

Triumph Rocket III: Size Matters

Story & Photos Koz Mraz



The Triumph Rocket III is awe inspiring. Launching with 2300cc's of pure adrenalin, 140 horses and a tire-shredding 147-foot pounds of torque. With pistons the size of a Dodge Viper's this liquid cooled in-line triple is pyrotechnic. Dyna's, Softail's and even Road Kings look like the runt of the litter next to this bad boy.



Yes, that actually is a Harley Davidson Road King Classic next to the Rocket

Pondering the power of this ballistic missile over a cappuccino I met Glenda. In fifteen minutes, this California native gave Mr. I've-been-everywhere-twice a geography lesson. Glenda's knowledge of So Cal's hidden Glens was astounding. Her first suggestion was Glen Ivy Hot Springs mud baths. A great ride up Hwy 74, Ortega Highway, I figure if Glenda is willing to roll around in the mud with me, this could be the start of something good.



One instantly appreciates the endless torque and power of this Triumph. Riding two up in the mountains is a completely different motorcycling experience. Comfort and power are immediately noticeable on the freeway but it's the twisties and mountain grades that expose this Rocket's fury. With very respectable lean angles it hugs the corners and I can tell by the way Glenda is hugging me on corners she's diggin the ride. We make an obligatory stop at Hells Kitchen but, are actually going further up the Ortega Highway to the Lookout Road House. It's not the usual hamburgers and hot dogs, instead, sumptuous breakfasts, lunches and dinners, and a great selection of beer and wine plus the view is stupendous. The Lookout Roadhouse has been here since 1968 and their website touts a Great ride, Great view, Great food, Great people, and Lousy service... hey, who complains in paradise?

The back side of the Ortega Highway drops into Lake Elsinore and connects to Interstate 15 and it's a short jaunt to Glen Ivy Hot Springs in Temescal Valley. Saunas, Jacuzzis, and the Glen Ivy Mud Club are just waaay to much fun, and of course, Glenda needs help covering her body with the thick red clay. Basking in the sun I'm watching mud dry...literally, and she mentions a visit to nearby Glen Eden Nudist Resort. Whoa...hold on big fella, I know there's some momentum here but am I ready for a Nudist camp? Riding a Rocket Three you realize that size does matter and I hope this Rocket is really impressing her. Fortunately for me, no cameras are allowed into the Glen Eden nudist resort and unfortunately for you

(AKA Glenda) no cameras are allowed. Actually, its a pretty cool hang (pun intended) the whole vibe is totally friendly, and truthfully if you're willing to lay naked next to someone you just met (and a bunch of strangers) everything else is easy.



Sometimes bigger really is better

Now it's my turn and I suggest a hidden castle in Glendora, a relatively short 40 miles away. What is the gas mileage of this beast? If you have to ask you shouldn't own one, being conservative is not in this Rockets genetic makeup but I suspect moderately piloted would equal that of a compact car. Conversely, the hard bags are spacious with easy key-lock access and an extremely functional tool kit inside. The seats are luxurious as is the cushy suspension.

Conversely, the hard bags are spacious with easy key-lock access an extremely functional tool kit inside. The seats are luxurious as is the cushy suspension. A quick release windscreen and passenger backrest instantly transforms this muscular master of the Hi-way into a muscular master of the street. Triumph released an even *MORE* powerful Rocket called the Rocket III Roadster. With torque upped 15% to 163 ft lbs and 146bhp! and for the first time, ABS brakes come standard. Esthetically, the Rocket III is impeccably British, commanding respect without demanding it.



We continue to Glendora and Rubels Castle near the entrance of Glendora Mountain Road. This is an amazing structure built by Mike Rubel and the 2-acre enclave is surrounded by 20-foot stone walls, has a draw bridge, moat and clock tower. Mike passed on in 2007 and the castle is now maintained by the Glendora Historical Society. Individuals or groups can arrange a tour of this absolutely unique and amazing American castle.



Glendora Mountain Road is a rider's paradise with some of the best twisties and vistas you could ask for. The Rocket's thunderous compression allows it to literally growl down mountain descents via engine braking. Plus, the engine's low center of gravity makes this 869 lb bike surprisingly manageable, flipping through the twisties with relative ease. The massive 150/80 R16 front tire and 240/50 rear gnaw at the curves. Although only a 5-speed transmission the bike never feels strained because this engine redlines at 6259 rpm. The incredibly smooth power plant, endless torque and acceleration of the Rocket III never ceases to amaze. In 2004, the Rocket III set the world land speed record for a production motorcycle over 2000 cc reaching its electronically set limiter of 140.3 mph. You really haven't lived until you've ridden the Rocket. Glendora Mountain road connects to Highway 39 and spits out 62 miles later in Azusa by the 210 freeway.

Glenda, Glen Ivey, Glen Eden, Glendora we *are* on a roll and I suggest Glendale's Forest Lawn Cemetery. With a spectacular gothic church, it's where Michael



Jackson, Walt Disney, Sammy Davis Jr., Bogart, Jean Harlow and Clark Gable are buried. Glenda however, suggests the Glen Tavern in Santa Paula, a secret Hollywood hideaway also frequented by movie stars of the past, a hidden playground known for its "discretion". Outwitted again by this bewitching

creature I make reservations for dinner and book the Penthouse suite, but there's a catch, she wants to pilot the Rocket. Glenda owns that runt of a Road King and has an M one license. She's been completely trusting of me and I am beginning to trust her (did I mention we were just laying naked in public). I acquiesce; Glenda takes command of the Rocket for the ride to Glen Tavern. I can't remember *ever* sitting on the back of a motorcycle and this is a tale of truly unexpected turns. She laughs out loud and shrieks in excitement with every twist of the wrist. If I've learned anything in life, it's please her first and the world is yours. We write our own script and as the story unfolds before us sometimes, it's actually the *little* things that matter.

