

# ON THE CAIRNS

**ADB PLAYS TAGALONG ON A FAIR DINKUM BIKE TOURS FIVE DAY LEGENDS RIDE OUT OF CAIRNS, HAS A BLAST AND ENCOUNTERS SOME OF THE MOST DIVERSE TERRAIN AROUND**

**D**oes five days blasting through tropical Far North Queensland on a dirt bike, led by an experienced local guide, with support from a fully-laden four wheel drive backup truck sound like your idea of a holiday? Mine too, so it's little wonder when Dave Williams of Fair Dinkum Bike Tours

cordially invited me along on one of his acclaimed Five Day Legends rides, I couldn't hop a plane to sunny Cairns quick enough.

Once at Dave's workshop, I met a group of six Gold Coast-based businessmen who'd signed up for the ride, and their level of off-road experience was diverse to say the

least – everything from a Finke Desert Race finisher to a couple of self-proclaimed trainee trailblazers. Seasoned adventurer or otherwise, each bloke was every bit as enthusiastic as the next, and throughout the trip I asked them (the legends) to recount their tales of trail triumphs and tribulations, one day at a time.





## SCOTT HARRIS

**Age:** 42 years young

**Occupation:** Wealth Coach & Public Speaker

**Famous For:** Always having the right thing to say at the right time



A busload of American tourists were smitten with our posse of hardened Aussie dirtbikers



Clean as a whistle, but not for long



Funny at the time, but little did the boys know the very next day we'd be waist deep in a croc-infested river!

Day one took in an awesome singletrail section through the FNQ tablelands



The National Hotel at At Molloy – a beautiful old pub

## CAIRNS TO MOUNT MOLLOY, 136KM

**M**y day kicked off in Darwin, where I'd been on a bit of a pre-holiday with the family in order to get enough credit in the bank to be able to come away riding with the boys. I got to the airport 40 minutes early thinking I had stacks of time, only to be told that for some inexplicable reason, my Darwin to Cairns flight was classified international, and I was too late to check in. In that second I saw the whole trip disappearing, so I started loudly dropping the F-bomb left, right and centre. Pretty quickly the AFP (Australian Federal Police) were on the scene, completely surrounding me. Anyway, as luck would have it I got on another flight and got to Cairns, albeit a bit late, and away we went!

I'll be honest: I was actually a bit nervous about the ride. I'm easily the least experienced rider in the group. I've done one four day trip to Fraser Island before and that was about a year ago, so I was a bit apprehensive. I was uneasy for the first couple of hours, but it was good to leave town on a bitumen road, then go to a gravel road before moving onto the singletrack. I had my first big fall in the first three hours and did some damage to my shoulder, and I think it was actually good to get it out of the way. Thankfully, I just had the one big one and then I got on with having an awesome day. It's a really great group of guys and we've had a good quality day.

It's great to get out with half a dozen of your good quality mates and push yourself during the day and sit around and have a good chat at night. Also, we've seen an awesome part of Australia today.

I'm in the personal development industry, and I put on events all around the world all the time. I'm aware of the challenges involved in organising things, so two things struck me straight away about the organisational side of the ride: firstly, the guide, Galaxy, is doing a great job on the road making sure we're all looked after, taken care of and no one gets hurt or lost on the trails. Secondly, our group has some pretty unique food requirements and Dave has done a great job of accommodating that in a fun, playful kind of way. So far, it really has been well worth the money. Logistically, you couldn't possibly do all the research to map out this ride and make it all happen yourself – it would take months. Plus, the whole way along you'd be digging out maps and trying to figure out where the hell you are, so it's much better this way. You're paying for Dave's experience and he's been awesome. I damaged the radiator on the bike today and as soon as we got into camp Dave fitted a spare from the truck and it was as good as new.



# DAY 2

## MOUNT MOLLOY TO THE LION'S DEN HOTEL, 200KM

**T**oday was an epic day for me. Being a non-rider, the first day created a whole lot of soreness Day 2 really brought to the fore, and I woke up feeling like I'd gone 10 rounds with Tyson. I was a slow start and I eased myself into the day. It was a very clever start to the day by the organisers because they kicked things off on some basic trails before we headed into the rainforest, so I felt much more confident heading into the more challenging terrain.

There were some fantastic roads heading into the rainforest. We crossed the Daintree River and I nearly fell off my bike because I was constantly looking for crocs, regardless of whether or not they were actually there! There was a sign there warning you about crocs, but what it probably should have said is, "don't concentrate too much on looking for crocs 'cause you'll fall off your fuckin' bike!" I was pretty anxious because I was sure I was going to be the one to fall, but I made it through unscathed.

We made our way onto the famous CREB Track, which was a real challenge. By the time I'd finished I was considering contacting the Crusty Demons for a position, because I did quite well and even managed to get down "Big Red", which was an extremely steep and slippery red clay hill. The CREB Track was amazing, a great track with lots of big ruts and holes, which sent the bike shooting left and right – it was a real challenge. We encountered a much deeper river crossing, which we had to carry the bikes across and everyone had to team up to get it done. The current was strong, but we got all the bikes across unscathed – it was a real team effort.

