

TUAC CYCLE TOUR BRISBANE SEPTEMBER 2012 BUSHRANGER BIKES TOURS WITH JON NEWRICK

Seven Senior Cyclists On A Mission Three or Four Days In The Saddle – Ouch!

In true TUAC style we give the Thumbs Up signal and we number off:

1. Libby Ivy Lyver: Navigator with big bruises
2. Rose: Keep on keeping on (note; never, ever to be deputy navigator)
3. Jackie: Photo poser – an opportunity round every sharp bend
4. Christabel: Best dressed - new experience, discovers lots of gears
5. Laura: Banana-bar-liker-biker “where you look is where you go”
6. Alison: The adventurer. Often missing in action (to be found in playground)
7. Judy: Hiker turned biker with the pearly white legs

DAY ONE

10am and off we go on our big adventure. Surprise goodie bag for all the passengers, buckle up, sit back and enjoy the comfort of the Bushranger Tour Bus. Leader Jon giving us the low down as we travel north to the Bruce Highway and first stop Bribie Island, miles of white sandy beach, gentle surf and first coffee stop out in the morning sunshine with view to Moreton Island.

“Back in the van girls” says Jon patiently waiting while we watch as one adventurer finds the playground and climbs as high as the sky.

On the road again, next stop the famous Ettamogah Pub for a big hearty lunch. It’s a dinky-di Aussie watering hole and we click away on our cameras and fall in love with the warm sun on our backs after the cold of Auckland’s spring.

We’re heading to Noosa now and our swanky resort with stunning views overlooking wetlands full of noisy birdlife and the rooftop terrace where you can see forever. A bit of sightseeing time and we head for Noosa National Park, see some kookaburras but no dolphins to spot. It’s a perfect late afternoon and Jon has decided it’s fish and chips tonight. So as the sun sets and the dusk comes we wait hungrily for our dinner. Now it’s 6pm and dark so back we go to dine in our swankiness at the resort. What a shame we can’t stay for a few days and luxuriate. But we have things to do, places to go so off to bed for an early morning start.

DAY TWO

Started early, settled on to our bikes for brekky at a lovely café at Tenwantin, right on the Noosa River. Jon made adjustments for our comfortable bike ride and then we were off again. Not too hot at this stage and beautiful shady bikepaths with stunning views made for a pleasant trip to our first coffee stop at Cooloom. Onward to Pt Arkwright where Jon surprised us with a yummy picnic lunch on top of the hill overlooking that fabulous Sunshine Coast.

Lots of photos and back on the saddles to ride the smooth paths, easyriding, dappled sunlight, a couple of undulating rises and downhill fun all the way to bike over the Maroochy River and end up at the Alexandra Heads Resort. When Jon told us we’d ridden about 60kms we decided that a soak in the spa pool was well deserved and it worked wonders for all the sore

bits. Our dinner was a walk across the road to the local surf club where we enjoyed the lovely food. Early to bed again!

DAY 3

Guess what, another early start and we drove to Pt Cartwright for another tasty brekky, set up the bikes, rode the coastal bikeways again, boardwalks, nature at its best, coffee on the beach at Coloundra, paddling in the sea and watching parachutists land perfectly on the beach. We'd ridden about 30kms and now we turned into van passengers and had another lovely lunch at the local Powerboat Club, outside on the waterfront watching the pelicans performing.

To the Hinterland we drove and next stop was the Wild Horse Mountain where we actually had to WALK 700 metres up to the lookout. It was hot by now and some of us almost skipped up the hill while others huffed and puffed our way up. The views to the high peaks of the Glasshouse Mountains were spectacular and the forest below made it all worthwhile. We could see the traffic on the Bruce Highway below moving at a good pace. Off in the van again and drove up one of the mountain tops – Mtfor more fabulous views.

Time to hit the road and get to our destination of Redcliffe for dinner and spend the night at the latest resort in town, the Mon Kamo. Alas.....we joined the Bruce Highway where we sat in traffic for an hour or so moving at snails pace and were entertained by antics from other bored motorists – teenage wannabes strutting their stuff out the car windows. Good for a laugh. We had fresh strawberries to nibble on and at last we arrived at our destination. The views just across the road to the local lagoon and beyond out to Moreton Bay were gorgeous. We had a few extra friends for dinner and then bedtime once more. Tomorrow was going to be a BIG ride and another early start. Early starts, early nights is what we are about.

DAY 4

Alarms went off about 6.30am and breakfast downstairs before a quick drive round the road to the marina at Scarborough where we began our days ride. Once more the bikeways were panoramic, easyriding pathways (look out for magpies swooping) and it was getting hotter but a lovely breeze and lots of shady areas.

The ride over the smart looking Ted Smout Bridge was a treat and we rode fast to keep cool. On to the Boondall Wetlands Sanctuary, the tidal flats which are which are just so lovely and cool in the shade, lots of curved wooden bridges, narrow in parts so we had to be a bit careful.

(Somewhere about here we rode alongside the motorway, a brand new cycleway)

Lunch was at Nudgee – Pam's Café, famous for their Vietnamese coffee. The food was delicious and their motto "fresh is best but you have to wait for it" was certainly true. A look at Nudgee Beach then off on the bikes along the Kedron Bikeway and through the quiet leafy suburbs of Ascot and Hendra to see where some of the rich and famous affluent Brisbanites live.

We joined the riverside paths and wound our way at a leisurely pace through the city fringes. This was 3pm on a Friday and there was a bit of traffic about. It was a beautiful afternoon, quite hot and we took our time to get to the Kirribilli Resort at New Farm where we were staying the night. It was nice to be settled in early and some of us enjoyed another spa soak and a bit of a rest. The views from our apartments were pretty amazing and as the lights of the city came on it got better and better.

It was a balmy evening and we sat outside our apartment right on the riverside, Jon organised pizzas and we enjoyed good bubbles, food and company. He warned us about an even earlier start the following morning and he was right.

DAY 5

We were all seated for breakfast across from our resort at 6am!! A beautiful day again, Christabel left for the airport and we jumped in the van and met up with the Brisbane City Riders for a ride with the locals. Some of the same places we'd been the day before and a nice coffee stop half way. It was good to speed up and keep up and oh..... for the same sort of smooth bikepaths in Auckland.

It was goodbye to Judy who was having another week in Brisbane and off to the airport still in our bike gear. Then goodbye to Jon.

I'm sure we all agree that Jon made sure we had a fantastic trip, he had probably wondered what it would be like to have 7 females in his care for 5 days but we did OK didn't we Jon?? We didn't complain too much about our sore bits at the end of the day, you didn't mind that we were usually running a bit late due to photo stops etc., you put on the best sunny days and even kept the headwinds away.

The accommodation was tops and the cafes Jon chose were very good and for some of us the "won't" power overtook the "willpower" – the idea was to come home feeling trimmer (some of us) but the food was always delicious.

Then there were 5 of us at the airport for cold showers and lunch, goodbye to Laura who was off to France, Rose's luggage was held together with duct tape (thanks for that Jon). Libby was overweight with her cabin bag so stuffed some of the weight into Jackie's backpack. Jackie almost got into trouble at xray as she didn't know she was carrying electronics and Alison kept mucking up her TV screen on the plane.

Back to the rain and cold of Auckland and back to work for us all.
Thanks guys, it was a great trip.