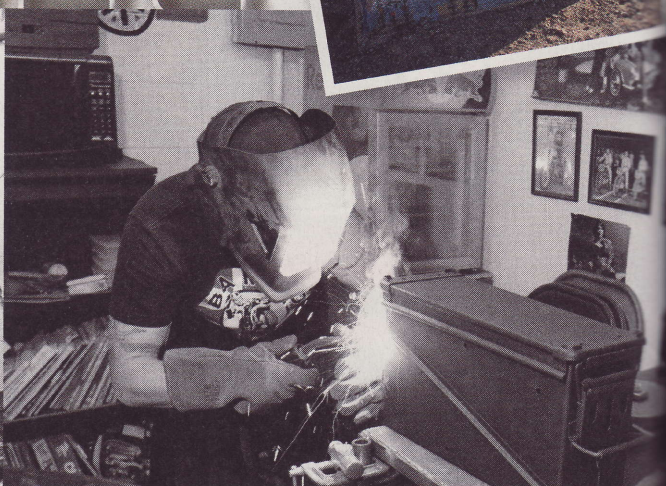




# BAGGERS 'N' BEER



## B.A. Moto Invades Slab City

WORDS: Gary Mraz  
PHOTOS: Heath Cofran

**W**hat's in your bagger? Is it full of useless stuff like clothes, food, maps, and toiletries? Most of the fancy baggers that grace this magazine are so damn nice the thought of filling them with brews and ice would send a cold chill up the owners' spines. Let's be real clear here: I don't condone drinking and riding, but I drink at my final destination, better believe a cold brew is first order.

Enter B.A. Moto. No, these aren't \$60k custom baggers, hell they're not even Harleys, these are modern Triumphs with 40mm military ammo cans bolted onto the frame, perfect for beer, ice, and the perfect riders to answer the nagging question—how many beers fit in a bagger? Based in Orange County, California, The British American Moto MC has a devout core of riders with one goal in mind, to ride. Ride



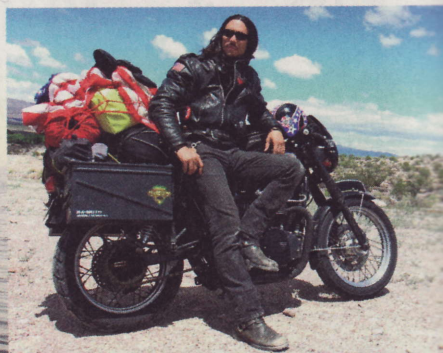
far, ride fast... then party. Most ride modern Triumphs, Thruxtons, and some vintage Triumphs. So how many beers fit into a bagger and how long will they stay cold on ice? Let's find out.

First, some scientific research; one ammo can holds 24 cans of beer but I removed four allowing for more ice, which equals 20 cans. Let stand outside in the sun, watch for leaks, and wait. The ice actually lasted almost two hours and the beer stayed cold even longer because the ammo can is watertight and sealed really well. Full ammo cans of beer and ice weighs 36.4 pounds each.

Ammo cans may be purchased at any Army Surplus

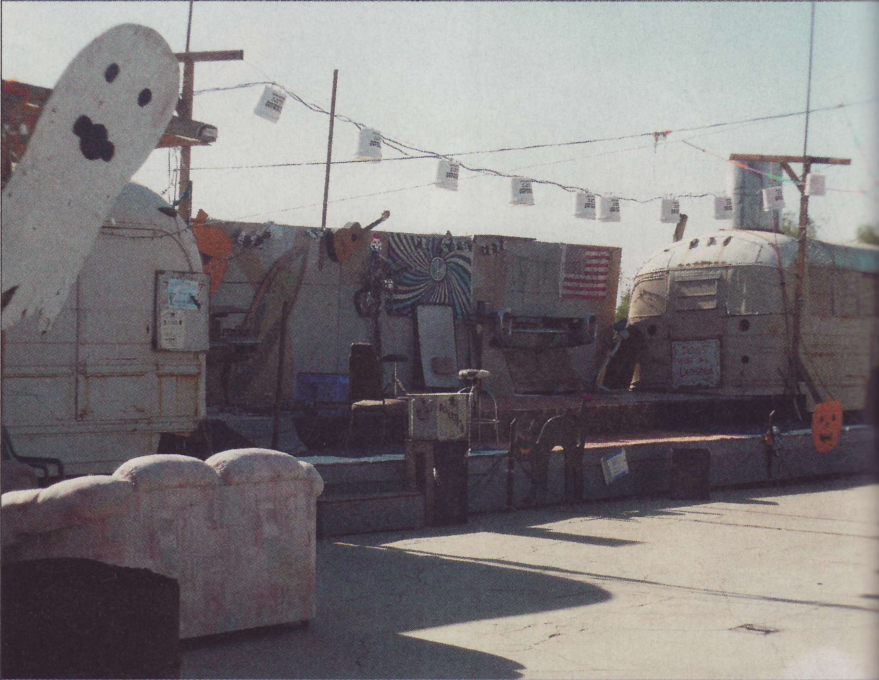
store for about 20 bucks. Since this is B.A. Moto's preferred bagger of choice they have designed a really cool bracket that fits on Bonneville's, Thruxtons, and Scramblers; installation can be done in about an hour. Scramblers can only be fitted with one ammo can since both exhaust pipes are on one side.

