

Horizons Unlimited California Travellers Meeting

Grant and Susan Johnson did their own round-the-world trip—two-up on a 1986 BMW R 80 GS—starting in 1987. They’ve been to over 50 countries, and created the Horizons Unlimited community for adventure riders and explorers back in 1997. Since then it has expanded, with “Travellers Meetings” held around the world. These events allow experienced riders to share video and photos from their trips, and what they learned, with the audience.

HU’s California Travellers Meeting (spelled the British way) moved from Cambria to the Mariposa County Fairgrounds because it outgrew the previous facility. Its location near Yosemite National Park brings with it some excellent riding opportunities. The latest meeting, from September 22-25, 2016, attracted approximately 300 people from across the globe.

Motorcycle manufacturers and aftermarket vendors showcased products that make motorcycling even more enjoyable. Authors were also on hand to discuss their books and sign copies. Sam Manicom, Joe Berk, and several others gave interesting presentations on their excursions, and Carla King put on a self-publishing seminar along with a session on riding Baja California, Mexico.

There were workshops and discussions about many of the subjects long-distance travelers are interested in, including border crossings, packing light, first aid, GPS devices, videography, and regional information on places like Cuba, South America, Africa, Europe, Australia, New Zealand, and Asia, plus a program for women. Walt Fulton and Nancy Foote provided off-road training by Streetmasters. There were also many motorcycles customized for extended travel, and friendly folks willing to share their experiences.

One of the most inspiring presenters was Alex Chacón, a lively 28-year-old who dropped out of medical school to chase his dream of exploration on two wheels. His creativity inspired everyone, with new ideas for shooting video on a trip, including drones you can carry on a motorcycle! Alex’s self-taught video and still photography techniques have led to commercial success rarely achieved by motorcycle travelers.

Pre-registration for the full event was \$89. Three meals a day were available for an additional fee (\$10 for breakfast, \$15 for lunch, and \$20 for dinner), but offerings and pricing vary by location. After the evening sessions, most riders gathered around the campfire for some camaraderie. There were clean restrooms, shower facilities, and even a “quiet camping area” for those who wanted to retire early.

Whether you are a new rider or a veteran, a Traveller’s Meeting is an excellent way to meet friends and learn more about the universe of adventure riding. The next California event is September 21-24, 2017. Online registration opens soon. To find other meetings near you, visit www.horizonsunlimited.com.

