

For the past year, the biggest taboo subject at the dinner table (or during pillow talk) has been motorbikes. It has also been the best kept secret that I was going to get one.

To talk about bikes with my beloved was like talk to a brick wall, You get it off your chest but no response or feedback. Every one asked 'What does Preeti have to say about a bike?' I said 'No much', which was in a way perfectly fine by me.

Research began long before the Pro-Biking shoot. My office colleagues and web chums were a great help. A special mention to Hemang who helped me pass my test, lent his bike to practice and took some of the flack that was being thrown about.

Top of the list came the Bajaj Avenger because its the only Indian built cruiser and felt it would be right for my Sunday riding, Being Indian made they have a good service network though out the continent. Preeti was also trying to tie up some business with Bajaj, I felt me buying one of their bikes may just swing it for her.

I had decided on a red bike as felt it would be the most visible on Indian roads. Avengers are only available in 3 others colours, black, silver and blue. In UK black would have been my first choice.

Of course a lot of flack was thrown around, on the usual grounds of my health and safety but who wants to get to 105 in a glass cage when you can get there on 2 wheels! The way I have lived my life thus far its surprising I have survived beyond puberty!

I thought 09-09-09, would be a great day to order the bike. So on the day, I stuck my head as far as I safely could out of my 18th floor bathroom window. Sadly I couldnt see 6 crows flying in formation at 6.00am.

Then came a period in the Hindu calendar which wasnt auspicious for major decisions (its only a bike), so I waited 10 more days before going back to Pro-Biking: Kanjur.

Had a test ride with the salesman as pillion. Dont know who was more nervous, him or me? Ordered it on 18th of September.

It was another holiday season and offices were closed, so would have to wait 3 weeks for delivery. Tum ti tum ti tum.

The 23rd of September was my birthday. It was the same day that a bike was allocated to me. My office colleagues kindly made a birthday card signed by all even lucky

the dog



Doesnt it make you want to get on a motorcycle?

As the delivery date was approaching, we had some freak change of weather and it was back to monsoon time. I didnt fancy collecting the bike in the rain. I anxiously waited for the bike collection call.

On the 5th of October I got the call around tea-time. I said see you tomorrow. Didnt tell Preeti as she was off to Delhi on business. No point worrying her eh?

Next day looked out of the shower room and the skies where grey. Didnt fancy going for the bike. Spoke to Hemang who had offered to come with me and he said lets do it. So off we went to Kanjur.

The amount of paper work in India is phenomenal. Mug shots, signatures, finger prints and whats your fathers profession before you can have anything. Even when you are buying a happy meal at MacD!

They finally brought our bike out. Enter the Dragon. Grrr.



By the time we got it off the forecourt it was lunchtime and the traffic was bumper to bumper. Rode 100 yards and decided Hemang was best qualified to ride it home.

Filled up with petrol and we were off. Once we were on the freeway I took over the helm. Thats when Hemang got a bit nervous and asked me to ride steadily.

Just when I was starting to have fun the heavens opened up and we were forced to pull up for shelter.

Hemang took charge of the rest of the ride to the office.

At tea time I rode home escorted by the driver. Felt like a VIP with my shades on! Preeti called and I told her that we were a 2 vehicle family and the bike is safely parked in the underground garage. Silence!

My first ride was along Worli Seaface and



Marine Drive.



My second ride took me along NH8 to Vajeshwari where there are natural hot water springs. Recorded the temple and stopped at service area where all I dared was bottled Coke on grounds of hygiene.



A run of 160kms which didnt go down too well. My moby battery was dead and I didnt get back home till way past 2.30 pm. Apparently everyone was worried about a 'foreigner' riding around in unknown territory alone! *Well you could have come with me!*



Apparently, Preeti was about to call the Militia and report me missing!

This could be the beginning of many adventures with me and the Dragon!