



the latest 'word

Road Trip: Around The World In a Toyota

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Days on the road: 134

Miles traveled: 6,034

Current location: Bangkok, Thailand

The World By Road founders Steve Shoppman and Steve Bouey left Denver five months ago to embark on their drive around the world ("Road Warriors," January 25). So far, they've crossed New Zealand, Australia, Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand, crossing ocean waters by ferry. They've been attacked by leaches in the middle of the jungle, seen Thai villages devastated by tsunami, shown border guides where to sign and stamp their country's own paperwork, and met lots of interesting people along the way.



"We ran out of gas in the middle of the outback," Shoppman says, beginning one of his favorite adventure stories, thus far. They'd been driving 35 miles per hour, dodging literally hundreds of kangaroo crossing the road, when they came to a station with a little pub. "There were four people and a hotel that was just a patch of dirt, a cattle stable where you can put up a tent. They called it Hilton Hotel. It was literally like walking into a scene from Crocodile Dundee." The place didn't have any gas, and a fuel truck wouldn't be coming by for another three or four days. "But because the station is so remote and big they use a helicopter to help heard the cattle, and the pilot had a leftover barrel of aviation fuel from 1989. The next morning we got out the hand pump and were filling up cars with helicopter fuel, out of a 55-gallon drum."

The cars were able to take off, but not before the pilot gave the guys a ride – flying at 150 miles per hour just four feet off the ground. "He scared the daylights out of all of us," Shoppman says, with a laugh.

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Other travelers will meet up with Shoppman and Bouey along the way, but for now it's just the two of them editing video footage in Bangkok. They're staying in the city for ten days because they're waiting on a man whose driven around the world before – and was the an inspiration for their trip. Harold Stephens, co-author of Who Needs a Road?, invited them to combine their expedition through China with one he's about to embark on. "It's pretty cool to meet up with the guy who played a big role in inspiring what we're doing," Bouey says.

While they'd be happy just to say they drove to Southeast Asia and met up with their hero, the Steves are intent on making it all the way around the world. "There's no doubt we've had our fair share of problems," Shoppman said. "Between team members and shipping and computer problems. But the impact that it's had on us already ... Some days we have no idea how we're going to fund the rest of this thing, and two new sponsors contact us. Every time we think we're never going to be able to finish this, we get that call."



Assuming those calls keep coming, you can follow The World By Road's route along their map, catch updates on their blog and see their latest photos and videos at www.theworldbyroad.com. --

Jessica Centers

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