



Main: Liz and DR carving a lap from her home in Gippsland, Victoria, to London, England.
Right: Liz has 30,000km under her belt already. She left Australia a P plater.
Below right: Her partner Con is sharing the ride.



One of the best things about our sport is the people it throws together. Here's an adventure rider chosen at random from the thousands who read this magazine. Everyone, meet...

LIZ KELLY

Q. Where's home?

A. At present home is my Suzuki DR650. I have rented out my house in Drouin, in sunny Gippsland, Victoria and have been riding for nearly 10 months. Although it was our family home, I don't have an attachment to it anymore.

Q. How old are you?

A. You must come from Asia. I've been asked that question so many times during our travels. I am 57 years young.

Q. Do you meet any other girls your age riding adventure bikes?

A. No. I left Australia 12 months ago as a P-plater and being new to riding I didn't mix in biking circles, so I can't speak for Australia. However, since travelling across Asia I have only met maybe five women riders in total. I certainly

haven't met any of my vintage.

Q. Are you registered on the AdvRiderMag forum? If so, what's your handle?

A. My handle is roostersoverland. My partner, Con Feyen and I were both born in the Chinese year of the rooster, hence our adventurous spirit.

Q. What bike do you ride?

A. I ride a 2001 Suzuki DR650 and it's a perfect beast for our Overland tour. It's been lowered to suit my lack of height. Very often road conditions are unknown to us, so it's great to know the bike can take me pretty well everywhere.

Q. You're on a monster ride. Where from and to?

A. Our original plan was to ride from Australia to London. If we don't finish in London I won't mind, because the destination



isn't the focus anymore. It's more about where we want to go next, and when the money runs out we'll stop. So far we've ridden Timor Leste-Indonesia-Malaysia-Thailand-Laos-Myanmar-The Sister States (India)-Nepal. The next challenge is to get Pakistani and Iranian visas.

Q. Where were you as you answered these questions?

A. Sitting in a guesthouse in Patan, part of the Kathmandu Valley. I can see the snow-topped Himalayas in the distance as I listen to the horn-blowing, crazy traffic outside. Kathmandu is captivating, but the sad reminders of the recent earthquake are everywhere. We've just finished nearly a month exploring the little-known sister states of north-east India. That's top of my list to return to one day – an adventure-rider's paradise.

Q. What do you like most about the mag?

A. I love that it's Aussie. Something reaffirmed for me on this tour is just how beautiful Australia is. Australia makes me

go, "Wow!" We have so many beautiful places to ride. I'm excited about returning to Australia to ride some of the places featured in *Adventure Rider Magazine*.

Q. What's something that really peeves you on a ride?

A. I get peeved if I'm really enjoying the ride and totally in the moment and I think about stopping to take a photo or record it on video. I often don't stop because it ruins the flow, and then I chastise myself later for not capturing the memories. Something else that peeves me is seeing rubbish on the side of the road and in waterways. Many places in the world don't have any systems for collecting rubbish, nor do they seem to understand how important it is to dispose of rubbish properly. Plastic rubbish peeves me!

Q. Why do they call India the 'subcontinent'? It's a big chunk of continent on its own, isn't it?

A. It sure is a big chunk of continent. It's a subcontinent because it has natural

boundaries like the Himalayan mountains which separate it from the rest of the continent, and also it has an identity of its own – for sure.

Q. Oh. How did you get started on this current challenge?

A. By a simple question thrown at me by my partner: "Is a 12-month overseas overland trip by motorcycle something you might want to do?"

I embrace challenges like that in the blink of an eye. I committed on the spot and set about learning to ride, saving, saving, saving, and letting my children know that the house wouldn't be available to them during 2014 and 2015. After two years of research and gaining my licence I was on my way.

Q. Had you done much riding before tackling this intercontinental cup o' soup?

A. I had no background in riding at all. Learning to ride was part of the preparation. While on my Ls, I crazily tackled the Wonnangatta Station ride

on my DR. Then we did a week-long trip up the Barry Way to the Snowy Mountains. They were the only real rides I had completed.

Once we began riding in Asia I realised I had a lot to learn. Slow riding skills in this part of the world are crucial to your survival and I didn't really have them. Doing U-turns would send me into an instant sweat. There are no paved parking lots and hotels often have really challenging entrances. I'm still challenged by these situations when they arise unexpectedly – like on the mighty Brahmaputra River. The ferry was barely wider than the length of my bike and had a couple of planks to ride up.

I now have 30,000km under my belt, so I'm just beginning to think of myself as a rider.

Q. You're on a big ride. What have you planned for when it's finished?

A. I have nothing planned. This trip has taught me an important lesson, though.

In life, if we just let go a bit, options present themselves. You just have to be open to them. Something will come up for me, I'm sure.

Q. What's in your panniers?

A. A lot less than when I started. In fact I have one less pannier.

In my top box I have: the Carnet De Passage for the bike, seven pairs of knickers, two pairs of socks, toiletries, a head scarf for Muslim countries, one dress, thermals, a Samsung Galaxy Note, chargers and adaptors, a diary, a warm vest, a T-shirt, a pair of bike shorts and a pair of happy pants. Today I bought a Punjabi suit appropriate for Pakistan and Iran. In my side pannier I have spare tubes, a first aid kit, sleeping-bag liner and pillow, runners, mosquito net and coils, knife, cutlery, spare tie downs, carabiners and rain gear.

My partner carries all the tools, spares and camping equipment.

Q. Are you going to tell us about the trip

when it's over?

A. Yes! One of my goals on this trip is to practise my writing skills. I've always had stories I wanted to tell. This is my chance to focus on that.

I've been keeping a blog of stories at www.roostersoverland.com. When I return to Australia I want to explore options for publishing my writing and photography and, of course, hopefully make some money out of it.

I also want to inspire other people, especially women, to live their dreams whatever they may be.

Travel has always been a central part of my life and a core part of who I am. It's mind-blowing to me that 35 years ago I visited Kathmandu as a young girl. That visit to the Himalayas was life-changing and set me on a passionate path of exploring the outdoors. Now, here I am again on my motorcycle. Who would have thought?

"The world is a book. Those who do not travel read only a page".

ADV



Main: The next challenge is to get Pakistani and Iranian visas.

Right: 'The world is a book. Those who do not travel read only a page'.