

[REVIEW]

The Whole Story

Two-book set recounting two adventure motorcycle trips, 50 years apart, through Central and South America by Keith Thye.

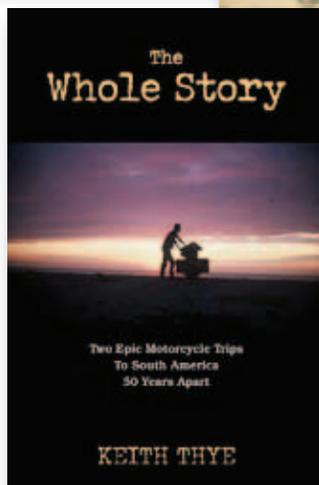
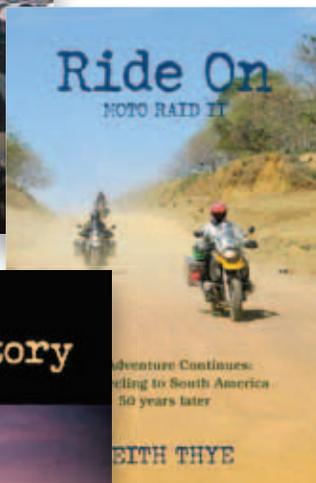
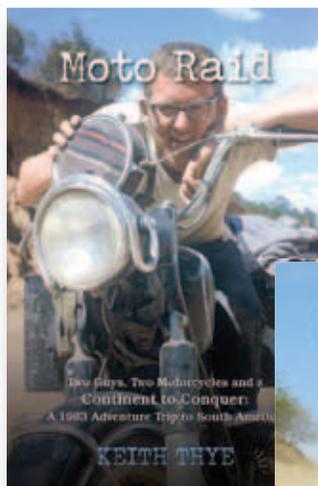
TODAY, TAKING AN adventure on our motorcycle consists of mounting our adventure bikes, donning adventure apparel, packing adventure-sturdy panniers, gear and accessories, and reading volumes of adventure tips from all those with similar experiences. But there was a time when the word “adventure” was more than just an adjective. Back in 1963, Keith Thye left college with his friend Dave Yaden and set off for one of the first recorded rides through Central and South America. It took six months to cover 25,000 miles from Oregon to Chile, with only the youthful notion that this would be the adventure of a lifetime and now was the time to do it.

Thye wrote a book about his trip, titled *Moto Raid* (Chilean for “motorcycle ride”), describing the roads that were nearly impassable, inventive repairs of their two 1958 BMW R50s including tethering them together, fording rivers because there were no bridges (then dismantling the bikes to dry out their carburetors), bouts of dysentery, even being thrown into a Peruvian jail for three days as drug dealers since local officials couldn’t understand why they would take such a journey otherwise. But that was not to be the end of the story.

Fifty years later, Thye decided it was time for a return trip. Only this time it would be by today’s standard of adventure touring... and with the wisdom of a 70-year-old rider. The pup tent was replaced by hotels, restaurants instead of canned sardines and crackers, and the Pan American Highway now connected by mostly paved roads. Although joined once

again by his friend Dave Yaden, they were also accompanied by four other riders, and all rode modern beemers. What cost only \$1,200 each back in 1963 for the entire six months, now ran \$16,000 and took only 100 days.

Some comparisons are predictable—quaint towns becoming tourist destinations, increased traffic, the benefits of GPS and bottled water. But not all changes were positive as it seems a bit less corruption was replaced by far more bureaucracy and the



danger of attacks by drug cartels loomed.

I won’t spoil the ending by giving away all the surprises found during

these two epic trips. The books are great reads and definitely inspiring, whether you look forward to your first adventure or want to relive the fun after 70. The two-book set, *Moto Raid* and *Ride On*, comes in a sleeve titled *The Whole Story*, available at keithsrides.com for \$24.95.—Sandy Cohen

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