

CBX *Travel: Fave Rides & Eats*

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TRAVEL AND FAVE EATS ULTIMATE JOURNEY ***My CBX Late Model and Iron Butt Lite Story***

Part I - Preparing for the Iron Butt

By: Jim Mulcahy

If you think it's a major accomplishment to trailer your CBX to a rally or go for a 100 mile spin once a month on a Sunday this is a good read for you

*Can an ole CBXer and Late Model make it 5000 miles in five days without problem, trauma, issue or a trailer?
Is this really the ultimate CBX Fave Ride and Eats story?*



In the Beginning

My first motorcycle was a 1978 Gold Wing. I remember shortly after buying it seeing a beautiful silver CBX in the dealer's showroom. Wow! I kind of wished I had waited for the CBX to come out. Oh well.

I kept that old Gold Wing for about 10 years. I used it mainly for taking long trips, usually to Colorado. It can get awful hot here in Oklahoma in the summer so I'd start out on my trips in the middle of the night. I think took that old Gold Wing on just about every highway in Colorado including many that were not paved. My longest trip was a ten-day (3,200 mi.) trip to Yellowstone National Park taking the long way back through the Badlands National Park in South Dakota.

A few years after I sold my Gold Wing, I went through my fast car phase. I had a Porsche 928, a Toyota MR2 Turbo and finally a Mazda RX-7 twin turbo. I poured a lot of money into driving, modifying, rebuilding and racing those cars but that's another story. A couple years after I sold the RX-7, I started longing for another go fast toy and then I remembered that silver CBX. I started looking on the Internet.

My First CBX and First Ride: Only 2000 Miles

In July of 1997, I bought a one-way ticket to northern California to buy my 1981 CBX. Cosmetically it was in pretty bad shape. It looked a lot worse than the

pictures and the red color in the PICS turned out to be more of an ugly color orange. Mechanically it seemed to be in good shape. I came awfully close to passing on the deal and either buying a CBR 1100XX or flying back home. I bought the CBX.

The route that I had chosen to take home was around 2,000 miles mostly on 2 lane roads. I gave myself 3 and 1/2 days to make it. I had not ridden a motorcycle in about 10 years so starting out on a 2K trip on a motorcycle that I just bought probably wasn't the smartest thing I'd ever done but I've always been the adventurous type. I'd only traveled about 3 miles when a bug about the size of a large hummingbird splattered in the middle of my face shield. I sure was glad that I had chosen to ride with a full-face helmet. Before I got of California it started raining. I wasn't sure how the X

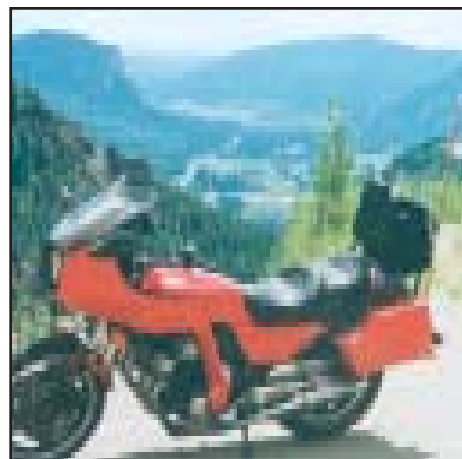
or myself would handle the rain. Fortunately we both survived and made it to Fernley, NV before calling it a day.

I started early on second day because I was anxious to get across Nevada on Highway 50 before it got too hot. For those who are unfamiliar with Highway 50 in Nevada, it is known as the loneliest road in America. They aren't kidding. Just imagine a two-lane road with almost no traffic where there is nothing but desert on both sides of the road and the only towns are about 100 miles apart.

Just How Fast Would the CBX Go?

I was feeling a little more confident in my riding skills so I took an opportunity to see how fast the X would go. I must admit I was a little disappointed that it topped out at around 130 mph. By mid afternoon I had most of Nevada behind me so I decided to do a little sightseeing in Grand Basin National Park. As sunset arrived, I was crossing into Utah and called it a day when I got to Hinckley, Utah.

