

# ZAKAR

## Adventure Gets a New Twizt

By Steven M. Green

Photography by Steven M. Green

Drone Photo by Arnoud Van der Neut

Back in the cave man days, we were fighting dinosaurs and scrambling for our lives [Editor's Note: Actually, the dinosaurs were long gone by the time we started writing graffiti on cave walls, but let's go with this visual for now]. Now, our biggest problems seem to be putting up with being cut-off in traffic and fighting for the channel changer with the kids. Enter motorcycles. Yes, we are all safety conscious, but there is within many of us, admit it or not, a keen appreciation for being a bit edgy on the bikes. For some folks, the edginess of traffic can become a bit dull, so some amp it up a bit and combine long-distance high-

way travel with the thrill of dirt bikes. Enter adventure bikes.

When the founder of the West Coast BMW Motorcycle Off-Road Academy, Jim Hyde at Rawhyde Ranch, opened the new Zakar facility within a couple of miles of two automotive testing grounds, great things were bound to happen. Located a short ride up Route 14 from Mojave, California and being less than two hours from Los Angeles, Zakar is quickly reached from the highway while being accompanied by the occasional fly-over of Edwards Air Force Base jets. The flat desert terrain of the new Zakar camp (rumored to be an old movie set) initially seems dis-

cordant with the mountains, trails and woodlands typically associated with adventure bikes, but once you arrive and get the lay of the land, your perspective will change dramatically. It is only a few minutes to legendary desert terrain, such as Jawbone and Red Rock Canyon, and day trips to Death Valley and the crash site of the X-15 rocket plane can be part of your prospective itinerary.

The grand opening of Zakar was combined with the fourth iteration of Jim's concept of Adventure Days – a gathering of the adventurous faithful and manufacturers eager to reveal their wares to eager, farkle-hungry riders.



When interviewing attendees, the answer to “What do you like best about this event?” was almost universally: “I met some great new people.” And that, dear readers, is the best part of all; especially since you won’t have to fight any dinosaurs.





The facility has camp bunks with private rooms carved out of recycled storage containers, a couple of permanent buildings, oversized popups that become classrooms and a huge tent that serves as a meeting place and mess hall. The new facility has acres more space and virtually unlimited parking for RV's and trailers – a good thing since this year's attendance swelled to nearly 400 folks. The big jump in attendance was fueled by the addition of 4-wheelers, most notably the Sprinter brigade. Call it another version of Overland Expo.

The program for the event overflowed with activities. Manufacturers put on seminars about their products in pop-up classrooms. Clearwater Lights gave an illuminating discourse on their products. Experienced riders discussed

a tire changing clinic, product displays, special 'show deals,' and even Jim Hyde taught a GPS class. There were many other presentations.

There were short, time-constrained mini-classes put on by Rawhyde coaches designed to summon up the desire for more riding training. Alongside the scheduled classes were test rides and day trips, and BMW supplied a load of new R 1250 GS bikes as well as some new 750s and 850s. There were GPX tracks for the ride destinations, but most folks grouped up with one of the coaches leading the way. A trip to Randsburg, and getting a legendary milkshake at the General Store, capped off a visit to that old mining city which felt like being the 1800s.

Although Zakar is perfect for motor-

for the 2020 USA GS Trophy Team and this will occur during the last weekend in May of this year. In addition to a skid pad and some up and down events, Jim will be adding some "secret" challenges designed by BMW for the participants. This event will be available to spectators as well as entrants, and Zakar will also be home to new product launches by a bevy of interested manufacturers. Who knows, Jim might even rent it out for weddings!

At night, the festivities proved the keystone of the event. Music, great food, sharing stories of the day's rides, and comparing notes about bikes and equipment became the elements for the bonding of new friends. When inter-



what should be packed on a trip. Trev from SENA talked about Bluetooth. Pete Day from Mosko Moto talked about the advantages of flying to a remote country and renting a bike. Kurt Forget from Black Dog Cycle Works presented tips on protecting your bike. There was

cycles, the activities at the Rawhyde Ranch will continue as before, ready and able to train riders to ever increasing levels of ability. Zakar will be expanded, and Jim has pledged even more investment. Its next planned event will be serving as the sole site for qualifying

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