

IDLE-A-WHILE:

in Idyllwild



2013 CVO Electra Glide Ultra Classic

Story: Gary Koz Mraz Photos: Ron Sinoy/Mraz

Over 22 million humans tread the hallowed ground we call Southern California. And get this, the California tourism website touts that we were the destination for 208.6 million person-trips in 2011 (It's why the freeways are always crowded). A person-trip is defined as a visitor trip made to a specific location and does not tally multiple stops within the specified location on a single trip.

So, just where do Southern Californians get away from...Southern Californians? Idyllwild of course. Smack dab in the middle of a 120-mile radius is a motorcycling sweet spot. Nestled high atop Mt. San Jacinto, a little more than two hours away from L.A., San Diego or Brawley (barring Carmageddon) lays this peaceful motorcycling paradise. Idyllwild has no tourist attractions; there

are no ski lifts, no Holiday Inns, Carl's Jr. or even Starbucks. No reason for thousands of cagers to clog the miles of these magnificent mountain roads. Cheesy tourist T-shirts and snow globes just don't exist here, and that's the way we riders like it. It's the perfect destination to let the high RPM of city stress unwind and just idle a while.

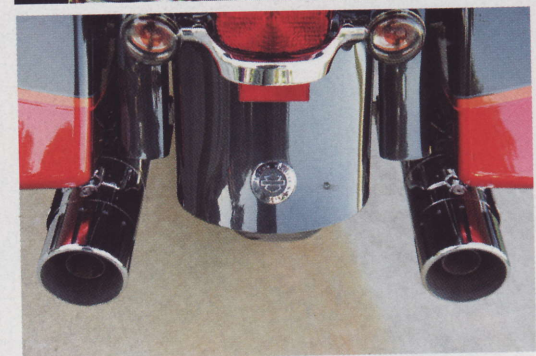
This weekend's jaunt is on Harley Davidson's most expensive motorcycle: the 2013 CVO Electra Glide Ultra Classic. At \$37,599, or \$38,599 for the 110th Anniversary Edition, branding is king and I counted 30 Harley bar and shield logo displayed on everything from air valve caps to headlamps. This Tribal Orange/Dark Slate/Inferno Orange with Thunderblade graphics CVO trumpets: "I have arrived" in style and comfort. Both rider and passenger are in control of the independently adjustable heated seats, while lumbar support

will help those passenger miles glide comfortably. Heated hand grips, cruise control that's easily operable via controls on the right handlebar, and ABS contribute to its list of touring luxuries. Another luxury item is its one button power locking system. Owners can lock or unlock the ignition, saddlebags and Tour-Pak luggage using the key fob. The fob is an important device to the CVO Ultra Classic Electra Glide as it also activates the Smart Security System, and the bike won't start unless the key fob is within range.

Launching onto the freeway, this motor-journalist is reminded why we love Harley Davidson so much. The TC110 engine is immediately palpable, taking this 900 lb. bike (1400 lbs with two riders and luggage) into the fast lane with unbridled fury. Damn this bike sounds good stock! How the hell do they do that? If this motorcycle meets the new "80 dB at fifty feet" California law for all 2013 motorcycles, I am impressed. I need to see how well-behaved this behemoth is on the twisties, so off to the mountains we go.

The Glen Ivy Hot Springs is the perfect stop on your no-stress express Idyllwild weekend. Right off the 15 freeway in Corona, Glen Ivy was established in 1885 and has a long history of healing wary travelers; replete with Saunas, Jacuzzis, six pools and the Glen Ivy Mud Club. The red clay pulls toxins from your skin as it dries, and of course your partner will need help covering her body with the thick





vermillion clay. Basking in the sun, you'll enjoy watching the mud dry...literally.

