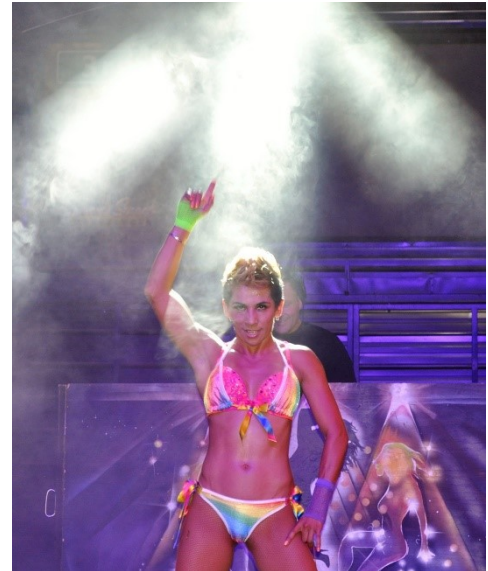


SOUL SMOKE

Iron Souls Motorcycle Club—Oakland Chapter

Brotherhood Run 2016—Las Vegas



Viva Las Vegas, that's how the song goes. I'm sure the handful of brothers that wanted to go somewhere else other than San Diego again were interested in just going somewhere else. The most vocal brother said he will never go back to San Diego. I can only assume there's outstanding warrants, because who in their right mind would choose to ride their motorcycle to Las Vegas in June. Clearly that was not the concern of this brother because he ended up driving the chase vehicle, a very nice air-conditioned truck, but I digress.



All photos provided by MacGyver unless noted otherwise.

Brotherhood Run 2016 (continued)

Vegas has a lot of something for everyone, even if you're not looking for it. Okay, it doesn't have the cool ocean breezes of a seaside retreat, but there was a man there in a G-string with the sign saying kick me in the nuts for 5 bucks. Some things you can't unsee, although I did take a picture of it. I admit that. Who doesn't look at the train wreck. No, I am not posting that photo. You can thank me for that later. There are far too many beautiful things to show you.



Brotherhood Run 2016 (continued)



Brotherhood Run 2016 (continued)

Now normally this is where I would show you some photos of the ride to Vegas. However, I road in a packet two. My brother "D" and I were not going to be swayed to leave Santa Nella so late in the morning as the pack had chosen to do. Even at that we didn't leave until 6 AM later than I would've liked. I am by anyone's description a daisy when it comes riding in extreme heat. I hate it. I hate it. I make myself clear about this whenever this craziness comes up, but here we are. The predictions of 111° by 11 o'clock that I had Googled the week before was pretty spot on, only slightly underestimating the bone bleaching heat that day.



The key point that I can point out about riding through the desert that day was when we passed Prim. There are several solar arrays out there that are pretty impressive. However, and I confirmed this with other riders later that evening, they felt the same eerie feeling as when D and I passed the solar arrays. It is a huge standing tower with mirror collectors on top. I swear I was being paid back for my misbehavior as a child, when I use the magnifying glass on ants. I kid you not, you can ask any brother that road that day. As we passed by the solar arrays, the sun being bounced off that mirror seemed to follow us as we moved down the highway. I remember distinctly looking over at D, yelling "go faster the beam is following us, it's getting closer". "D" later confessed he saw me yelling at him but did not hear what I was saying. He was too busy trying to out run the magnifying glass on the top of the tower.

When we arrived at the Grand hotel, it seemed like a nice spot. It was newly renovated, standard rooms with a decent outside pool and bar. None of that really seem to matter, as we just wanted to hit the showers. The main pack arrived sometime later, getting the full brunt of the desert experience. It wasn't till later, much later, that the crew gathered their thoughts at the downstairs watering hole. The BRU was strong as we shared the day's experience. Everyone was smiling and having a good time. No one there brought up the idea that we had to ride back. That was for a later conversation, and a lot more hydration.

Brotherhood Run 2016 (continued)



Nothing was scheduled that evening. Some braved the elements once again to walk down Fremont Street. Even well after dark it was still over 100° yeah, but there was enough distractions to keep us from dwelling on the obvious. Others, like myself, only managed to get as far as across the street to grab a bite to eat. The rest saw no reason to leave the sanctuary of air-conditioning and the sound of ice cubes.

