

DREAM COME TRUE ON GREAT BARRIER ISLAND

With something borrowed and something blue, a Great Barrier escapade was in store for Robin Webster with Britton Adventures. >

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Picture perfect day to
enjoy the sights near
Schooner Bay



Looking south along
Whangapoua Bay, Okiwi,
Great Barrier Island

So, there I was on Great Barrier Island (GBI), New Zealand, surrounded by lovely farmland, gorgeous beaches and lots of bush – all connected to one another by tight, windy, tar sealed roads. Oh what I would have done for a motorcycle to ride... Then I got a message that Britton Adventures is coming to GBI and would I like to join them (seeing how I'm here and all). Mike Britton and Angela Bruce (the owner/operators of Britton Adventures) and I are connected by a mutual friend in California. We've heard all the stories about each other and were finally going to meet.

Britton Adventure's was heading over to the island with 35 customers for an adventure ride exploration. They had a local lead rider, Wayne (a sixth generation Barrier resident) who'd sorted out some off road riding, and of course he knew all the tar sealed and metal roads to be found there.

Upon arrival at Tryphena via the Sealink

ferry everyone gathered at Tipi and Bob's, where the ride was based. It was here I got to try on my borrowed gear and feisty XT250 kindly loaned from Yamaha Motor New Zealand via Angela and Mike.

Riding on GBI is a treat as there are few cars/trucks to share the narrow roads with but our mantra was to be "Stay Left" as the blind corners would not be forgiving. Many of the riders had been here before, but not all and I didn't hear any complaints. The bikes ranged from a 125cc dual purpose dirt bike to 1200cc Adventure bikes and many in between. Of course, I felt the XT250 to be the perfect bike for the conditions.

The itinerary was comfortable – once off the ferry on Friday afternoon everyone had time to settle into their rooms, sort out their equipment, get to meet the other riders and be ready to ride after breakfast the next day.





SATURDAY

Saturday morning we took off on the tar seal through Claris to Windy Canyon Lookout. Almost everyone took the opportunity to check the magnificent views from the lookout. From there we went over the mountain to Okiwi and onto private land for some fun farm trails. This led us to some fabulous views of the remote northern coastline of the Barrier. This is a view rarely seen by others.

From the farm we crossed over to the other side to Port Fitzroy wharf. And then back to the Claris Club for a delicious lunch prepared by a local catering company. After lunch we were treated to an informative briefing from Ben Sanderson, Wayne's father, about the mining, whaling, and logging history of Great Barrier Island.

Then we were off again on more winding roads plus an off-road adventure on Wayne's farm near Claris. We didn't seem to bother the livestock as we raced by in their fields (Robin is American - they're called paddocks here, Robin - Angela). Then it was on to Whangaparapara, and Blind Bay where Saturday was done and dusted.

SUNDAY

This was a bit more relaxed – everyone was on island time now. We stayed south and found every road either side of Tryphena. The beaches there are white sand and shallow, very photogenic. With only the morning to ride every effort was made to make it last. The route included going on some private land to homes with a view past Schooner Bay and the trailhead of Whalers' Lookout.

Lunch on Sunday was hosted by Peter and Helga at their comfortable home/farm/B&B in Rosalie Bay, where we dined and relaxed in the sun until it was time to head back to the ferry.

A couple of days have passed now and I am still smiling from my experience on the agile Yamaha XT250, my many new friends and thrilling memories of riding on Great Barrier Island. ➤



Robin leads the way on her (borrowed) Yamaha XT250



“ She can ride, that friend of yours. She’s got some skills.” These words were said to me by well-known adventure rider Gary (Gazza) Beckham on the Saturday afternoon of our recent Yamaha Great Barrier Adventure. His eyes were wide reflecting the surprise he felt at making this statement.

The woman he was referring to was Robin, an American woman we had been connected with via a mutual friend (also an American). We knew Robin was an avid motorcyclist with many years’ experience, who was currently staying long term on Great Barrier Island. We also knew Robin didn’t have a motorbike with her and was getting withdrawal symptoms... so she jumped at our offer to bring the Yamaha XT250 over for her to use on our Great Barrier Ride.

Robin is in her early 60s, is only about 5’3” (160cm) and is of a slight build, she wears her hair in a long grey plait, and she has a

wide, open, friendly smile. Don’t be fooled by any of this though.

Gazza continued his story...

“So it took a while but I finally got past her on the gravel, and it looked like she was going to f**k it up, but she saved it. I saw her do that a few times. Yeah, she’s got some skills.”

He continued...

“And then I’m going along, enjoying the ride. Getting along at a good clip in the gravel, and I see three headlights in my rear vision mirror. Now I just don’t usually have headlights in my rear vision mirror. And these ones are gaining on me. Then when they get closer I see that it’s my mates Blingy and Robbie, and bloody Robin in the middle!”

And may I remind you that Gazza, Blingy, and Robbie were all riding big bore adventure bikes, and Robin was riding the ‘mighty’ Yamaha XT250. 🏍️