Continuing to Idyllwild, the sparsely trafficked State Route 74 (The Palms Scenic Byway) road becomes a sinewy ribbon just past Hemet; the perfect road to start your weekend of recreational riding. It connects to State Route 243 into Idyllwild. The roads, riding and weather just keep getting better and better. Winding effortlessly through the cool pine forest at 6,000 feet, it's a truly heavenly climate. Idyllwild is riding



We stayed at the Silver Pines Lodge & Creek side Cabins and what a cool, laid-back scene it is. Koi ponds, a creek and the pine forest are your backyard. Silver Pines Lodge was built in 1923 and previously operated as the Rustic Tavern Restaurant and the Rustic Theater movie house. It's been an Inn since the early '50s. The Lodge sits on 1-1/2 acres of wooded pine forest overlooking Strawberry Creek. Each unit is individually decorated. Most rooms have fireplaces and about half have kitchens. Silver Pines also has individual cabins, a duplex and triplex, and 5 units connected to the main lodge building. Every room has its own refrigerator, bathroom, cable TV and complimentary coffee. This place is awesome, and is only 2 blocks from the main village.

Shangri-La and this friendly community hosts a variety of music festivals, Idyllwild Cinemafest and art shows. On summer weekends every restaurant and bar is packed with Harleys, Metric cruisers and sport bike riders. Jo-Ann's Restaurant and bar is literally the hub of downtown, offering riders comfortable outdoor seating with a stage and barbecue grills. With ample parking for hundreds of bikes, a large indoor restaurant offers more seating and a full bar. This epicenter of downtown Idyllwild confirms my motorcycle mecca moniker.

that has it all: 4 speakers (2 up front and 2 in back) with an amplifier that distributes 40 watts per channel, an AM/FM receiver, CD and MP3 play even an intercom and CB, "it goes to 11".

The 2013 Ultra Classic pumps up the volume with a premium Harman Kardon audio system





system "Audio Bass Booster Ports" in the bottom liner of the Tour-Pak, and the 8GB iPod Nano, which comes as part of the package, is now accessible via the hand controls. Toss in Road Techs Zumo 660 GPS navigation; it's all standard gear on the CVO Ultra Classic. Girlfriend seems more impressed with the lumbar support and extremely comfy seating.

In downtown Idyllwild there are 16 dining options, 30 retail shops, art galleries and salons offering Thai massage and aroma therapy, so this is the place to get totally blissed out.

On our second night, we ended up at Hidden Village Chinese Restaurant literally 100 feet from Silver Pines Lodge. Without a doubt, the "Best Dining Deal" on the mountain. The food is excellent and affordable. They have beer, wine and Sake, and My Moo Shu vegetable was awesome. Our entire bill for food and drinks was forty bucks.

The trip home affords another wonderfully twisty riding opportunity. The SR 74 connects to SR 243 west. We pass the Diamond Zen Mountain Center Buddhist training and retreat. The ride down Mt. San Jacinto on this road is spectacular. Descending 4200 winding feet over the next 25 miles, you're flushed out on the 10 Freeway into Banning. High-performance dual

disc Brembo brakes offer consistent stopping power. The 4-piston front and rear calipers with dual front rotor brake system is state-of-the-art and top-of-the-line. The Ultra corners aggressively. The TC110 pulls ferociously up mountain grades, and provides robust engine compression on the downgrade. The power plant delivers, and the gas mileage is surprising. Fully laden and fighting the mountain gravity for three days, we averaged 36 mpg.

Next time you and your significant other ponder a relaxing riding getaway, remember Idyllwild. Lodging at Silver Pines ranges from \$63.00 to \$189 a night for a full-on cabin. Idyllwild offers a multitude of lodging options for every budget. The full throttle, high octane pace of city life can be exhilarating, but sometimes the soul just needs time to idle.

Silver Pines Lodge & Creekside Cabins
 - 25955 Cedar Street P.O. Box 1171
 Idyllwild, CA 92549 (951) 659-4335
<http://www.silverpineslodge.com/>

Paradise Corner Café - 61721 State Highway 74 92561 (909) 659-0730

Hidden Village Chinese Restaurant - 25840 Cedar Street Idyllwild, CA 92549 • (951) 659-2712

Glen Ivy Hot Springs - <http://www.glenivy.com/>

