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Old Man On A Bike



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Synopsis

A Septuagenarian Odyssey Simon Gandolfi has never been one to grow old gracefully and following two heart attacks he decides not to rest up, as many might, but to ride the length of Hispanic America on a 125cc motorbike. And why not? His wife may have plenty of reasons why not, but used to the intrepid septuagenarian's determination to complete any plan he comes up with, she shrugs her shoulders and waves him goodbye. At 73 years old, Simon Gandolfi sets off from Veracruz on the Gulf of Mexico to embark on a five and a half month journey culminating at 'the end of the world', Ushuaia in Tierra del Fuego. For Simon this is a journey of discovery. Leaving behind the safety and sanctuary of friends and family, he is truly alone but along the way he meets and talks with rich and poor, old and young, officials and professionals, agricultural and industrial workers. This expertly written travelogue reveals not only the stories of those he meets, and his own, but also that of Latin America, its attitudes to itself, to the USA and the UK in the aftermath of the Iraq war and the realities of the poverty and endemic corruption throughout much of this continent. But whilst guide books often warn of thieves, corrupt police and border officials, Gandolfi writes of the incredible kindness and generosity he encounters, of hope and joy, understanding and new friendships, and ultimately, an old man's refusal to surrender to his years. 'The journey begins tomorrow at 8 a.m with a flight from the UK to Boston. I fly Aer Lingus and have bought and will wear a green shirt and a Clancy Brothers Arran sweater in hope of an upgrade. I will be away from home for many months and I have a long long way to ride. Am I nervous? Yes. Scared? A little.' Simon Gandolfi, 18 April 2006 Outrageously irresponsible and undeniably liberating, Gandolfi's travels will fire the imaginations of every traveller, young or old.

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Customer Reviews

This book is well written and interesting but not a motorcycle book IMHO. He could have taken the trip in a car. He just doesn't convey the sense of riding a bike and spends most of his time writing about his stops. He writes very well and gives great stories of his stops but when I read a book on motorcycle riding I want to sense of riding along with them. It's how I get by in the winter when I can't ride I enjoy reading about others riding and their journey where I can feel the wind.

I'm an old man on a bike too. He's a good writer. And I like that he rides alone, not in a gang - and on a very small bike - not some giant BMW with thousands of dollars of equipment - like most "adventure riders." I got tired of his politics, even though I agreed with them. He's in India now, and older. I saw a short bit on YouTube but I couldn't understand anything he was saying - the mic was so bad. I'd like to know what kind of bike he is riding in India but I couldn't understand what he said even though I ran it several times.

A great ride and wonderful observations of the countries travelled. I did enjoy the book for the most part. He is considered an honored member of the motorcycling adventure crowd. Unfortunately the author spends 25% of his time bashing the United States and its foreign policy. He definitely has some kind of axe to grind, a pathological issue that gets in the way. What makes this so comical is that he is so enamored with his Spanish heritage and their impact on Mexico, Central America and South America yet, he neglects to mention the wholesale slaughter and genocide practiced by his enlightened ancestors.

Boring and political not at all what I had hoped for. didn't bother reading it all as I quickly lost interest. Why the Writer felt he needed to inject his personal political (Liberal\socialist) viewpoints

into a book about riding a motorcycle through south america is beyond this reader. My advice don't waste your money.

Well written account of a 70 year old who rides a small motorcycle from Mexico to the south end of South America! I enjoyed the author's descriptions of the places he visited and the discussions he had with the people he met! Great book!

This was an enjoyable read. The author has a Hemingway writing style - short, declarative sentences. I bought it. I liked it. I might get his second book. Why not a 250cc bike? Like most travel/road trip stories it mixes reports on problems encountered, people encountered, terrain encountered and weather encountered mixed in with a bit of philosophy and political comment. His age (70s) and size of the motorcycle (small) do not dominate the tale more than just enough to maintain a deserved uniqueness. I recommend it.

I am an old man, about the author's age, who rides a motorcycle and can relate to his experiences. Don't think I would have the courage or the energy to take that trip. My hat is off to him.

What a find. Loved this book for the wonderful interactions with people from a fluent Spanish speaker who could relate to the natives of each country. Obviously well-educated and politically savvy, he also had *cujones* to run a small bike down the length of Mexico, central and South America. His historical knowledge of each country enabled him to paint a broad landscape with an artist's eye. Some may not like his liberal Politics, but then Jesus fell to the same prejudice. A rare writer who is also a rider On my list of heroes

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