

With a couple of new Vision derivatives to talk up Victory flew the local Press Corps to Australia's Sunshine Coast for a conference and ride. Big Dave takes up the story.



CROSS YOUR HEART...

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It's been interesting watching Victory establish itself in the consciousness of the local bike population – particularly since the low-key nature of the NZ re-launch (I was the only one there) in early 2008.

Subsequent extended periods testing and touring on various models has proved the American-made bikes to be interesting, capable machines, each with its own unique personality. And hopefully for the parent company's sake, the third attempt at establishing retail footholds in New Zealand will be as successful as those across the ditch.

The Polaris-owned company certainly gave the various Aussie and Kiwi journos every opportunity to appreciate the new Cross Country and Cross Roads models at the recent launch on the Sunshine Coast.

Stretch limousines transported representatives from a number of Australasian publications to the five-star Hyatt Coolum Resort where National Sales Manager, Peter Harvey, along with AMA Hall of Famer and Polaris Industries VP – Motorcycles, Mark Blackwell, greeted us.

We were then introduced to the new bikes, given a full briefing on the entire model range, and presented with an overview of the brand and the parent company's plans for it. Peter and Mark were both keen to point out that the region is important to the growth of Victory as a global player and they intend to be successful in New Zealand.

Then over canapés (several of us looked at each other and said 'canapé's!) we were also introduced to the Victory 'Core' motorcycle. (For a great video of the Core, log on to the KR web site and search 'Core' in the top RH corner.)

It's a fascinating concept bike and a great demonstration of what the latest sandcast technology is capable of. All very nice 'fruit' around the main reason we were there; a spin on the new Cross Series bikes (and the rest of the range if we wanted).

AT THE CROSS ROADS...

I was allocated a Cross Roads with Maroon livery for the first leg of the journey and pretty much stayed on it for the duration of the ride. Roomy, comfortable, torquey and with good ground clearance (for the type of bike).

The beauty of the Victory range now is that if you don't share my preference for naked machines there is the mid-

Out on the road with the Sunshine Coast hinterland looking greener (for a change) than home. Top shot shows Big Dave aboard the Cross Country, second shot (as well as the pic on opening page) the Cross Roads

bodywork sized Cross Country – or the bike with possibly the largest expanse of bodywork on the market, the Vision, to choose from.

One thing that was obvious from the presentations was the extent of market research and profiling that has gone into the production of each and every vehicle in the range.

Each Hammer, 8-Ball or Jackpot buyer has had their profile 'painted' and the machines are an attempt to tick as many boxes as possible in each profile.

Age, riding preferences and intended uses have all been considered and evaluated.

GOING COUNTRY

They seem to have profiled me exceptionally well with the Cross Roads. Those who enjoy a bit more 'infotainment' and weather protection will be well served by the Cross Country. It has a variety of extras, including cruise control and a MP3 capable sound system in the roomy cockpit. If you are an 'all the bells and whistles' type, a Vision is your machine.

Essentially it has the same chassis and running gear with the bodywork and added extras being the main differences.

Both new releases are powered by



the air and oil cooled, 106 cubic inch /1731cc engine which produces 68 kW (92 hp) and 109nm of torque. It features a 'squareish' 101 x 108Nm bore and stroke with single overhead camshafts, four valves per cylinder, (and my favourite things come servicing time) self-adjusting cam chains with hydraulic lifters (no shims).

The motor is fed by dual 45mm throttle bodies and the engine pushes these big units along, all 330+ kg of them, very nicely indeed.

A RELAXED FEEL

The engines have a relaxed, 'big cruiser' feel, mixed with good overtaking capability and power. They are also mounted in chassis that have very pleasant road manners for such large bikes.

Even the best-on-any-motorcycle foot accommodation doesn't impede cornering clearance too badly.

The ride took us from the resort near Noosa on a cruise along the beach fringe and golden sand coastline in warm pleasant conditions.

Then, after a taste of how nicely the bikes perform on the boulevards, we headed into the Sunshine Coast hinterland and some great twisty sections, followed by open road touring, heading back to the coast along the southern edge of the spectacular Glasshouse Mountains.

Some of the hinterland roads and countryside were quite similar to North Island conditions – but greener. Twisty tarmac through volcanic terrain covered by lush rainforest, and the bikes were very comfort-



Ready to roll with a mix of Cross Roads and Cross Countries (top). The night before the Press Corp was briefed by National Sales Manager, Peter Harvey, and AMA Hall of Famer and Polaris Industries VP – Motorcycles, Mark Blackwell (pictured here). The bikes themselves are based on the full-dress Vision platform with the Cross-Country running a three-quarter fairing and the Cross Roads the choice of Lexan screen or wind-in-your-hair nakedness

able in the way they handled all of it.

Back at the resort and over dinner we had an opportunity to talk one-on-one with Mark and the rest of the Victory crew – and couldn't help noticing the enthusiasm they all share.

It was quite a spectacular event.

AND A NEW DEALER AT HOME

Back in Auckland (after an equally opulent stretch Limo ride back to Brisbane) I called in at the new home of the 'New American Motorcycle' in Newmarket.

The showrooms at TMG in Broadway were just getting the finishing touches to the range and layout of accessories. The new Cross Roads and Cross Country models are on display now, as well as a good assortment of demonstrator units.

The new Victory Touring models are great additions to what is becoming a very tasty collection of bikes.

Viva la choice. Let's hope that the third try at establishing a retail foothold in NZ is successful for Victory. The bikes sure are good enough for it to happen, this time the location looks right too.

Maybe they have reached the Cross....roads.... **KR**