It was dark by the time we got to the Lion's Den Hotel, but Dave was all set up and had whipped up some fantastic spaghetti bolognaise, so we knocked that over and headed into the pub, which was an awesome establishment. Day 2 was epic, it was great and I'm looking forward to tomorrow.



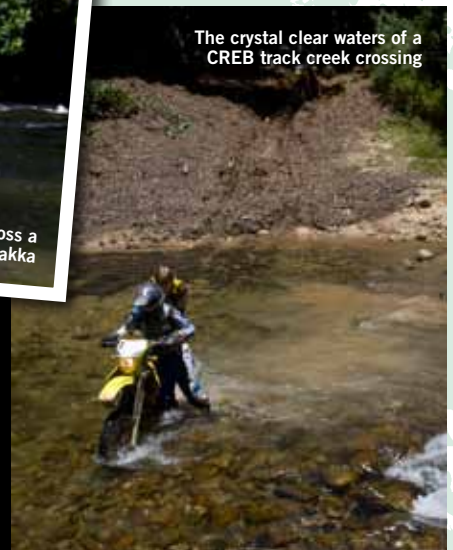
Above: The hospitality of publican, Max, at the Lion's Den hotel was second to none. It's hands down the coolest pub I've seen, and I've seen a few!



Carrying eight bikes across a fast-flowing river is hard yakka



Wildlife in the Daintree was pretty special



The crystal clear waters of a CREB track creek crossing



Crossing the Daintree river under the attentive eye of our lead rider, Galaxy



## NEMO DAT

Age: 38

Occupation: Yoga-Instructing Chiropractor

Famous For: Staying married for 20 years





Jervis blasting to the beach. This section of trail was a real highlight



## LION'S DEN HOTEL TO ISABELLA FALLS, 214KM

**T**oday was fantastic. First up we rode from the Lion's Den to Cooktown and checked out the lookout, where we got an awesome view of far north Queensland – the same one that Captain Cook got when he first checked out the lay of the land in 1770. We jumped back on the bikes and all of a sudden mine started to overheat a little bit. We headed back into Cooktown to fuel up and we had three petrol tanks start to leak, which held us up for a couple of hours. Thanks to Dave and Galaxy who knocked up some homemade O-rings that solved the problem. The next thing we realised is my electrics were playing up, so the boys pulled out a few jumper cables and tested the battery, and Dave was nice enough to throw me a DR-Z400 battery which fitted perfectly in the Husky, probably even better than the stock battery.

Once we were sorted out, we were back on the road, heading from Cooktown to Isabella Falls, which is absolutely spectacular – there's a little river crossing just down below where we're camped with a beautiful waterfall. Dave set up camp and low and behold we had another issue with one of the Huskies. Dave wasn't too happy, but with a little bit of electrical handiwork it was sorted. We then reeled off another 50 or 60 clicks of red gravel road, until we came across a turnoff which took us out to the beach.

We headed down a track with manicured hedges on either side, almost like we were riding up to an English manor and the lads were giving it some gas. At the end of that trail was a small creek crossing, and then we hit the soft sand for the run out to the beach, which definitely sorted out a few of the guys. Some of us hadn't ridden in soft sand for a while, so it definitely tested them, and after a few offs into the bushes we got to the beach – although Scotty Harris decided to leave his clutch behind. The beach was great, we got some photos and some outstanding crash sequences of the lads mucking around. Ant was saying if he learned to do a donut his trip was complete, and he got the job done.

We hung out down there for 10 or 15 and headed back. For the first 100m back off the beach there was a good 2ft of baby powder sand, so it was tough riding and all the boys handled themselves pretty well. We had a good run back through a few of those sand tracks. We even came across a seven-foot black-headed python on the road, so we saw some beautiful wildlife. We got back to camp and Dave put on a great feed before we retired around the campfire to polish off a \$500 bottle of cognac and some \$100-a-throw Cuban cigars, so the boys do it in style don't worry about that!

## WE HIT THE SOFT SAND FOR THE RUN OUT TO THE BEACH, WHICH DEFINITELY SORTED OUT A FEW OF THE GUYS

The lads could have mucked around on the beach for hours



### CRAIG JERVIS

**Age:** 37

**Occupation:** Opening hearts and souls and creating destiny

**Famous For:** Killer farts

More wildlife – a 7ft Black-Headed Python



Water crossings weren't just limited to the CREB track







## MARK ROWLTON

**Age:** 26  
**Occupation:** Investor  
**Famous For:** The ginger and lemon tea close



Mark on the pipe on the big 510. The more experienced guys loved the hill on Day 4, but it proved to be a source of carnage for some

## ISABELLA FALLS TO PK'S JUNGLE VILLAGE, CAPE TRIBULATION, 210KM

**T**oday was interesting. We started out strong from Isabella Falls and headed up to the Chinaman's trail. It was a good day with good riding, heading through some wide, graded tracks that saw plenty of motard-style slides. There was a long, slippery hill leading up to a telephone tower, which was quite challenging for some of the boys. It was interesting to see the contrasting expressions on the boys' faces – many were disheartened and many were full of joy!

