



TOUR OF TOURATECH USA

by Alisa Clickenger

From Supplier to Importer

Tom Myers started *Touratech USA* in 2001. Back then the *Touratech* catalog was only 16 pages, and one of those pages was for handlebar map cases. Those map cases were made by Myers and his company *CycoActive*. As a *Touratech* supplier, Myers was intimately aware of *Touratech*, its products and philosophies. When *Ride West*, a Seattle area BMW dealership, decided to open another dealership and take a sharper focus on selling motorcycles, Myers and *CycoActive* took over *Touratech* importation and distribution in the U.S.

A hotshot A-level enduro racer in the 1990s, Myers knew a thing or two about motorcycles, off-road and adventure riding. His business acumen, combined with his motorcycling knowledge, has grown *CycoActive/Touratech USA* from a small business into a cornerstone of the U.S. motorcycle market.

However big the catalog and notoriety of *Touratech USA*, it always comes down to serving the adventure riding community. In fact, everyone in the company rides. “We do a lot of riding events together,” says *Touratech USA*’s general manager Paul Guillien. “It’s not uncommon to find half of our staff camping on weekends, or off riding dirt bikes together.”

Last year *Touratech USA* had a large showing at the *Desert 100* off-road race. While 800 bikes lined up handlebar to handlebar for this exceptionally tough event, two thirds of their employees either participated or volunteered with the race support effort. Guillien himself has raced in it three years in a row.

“Even though dirt bikes aren’t really core to our business, we do events like the *Desert 100*,” said Guillien. “It’s a cool culture and it’s a neat company—very much about riding.”



German Engineering Heritage

Touratech was founded in Germany by two adventure riders. Now with around 300 employees dedicated to making adventure touring accessories, the company does all its own manufacturing of metal parts and core products (they don't manufacture tents and such). It's also a socially and environmentally conscious company aiming for a low carbon footprint while sourcing locally everything possible.

Touratech's core values carry over to the U.S., and the *Backcountry Discovery Routes (BDRs)* are one example—a way of giving back to the community out of love for the motorcycling culture. "I've enjoyed helping people get outfitted for motorcycle trips since 1993. Soon after starting the business I met Helge Pedersen, who had spent 10 years traveling around the world. He inspired me to import Touratech products, and it's been a fun ride. The *Backcountry Discovery Routes* projects have been great fun too. Having a young family and running a business, I don't have time to travel the world but I enjoy riding in the mountains in the western U.S.," says Myers.

Touratech's massive catalog can be found on the bookshelf of nearly every adventure rider. They seem to be at all dual-sport riding events, and their *Backcountry Discovery Route* DVDs are everywhere. Touratech claims a huge footprint in the American ADV motorcycling community, and with good reason—adventuring is at the heart of everything they do.

Touratech-USA's president, Tom Myers, playing in the mountains on the Yamaha Super Ténéré.



Seattle's Touratech store has one of the largest displays of adventure touring gear and accessories in the U.S.



Conveniently located on the main route between Prudhoe Bay, Alaska, and Tierra del Fuego, Argentina, Touratech-USA's Seattle store enjoys visits from many world travelers.



Backcountry Discovery Route

The BDRs began with the *Oregon Discovery Route*. Bob and Cheryl Greenstreet had mapped out a stunning dual-sport route that traversed some of the best scenery and trail the state had to offer. In 1999 Myers read about the route and then rode it. Helge Pederson and filmmaker Sterling Noren created a short film about the route, and later Paul Guillien helped to popularize the BDR by writing a magazine story about the ride.

The state of Washington came next, and *Butler Maps* got involved. A feature was filmed of the route, a DVD and maps were made, and the project took hold. American adventure riders now had a fantastic, well laid-out route right in their own backyards. They only had to take a week off from work to do it, and it gave them a destination as well as a unique way to experience riding through a state.

The BDRs are designed as trips that anyone can do in a week. With the majority of adventure riders unable to take off months at a time for long rides, the BDRs offer a resource of inspiration and information for riders to enjoy some of the best riding this country has to offer.

"I think it's helped grow the sport. Before, when I looked at magazines, I saw people that did these super cool epic trips to South America or Prudhoe Bay, but there's a huge segment that have young kids or jobs that aren't that flexible," says Guillien. "So adventure riding was a little bit less attainable for them. What we tried to do with the *Backcountry Discovery Routes* is make something that anyone can do in a week. We keep them that size so that anyone can take a few days off work, recruit their friends to come join them and just go do it."

