
Harley Owners Group (HOG) – New South Wales Chapter

HOGS – The Official riding club of Harley-Davidson

HOG Ride – Saturday December 30, 2017 + Sturgis Part 6

Today we attend the “Combined Chapters Christmas Party” hosted by the Central Coast Harley-Davidson dealership at 210 Manns Road, West Gosford. HOG Chapters from Sydney to Newcastle were extended an invitation to attend this party in an effort to promote a better acquaintance and camaraderie between the chapters.

The meet point for our Chapter ride today to go to the Christmas Party was the McDonalds restaurant at Thornleigh for a 9.30 am departure.

Our complementary story this time is part 6 of my Sturgis experience. Because there is so much to talk about and because I want you to know about Sturgis, I will continue with it but this is the final instalment.

“Sturgis” is the annual South Dakota gathering of motorcycles and motorcycle culture known more accurately as the “Sturgis Motorcycle Rally”, but just one word will do, **Sturgis!** That’s really all you need to say! *This world famous Motorcycle Rally is something just about every HOG member has on their bucket list. The rally for 2017 was from August 4 – 13.*

Hundreds of thousands of motorcycle enthusiasts from all over the world gather for this legendary event. Figures mentioned on local media this year in Sturgis predicted numbers of up to 450,000 visitors. But don’t expect to see 450,000 people in Downtown Sturgis at the one time. These people are spread all over South Dakota at places such as the Black Hills, the Badlands, and visiting many of the historic towns like Deadwood, Keystone, Spearfish, Wall, or visiting Mount Rushmore or Crazy Horse Memorial for instance. There are so many interesting places to visit. And on all the surrounding roads and highways you will find a constant stream of motorcycles during the rally.

In this blog, we are back in Sturgis itself to show you some more highlights.

Part 1 was with the Saturday September 2 ride blog.

Part 2 was with the Sunday September 17 ride blog.

Part 3 was with the Saturday October 7 ride blog.

Part 4 was with the Saturday November 4 ride blog.

Part 5 was with the Saturday December 2 ride blog.

These previous newsletters can be viewed by going to the NSW HOG website.

This newsletter contains images taken on the day of our Chapter HOG ride as well as further images from my recent trip to Sturgis, South Dakota. There are no downloaded images and all images are my own.

The following images alternate from the HOG ride to Sturgis.



Hog Ride Image 1 – At the McDonalds restaurant at Thornleigh. Expected numbers of participants are down as it was raining this morning when we set out. Because catering has been arranged, the Combined Chapter Christmas Party will take place regardless of the weather. Partaking in the HOG ride is always at your own discretion.

At McDonalds, we see from left Louise, Cappa (Warwick), Shieldsy (Brook), and Bollard (Dave).



Sturgis Image 1 – Back to Sturgis, let's look at the various ways riders get their bikes there. Of course many ride from their home but there are many other ways to get your bike there. Every conceivable method is used for varying reasons. For instance, if you live far away you may prefer to transport your bike in an enclosed trailer such as this one thus avoiding potential bad weather along the way. You see plenty of the types of trailers during the Rally.



Hog Ride Image 2 – Also in attendance today is from left Velvet, Grum (Grahame) and U-Leak (Victor).



Sturgis Image 2 – Many choose to transport their bike to Sturgis on the back of their utility vehicle. These big utes are seen in Motel carparks everywhere around Sturgis.

Alternatively, some prefer to ship their bikes to Sturgis in advance of their flight to Rapid City which is near Sturgis. There are transport companies in the U.S. that specialize in bike haulage which are very reliable. One couple from Florida mentioned to me that they do this every year and just love the convenience of it.



Hog Ride Image 3 – The rain did not deter Peter and Fifi from partaking in the HOG ride to Gosford. .



Sturgis Image 3 – A look inside a purpose built enclosed bike trailer. The ultimate way to transport a bike!

And others will just hire a bike once they get to the rally. Most hire bikes are usually late models and you can choose the type you prefer.



Hog Ride Image 4 – Well the rain has stopped and we now gather in the carpark for our pre-ride briefing.

In the foreground we see from left Jean with Paul, Bollard (Dave) and Grum (Grahame).



Sturgis Image 4 – This couple rode their bike to Sturgis all the way from California seeing many other tourist attractions along the way.



Hog Ride Image 5 – You can see the road is still wet but the rain has in fact stopped. The forecast is for sunny periods with temperatures into the 30's (Celsius).



Sturgis Image 5 – And here is a chap who rode all the way from Texas to enjoy the Sturgis Motorcycle Rally.



Hog Ride Image 6 – Today Grum (at left) will be the Lead Road Captain while Bollard takes on Tail End Charlie duties.



