



Top of Mammoth Hot Springs, Yellowstone National Park, Wyoming

# MINNIE & ME – AN AMERICAN LOVE STORY

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**M**innie, a.k.a Donita and me, a.k.a. Carlus have been happily married forty years and have ridden motorcycles together for thirty five of those years. Minnie is 4 feet 10 ½ inches tall, consequently in order for her to ride comfortably and safely, we have seriously modified every motorcycle she has owned. Our current bikes are 2007 premium Victory Jackpots. After riding her Jackpot as a bike for three years, Minnie had two serious back surgeries. With the assistance of Myers Performance in Johnstown, Pennsylvania, we converted her bike to a trike to better address the challenges of her medical issues.





Her trike is powered by a 100 ci v-twin engine, moves power through a six speed overdrive transmission to a first class Frankenstein Trike's custom rear end conversion, steers smooth using a Kewlmetal 7 degree triple tree front end rake kit, and sports numerous innovative Tomahawk motorcycle accessories. The rear wheels are custom units produced for Minnie by Billet Specities and turn 295 x 50 x 15 Mickey Thompson tires. The trike has a one off luggage rack that is a billet Minnie Mouse head, custom handle bars and the forward foot controls have been moved back six inches. We have painted every bike she has owned hot pink with a Disney motif. Her trike is no exception; we painted it hot pink with ghost Minnie Mouse heads.

Minnie and Me have traveled the back roads of America on motorcycles for decades. Beginning in late July 2011, we rode 9,700 miles in 63 days and visited 22 states: Virginia, West Virginia, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota, North Dakota, Montana, Wyoming, Idaho, Washington, Oregon, California, Nevada, Utah, Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, Oklahoma, Missouri,



(Illinois, Indiana a 2nd time), Kentucky, back through West Virginia and home to Virginia. We purposely traveled the country without the burden of specific agenda or hotel reservations. During our cross country adventure we visited numerous National parks and points of interest to include: the World's Largest Buffalo, the Medora Musical, Theodore Roosevelt, Yellowstone, Grand Tetons, Jackson Hole, Grand

Coulee Dam, Olympic National Forest, Cape Flattery (farthest NW corner of the US), Redwood Forest, Pacific Coast Highway, Lake Tahoe, Canyonlands, Arches, Escalante Forest, Bryce Canyon, Zion, Grand Canyon North Rim, Petrified Forest, the Easter story of Christ in bronze statues in Texas, St. Louis Arch, Seneca Rocks, Smoke Hole and home sweet home in Virginia.







Yellowstone River, Yellowstone National Park, Wyoming



Cape Flattery, Washington (farthest NW point of the United States)



Multnomah Falls, Washington

On our journey we experienced beautiful weather, extreme heat, cold, rain, snow, and yes, hail. Wildlife was abundant and included: prairie dog colonies, groups of sea lions, elk and deer, herds of buffalo, chipmunks and coyotes. We visited with friends and family, met and made new friends and often stopped traffic when people wanted to take pictures of Minnie's pink trike. Minnie's trike attracted people from all over the globe – America, England, Netherlands, France, Italy, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, China, Canada, and Spain to name a few. At the end of each day we sent an e-mail and the day's pictures to a group of about 100 friends and family. Our hearts were warmed when these folks shared with us that they looked forward to our reports and felt as if they were riding along with us.

As we rode we knew that God had us just where He wanted us to be, safe in His loving arms! Our trip gave us a renewed appreciation for the blessed America that God has bestowed upon each of us. He allowed us to experience so many wonderful places and people beyond our wildest dreams. He brought us so many different challenges and so many associated solutions that we are simply in awe of His love and power. Along this trip we developed a greater appreciation for: God and His creations; this country of freedoms and the many people who have fought, sacrificed and paid the price for our freedoms; the explorers and pioneers who braved the unknown to discover a new world; the brave people that developed the infrastructure we take for granted; and the friends and family that took a virtual journey with us.



Chromed Out 42

Tunnel in Zion National Park, Utah



Firehole Canyon Drive, Yellowstone National Park, Wyoming



Arches National Park, Utah





Tucumcari, Arizona (part of old route 66 – mural on old feed store)



Emerald Bay, Lake Tahoe, California

Loading and reloading two eighty pound travel bags and a set of saddle bags for 63 days became a daunting task. Consequently, we had a custom 18 cubic foot trailer built to pull behind Minnie's trike. We are currently in the process of painting it hot pink with the Minnie Mouse heads to match her trike.

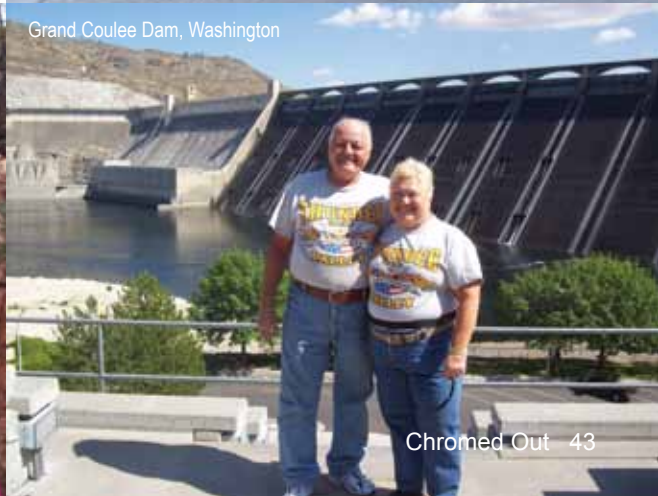
As Minnie, who has a great sense of direction, leads and I follow, we are truly blessed to share our lives together doing something we both enjoy. Watching Minnie skim six inches over the blacktop on her pink trike I know that God has us just where He wants us to be, and I also know that I loved her the first time I saw her, I love her today and will love her forever! If you are out and see a cute little blond on a hot pink trike pulling a hot pink trailer followed by a happy old guy on a custom Victory Jackpot, chances are that's my love, Minnie & Me! ☐



Myers Flats Shrine, Redwoods National Forest, California (tree is 5000 years old, 275' tall; 21' diameter; 64' circumference)



Entering Zion National Park, Utah



Grand Coulee Dam, Washington