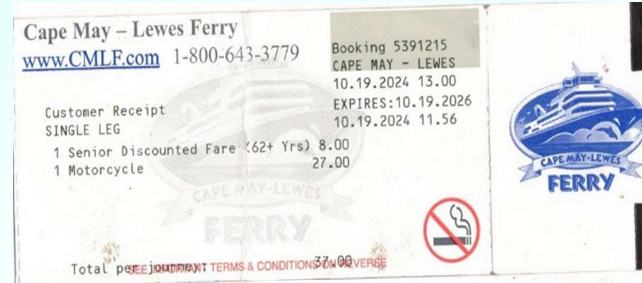


## Ride report Chesapeake Bay Cruise 2024

Perfect weather again. This entire season has been like that—no complaints. We had 7 deposits on hand, but one rider had to cancel, so with me we made a group of 7. Unusually, every one of the riders was a repeat customer, and everyone lived close enough to show up for breakfast without sleeping here; even Ed who lives in Allentown, a good 90 minutes north. Presumably he is an early riser and showed up on time (as always) at 7:30.

### ROLL CALL:

Ed.....Allentown, PA  
Charles...Plainfield, NJ  
Fred...Landenberg, PA  
Jon....New London, PA  
Nico....West Grove, PA  
Andy.....Gladwyne, PA



An abbreviated rider's meeting was all that was necessary given that everyone had experienced more than one RetroTour in the recent past. Then too, being a 1 day trip, there was no luggage to pack onto the bikes. Consequently, we had no problem getting an early start which suited me just fine since we had a ferry to catch. Ferrys don't wait; they run on a schedule. I wanted to make the 1 o'clock ferry. If we missed it, there was another at 2:30 but who wants to wait around the dock for over an hour? Plus, making the early boat would increase our chances of getting home before nightfall.

### OUR FLEET:

Yamaha XS750  
Kawasaki KZ750  
Yamah TX750  
Suzuki GS550ES  
Moto Guzzi V65SP  
Suzuki T500  
Honda GL1000



*With minimal packing we are underway early Saturday.*

My anxiety over catching the early ferry was compounded early on. I had planned to cross into Jersey via the Delaware Memorial Bridge but several closed exits and detour signs has me heading north on 95 for 15 miles to cross at the Commodore Barry Bridge, then turning back south 15 miles on the east bank to regain the original route. We normally shun any highway miles on RetroTours but I just got sucked into this one which cost an extra 45 minutes. To make up some time, we rode right past several interesting stops, including Duncan Donuts, which really hurt, man. Of course, it might be that no one behind me knew anything was amiss, and once back on the original route, we greatly enjoyed motoring through South Jersey's back waters: sod farms, peach orchards, small towns, and tiny shell fishing communities. Ultimately, after an enjoyable 2 hour ride which included a near drive-by of New Jersey Motorsport Park, we made it to the ferry slip just past 12 noon. I was shocked to be so on time and chalked it up to the excellent riders in this group that made it easy to maintain a reasonable pace. We relaxed and chatted up some of the security personnel and other tourists in line for the crossing.

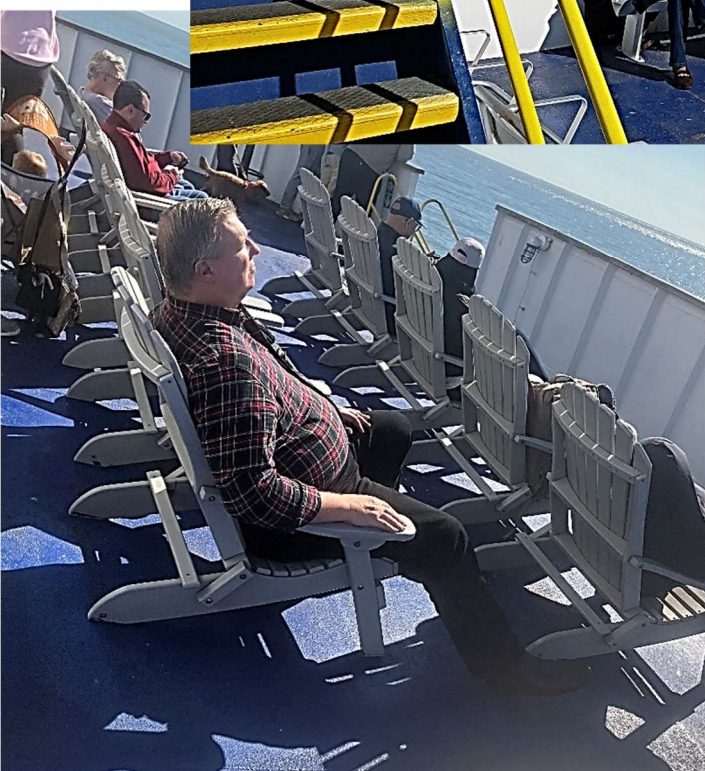


*Charkes (center), Jon (right), and Andy (below) catch up with their email and texts while waiting for the boat.*



Once on board, we settle the bikes and then settle ourselves in nicely, taking in a light lunch, enjoying Chesapeake Bay views, chatting, and relaxing. Did I mention the weather? Look at that fishbowl blue sky! It's hard not to relax when you have fine weather, cool vintage bikes, and great riding buddies.





*Charles (left) and Ed (right) relax on board the Cape Henlopen; smooth sailing!*

We disembark in Delaware and head north and west across rural Lower DE (AKA Slower DE). Soy beans and small towns form the backdrop until we hit Magnolia, where we pick up Route 9 North by the Dover Air Force base. The days are shorter now, so we maintain a steady pace as the sun slowly sinks towards the western horizon. This road was the primary route between Wilmington and Dover until route 13 took over in 1926 and 13 in turn was supplanted by the Superslab: limited access highway DE1 in 2003. This left Route 9 pretty much disused and deserted, as it thankfully is today. Long straightaways connect some interesting curves, and hump backed bridges cross phragmites-lined brackish meanders as the road follows the Delaware River. We stop for a brief rest at Augustine beach, where the Salem nuclear power plant just across the river on the NJ side blows a flume of hot smoke into the warm sky. Somehow, despite the awesome power of the atoms within, the steaming tower evokes a sense of peace. A lone sun worshiper takes in the long late afternoon rays.



Finally,  
we make  
the last leg  
home,  
arriving at  
the perfect  
moment,  
as the sun  
sets  
behind the  
backyard  
pond.

A fabulous  
pasta  
dinner  
served  
with beer  
and wine  
awaits.

Of course  
there is  
also a  
delicious  
dessert.

Thank you  
Lynn, my  
dear wife,  
whose  
cooking is  
more than  
just tasty:  
it is her  
sincerest  
expression  
of love.



*We have covered about 200 miles of back roads and enjoyed a 90 minute cruise under spectacular blue skies. Fine roads, cool bikes, great friends, good food. Let's do it again soon!*