Sturgis Image 6 – This father and son team rode up together on separate bikes all the way from California as they do most years. Here they are seen washing their bikes in front of their hotel in Rapid City. The son is still wearing his Sturgis 2016 T-shirt.



Sturgis Image 7 – I also stayed in Rapid City and here I meet the friendly constabulary on their rounds of the city. I think the Police on duty at the rally were most reasonable. They are happy to see bikers enjoying themselves and will logically only intervene when necessary. They are always happy to engage in a conversation.



Hog Ride Image 7 – Here we see Rocket (Rodney) with his recently tricked up 2016 Street Glide model (he had the engine upgraded to 117 cubic inch capacity).



Sturgis Image 8 – Now back in Sturgis so I can show you around a little bit more. As mentioned previously, most of the action occurs in 2 parallel and adjacent streets, these being Main Street and Lazelle Street. This shot is from Lazelle Street and looking towards that famous sign on the hill north of the town (Main Street is behind me).



Hog Ride Image 8 – Rocket is joined by U-Leak for some friendly banter before we set out.

Don't the bikes look good grouped together and they are always spotless!



Sturgis Image 9 – During the rally there is a military jet fly over of Sturgis which just enhances the mood of the place. It's always cool seeing and hearing these fighter jets!



Hog Ride Image 9 – Here we see Grum (facing camera) delivering the pre-ride briefing which pertains to route, Road Captains duties, ETA for our destination and safety considerations, particularly for the wet road conditions.



Sturgis Image 10 – Just off Main Street in Sturgis is a Harley-Davidson dealership. Yes I got my T-shirt and poker chips!



Hog Ride Image 10 – At about the half way point on our route to Gosford via the Old Pacific Highway we have a brief stop at the bike friendly Old Road Café located at Mt. White. Now this place is always interesting on the weekend because you will always see here an eclectic collection of bikes and riders with anything from 20 bikes and sometimes as many as 50 bikes. And it's always easy to strike up a conversation with like-minded bikers.



Sturgis Image 11 – During the Rally, Main Street Sturgis has end to end pop-up food vendors selling junk food at exorbitant prices. If this doesn't suit you, just go around the corner to Lazelle Street where you will find this supermarket with all your culinary requirements at a much more reasonable cost.



Hog Ride Image 11 – As expected there are other bikers present at the Old Road Café but the rain has kept numbers down a bit.



Sturgis Image 12 – There are many patch shops set up around Sturgis during the Rally. This one on Lazelle Street has a massive selection with prices quite reasonable.



Hog Ride Image 12 – Here we find a group of HOG riders from another Chapter, the “Sydney Chapter” (sponsored by the “Harley Heaven” Harley –Davidson dealership which is located in Alexandria).



Sturgis Image 13 – Many of the vests, jackets and bags on display in Sturgis have a “Gun Pocket” tag.

In South Dakota you do not require a permit to purchase firearms, there is no need for firearm registration, no owner license is required, open carry is permitted, there are no assault weapons laws, there is no magazine capacity restrictions, and there are no background checks required for private sales. Despite this, you don't see open carry but concealed carry is not uncommon (as I found out over a beer or two in the bars). Some will say, "never leave home without it"!



Sturgis Image 14 – Also on Lazelle Street is this bike yard selling second hand Harleys. There are so many to choose from and all are late models in very good condition.



Hog Ride Image 13 – Not surprisingly the Sydney Chapter guys were fun to interact with and they too are headed to the Combined Chapters Christmas Party.



Sturgis Image 15 - Located in the heart of Sturgis is “The Knuckle Saloon”, a renowned hotspot for a craft brewed beer and live entertainment.

The site of this saloon actually rests on the property once owned by the famous Colonel Samuel D. Sturgis, the namesake of the Rally Town.

As you can see, the outside is decorated with antiques and auto memorabilia.



Hog Ride Image 14 – Now let's meet Greg from the Sydney Chapter with his gleaming Road King model.



Sturgis Image 16 – Just outside The Knuckle Saloon is this sign: “All roads lead to Sturgis” and Sydney is 8,498 miles away!



Hog Ride Image 15 – Also from the Sydney Chapter is Binky (Noelene) seen here next to her 2016 Road King bike. As you can see she has customised it with a very special paint job featuring wolves.



Sturgis Image 17 – Inside The Knuckle Saloon at mid-afternoon and it's a busy place. It houses the longest bar in South Dakota and they have their own brewery, the Knuckle Brewery. Their flagship beer is the Knucklehead Red, American style red ale and it's very nice served straight from the tap. Also over all the internal walls is auto memorabilia.

