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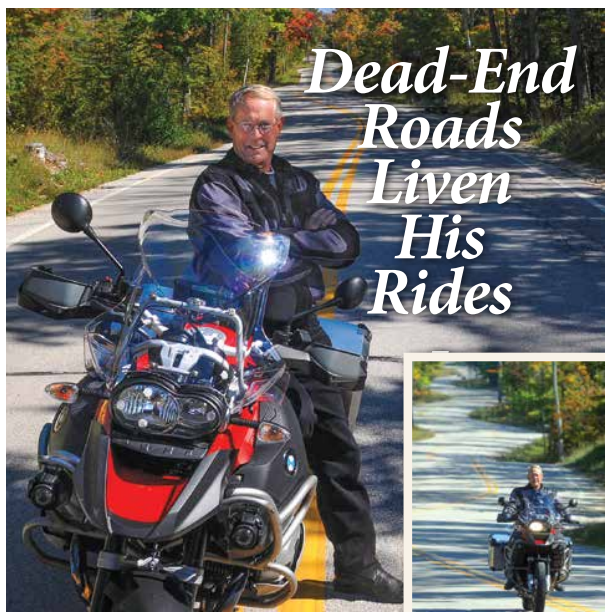
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MY FAVORITE WEEKEND RIDE



By Tina Gohr, Kewaunee, Wisconsin

DOOR COUNTY is a motor-cycling Nirvana for enthusiast Steve Reinke of Valmy.

Here in the Door it's all about the views, so that's why Steve, a professional photographer, packs his saddlebags with camera equipment and "journals his journeys" with vivid photos.

"Nobody should get on a bike without some sort of camera," he says. "In a place like this, even a selfie with an iPhone can be priceless."

A Marinette native, Steve retired and moved to Door County as a summer resident after a long career as manager at NCR Corporation in Dayton, Ohio. It was there he turned the key on his first bike and toured the winding roads of southern Ohio with his wife, Kathleen.

Destination Is What Counts

Since the mid-1980s, Steve has put more than 200,000 miles on 16 bikes produced by different manufacturers. He's straddled some of these cycles on adventure rides with groups across the U.S.

Today he owns two BMWs and a Tri-

umph Tiger. "To me, biking isn't so much the brand as it is the ride and the people you meet," Steve says. "It's where you're going that counts."

These days, most of where Steve heads isn't far from his front door. In a county surrounded by 298 miles of water, why look any farther?

Steve often starts his rides in the southern part of the peninsula. He loops through farmlands and forests and enjoys the bayside bluffs.

"It's not hard to find a breathtaking overlook, an interesting landform or a new friend," he says. Although he rides comfortably alone with his trusty GPS, Steve often meets riders who share his love for the backroads.

"We swap stories about our rides, suggest roads worth seeing, or simply chitchat and kick tires," he says.

On weekdays when the tourist traffic is thin, Steve's drawn to the state parks. Potawatomi boasts a 75-foot observation tower with stunning views. The popular Peninsula State Park challenges visitors to trek below the bluffs of Eagle Trail. It also

WINDING HIS WAY INTO AUTUMN. Door County biker Steve Reinke rides curves on Hwy. 42 between Gills Rock and Northport.

offers a summer theater and golf course.

On the Lake Michigan shore, Whitefish Dunes State Park treats swimmers and sun worshipers to the longest and most lovely beach in the county, while Newport State Park offers 30 miles of wilderness hiking and bicycle trails.

Smooth asphalt roads run through all of these parks, with thousands of wooded acres to explore. And once you've visited them all, there are 19 county parks to discover!

Some of the most impressive scenery can be found in the northern Door, including the charming hamlets of Ellison Bay, Gills Rock and Baileys Harbor.

"These are favorites because all provide great views with friendly coffee shops, fine restaurants and nice people within a half-day ride," Steve says.

If you're planning a full weekend, you will have ample time to roll your cycle onto the ferry at the tip of the peninsula and take it over to Washington Island, where, Steve recommends, "There's a lot more fresh air to breathe and forests to see!"

Backroads Are Better

Generally during the high summer season, there's weekend traffic on State Highways 42 and 57. At those times, the secondary roads are more to Steve's liking. Some stop at the foot of glistening Lake Michigan or the bay of Green Bay.

Many riders turn around at signs that say, "Dead End." Not Steve. In fact, he's learned to seek them out. This calls to mind his story about riding with lifelong friend Roy Johnson of Green Bay.

"Roy prefers for me to set the course and lead," Steve says. "But one day near Gills Rock, I pointed to a road and asked him to go first."

Seeing that the road was marked as a dead end, Roy questioned Steve's logic... but he shrugged and headed down that lane. To Roy's delight, it led to a small boat ramp for non-motorized watercraft. Roy, you see, is an avid kayaker and this little put-in was a discovery he was thrilled to make.

"Since then, my motto is to take every dead-end road you can," Steve says. "You just might be surprised."

Your Favorite Ride? We'd like to share the route you love in a future issue. E-mail editors@ourwisconsinmag.com and put "Weekend Ride" in the subject line.

Sideline: Bring a blanket or lawn chair to Newport State Park in Ellison Bay at dusk Aug. 12 and view the Perseid meteor shower.