

HIKE THE BLUE RIDGE'S MYSTERIOUS MOUNTAIN BALDS

BlueRidge COUNTRY

Exploring the Mountains of the South

MOUNTAIN CREATURES
GREAT & SMALL

Wildlife



TASTE
THOMAS JEFFERSON'S
HEIRLOOM
TOMATOES

OFF THE BEATEN PATH
ART IN WESTERN CAROLINA



FOLLOW 469 CURVES TO THIS MOTORCYCLE-FRIENDLY TENNESSEE INN

Iron Mountain Inn sits atop a mountain peak in the northeast corner of Tennessee, surrounded by the Cherokee National Forest. Catering to motorcycle enthusiasts, the inn features a flat driveway (paved on the uphill) and indoor bike parking. Owner Vikki Woods provides all the amenities needed for a relaxing respite after riding U.S. 421 between Mountain City, Tenn. and Bristol, Va.

This challenging ride, known as "the green eyed snake," encompasses 469 curves, three mountains and one valley. Woods is happy to suggest other scenic drives around upper East Tennessee and nearby North Carolina.

Each room at the inn features a whirlpool tub, cozy Egyptian cotton sheets, hair dryer and terry robes; some rooms have steam showers. The Family Memories Room has an antique king-sized bed and private balcony overlooking Sink Mountain. The light-filled Green Room also provides magnificent mountain views from its private balcony. The Appalachian Spring Room is complete with four-poster bed and balcony overlooking the gardens. For the cooler months, the Equestrian Room has its own remote-controlled cast-iron stove. Room rates include a hearty breakfast, afternoon refreshments and a bottomless cookie jar filled with homemade chocolate chip cookies. Lunch and dinner options are also available.

1-888-781-2399, www.ironmountaininn.com. For more motorcycle-friendly accommodations, turn to Mountain Inns on page 79, and go to www.BlueRidgeCountry.com.

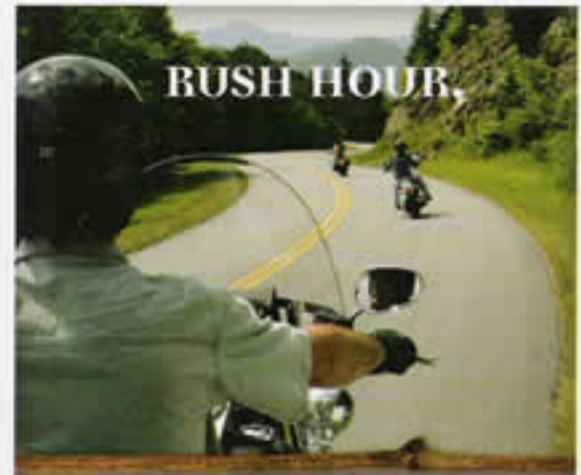
—Cathy Rogers

Great Smoky Mountains National Park on the Tennessee-North Carolina state line. Starting in Knoxville, the riders head south, maneuver the winding U.S. 129, and brave the infamous Tail of the Dragon, a twisting, 11-mile stretch considered by many to be one of the world's best roads for motorcycling. Also known as Deals Gap, the Dragon offers no fewer than 318 challenging curves, which probably helped it land starring roles in such films as "The Fugitive," "Thunder Road" and "Two-Lane Backtop."

Despite the allure of the mountain rides, Chilhowhee Park is the hub of the annual event, especially for families with children. At the youth familiarization obstacle course, 11-year-old Chris Winton straps on a helmet and tries out a Honda mini-bike as Van May, an instructor with the California-based ATV Safety Institute, looks on. Occasionally the boy grazes a hay bale or flat out runs into one.

"Practice trying to be smooth," May coaxes. "There you go," he says as Chris aces the turn. "Good job, good job. Now you're getting it. Remember: Where you look – that's where the motorcycle goes." By the time the boy dismounts, he has all but mastered the course.

Such attention to safety doesn't stop the thrill-seekers from clustering in the hot sun for a Team Extreme show by two-time



Up here, you won't find any traffic jams. And the only "rush" comes from gliding along our wide-open scenic byways—including 46 miles of Blue Ridge Parkway. These are mountains roads fit for open throttles—roads that inspire rejuvenation—and you won't find them in the city.

It's a different kind of ride...it's a different kind of downtime.

We call it DOWNTIME, REINVENTED.



Where the Sun Rises on the Smokies

MAGGIE VALLEY · WAYNESVILLE NORTH CAROLINA

CALL FOR A FREE TRAVEL GUIDE
1-800-334-9036

For upcoming events visit
WWW.SMOKEYMOUNTAINS.NET

Circle ad number on card or visit www.blueridgecountry.com

"The Dragon." Honda Hoot bikers take to this Great Smoky Mountains road, a.k.a. U.S. 129.



Vacation Center in the Smokies

Awaken Your Senses...

in Murphy, Brasstown & Andrews, NC



STEP BACK IN TIME — Walk where DeSoto walked, hear river waters rushing over ancient fish traps, touch ground along the Trail of Tears hear the rustling leaves crackle under your feet.

AWAKE and breath in fresh air.
SMELL burnt marshmallows around a campfire.
HUNT for the milkyway under a canopy of stars.
FEEL the cool water in the lakes and rivers.
COME face to face with nature's creatures.

828-837-2242
www.cherokeecountychamber.com

Circle ad number on card or visit www.blueridgecountry.com