On their menu you can order a "Knuckle Sandwich" which comes with a 1 lb flame broiled hamburger patty. So just go in and say "a Knuckle Sandwich with the Knucklehead Red please"!



Hog Ride Image 16 – Another view of Binky's bike showing the special artwork featured all over it. Very cool ride Binky!



Sturgis Image 18 – Still inside The Knuckle Saloon is this map of the United States where all visitors from the US are encouraged to place a pin on their home locality. As you can see, visitors are from all over the country.



Hog Ride Image 17 – Inside the Old Road Café we see from left Velvet, Fifi, Louise and U-Leak.



Sturgis Image 19 – The Knuckle Saloon also has this adjacent large venue for concerts and during the Rally the entertainment is free. Here we see patrons enjoying lunch while a rock band plays on the stage.



Hog Ride Image 18 – By the time we get to Gosford the roads are dry and temperatures were on the way up.



Sturgis Image 20 – And near the Knuckle Saloon I came across this artist doing his thing. Naturally I asked for permission to take this photo which was granted by both parties. This sort of thing doesn't raise too many eyebrows in Sturgis!



Hog Ride Image 19 – Our destination, the Central Coast Harley-Davidson dealership on Manns Road, West Gosford. Anticipated numbers were down a bit due to the rain earlier on in the day but that won't dampen our enthusiasm, we are with our biker buddies!



Sturgis Image 21 – One of the many carpark in Sturgis. During the Rally you will see a sea of motorcycles in and around Sturgis. Fantastic!



Hog Ride Image 20 – Hogs from various chapters enjoying the relaxed vibe at the Christmas Party.



Sturgis Image 22 – Spotted this display on Lazelle Street in Sturgis, a motorcycle trailer that leans with the bike. N-Line Trailers specialize in single wheel motorcycle trailers which allow the bike and trailer to become one machine that leans into a curve. They also offer customization to meet your particular requirements. The trailer shown here is custom painted to match the hauling motorcycle.



Hog Ride Image 21 – Inside the showroom of Central Coast Harley-Davidson. It's always fun checking out new Harleys and Harley merchandise even if you've seen it all before! .



Sturgis Image 23 – Another carpark at the west end of Main Street Sturgis near the Indian Motorcycle dealership (seen in background). No, one does not get tired of seeing motorcycles!!



Hog Ride Image 22 – There are no dress regulations to worry about when entering the Central Coast Harley-Davidson showroom!



Sturgis Image 24 – This is the Iron Horse Saloon in Sturgis which is impossible to miss as it takes up an entire block. It is a very large venue with indoor and outdoor entertainment spaces, and it also offers multiple dining options.



Hog Ride Image 23 – The Central Coast Harley-Davidson dealership sponsors the Central Coast HOG Chapter. This board inside their showroom shows the names of the current Chapter Officers and Road Captains.



Sturgis Image 25 – Still at the Iron Horse Saloon in Sturgis we see the wrap-around mezzanine balcony which overlooks an enclosed stage area. All concerts provided are absolutely free to attend during the Rally.

Here we see a very large crowd on the balconies and in the enclosed area that are watching the free entertainment provided (which was a rock band).



Hog Ride Image 24 – Also enjoying the Christmas Party is Roundy (Stuart) seen here beside his 2017 Ultra model. Roundy, a resident on the Central Coast, is a member of the Central Coast Chapter as well as our chapter.



Sturgis Image 26 – Another view from the balcony but looking in the opposite direction to that shown in Sturgis Image 25. It looks like a capacity crowd watching a live band perform in the background of this image.

The Iron Horse Saloon also has other concert stages within this very large complex.



Hog Ride Image 25 – Our Chapter members enjoying a drink with BBQ food at the Christmas Party.



Sturgis Image 27 – Night falls on Sturgis and the party continues! It's just as busy at night as it is during the day.



Hog Ride Image 26 – Grum in conversation with Jean with other Chapter members in the background.

Well it was great meeting HOG members from other Chapters. It's really just like one big family, like-minded people sharing a passion for motorcycles and Harley-Davidsons. Real families don't get on this well!



Sturgis Image 28 – The Iron Horses patiently await the return of their owners.

I must say the crowds were always well behaved and I didn't spot any problems anywhere. This may have been partly due to the very conspicuous presence of Police patrols but the Sturgis crowd are nice people just out to enjoy the Rally.

Sturgis would have to be the greatest biker party the world has ever known!

Well that concludes my coverage of the Sturgis Motorcycle Rally and I emphasize that what I presented to you is just a brief introduction to the Sturgis experience. There is way more to see and experience than what I covered with time being the main limiting factor. Overall I would say it was well worth the effort and is an experience that memories are made of.