

# Moonshine Lunch Run 2010

*Ride-to-eat from far-and-wide.*

# RALLIES & CLUBS



It doesn't matter what you ride to Moonshine, only that you ride.



Above: You may see this sign on your way to Moonshine, but it won't help you much.

**Long-distance riders occupy a small but distinct subset of the motorcycling community. For sport tourers who enjoy 500-mile days and hardcore endurance riders who rack up multiple, consecutive 1,000-mile days, it's never too cold, never too far, never too wet.**

This is the story of a ride-to-eat gathering that brings long-distance riders together. Each year, in early spring, they head for Moonshine, Illinois (population 2) for a hamburger—a Moonburger, specifically.

The Moonshine Lunch Run has no test rides or beer tents or stunt contests. The only vendors are long-distance riders themselves, and they don't ride to Moonshine to sell anything. There are no celebrities unless you count riders who have ridden from Key West, Florida, to San Diego, California, to Prudhoe Bay, Alaska, to Goose Bay, Labrador, and back to Key West in 16 days on a Kawasaki KLR650 as celebrities. (Some of us do.)

Moonshine was conceived by Terry Hammond. An eighth-generation farmer from Casey, Illinois, he got hooked on motorcycling years ago when he met a long-distance rider.



Hungry riders ate 1,908 Moonburgers.

"I was eight years old," he recalls. "My father was getting a tire changed at the Martinsville gas station. I went out to get a bottle of pop and this motorcycle pulled in. I'd never seen anything like it. It was beat, bruised, battered, torn. I could hardly tell what color it was. The rider looked like somebody took a five-gallon bucket of slush and threw it over him. I just stood there, enamored, while he pumped gas.

He said, "How're you doing?" I said, "Fine, can I ask you some questions?" and it was a big mistake when he said, "Yes." For 20 minutes I hammered him. "How many pistons does that have? How many valves? How many miles before you wear out your tires? Where are you heading?" He answered every question. My father finally came out and said, "Good God, leave the guy alone!" At that point, the guy put his hand on my shoulder and said, "Someday you're going to be a long-distance rider and you need to get yourself a motorcycle because I can tell you've got it in you." It was like someone threw a switch. From that moment on, that's what I wanted to be. When I'm riding around for 16 hours a day on a tractor, I'm dreaming of where I'm going to go on a motorcycle."

Fast forward to 2004. On an Internet rider forum, Hammond posted an invitation: If any riders cared to join him for lunch—in rural southeastern Illinois, in early spring—he was buying. When his local friends said they didn't think anyone would ride 70 miles to the middle of nowhere that time of year, Hammond agreed. He thought people would ride 700 miles. "I knew there were riders out there who'd get it."



Jerry Wagner, a retired Navy man from Morganfield, Kentucky, was the first. He admits riding half the gravel roads in the county before he found the place Hammond wanted to meet. (Unless you have the coordinates, GPS doesn't go to Moonshine.) "I sat there for 10 minutes before he showed up," Wagner smiles, "drinking coffee and deciding whether I was going to tell him I got lost. I told him the truth. We laughed

**Above: Moonshine Store regulars know to turn off the lights if they're the last to leave. Left: The author's 1,000-mile sticker now occupies a place of honor on his Honda ST1300.**



**Above: Moonshine newbies, such as the author, are often brought by someone who's been before, such as four-time Moonshiner Steve Efthyvoulou (right) of Ledgewood, New Jersey. (Thanks, Steve!)**

**Above right: Homemade desserts, anyone? They arrived by Amish buggy. Right: The Moonburger is acclaimed as "the world's best burger" by *The Food Network*. Is it really that good? Get on your bike and go find out!**



about it and got acquainted over a Moonburger."

The Moonshine Lunch Run was born.

Word spread. The following spring, 30 people rode to Moonshine. Half came with Wagner. In spring 2006, more riders brought more friends and 400 riders came

**Motorcycles line all the roads leading to Moonshine.**



to Moonshine. Year by year, the numbers kept growing. In 2010, there were 1,400 riders, including your humble scribe. My ride from Massachusetts was more than 1,000 miles each way. That's a good distance, but 27 motorcyclists rode farther. Bob Wallace of Santa Maria, California, came farthest—more than 2,100 miles each way.

What did we all find? An unincorporated community in Clark County with one noteworthy landmark: Moonshine Store, c. 1912. Helen and Roy Tuttle, the town's entire (and endearing) population of two, run the store and live upstairs. Their signature creation is the Moonburger, a straightforward American hamburger that has won accolades from farmers, food

**Right: Sign inside the Moonshine Store. Below: The line for a Moonburger is long, but no one's worried.**



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critics and motorcyclists.

By midday on April 10, hundreds of motorcycles of all makes were parked along the unpaved roads leading to Moonshine. Riders from 39 U.S. states and Canada kicked tires, ordered 1,908 Moonburgers, and enjoyed lunch with friends old and new. People who've known each other only via online forums finally met in person.

Many riders wore T-shirts from

previous Moonshine Lunch Runs with a quiet sense of pride, knowing they'd earned the privilege to wear one. If you think all those T-shirts make Hammond a pile of money, kindly think again because he gives it away. All of it. "Money would screw up everything," he insists. "T-shirts are a pain in the butt, honestly, but the riders want them and Moonshine is about the riders. Everything we sell was donated by

someone and all the money we raise goes to charity." (See sidebar.)

Hammond believes the Moonshine phenomenon proves that people will take a chance on others. "It's about trust," he says. "Why else would people come here, this time of year? I just thought it would be cool if we could forget about being a Harley guy or a BMW guy or Kawasaki guy, and all get together because we all like to ride. It's amazing the friendships we make over a silly hamburger in the middle of nowhere."

Learn more: [www.moonshine-run.com](http://www.moonshine-run.com) 

**Below: Bob Wallace (right) of Santa Maria, California, rode more than 2,100 miles each way to Moonshine. No one else rode farther.**



## RUNNING THE MOONSHINE NUMBERS

- 1,908 Moonburgers
- 1,100 motorcycles
- 1,400 riders
- 39 states and Canada
- 500,000-plus miles ridden

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