must ride as slowly as possible in a confined space. In this case, the space was 4 Wal-Mart sized parking spaces. A timer begins when the rider starts moving and stops when they leave the space or put a foot down. Clutch control and balance are key. Chase employed his dirt bike skills and won by a wide margin.

The final stop was a gas station near our home base to top up the tanks and calculate fuel economy over the previous 70 miles. To ensure parity, each rider must fill up another's tank. Colin, using an uncomfortable looking race tuck most of the day, managed to eke out an incredible 73 miles per gallon from his 400cc Honda.

The sun had set and the ride was complete. The final steps were to tally up the points and crack open some cold refreshment. We had ridden about 200 miles in total, half of the original plan. The reliable riders were soggy and cold, but held a certain sense of accomplishment after toughing out nearly impossible conditions.



Don't drink while riding!

Despite being one of the most expensive entries in RR2018, Colin's CB-1 performed admirably through the tropical storm, earning enough points to narrowly capture victory over Justin's Teutonic Tourer. In celebration of his victory, Colin was awarded the hallowed Reliability Rally trophy: a warm Buckler non-alcoholic beer.



The sweet taste of victory!

After bragging about how bad the weather was and embellishing our 0-60 times, it was time for all of us to part ways. Also it was time for the Reliability Rally bikes to be passed on to new owners. I listed my Virago the Monday after the end of RR2018. It was on craigslist for two whole days before a palatable offer was made.

☆ 1998 Yamaha Virago XV535 - \$1600 (McKees Rocks) ☒

image 1 of 3



Fresh carb clean, battery, oil change and air filter. Ready to go. Runs perfect. Ride home today, ride to work tomorrow and bomb around with your buddies all weekend!

6100 miles. Battery tender hookup. Toolkit included.

Bike gets about 50mpg and will cruise interstate all day. Cash only OBO. Title in hand.

- do NOT contact me with unsolicited services or offers

Like an injured animal nursed back to health, the Virago was cleaned up, repaired, and released back “into the wild.” Now there’s a nice pile of cash to start shopping for next year...

You in?