

Gabi's ride - Tahuna to Tata

Gabi Rides a Honda PCX150

Since stepping off the back of my husband's bike and now riding my own bike, one of the delights has been discovering the many places I would never consider for a quick outing by car. One of my favourite escape destinations is Golden Bay; specifically, Tata Beach.

I head away in the morning, heading out of town on State Hwy 60. A first stop option could include: breakfast/brunch at Alberta's in Mapua, if you choose to ride the coastal route via Ruby Bay. Alternatively, rather than railing at the summer traffic through Motueka, the Smoking Barrel continues to serve up new and tasty options – that's without even mentioning the donuts that Josiah Smit has turned into a culinary art form! If you can hold out that long, as you reduce speed to 50km in Riwaka, pull up at the Ginger Dynamite for a cuppa with the option of indulging in one of the most outstanding pies found in the region. All this before the ride really begins!

As you pass by the Kaiteriteri turnoff, you leave the bulk of the traffic behind you and the real adventure begins over the Takaka Hill. It is the ride up and over the hill which is a determining factor in making this ride a favourite. If you head out during the week, chances are good that you will have the road to yourself as you swoop through the curves and corners framed by unfolding views. It is worth stopping at the summit to inhale the view into Golden Bay. Then the ride down the marvellously engineered switchbacks into the heart of the Bay is delightfully exhilarating.

The Bay holds many treasures to satisfy both belly and soul, but on a hot summer's day, the coast beckons. I'll bypass Takaka, turning off the state highway onto Abel Tasman Drive and head on past Clifton, Pohara and Ligar Bay, through the great limestone arch, straight out to Tata Beach. Here I can park my bike beside one of numerous benches or picnic tables, while I strip off the protective gear for a dive into marine splendour – no need to wait, as the cooling depths beckon regardless of



tide. This is absolute bliss on a hot summer day, decadently stretched out in one of those inflatable beach bananas, warmed between numerous dips into the tourmaline waters.

Anticipating the thrill of the ride back home over the hill, makes a reluctant departure a bit easier – especially knowing that the hill and the beach will be there for another day of pleasure.

