

TRAIL BOSS

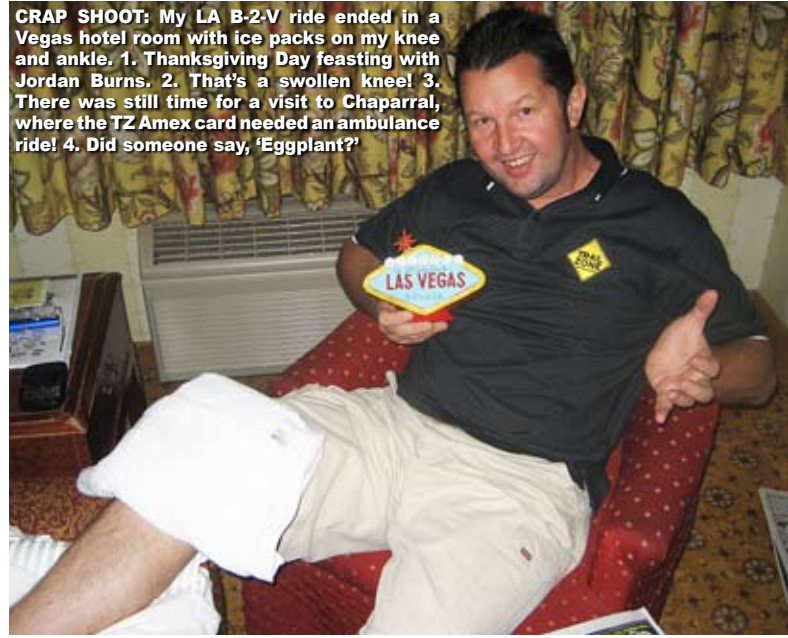
G'DAY AGAIN and thanks for reading **TRAIL ZONE**. We're fast coming up to our fifth birthday and without you, our loyal readers and subscribers, there would be no **TRAIL ZONE**, so thanks for all your support.

For the most part this issue was pieced together over the Christmas/New Year rush, which for us is our busiest time of the year. Response to our annual Choose Your Ride subscriber promotion has once again been massive, and it seems like everyone wants their subscription in time to stuff inside the Christmas stocking. Which is a good call, because as I like to say, "A **TRAIL ZONE** subscription is the gift that keeps on giving – plus you could win your choice of a Husky TE450 or Kawasaki KLX450R or KTM 300EXC or Suzuki DR-Z400E or Yamaha WR450F!"

At the very tail end of last year in between writing stories, riding bikes, polishing Teneres, packing magazines and working the **TRAIL ZONE** stand at the Sydney Motorcycle Show at Homebush, I squeezed in a fast trip to California to take my first stab at the famed LA B-2-V desert ride, which is held each year over the Thanksgiving Day holiday weekend.

I flew into LAX on Thanksgiving Day and was whisked from the airport by my good mate Big Rich Gold to a family Thanksgiving dinner. Fighting jet lag but nevertheless packing a mighty appetite (always!), I did my best to get into the spirit of things and devour a mountain of turkey and pumpkin pies, in the company of none other than Jordan Burns, one of the honchos of the Moto XXX brand and drummer with Strung Out. Jordan's a major moto fan like me, and neither of us could believe how small a world it is that we'd bump each other at a Thanksgiving

CRAP SHOOT: My LA B-2-V ride ended in a Vegas hotel room with ice packs on my knee and ankle. 1. Thanksgiving Day feasting with Jordan Burns. 2. That's a swollen knee! 3. There was still time for a visit to Chaparral, where the TZ Amex card needed an ambulance ride! 4. Did someone say, 'Eggplant?'



THANKSGIVING DAY BLUES

Day nosh-up in suburban LA – where neither of us actually knew the hosts!

The next morning Big Rich had the troops rallied for a 4.30am start to our LA Barstow to Vegas assault. Rich, myself, Big Steve, Mike, Mark, Tony and JD duly assembled at Palmdale, north of LA, just on dawn, unloaded the bikes and joined the throng of 375-plus riders for the start of the legendary dual-sport trail ride. For the full story on the ride, turn to page 30 of this issue and check it out.

Of course I was more toey than a Roman sandal to do the ride, and in my enthusiasm for a little extra action this time, I said to Rich the night before the ride, "I reckon we could do with a little drama this weekend, just to test us out ..."

Talk about famous last words ... our drama started from the get-go!

Barstow, where Mike was picked up by his wife and returned to Los Angeles and a date with an orthopaedic surgeon, 12 titanium screws and a huge plaster cast.

The next morning it was my turn. In only the second section of the day, a rider ahead of me bounced a rock under my front wheel and I went down hard on my right side. My ankle and knee bore the brunt of the impact and after riding another 60 miles or so out to civilisation, I knew my day was done. That night, when we finally made it to the finish in Las Vegas, I peeled off my riding gear and boots and my knee was already the size of a watermelon and my ankle was following fast.

A week later and back home in OZ, my plump knee and ankle had turned the colour of eggplant and the Ultrasound operator let gasp an, "Oh, wow!" when she



Big Rich's XR almost boiled dry while idling in the car park of Palmdale Super Cycles, as we were all busy trying to bump-start Big Steve's Kato. Then Rich's bike snapped a speedo cable just five miles into the self-navigation ride.

Speaking of snapping, just after the morning's first fuel stop, Mike took a low-speed tumble and busted his right wrist, at precisely the same time as Rich suffered a busted footpeg mount. Right away we had some bike and body casualties to deal with, which was made just that little bit tougher by our chase truck driver, Tom, not having his phone turned on!

We salvaged the rest of the day and eventually made it to the overnight stop at

confirmed the mass of fluid in my swollen knee. Thankfully the knee itself was intact and the swelling and bruising will subside, but if there's one thing I hate, it's sitting around waiting for your body to heal. And doesn't the missus hate it, too!

A day later an email rolled in from Big Rich, offering wise council as always:

"Clubby: We are lucky fellows indeed to get to enjoy the adventures that we do. Once in a while, we have to pay the bill for our fun. You and I, given the years and miles we have traveled on two wheels, have had our fun at a bargain price. Here's to hoping your bill is now paid for years to come!"

I'm with you on that one, Rich, all the way. – **Clubby**

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TRAIL ZONE MAG

WHEN THE TAR ROAD ENDS, THE TRAIL ZONE BEGINS