Unfortunately, we lost a rider at one stage due to an incorrect head count on a corner, but we tracked him down and got the group back together. The afternoon was different to what we had done earlier in the trip, with some wet clay, flat-track style turns and we had a bit of fun there. We sank a bike in a creek crossing, but managed to get it going again without any problems and arrived at a backpacker joint called PK's Jungle Village.

One of the more humorous elements to the day was sitting on the rear wheel of Broads and Jamie, and watching them both shoot off into the bush on an off-camber left hand turn. A few times I thought about overtaking, but I was having too much fun watching them duke it out. Watching Jamie drop his bike in a river crossing was also pretty funny – both he and the bike went right under, but he got it going again in no time. Also, Aaron (aka Nemo), suffered a rather unfortunate green ant attack.

We had a fair bit of trashed gear today – a broken headlight and some bent 'bars that required some bush mechanics adjustments with a big stick to get straight again. The most memorable part of the day, though was the afternoon trek across to PK's: it was a nice gravel road which whipped in and out of the forest, covered by a thick canopy. It was really picturesque.



Picture perfect postcard scenery



## SIXTH SOLDIER

We had six riders on a five day tour, so someone was always going to miss out on giving us a rundown on their day during the tour. That rider was the ever elusive Ant.

## ANTHONY GOLLE

**Age:** XX  
**Occupation:** Chiropractor  
**Famous for:** Evading journalists!



Our motley crew scopes out the picturesque falls at Wujal Wujal (meaning "big water")



Our guide, Galaxy, punted his big DR650 like a seasoned enduro Pro



# DAY 5

## PK'S JUNGLE VILLAGE, CAPE TRIBULATION TO CAIRNS, 190KM

**D**ay 5 was a last ditched effort to see who came out on top. The egos were still strong and, with the boys more au fait with their machinery, they were as competitive as ever. Elbows were rubbing, 'bars were banging, rocks were flying, sheep stations were on the line and everyone was out for glory. There was another broken headlight in the heat of battle, and I had a bit of skin taken off thanks to a "wait-a-while" vine hanging over the track that grabbed me on the arm.

We started out from PK's with a cruise down the coast to the Daintree River ferry, where we crossed the river and rendezvoused with another Dave who took us out on a boat for a fishing charter. It was a calming change after an adrenaline-pumping four and a half days. The adrenaline kicked in again though as soon as we hooked the first fish and it was like we were back on the bikes again – elbows out and water flying around instead of dust. Then we cruised around in the boat and spotted a few crocodiles which was something you obviously don't get back at home; something a bit out of the ordinary.

On a scale of 1-10 the ride was a definite 8-9 experience, especially if you really want to escape society (or the missus) and switch off and go for a good ride. The variety of the terrain was amazing. You can go to a motocross track and do 100 laps, or go to an enduro loop and do the same thing there, but the variety on a long ride in Far North Queensland really is something else – the water, the sand, the mud, gravel and bitumen – you mix it all together and every day on tour is a lottery. A ride like this gets you out of your comfort zone and pushes your boundaries and it's great.

We've organised a lot of big rides ourselves, and not having to work on the bikes and fill them with fuel and generally maintain them was a real bonus. On our rides, I normally get lumbered with it, so not having to worry about that was great. I learned you probably shouldn't take a brand new bike up there because there's always a couple of teething problems, no matter what brand of bike you ride. You can't put a price on escaping reality and challenging yourself.

Dave is a great host, a pretty laid-back character with his own philosophy on life the boys enjoyed hearing. We're already talking about heading up the Cape on an eight day tour with Dave next year. Anyone who hasn't done it definitely should – they won't be disappointed. Doing a ride like this really reignites your passion for riding. **ADB**



Sadly, two local kids have been taken by Crocs within 500m of this spot in the past couple of years, so heed the warnings

## ELBOWS WERE RUBBING, BARS WERE BANGING, ROCKS WERE FLYING, SHEEP STATIONS WERE ON THE LINE AND EVERYONE WAS OUT FOR GLORY



The trip back across the Daintree was far less physical than the one we made on Day 1



### JAMIE MUGGERIDGE

**Age:** 43

**Occupation:** Owner, Sunstate Motorcycles

**Famous For:** Always being late



Muggaz embracing his catch during Day 5's fishing charter

## SHAMELESS PLUGS

### Fair Dinkum Bike Tours

Ph: (07) 4053 6999  
www.fairdinkumbiketours.com.au

### Lion's Den Hotel

(07) 4060 3911  
www.lionsdenhotel.com.au

### Daintree River Fishing and Photography Tours

(07) 4098 6111  
www.daintreefishing.com.au

### PK's Jungle Village

1800 232 333  
www.pksjunglevillage.com.au