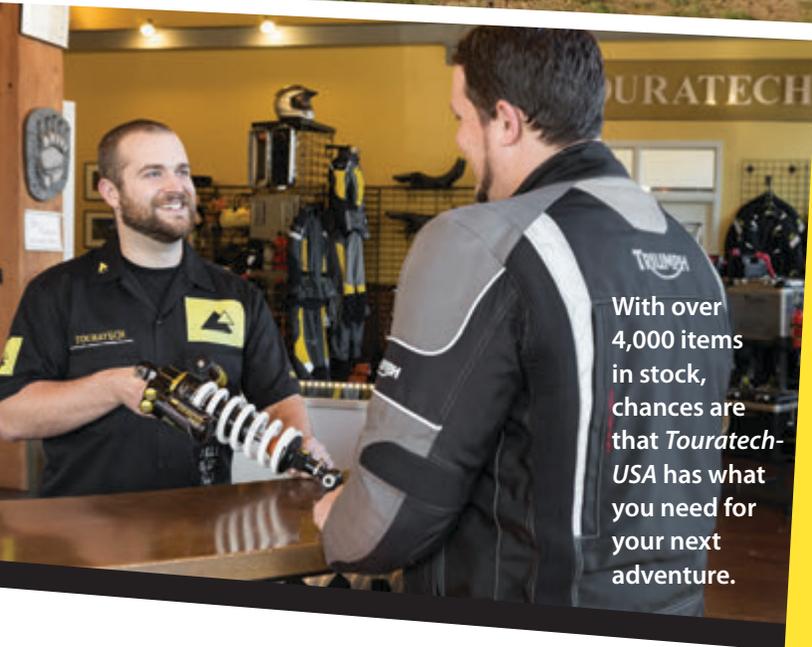
The BDRs have become a community tool that shows best practices such as *Leave No Trace* and staying on designated roads. The routes are "open source" and GPS tracks are available for free downloading on the BDR websites. DVD and map sets are available through *Touratech USA*, *Butler Maps* and motorcycle dealers across the country. "We've laid out the map as a planning tool where you can look at the map, see where you'll get gas, how long the sections are, whether you are going to do it all at once or over a couple weekends, and watch the documentary so you'll know what to expect out there," says Guillien.

Annual Rally

Touratech USA sponsors a rally every year, held on the last weekend in June, and all employees are present running the event. They don't sell anything at the rally in order to focus on the fun, entertainment and riding with their customers and the community at large. Months are spent scouting the rides and putting together the GPS tracks. Rides are graded for beginner, intermediate and advanced, and there are also classes and clinics.



All the staff at *Touratech-USA* ride motorcycles. Many of them participate in local events and races such as the *Desert 100* every year.



With over 4,000 items in stock, chances are that *Touratech-USA* has what you need for your next adventure.

The Catalog

It's difficult to find an adventure rider who doesn't love the *Touratech* catalog because it offers endless hours of fantasizing about how to better customize our rides. The catalog also offers stories from adventure travelers along with world class photography. Most of the stories are first-hand tales from either *Touratech* owners or internationally known moto-journalists who test *Touratech* equipment. Designed by riders and made by riders, *Touratech* products are used all over the globe.

"We have the largest selection of accessories in the U.S.," says Guillien. "Over 4,000 items ready to go. Everything one might need for a motorcycle adventure as well as the expert staff that get out on the same bikes as our customers. There's no better place to call for answers when you're preparing a trip. Whether it's a big one to *Tierra del Fuego* or a *BDR*, our guys really know their stuff and will help get you the right answers. And, if we don't have exactly what you need, we'll usually know where to get it."

Sounds like it's time to start planning our next adventures. **ADV**

Touratech-USA.com



Backcountry Discovery Routes

The *BDR Organization* is a 501(c) 4 nonprofit. Its mission is to create and preserve off-road riding opportunities for the motorcycle community and to drive commerce to the remote towns we rely upon for access to the backcountry. The *BDRs* provide a good voice for keeping roads open for riding. The organization cooperates with land managers and government bodies at keeping roads open, communicating preferred routes for motorcyclists through public lands and relaying fire information to the motorcycling community. *BDRs* are a cooperative venture with support from *KLIM*, *Butler Maps*, *ExOfficio*, *Nemo*, *Sena*, *Black Dog Cycle Works*, *Wolfman*, *Continental*, *Colorado Motorcycle Adventures*, *Big Twin Motorcycles*, *Trailmaster Adventure Gear*, *Kate's Real Food*, *BMW MOA* and ***ADMoto Magazine*** who donate time and financial resources to create these "by the people, for the people" rides that serve as

planning tools for adventure in riders' own backyards. The non-profit is also supported by individuals who help the organization achieve its mission by becoming members. To participate in this great cause go to: **Backcountry-discoveryroutes.com/BDR-Memberships**

In August 2014 filming of the *Idaho Backcountry Discovery Route* was completed. Scheduled to be released in January 2015, the *IDBDR* is as long as the *Washington* and *Oregon BDRs* combined, and runs

through some of the most rugged, remote and scenic areas in the U.S. A cooperative project to the core, the *IDBDR* brings along Idaho resident/adventure rider/historian Bill Whitacre and resident John Summers of *KLIM*. Local North Idaho rider Kurt Forgét of *Black Dog Cycle Works* also joined the team.

BackcountryDiscoveryRoutes.com

"The *BDRs* are a great voice for keeping roads open while maintaining a good balance between managed travel and the Forest Service's directives. It's something that works and I truly believe that it will keep riding opportunities open for the next generation, in addition to providing commerce in remote towns that we rely upon for food, gas and lodging. These towns will survive because we're getting people to come and support their economies."

— Paul Guillien