

Fin del Mundo...

...the end of the world with Compass Expeditions

Some rides you never forget. Our recent tour to Chile and Argentina, visiting almost mythical Patagonia, gave us several rides to remember.

The seven members of the group were entranced by the scenery from the stunning Moreno Glacier to the Torres del Paine National Park and the winding mountain roads of the famous "seven lakes drive" to a thundering ride across the plains towards our remote *estancia* (sheep station) stay.

There are not many places in the world where you can still enjoy such large natural expanses with such minimal human presence. Once away from the towns there is only light traffic and in some areas you can ride all day seeing only one or two other vehicles.

The Patagonian landscape is awe-inspiring but it is the friendliness and genuine welcome from the Chileans and Argentineans that sets it apart. I am often

overwhelmed by the interest and joy that the bikes and our groups seem to inspire and the warm welcome from officials and locals alike.

This season we have been trialing our updated fleet of BMW F650GS twins. All of the participants were pleasantly surprised by the performance and handling of the new bikes. They are perfectly suited to the varying road conditions and rigors of Patagonia. They have passed our test and will remain the bike of choice for our tours worldwide, along with our GS1150s and GS1200s.

The smaller bikes handled magnificently on the trip and on the last day's ride into the southernmost city in the world, Ushuaia. This ride takes you off the windswept plains and back into the tail-end of the Andean range; the road becomes an exhilarating ride through high mountain passes and past crystal clear lakes on perfect new bitumen. One recent

participant asked: "Seriously Brendan, can I go back and ride that section again tomorrow morning?"

As you enter Ushuaia, you feel a real sense of achievement after riding 3500km of varying road conditions through mind-blowing scenery. You really feel as though you have earned a cold Quilmes (Argentina's favorite beer) and a hearty Asado (Argentine barbecue, best in the world), before taking the following morning's cruise on the Beagle Channel to view the amazing wildlife and pristine scenery.

And, of course, we have to ride the last few kilometers to the very end of the road at Lapataia, squeezing the last drop out of our adventure. — **Brendan Barbetti**

For more information, see Compass Expeditions Adventure Motorcycle Tours, www.compassexpeditions.com. Compass provided the words and photos but we're sorely tempted to join them some time soon.