Armed with all this scientific data it's now time for the practical application. Twelve bikes times 14 ammo cans equals about 300 beers, yeah baby! With more than 800 pounds of camping gear, beer, and food all packed on a dozen Triumphs, B.A. Moto heads to the Salton Sea for the Slab City Riot. Salton Sea is the result of an irrigation



plan diverting water from the Colorado River gone terribly wrong. A levy breach in the early 1900s created this manmade lake only 45 miles from Palm Springs. It's the largest body of water in California and it's now saltier than the Pacific Ocean. Because of its extreme salinity, every couple of years millions of Tilapia die off and an awful stink

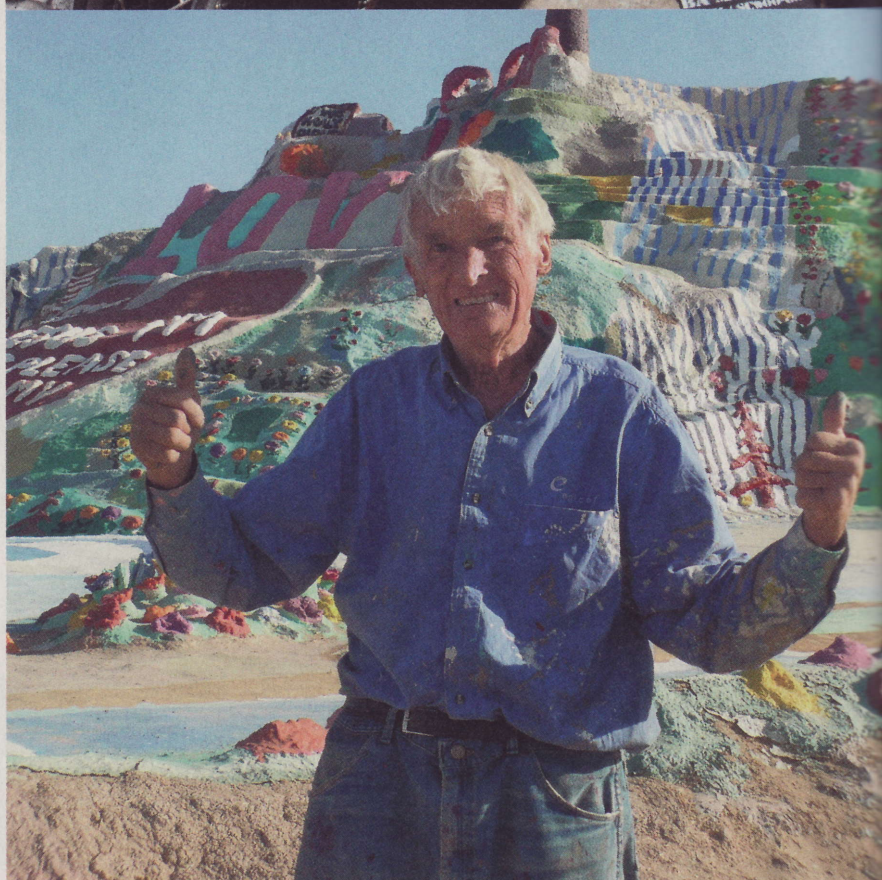
hovers for weeks. A once promising recreational paradise now resembles a post-apocalyptic Mad Max movie set. The 36-mile ride skirting Salton Sea on hwy 111 to Niland is a surreal mirage against a dry desert backdrop and there are so many interesting abandoned structures from North Shore to Bombay Beach to explore.



Unfortunately, scientific research and real world applications don't always coexist. First, the heat from the pipes wasn't factored into the experiment, secondly the holes where the brackets fit to the ammo cans leaked and finally all that shaking meant a complete ice refill at least every hour.

Slab City is easy to spot because colorful Salvation Mountain looms at its entrance. Twelve years ago Leonard Knight decided to make a "small state-

ment" with half of a bag of cement. He fashioned a small monument near the entrance and one thing turned into another and weeks turned into years. Each day, Leonard would put a little more cement and a little more paint on the side of a forgotten riverbank. Salvation Mountain has become an American Mecca with visitors sometimes traveling thousands of miles. Leonard's message is simple; God is love, make good bigger. That reflects his



passion on the mountain. Build it and they will come.

Slab City is basically acres of concrete slabs left from an abandoned military base. The “Slabbers” live completely off the grid here with no electricity, water, or plumbing. Slab

City has a church, library, and community center, even its own Avon Lady. The performance area is replete with stages and seating and hosts concerts and events yearly. It’s estimated that more than 1,000 people and RVs stay at Slab City each winter. The state of



California is currently in the process of shutting down Slab City. Over the years, people have desecrated the desert, and left their trash and waste behind. A growing portion of Slab City is now littered with abandoned trailers, old clothing, rusty vehicles, and trash of all kinds. Still, folks have a special affinity for this god-forsaken place and there are countless stories, books, and movies about Salton Sea and Slab City. (See *Plagues and Pleasures on the Salton Sea* and *Into the Wild*).

Finally, time to set up camp, tents, fire pit, and crack a few brews. The Slab City Riot sponsored by Biltwell hosted more than 150 riders on

bikes of all types that braved the desert night. Bands played and the party raged till dawn, and the beer? Unbelievably, there were still four beers left, a complete success! It's what baggers do, carry important stuff and in this case, cases of beer.

You know the old saying that you can't judge a book by its cover; well you also can't judge a bagger by its bag, or ride by its rider. I don't care whether you're on a Kawasaki Vulcan, Triumph Bonneville, or some fancy ass Easter egg, it's probably a real good idea to be cool to your bagger'n brethren, ya never know what's in their saddlebag. Ride safe.





Ammo Can Brackets are available from B.A.Moto—they're functional, durable, and put to the test. Contact [ba-moto.com](http://ba-moto.com) or [staff@ba-moto.com](mailto:staff@ba-moto.com) for more info. *B*

