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# RUBBER SIDE DOWN

## JANUARY RETREAT *the therapy of the open road*

It always amazes us how easily we forget the feeling of freedom that comes with being out on the open road. That is, until we get out on the open road. In early January, we headed for Alpine with the intention of unplugging and spreading our creative wings. We just wanted to unwind from the holidays and kick off the New Year with a little retreat. It's our tradition and this year we made the trip on our motorcycles. Yes, we knew it was January, but why not?

In this sense, we are very fortunate to live in this part of the country where riding is something we can do almost year-round. When other parts of the country are winterized for months, we are gallivanting the roads cloaked in leathers maximizing the return on our two-wheeled investment.

The day we left, we could not have asked for better riding weather. The trip coming home was a little cold, but we knew that would be the case before we even left, so we had plenty to keep us warm. When we think about it, there is just something innate about riding in less than ideal motorcycling weather. Being in tune with nature, has a way of putting you back in touch with what's really important. Anybody can ride a motorcycle when the weather is perfect, but it really tests what you are made of to ride in less than perfect conditions because you have to. Like Scouts, you go off in the wilderness and just make do with what you have. You adjust to your surroundings whatever they may be. Perhaps this is part of the therapy of riding – just getting back to the basics.

Of course, just as therapeutic as the ride itself was, actually being there came with its own set of presents. We stayed at the Antelope Lodge ([www.antelopelodge.com](http://www.antelopelodge.com)) and for only 49 bucks a night, we felt like we got a steal. The simple stucco cottage with its rustic casual charm makes you feel at home; that it's ok to kick back and relax – really.

While we were in Alpine, we of course frequented the local flavor and one of the things that sticks out in our mind is a small coffee shop called La Trattoria. VERY small and quaint (*although we hear she is moving to a bigger space*), right now she is across from the Holland Hotel. We ate lunch there and stumbled upon the Spinach Stir-Fry salad. DELICIOUS! A must-do despite how it sounds. You can also find beer and live music on the list of amenities at La Trattoria.

Another cool place we stumbled upon just by exploring with curiosity was TransPecos Guitars ([www.transpecosguitars.com](http://www.transpecosguitars.com)). It's right there on

the main road heading out of town (*toward Midland*) and they even have designated parking for motorcycles – right in front! Really that's why we stopped – because we thought anybody that would hang that sign in front of their business had to be worthy of our patronage. And to add to the cool factor, Mark Pollock, the owner, played on tour with Eric Clapton in the mid-70's.

The second day we were there, we set out to experience a little of Marfa's local flair and our first stop was a real gem – the Galleri Urbane ([www.galleriurbane.com](http://www.galleriurbane.com)). This was unexpectedly a twofer. Not only is there cool art, but the guy that owns the place talks "cycle-speak". He and his wife did some touring and he was well-versed in motorcycles; more than willing to share his stories with us. I guess our chaps were his first clue we might be interested.

We also checked out the Marfa Book Co, which we were told was a must-do. Now we know why. Cool books, great layout, coffee and snacks, book paraphernalia, internet access – everything you could want in a book store, not to mention that it's right in the heart of Marfa, Texas.

While we were there, we realized there is something about little Marfa that makes you not want to leave. We couldn't ever quite put our finger on it, but it definitely permeated our thoughts. Maybe it's just because there was a lot of stuff that was of interest to us – art, books, history, culture. Or maybe Marfa just has that small town charm that you only appreciate as long as you don't live there. We don't know precisely, we just know we had a blast.

And no commentary on a trip to Alpine would be complete without mentioning the legendary Railroad Blues. If you're looking to put out old flames, this is the place to do it. No joke, the fire truck out front told us so.

Until next time, you know the drill. Keep the Rubber Side Down.

~Lisa & Ronn

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