

# Dirt & Trail MAGAZINE

One of the stories going around was of the rider who, travelling alone, decided to use his GS 800 (well, actually Zambesi Auto's demo bike) as it was intended, and used as many gravel roads as possible to get there. After having ridden from Vrede through Verkykerskop towards Harrismith, he came across a group of riders from Bavarian Motorcycles in Centurion about 80 km from Drakensville. They had also taken unpaved backroads and stopped to regroup. On joining them and asking if they knew the way, they pointed to not one, but four different GPS's, and said "Of course we do!" As they got going, about half an hour before dark, the rider decided he may as well travel with them. 200km later the tired and hungry group eventually arrived.....luckily the ever thoughtful Cora had arranged for an excellent camp dinner to be kept for them. Another story was of the guy who had meticulously restored an original GS 1100, and was invited by a group of mates to join them on the trip. Gerrit Barnard is his name. On Saturday morning they all decided to go on an out ride, and tackle one of the routes. Off they set, telling Gerrit that it was one of the shorter ones, and that they would be back in time to watch Currie Cup Rugby. Gerrit, trusting his friends implicitly, packed a bottle of water and happily followed. Soon they turned off the tar onto a road marked "Piet Retief Pass" and casually followed a canal, which is part of the Highlands water project, for about 12 km. They passed through a farmyard and then some cattle pastures, and started down the side of the mountain. That's when Gerrit realized that his day was about to change. As a novice rider the route was intimidating, to say the least. After several heart stopping descents, Gerrit realized that he was in this for the long haul. There was no way he was going to get his pride and joy, gleaming restored GS 1100, back up the mountain he had just ridden down. So he persevered. The cool cloud cover lifted, and the Sun warmed the surrounding countryside. A lot. In no time at all he finished his water, and began to wish he had stayed at the resort. As the Sun shone down the valley which he was now in got hotter, the dust got dustier, and each rise became more of a challenge. To make matters worse he had suffered a sleep shattering case of "Deli-belly" the night before, and hadn't been feeling great to start with. What's more, his riding companions also started to feel the strain of coaxing their 1200 GS' along a route which was a challenge for a purpose built Roof of Africa enduro bike, so they started concentrating on getting themselves along the route, and quite often had to help each other after small falls and steep climbs. Gradually Gerrit fell further and further behind, and without the help and riding advice from his now former friends, found the going more and more difficult. Eventually after another few kays of battling along, he found he just didn't have the energy and skill to carry on. His bike had mutinied up a short stony incline and had dumped Gerrit, turned 180 degrees just before the top and had charged back down the trail, only to fall over half way down in the most awkward position possible....horizontally across the path with its wheels facing uphill. Petrol was spilling out the tank, which was the lowest point of the bike, and the left mirror had broken off. On top of all that, poor old Gerrit had suffered a burn somehow on his knee where his riding pants had melted. He looked down at his now dented pride and joy, and shouted "oh golly, what a pickle" or words to that effect. There was no way he was ever going to pick it up, which meant that unless someone came to fetch him, this is where he was going to stay for the foreseeable future.