I got another early start on day three and made it to Arches National Park by midday. Arche's is a beautiful place but in July it is also very hot. After a couple of hours in the park, I headed to Moab for a late lunch. I took advantage of the air conditioning in the Mexican Restaurant that I stopped in and hung out for a while to get away from the heat. The day ended in Monticello, UT.



The Before

I knew that I wasn't going to make it to Tulsa before the day was over but that was all right with me. I headed south towards 4-Corners and then east through southern Colorado. It started raining off and on around Wolf Creek Pass. I was really glad that it was not snow. I was enjoying the scenery of southern Colorado and felt like I was starting to bond with my CBX. I spent the night in Raton, NM and then headed across the Oklahoma panhandle towards home. By the time I pulled into my garage I had coved 2,029 miles on my "new" CBX. A bond was forming between my CBX and me.

Late Model Modifications Necessary To Get Ready for Long Distance Events

As I mentioned earlier, my CBX needed a lot of cosmetic work so I quickly got to know the parts guys at my Honda dealer. They gave me a discount on all of my parts so everything that was cracked, broken or worn out got replaced.

It didn't take me long to figure out that I'd have been better off spending more to find a CBX that was in better condition. The ugly red/orange paint job just had to go so it was time to take off all of the body parts.

After repairing the body parts I enlisted the help of a guy known here in Tulsa known as the "Wizard" for a paint and design scheme. We settled on a yellow and purple design. I also added a new Corbin seat and backrest with yellow piping to match the paint. Now it was starting to really look like something special. By January of 1998 I was back on the road.

I enjoy working in the garage and found that I enjoyed working on the CBX almost as much as I did riding it. During 1998, I added had valve cover and other parts chromed. The crank covers and carburetor bowls I polished myself.

I also had the front rotors cross-drilled, rebuilt the master cylinders and added stainless steel brake lines, rebuilt the front forks with Race Tech gold emulators and springs, replaced the rear shock with a Progressive shock, replaced the tachometer, speedometer and other gauges, rebuilt the



carburetors with a stage 3 kit, removed the air box and replaced it with individual K&N filters.

I also added a Dyna electronic ignition and coils, replaced the stock spark plug wires and mounted my Valentine 1 inside the fairing with just the remote display visible on the fairing.

Faulty CBX Starter Ends Up With Motor Modifications for Long Distance Events

I managed to get in a 1,500 mile round trip to White Sands National Monument, NM. During the winter months of 1998 I wasn't riding much but I would start the CBX at least once a week. I started noticing that at times the starter motor would not catch. I had the starter motor rebuilt but the problem did not go away. I hoped that it was not the starter clutch but unfortunately that was the problem. I knew that meant cracking the cases to fix it. I did not have the time or inclination to repair this by myself. After checking with several of you more experienced CBX owners on the CBX list, I called Pat Mattachione at Phoenix Cycle in Ohio. Remember earlier in the story about being disappointed in the performance of the CBX, I figured that while the engine was apart I may as well have a big bore kit put in, 79 cams, stage three carburetors.

Doing the Logical with a 15 Year Old CBX: Why Not Enter an Iron Butt Event

While I was going through the withdrawal of not having a motorcycle to ride, I picked up a book titled "Against the Wind" written by Ron Ayres. The book was Ron's account of the 1997 Iron Butt Rally (IBR). The IBR is a 10-day Rally held every other year. There are four checkpoints in the proximity of the four corners of the United States.

Riders get bonus points by going to various bonus locations. The locations are unknown until just before the start of the rally and your visit to the bonus location is usually verified by either a receipt or a Polaroid photo of the location with your rally towel, which is also given out just before the start. The IBR is not about speed nor is it a race. It is about time management, knowing your limitations, choosing your bonus locations wisely and being able to stay in the saddle for long periods of time. If you'd like to learn more read Ron's book or go to the Iron Butt web site (ironbutt.com).



The IBR is limited to around 100 riders and the 1999 Rally was full with a long waiting list. After doing some checking on the Internet, I found a new Rally the Butt Lite 5K. It was being put on by a couple of IBR veterans (Eddie James and Adam Wolkoff). The Butt Lite was scheduled to start on July 5 from St. Paul, MN. I figured that I should have my engine back in plenty of time to put everything back together and get it ready for the Butt Lite.

