

Ride 479 Report – 11 January 2015

The Back to Nature Ride!

Hares: Slowcum, Jack Off and Leonard Teo

First off - Subs are due - Pay up. Bring Sunday.

The last time the Hares set the Malaysian ride, we had torrential rain and quite violent thunderstorms which drove the pack into the shelter of some estate workers. The only exception was FCB. The scene was like the legless Colonel Dan in Forrest Gump, hanging from the top of the mast during a tempest shouting out to God, "Is that the best you can do!" That was FCB as he rode towards the darkest part of the sky, a defiant clenched fist raised to the heavens as the rest of us cowered in an atap hut with Too Easy wondering where the life insurance policies were kept. As if this bad omen wasn't enough, the Hares got lost and there was even the thought that the lost Singaporeans would have to be ignominiously air-lifted out. Would it be the same this time, we hoped not.

Stories had begun to percolate out of Malaysia in the latter months of the year that the highly efficient and diligent Malaysian police force were getting very fed up with those deceitful Singaporean drivers who don't play the game when they get stopped for speeding and refuse to bribe (makan suap) the smiling bumi, which then requires the officer to write out a ticket (tiket). What's more, those same reprobates have the gall to drive back to Singapore without first finding a convenient police station where they can pay the fine. This denies the law enforcement officer another opportunity to obtain a charitable donation when he offers to settle the fine on your behalf for an appropriate discount, no receipt will be issued you understand. Well this type of behaviour is now forcing the Malaysian authorities to get tough as the loss to the Malaysian exchequer is very significant and the police are asking for a pay rise. New teknologi is being implemented that will catch those scoundrels who flaunt the law and will force them to pay their dues. Only one problem, you need data in the first place.

Eight years ago I was stopped for speeding somewhere on the way to KL. The officer invited me to contribute towards the cost of a new dress for his wife but I insisted he give me a tiket. More seasoned officers would have recognised this as code for "go and f^&k yourself", which would be their cue to look once round the car, kick the tyres and then say, "OK, this time I let off", knowing the futility of writing out a tiket that I am not going to pay in KL. My boy took things more literally and gave me the tiket. Not a problem I thought as I screwed it up into a ball and tossed it on the floor, after all, this ain't Singapore where they'll have you banged in irons with thirty lashes for so much as touching the indicator.

I go past Malaysian customs where I have to think hard, what are they looking for? Name me anything that you can buy cheaper in Singapore than Malaysia and would want to smuggle in. As I enter into Malaysia the thought evaporates and I begin to think there will be a cordon of police cars ready to grab me for the time I was stopped for speeding 8 years ago. That policeman has probably made inspector now, his wife will have a huge wardrobe of dresses and he's bound to remember the outstandingly handsome Matsaleh, who refused to give a gratuity and that he had to waste time on writing out a tiket when he could have been fleecing someone else. They'll be in waiting just past the toll with their lights on as I come through, their guns pointing at me from behind their cars and through his loud hailer the inspector will say, "Aaagh! Mr Coline, I stop you many years ago and you not help me buy dress for my wife, you veri naughty".

Fortunately, if there was a police road block waiting for me it was further up the road than the R&R stop where we were scheduled to meet. I had left early because, being Malaysia I knew I could get some roti canai (prata to Singaporeans) for breakfast. The only other person around was Stiffy who had been kicked out of the house early and was now sitting in his car reading The Times. Having been looking forward to this

culinary treat there was a typical Johor anti-climax as the few stalls that were open didn't sell what I was looking for. In fact the whole place had such an air of austerity about it you could be forgiven for thinking you were in Greece, except the women all had pillow cases on their heads and nobody answered to the name Stavros, and nobody spoke Greek. Paus were the only thing on the menu apart from three day old watery curry and teh tarik, which was ok.

As I wandered over to the car with my second cup, a number of people began turning up, no doubt also expecting a hard time from the feds over their parking fines and consequently arriving much earlier than anticipated. The weather had turned for the better over the preceding week and was holding up. This could be a dry run. There was plenty of time before hand to admire the bikes on display. The winner went to Goes Both Ways who had brought along the latest toy from the Batman movie set. A matt black carbon framed Specialised thing with reverse forks that weighed about as much as my pedals. However, the undisclosed cost of this machine meant that it came with an armed guard and it also had a wobbly seat; a design feature of course.

The Hare arrived looking reasonably clean and we were informed that it was a brilliant ride, not that we were interested in that. The Hare won the On On of the year award last year and we wanted to know about the scrumptious pickings to be had after the ride. A curry feast had been laid on so with our stomachs already rumbling we set off. It was the usual jaunt up the hill but this time the Hare cunningly led us off to the left and the first T-check. Heading back the only other possible route we rode towards the entrance of the oil palm estate, passing Fiona, who was in virtually the same place as we passed her the last time we did this ride. I think she'd been home since then though. Entering the estate, FCB had obviously been hitting the pills and was speeding along the track. It wasn't long before the girls showed some early competitiveness vying for position going round the first bend as Too Easy and Goes Both Ways screeched to a halt in a near collision, the Bat Bike coming off slightly worse I think. All the gear, no idea. Meanwhile FCB had broken the first check by finding a T-check, an interesting bit of trail setting, which was broken back past the first check, if you see what I mean. This then led us up the hill and down a craggy, deeply rutted path, which if you went too fast you were likely to come a cropper on, which I did, but I bounced with style. From here we had a short stint on the road then back into the oil palm after exiting from a T-check. Now in the absence of road signs or differing terrain a description of how we went left or right down one oil palm track or another will soon have you slumbering, so I recommend that for the true nature of the ride watch the video on the Bike Hash website. What is unique from Singapore is the wonderful terrain. Although it was drier than it had been for a long time the very muddy trails bear testimony to the amount of rain that we had had over the previous weeks which led to some abrupt stops. The mud also caused very frustrating chain suck for me on the steeper sections, dislodging the chain off the smaller chain ring at the key moments. The blogs tell me this is what happens in muddy conditions when the chain rings are worn. FCB seemed to be in outstanding form on his Indian gold Bling Bling bike, marshalling everyone around on the day while capturing it all on his GoPro. There was the potential for a screw up as we reached a T-check by the road as the obvious move was to cut straight up the hill instead of going back as the Hare wanted us to, yet again FCB saved the day. Just as we felt we were bracing ourselves for the final quarter we found ourselves on the home trail by the fence and back out onto the road to the service area. Overall the ride was free flowing through wonderful oil palm trails uninterrupted by traffic or building rubble. I'd do it again and again.

The Circle had a change in proceedings from usual with our Grand Mattress in Waiting, Wet Beaver, taking over the running of the Circle. Slocum and Jack Off were thanked for their great effort. We seemed to have a larger number of guests than usual, some of whom thought they could get away without introducing themselves in the Circle and having a down down, but the GMW was not having any of this. Each guest swore to return to the Bike Hash then drank their beer. Crash of the day included me and someone else I can't recognise from the video. Quote of the day went to Ted for asking Goes Both Ways, "couldn't she get a bigger brain", eluding I think to that bit of expensive bikes that always go wrong. Other totally false charges were called for me, Hash Brew, Stiffy and the GMW though no record exists as to what they were.

The On On was declared to be at the Hares palatial guarded estate where most people headed. As promised a yummy curry and extras was to hand along with some good wine. All this while FCB regaled me with stories of Nigeria, which was actually quite interesting (did I really just say that?). Definitely On On of the year so far.

Verdict: Loved it all.

Lastly - Subs are due - Pay up.

On On

Scribed by,
Wan King

