

Motorcycle TourMagazine

Backroads

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RETRO RIDING KAWASAKI'S NEWEST Z



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We have some great friends who send us little gifts of joy – usually in the form of printed reading matter. Sindee and Ed are as thoughtful as can be and the last package to arrive contained not only some wonderful cooking spices but one of the best cookbooks we have on our shelf. The Fly Creek Cider Mill Cookbook has over 100 recipes, with apples featured in most, everything from appetizers to desserts, sweet to savory, and most things in between. We have not made one thing from this book that hasn't been delectable. I put the Fly Creek Cider Mill on my list of must-visit places.



Sometime in August, I got a posting on my Facebook page from another friend – Tony L. – who had gone to Unadilla and, on his way home, made a stop at the Fly Creek Cider Mill. His image of homemade cider donut and fresh churned ice cream solidified by desire to visit this wondrous place. With our Fall Fiesta in the near future, I looked at maps, plotted courses and



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made the announcement that, if Brian was willing to follow one of my routes, we were going to have lunch here on the way home from Bolton Landing.

After many curvy miles, some filled with new oil and chip, we arrived at this happy bastion of everything apple. The Fly Creek Cider Mill, for the past 161 years, has welcomed visitors with the sweet smell of fresh pressed cider. Starting with Hosea Williams' original press, harnessing the power of the Fly Creek, and moving through time to today's fully renovated and modern complex run by Brenda and Bill Michaels, the Fly Creek Cider Mill has become more of a family attraction than a place where settlers got their cider to ferment and age into hard cider.

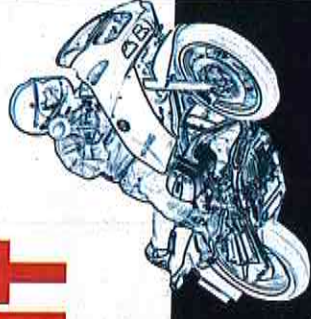


You can begin your visit with a walk to the Millpond, where assorted fowl can be fed and photographed. In the same area can be found the Vintage Equipment Display, with an extensive collection of John Deer equipment both on display and in action, as well as some single-cylinder gas engines



operating with their hit-and-miss rhythm. There's a self-guided tour of the Mill's production area in the Cider Gallery on the second level of the Mill Store, which runs continuously from 10am-2pm on busy fall weekends. Beginning with the harvest, the apples are stored at 38 degrees before washing, grinding, pressing and storing in two storage tanks ready to be tasted and pur-

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chased by Mill visitors. Of course, the procedure in between is more detailed, but when you make your visit you can watch the whole thing. You can also find historic displays, literature and memorabilia on the second level before heading down to the Marketplace.



Make sure you bring your appetite, as there are over 40 different products to be sampled, ranging from cider to cheese and so much more. I was stopped short by the sauces, salsas, marinades and jams – where I filled my cart with Key Lime Curd, Smokey Pig on Pig BBQ Sauce with Bacon and Tikka Marsala Simmering Sauce. There is a temperature-controlled room full of NY State apples, from sweet to tart, available for the munching. While I know that I enjoy a good Cortland (created at the NY Agriculture Experiment Station in Geneva, NY in 1915), after tasting the Zestar, a new variety developed by the University of Minnesota, I think I've found my new favorite. It's been described as an early Honeycrisp, as it becomes available early in the apple season. Come with empty saddlebags, as the apples are FREE (you just purchase the size bag you want and fill it to the brim – from 2.5 to 20 pounds).

If you make your way out of that room you'll come face-to-face with the fudge counter. The Mill manufactures over 5 tons of sweet, butter-cream fudge in over 14 flavors – and you may taste them all. There are hard ciders and apple wines, as well as salad dressings, dips, butters and honeys. Whatever tickles your tastebuds can be found on the shelves of the Marketplace.

If you've saved your appetite, once outside the store you'll face the decision of what's for lunch. There are many outdoor picnic tables and tables overlooking the Millpond, as well as indoor dining, but you have to place your order at the walk-up counter for either. While you wait, try your hand at the Duck Race just beside the outdoor tables. You may choose from dogs and sausages, sandwiches, soups, chili and mac 'n cheese along with the sweet side of ice cream and baked goods. On our visit we opted for the chili in a bread bowl and a pot roast sandwich – even on a super hot day they were extremely comforting and delicious. I know I'll have to make a return visit as I was too stuffed to sample their desserts and ice cream – oh well...



And, as icing on the cake, should you be too stuffed, or want to enjoy the surrounding of this area for a longer period of time, the Cider House is located on the property of the Fly Creek Cider Mill and is available for weekly rentals during the summer. Built in the 1880s and completely renovated in 2011, the home can accommodate 8 adults with 3-bedrooms and 2-baths, a covered porch with rocking chairs overlooking the Cider Mill and a 14X14 deck with gas grill and picnic table. With all the great riding in this area, it would make a perfect home base to explore the region.

It was only an hour, but the time spent at the Fly Creek Cider Mill reminded me of the my family vacations, stopping at little stands along the roadside, sampling the wares and soaking up the later afternoon summer sunshine. Situated just outside Cooperstown, NY, it's a great destination any time of year, but during apple harvest time it is spectacular.

Here's a 150-mile portion of the ride I put together, starting at the diner in Branchville, NJ (or you can opt to begin at the Elias Cole on Route 23 in Sussex, as the route passes right by). Enjoy! ~Shira Kamil

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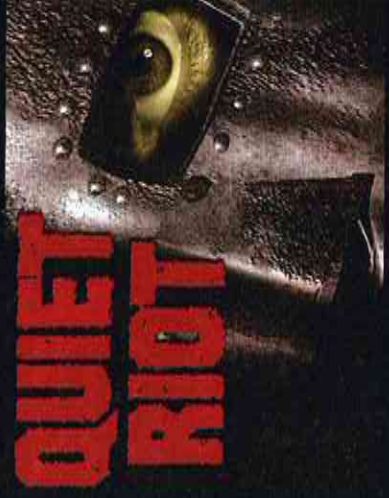
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