Wrong!

Big Displacement Motor Is In and Why Not a Fuel Cell for More Gas?

Pat got my engine back to me on May 17th. That gave me plenty of time to get the engine in. From Ron's book and my previous experiences with my CBX, I knew that I needed to add a fuel cell.

Why a fuel cell? Remember what I said about the Rally being about good time management. Stopping for gas takes time and being able to go 250-300 miles between stops is a lot more efficient than stopping every 150 miles. That meant finding a way to mount it and figuring out a good way to combine the fuel lines and get fuel to the carburetors. I also wanted to mount a bicycle speedometer so that I'd have dual trip gauges. I also wanted to add some auxiliary lights for those dark two lane roads that I knew that I would encounter.

I got it all put together just before leaving Tulsa on Friday, July 2nd for St. Paul. I brought enough tools with me to make any last minute adjustments once I got to St. Paul. Mechanically the trip to St. Paul went smoothly. Pat had done a great job on the engine, my fuel cell was working as planned and so were the auxiliary lights that I mounted under the fairing. The performance of the CBX had certainly improved but the gas mileage had also gone down.

I was getting less than 30 mpg. The only glitch was that the magnet for the bike Speedo had gone south on me but that was a problem I could fix in St. Paul. About half way there, I ran into some serious rain. This was the kind of rain that causes cars to pull over and roads to be closed due to flooding. I got out



my old rain suit from my Gold Wing days but it had a few leaks. I stopped at underpasses a few time due to poor visibility but for the most part I kept on going.

By the time I got to the Minnesota border the rain had pretty much quit but now I was having a serious case of sore butt not to mention being very wet. Partly to blame was my lack of saddle time during the last six months but that Corbin seat felt as hard as a brick after about 500 miles. How was I going to last five 1,000 mile days in a row?

The CBX and Butt Lite 5K

I got to the motel in St. Paul fairly late Friday night and had no trouble getting to sleep. I sleep in a little the next morning and then checked in for the Rally. At the check-in Adam and Eddie went over the rules with each rider and we all had to sign waivers of liability.

A large section of the parking lot was roped off for all of the rally bikes. I spent some time introducing myself and looking at all the other bikes. BMW's seemed to outnumber everything else with Honda's coming in second. Just about everyone had a fuel cell and at least half had a GPS system.

Most of the bikes also had water bottles with drinking tubes. Later I found out that his was something that I would really miss.

The trip up was my break-in mileage for my engine rebuild so I changed the oil on the CBX in the parking lot. I also purchased an "air hawk" seat pad at a local dealer to help my sore butt. Later I found out that it also made a good pillow whenever I paid a visit to the

"Iron Butt Motel." The "Iron Butt Motel" is anyplace that you decide to sleep except in a bed. During the Rally, I sleep on a picnic tables in rest areas, under a bridge overpass and on the grass near an all night restaurant. Saturday night most of the riders went to an Italian restaurant together for dinner.

Going to Church Along the Way

Sunday morning I got up and I went to church. I probably looked a little strange to the rest of the congregation but they were very friendly. Several asked me about what I was doing in St. Paul and I told them about the Rally. They all looked at me like I was a little crazy but wished me a safe trip. Sunday afternoon was the tech inspection and odometer check. They also checked the decibel level of all the bikes. With my Kerker exhaust and my individual K&N filters, I barely passed.



A couple of local CBX owners had heard about a CBX being in the rally and stopped by to say hello and wish me good luck. Pictures were taken of all the Rally contestants and later that evening we were given one set of bonus sheets with a warning that more would be given out the next morning.

I looked at mine but decided to wait until the next morning before figuring out my plan of attack. I was excited about the rally and it was hard to getting to sleep. I just hoped that my boots would finally be dry before morning. I had been stuffing them with newspaper since Saturday morning and they were still damp.

STAY TUNED
In the Fall Xpress we will find out how Jim and his CBX did in the Iron Butt Lite 5000