

First time at the 'Cord'

By John Menze

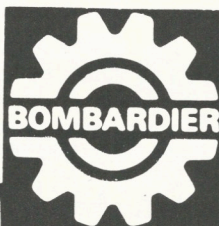
If you decide to ride the Corduroy, beware—you could get spoiled. There's something about traveling to a faraway place and becoming totally immersed in two days of riding. You begin to feel the involvement long before the dead engine start on Day One. The motorcycle *must* be ready and able to go two days. That thought keeps going through your mind during preparation. No shortcuts and no "It'll last one more ride" parts here. Weeks before the event, the "Two Day" state-of-mind is already taking effect. New tires, tubes, cables, brake shoes, and chain and sprockets are the norm. I added a new top end to the list, too, along with enough spares that must have been good for at least one mph less on our camper. "Money is no object," I thought, "We're going to 'the Cord'!"

The eleven-hour journey is seasoned with international flavor: crossing the border through customs, tuning in French radio stations, changing money over, and listening to accents. The Corduroy is an adventure, and it's available to anyone who can schedule a four day weekend. Two of those days will be spent sampling what must be some of the best riding in North America. I say that because the trails are fun without being easy, and challenging without being too technical or bike-and-body busting. Very much like the "fun and fast" sections in the Berkshires, but with fewer rocks and more turns, the wide snowmobile trails of the Corduroy undulate through the Canadian forests for miles like a giant network of long distance roller coaster track. Berms are everywhere. If you like jumping and wheelie-ing over fast, very long sections of trail, you'll love the rhythm of this enduro. There is a little bit of everything thrown in, too, rest assured: a few rocks, several speed changes, scenic tar and dirt roads, the Devil's Staircase on Day Two (a steep, rocky uphill or downhill, depending upon which direction the

organizers run the course), a classic, wide river crossing at Burnt River, a special test track, and, if you were on minute sixty, a couple of "stoppers". I like to look at "stoppers" philosophically. There are two kinds of riders who will define what a genuine stopper is: those who make it through and those who don't. The ones who don't talk about being knee-deep in an impassable section of trail. The riders who do make it through usually describe that same section of trail as a place where they had to *stop*—and look for a way around the stuck riders. Hence, the word "stopper" has a double meaning depending on your choice of lines. On Day One, I had the opportunity to use both definitions in my riding vocabulary while negotiating a couple of low-lying areas. The first one was right before the third check and looked innocent enough until firsthand (or "foot") inspection revealed that gaps in the logs corduroying this spot were wide and deep enough to swallow front wheels whole. The second area was a short deep-water crossing about ten miles from the finish. The club had thoughtfully erected a sign indicating

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the proper line through. When you bounced to the other side, you had to work your way around some swamp mud, highlighted by a two-foot deep rut that wound around a corner and up a short, steep hill. When I got there, I had to push the bike through, weaving between some half-dozen stuck riders, crossing the rut diagonally. After pushing up the hill, it was home free to the last check, then back to the start where all motorcycles were impounded overnight.

Despite the problems of getting stuck, burning a check, and riding the last 40 miles with a rear flat, I dropped 16 points on the first day, which shows you just how rideable an event the Corduroy really is. I didn't even dent my rim!


Day Two was nearly twice as long (160 miles), but another flat and no more spare tubes put me on the DNF list. The worst part was hearing that the second day was just as good as the first, if not better. The Corduroy "Two Day" Enduro is just one of those special all-encompassing quality events that stands out as one of the classic motorcycling experiences. Someday I'm going back, and it will probably be next year. ■

CORDUROY WINNERS

1953 Basil Jackson	Toronto, Canada	500 Tri
1954 Gerald Roberts	Toronto, Canada	Harley K
1955 Bill Sharpless	Toronto, Canada	650 Ariel
1956 Sheldon Smith	Peterborough, Can.	500 AJS
1957 Leroy Hartman	Plymouth, Michigan	600 Nort
1958 C. Wise	Zanesville, Ohio	650 Tri
1959 John Penton	Lorain, Ohio	175 NSU
1960 John Penton	Lorain, Ohio	175 NSU
1961 John Penton	Lorain, Ohio	250 BMW
1962 Norm Smith	Bracksville, Ohio	500 Tri
1963 Sal Scirpo	Hartford, CT	250 HD
1964 John Penton	Lorain, Ohio	250 BMW
1965 John Penton	Lorain, Ohio	250 BMW
1966 Bill Sharpless	Toronto, Canada	250 Bul
1967 Bill Sharpless	Toronto, Canada	250 Bul
1968 Leroy Winters	Ft. Smith, Ark.	125 Pen
1969 Cancelled		
1970 Jeff Penton	Lorain, Ohio	125 Pen
1971 Jack Penton	Lorain, Ohio	125 Pen
1972 David Hulse	Bayshore, NY	125 HDKA
1973 Tom Penton	Lorain, Ohio	125 Pen
1974 Jeff Smith	Valcourt, Can.	175 CA
1975 Tom Penton	Lorain, Ohio	250 Pen
1976 Max Markowitz	Putnam, CT	400 Pen
1977 Max Markowitz	Putnam, CT	250 Pen
1978 John Cooper	Columbus, NJ	175 KTM
1979 John Cooper	Columbus, NJ	400 Mai
1980 Tom Krehbiel	Vienna, VA	250 KTM
1981 Jim Stevens	Winona, Canada	175 Yam
1982 Ross Lennox	Orangeville, Can.	400 CA
1983 Blair Sharpless	Toronto, Canada	250 CA
1984 Blair Sharpless	Toronto, Canada	250 CA





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