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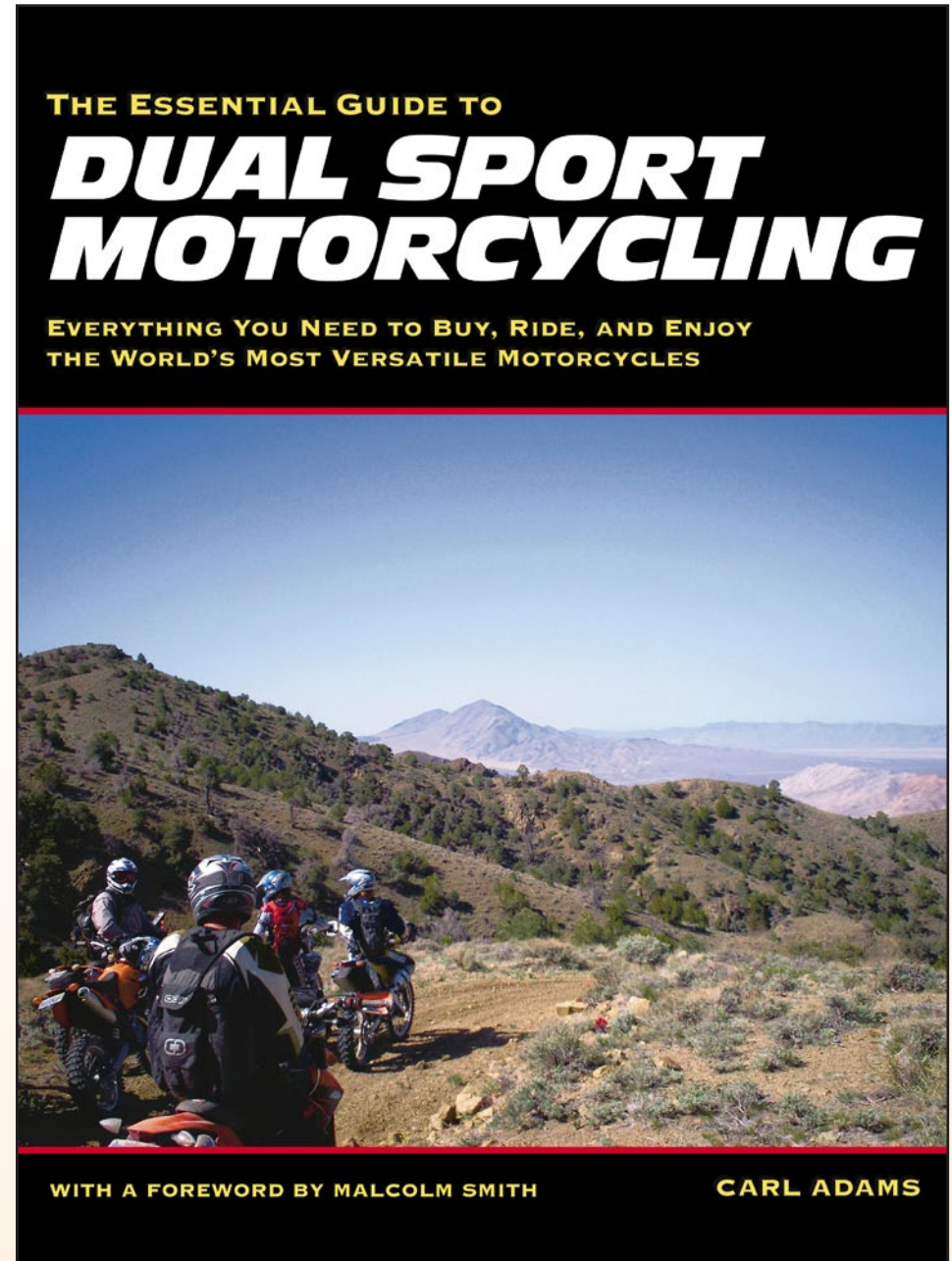
# Book Review: *The Essential Guide to Dual Sport Motorcycling*

By Susan Dragoo

SOMEWHERE IN GARVIN COUNTY, OKLAHOMA – The road winds through brush and woods, occasionally punctuated with a pump-jack or storage tanks. It is pleasant, grassy two-track and I’m tooling along comfortably until something gnarly appears before me. Just ahead, the hard-pack red dirt road has been deeply rutted and is dramatically off kilter. Not only do I hesitate, I come to a dead stop. But I look at the obstacle again. It would be a nasty place to fall but I can see a good line. There’s no reason I can’t do it. Then I remember the words of Carl Adams, author of *The Essential Guide to Dual Sport Motorcycling* and 40-year veteran of the sport:

“Obstacles are things like ruts, logs, and big rocks . . . sometimes they block the entire way and you must ride over them. The most important techniques for obstacles are always to hit them in perfect control of the motorcycle – centered and balanced, head on, and at a speed that will allow the suspension to deal with them.”

With dual sport motorcycling’s rise in popularity, the publication of Adams’ new book is timely. Endorsed in a foreword by Malcolm Smith, *The Essential Guide to Dual Sport Motorcycling* conveys “everything you need to buy, ride, and enjoy the world’s most versatile motorcycles.” Organized into four sections, it covers motorcycle selection, setup, riding skills, and specialized activities such as exploring remote areas, organized rides, and touring. Several chapters include exercis-



es designed to improve riding technique and develop new skills.

Whatever the reader's experience level, this book is an effective guide to the sport. New riders will benefit from the clear explanations of gear, accessories and techniques, while experienced riders coming to dual sport from a street riding background will enjoy chapters covering advanced dirt riding skills, GPS navigation, and preparing for multi-day trips. Even sage dual sport riders who want to become more well rounded in their knowledge will find value in these pages. We all have our areas of weakness and Adams' advice helps ferret out those gaps and enhance riding skills.

Although at first I was eager to rush through sections like "Suspension

Tuning" and "All About Tires" to get to more glamorous topics like "Advanced Riding Techniques" and "Exploring and Navigation," I actually found the technical sections both interesting and clarifying. For example, I already had a basic understanding of the relationship between tread pattern and traction, but Adams' explanation of tire characteristics and selection thoroughly conveys the importance of these issues. And it is done with illustrations that reflect a sense of humor, assuring that the reader is not put to sleep with too much detail. In fact, his underlying philosophy of riding is reflected in an interesting way throughout the book:

"Dirt riding is a series of challenges – turns, rocks, ruts, holes, logs, hills, etc. In addition, turns on loose, slippery, and uneven surfaces are challenges because your tires could easily slip. Anticipation is predicting how the motorcycle will react to these challenges and positioning the bike and your body to deal with them – before you reach them. Anticipation is the key to traveling safely at speed. If

you are not mentally ahead, you will be physically behind. Your weight will be in the wrong place, and you will spend the day recovering from one mistake after other. Eventually you will fall. Never ride behind the bike; never become its servant. Your job is to lead. Get mentally ahead and stay there."

Bottom line . . . The Essential Guide to Dual Sport Motorcycling is informative, comprehensive and entertaining. Here's one last word from Adams about its pleasures:

"You can have great fun on graded roads and easy trails, but unless you reach for greater challenges, you will be missing the best part of the dual sport experience. Difficult terrain is endlessly fascinating. The satisfaction of conquering hills, logs, bogs, and obstacles can keep you smiling for half a week."

The Essential Guide to Dual Sport Motorcycling is available from Whitehorse Press, 107 E. Conway Road, Center Conway, NH, 03813-4012. Telephone toll-free 800-531-1133 or visit [www.whitehorsepress.com](http://www.whitehorsepress.com).