The next day, at breakfast in the hotel restaurant, the crazy stories of Fremont Street started to surface. The phrase anything for a buck took a quick turn south. I myself had never made the time to go to Fremont Street, as many times as I've been to Las Vegas. I'm sad to say. It wasn't until later that evening, Iron Butt and I took the walk. Come to find out the 1st Saturday of each month they block the entire Fremont Street walk off to traffic. This is the time that the locals venture out to see the sights. I mentioned earlier the man in the G-string offering himself up. This is no joke, and I have to say that it is not the craziest thing I saw.

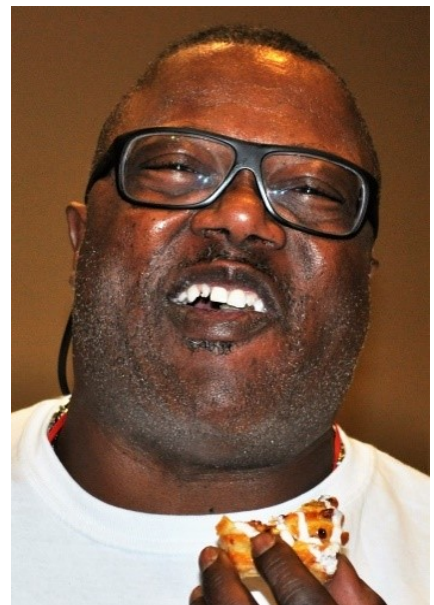


Brotherhood Run 2016 (continued)



It's something you need to see not be told about. I can see why the locals come down when everything's blocked off. Vegas knows how to dazzle. The energy of the crowd and a variety of ways they try and get money out of your wallet was endless. The payoff was an overload to the senses. As a photographer, the lighting and the accessibility to the dancers was a treat. Clothed in extra garments to protect against any wardrobe malfunction. These women put on an exciting show that would've made any aerobics instructor short of breath.

The club meeting the following day was at a separate location. As always, it was a breakfast meeting with both chapters. I remember Robin Williams saying once in the movie *Hello Vietnam*, "Crotch pot cooking hot". That phrase jumped out at me and stuck with me for the rest of the trip on the way back from the meeting. The BRU was strong in the meeting. The buffet breakfast was substantial. A lot of things set up for the coming year and committees set up for everything. We love our committees. You can't complain about what we do, if you don't have time to join the committee that decides where we go. That being said, the brotherhood run next year will sure in the hell not be in Las Vegas. Just saying. Good meeting.



Brotherhood Run 2016 (continued)



The last evening we gathered for dinner in the hotel, I wasn't feeling that well and arrived late. I'm glad I made the effort. It always makes me feel better to be with my brothers. Heavy K always says it's about making the stories. I love hearing stories about the past, brothers I wasn't lucky enough to meet and are gone now. They never seem to be too far from our brothers thoughts and our laughter. We build our strength together through them, and making our own stories together keeps us strong. Anyone who has ever dealt with brothers understands. They can say what they want about each other. It would be a lasting mistake to say something bad about my brothers to me, but don't tell them I said so.

Before we knew it, we had to head home. The pack had fragmented into many, many packs. Kick stands up as early as 5 AM. The desert has ways of equaling things out. I thought of Richie Rich, one of my sponsors coming into this club over 10 years ago. The additional riders that left with D and I did not get gas the day before. Richie Rich would have had a fit. You always get gas before you go. Adding a gas stop in the desert is nuts. I miss Richie Rich. We made good time and were back in the Bay Area before we knew it. Trading extreme heat for extreme traffic and cool weather. I'll take that anytime.

~MacGyver



Brotherhood Run 2016 (continued)



Upper left photo. From left to right. Brother chainsaw, V, and Big-K (President of the Sacramento chapter). Upper right photo. left to right. Brother Blues from Southern California is with Tree. Bottom photo is TKO all smiles watching the warriors dominate from the roof top lounge and pool.



Brotherhood Run 2016 (continued)



Upper right-hand photo. Brother P all smiles and ready to go. Upper right-hand photo. DJ coming in slow and low. Bottom center photo. Detour doesn't have any worries about where he's going, as long as he Glides there.

