

Ride 557 Report – 7 April 2019

The Brösel Goes to Batam Ride!

Hare: Slippery Nipples

It was still dark as we arrived at Harbourfront Ferry Terminal, but by 6:30am 14 of us had arrived bleary-eyed yet eager for a memorable day of riding at Drak Bike Park.

The number of those who had registered but could not attend on the day itself turned out to be quite a few, and that number was to increase by one more as Coo Chi Coo had a passport issue at Customs and was unable to join us at the last minute. His ribald and politically incorrect sense of humour was sadly missed that day. You would think that after 50 years in Singapore they would recognize him by now and give him a break, but that was not the case. In the end, 13 of us crossed the plank and boarded the boat.

After a smooth ferry crossing, we were met by the team from Drak and boarded two large vans that whisked us to the familiar storefront that was once a bike shop and is now a Chinese restaurant. We ceremoniously kitted up and Fat Crashing Bastard was soon spotted doing laps around the parking lot. “You can never be too prepared,” he cautioned.

After the usual briefing by Stewart, we were led by two Indonesian cyclists along the highway and safely managed to cross the busy thoroughfare. “Crossing the highway is the most dangerous part of the entire ride,” Stewart quipped. I wholeheartedly agree with him on this point. They need to develop a better system to handle the road-crossing to make it less like playing a vintage video game called Frogger.

We were soon on our way – caravan style – through the first kilometre of the bike park when the lead guide stopped and got on the walkie talkie with his companion. Our cohort looked around at each other, wondering if this was an ominous start to a Keystone Cops misadventure. We were soon on our way, though, and proceeded another few kilometres through pristine trails until we were sidelined as Brick Shithouse had a major mechanical issue with his full-suspension bike. Some of us did two, three or even four laps of a one km loop to pass the time. About a half-hour later, everything was operational again and we were ready to launch into the entire course.

The FRBs moved at a relentless pace, following the wheels of the local guide, while another group carried on a bit behind. We made periodic regroupings every few kilometres. A second local guide did a diligent job of sweeping and kept us altogether. The temperature continued to climb to reach a high of 33 degrees that day and had thoroughly drained many of us by lunchtime. The course was ideal, though, because the dry weather made it easier for us to navigate to countless sharp turns and never-ending roots that we traversed throughout the 36km that many of us rode that day. Some of the FRBs rode even further than that, as they did an additional lap before leaving the park. Had the ground been wet,

the extensive roots would have created a heavy toll on our safety and no doubt there would have been dozens of spills.

At lunchtime, Old Worn Stump kindly sorted out my front tire issue, as it had been rubbing and could barely turn a few revolutions before stopping cold. Somehow my tire problem was solved, but along the way my front brake became adversely affected so after lunch my ride was strictly rear-brake only. No matter, I made it through the course with no punctures and no spills.

We arrived back at the Chinese restaurant safe and sound, with only sunburns and sweaty togs to show for our immense effort in circumnavigating Drak Bike Park that day. As we arrived back without time to spare, we skipped the usual bike wash but queued up for showers instead. Time didn't allow for a proper Circle, but thankfully we were granted some cold beer, warm food and camaraderie before departing for the ferry terminal.

Two of the most hysterical sights I saw that day were certainly down-down worthy. The first occurred when we reach Batam Ferry Terminal and the porters were loading our bikes onto a transport truck. An Indonesian porter, perhaps the height of Too Easy, was tasked with moving Jar Jar Binks' bike about 100 yards. As you might imagine, the bike seat came up to the chap's shoulder and caused the Bike Hash to roar with laughter. It was truly a memorable sight.

The other comedic situation that I witnessed (and I think I was the only one to see it) occurred after the ride had finished. Brick Shit House emerged from the ground floor shower wearing just a pair of shorts. Two local women were sitting opposite me at the table, and their eyes tracked our own "David Hasselhoff" as he primped and preened before them. It took him about five minutes to towel himself off, apply a bit of moisturizer to his face, and don a fresh shirt. All the while, these two women held him in their gaze like a lion stalking its prey. When I mentioned "David Hasselhoff" to them, there was no reaction, but when I uttered "Baywatch" it struck a chord and the women were laughing and chatting quickly in Bahasa while pointing to our Aussie friend. At this point, Slippery Nipples emerged halfway from the shower to receive some shampoo from Brick Shithouse, and the women's laughter was raised to another level. It was one of the funniest things that I've witnessed and am glad that our zany group brightened the day of these lovely ladies. They certainly brightened mine.

As we drove back to the Batam Ferry Terminal, Fat Crashing Bastard was in customary fine form, regaling those around him with stories of bygone Hash days and the legendary exploits of SBH co-founder, Barf Balls. Nothing makes FCB happier than having a group of keen listeners around him as he spins a yarn or two. On second thought, sitting in a McLaren sports car or sitting in the VIP section at an F1 race would probably make him happier.

Like some of us, I fell asleep on the ferry ride back to Singapore and was woken up just in time to queue up to make an early exit from the boat. After clearing our bikes and bags through customs, we bid each other Adieu until our next outing. Singapore Bike Hash wishes My Precious and Deviant a happy wedding, as they were due to celebrate their ROM

ceremony the very next day. Let us hope that he will be let out for an occasional Sunday outing in a few months' time, and we wish them much happiness together!

Until the next ride, on on!

Scribed by: Knobby Boy Scout