



Is That Thing Diesel?: One Man, One Bike and the First Lap Around Australia on Used Cooking Oil

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The next eagerly awaited, high octane, seat-of-your-pants adventure from the author of the bestselling Don't Tell Mum I Work on the Rigs (she thinks I'm a piano player in a whorehouse) sees (the surely a bit bonkers) Paul Carter circumnavigating Australia on a bio-diesel motorcycle.

Is That Thing Diesel?: One Man, One Bike and the First Lap Around Australia on Used Cooking Oil Details

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Author : Paul Carter

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From Reader Review Is That Thing Diesel?: One Man, One Bike and the First Lap Around Australia on Used Cooking Oil for online ebook

Lee Garner says

Really good book about a mans struggles to tame the caged adventure within. Like all good men Paul also has an understanding wife as he set out to ride round Australia. unfortunately the end goes faster than his diesel bike! It looks like he used too many pages and was told you can only have 266 in this book. So he sped off on the last leg of the trip with practically no depth. Still enjoyed the book with good laughs along the way.

Nancy says

Not as good as his first two books but still very entertaining. The scenes including the cockroach and the Longreach hospital had me laughing out loud on the train. I certainly hope that there are more books to come from Paul Carter.

Graham Penson says

Not as good as it could have been. Yes, the author has my sense of humour which made a great connection in the early stages. The whole premise of the book makes for a great story. Riding a crazily underpowered bike running on used chip oil around Australia is a great idea. The author is the type of person to turn the idea into reality.

The humour keeps the book fresh for the first half, but sadly it runs out of steam. The second half gets very repetitive and lacks detail and humour. I am sure this reflects the reality of such an amazing adventure, but really does not make for a brilliant book.

I am though keen to get hold of the first of the Authors books to see if this holds the humour and interest all the way through.

Paul Cookson says

I picked this book up after reading Paul Carter's two previous books on his time working on oil rigs around the world. In this book Paul is retired from the oil rigs and is working a desk job with a new family. What happens next is summed up perfectly in the title. He does what it says on the cover.

This is a nice funny tale of a man and a bike. It is a nice easy read, perfectly enjoyable whether you are into motor bikes or not. If I am going to be super critical, then the final section of the journey feels a little rushed almost as if the publishers deadline had crept out of left field and surprised the author. He covers the final few thousand kilometres of his epic journey in a couple of pages. Don't let that put you off though, just go along for the ride and enjoy the journey. I completed the book in four evenings and so it can't be a bad read.

Mark Oliver says

I fear you have to be an Australian bloke to understand the twisted, ocker sense of humour that Paul Carter brings to the table. He is brash, brutally honest and down-to-earth. His stories are retold with the sure-footed comfort of a master story teller, any bloke that enjoys a beer and regaling his mates with stories of his adventures will be able to relate. In my mind we all know one Paul Carter, the bloke that tells his stories over and over again but somehow they are always fresh and entertaining. The other attractive aspect of Carters stories is that we all have some like them and can easily imagine ourselves doing similar things (some of us can remember it). We've all stacked motorcycles or accidentally set things on fire although it seems Carter has a gift for being in the wrong place at the right time that few of us could hope to, or want to live up to.

Five stars for Paul, I hope to run in to him some day now that he resides in my home town!

Paul says

If you are expecting an Australian version of Long Way Round then it won't quite meet it.

Paul Carter is an ex oil rig worker who after his partner becomes pregnant decides to settle down. After a few months shuffling paperwork wants to ride around Australia on motorbike, his wife suggests rinding something unusual. he manages to find and borrow a oil powered bike from Adelaide Uni and so begins the journey. He completes 14,500km, and thankful escapes serious injury after falling off at one point.

It is written in quite a abrupt style. There are some funny bits and some quite coarse parts, so might not appeal to everyone.

Ok but not great

David says

Right, first an admission. My wife and I went on a 1100 km drive in our fuel guzzling 4WD. On the way, I bought this talking book and whacked the CD into the driver. Paul Carter, the author, read his story of travelling around Australia on a bike driven by used Vegetable Oil!

The story has some mildly interesting anecdotes of getting the trip up and running followed by the trials and tribulations of actually getting the bike around the country. Look, I didn't really like Carter's style of storytelling, but I am so glad he did it. When finished, I couldn't help but wonder why on unrenewable fossil fuel earth aren't we driving around on much more eco-friendly fuels? Worth a read for anybody wanting to be inspired to better this earth.

Paul says

Great read. Plenty of laugh out loud moments but perhaps not as many as his first book, Dont tell my mum I work on the rigs, she thinks I'm a piano player in a whorehouse. There isn't much to this one, its a quick read but well worth it all the same.

Rhys says

Paul Carter's first two books are excellent and I've recommended them to everyone when conversation has hit upon favourite books. I don't think this book is up there with these two but it kept me entertained on a flight. If you've not read any of PC's books, start with "Don't Tell Mum".

Kenny says

I wanted to enjoy this more than I did. It was ok, but hitting the difficult third book. After the often hilarious Don't Tell Mum, the "these are the bits I didn't put in the first book, but they're still funny" This is not a drill, what does he write about now?

And I think he wasn't sure himself - having taken a desk job, and with a new family, he decides to lap Australia on a bike created to run on bio fuel. And...well, that's really it. Again it's nearly half way through before he sets off, and while he's an excellent raconteur, he's no travel writer - each stop has as many thanks to the people who supported him as insight. It strays occasionally into a post-Christmas list of thank-yous...But at least some credit is due for not getting sucked into a bike junkie competition of widget analysis - and he keeps things moving.

But when he gets going with a good story, he's brilliant. His introductory anecdote about just getting to a book festival had me laughing on the train. Not his best, but interesting to see what he does next.

My travel writer question is usually "would you buy them a pint and listen to their experiences?" While Carter may not say as much on his overall experience, you'd have a great time asking what he did on his way to the bar.

Alan Pickerill says

I can see how this book might work for some folks, and it certainly had potential, it really didn't for me. I picked this one up in the Heathrow airport when Dianne and the girls and I were coming back from our trip to Europe last August. Mr. Carter's irreverant personality and writing style at first seemed quite clever but the charm seemed to wear off rather quickly. In the end, the story telling was too simple and I couldn't really figure out what the author was all about other than really loving motorcycles and motorcycle riding. In the end his jaunt around Australia appeared to be just that, and nothing more. At least that's the way I was left feeling.

MaryG2E says

The formative idea of this book is that 40-something Paul Carter, having recently attained the status of fatherhood, is not ready to settle down into suburban life in Perth just yet. After spending an interesting two decades flitting around the world working on various oil rigs, he wants one last big adventure before he succumbs to domesticity. Being passionate about motorcycles, he wants to go on a Really Big Ride. Only problem is that he lacks the necessary cash to indulge his fantasy, so has to go looking for people willing to sponsor his personal mid-life crisis. By some incredible good fortune he discovers a way of doing it. Using an experimental model of a modified motorcycle, he will circumnavigate Australia riding a bike running on bio-fuel. The test vehicle, called Betty, belongs to the engineering department at the University of Adelaide, where the professor and students are eager to assist Carter's vision. Finance and in-kind support roll in from former oil industry colleagues, mates and the customised motorcycle community. Carter has some status as a part-time author of two successful memoirs about his life on the rigs, and he intends to help finance the trip by writing the story of his journey - which resulted in the volume I have just finished reading.

Generally speaking, I enjoy reading travelogues, particularly those that offer insights into the people and ways of life in parts of Australia that I never get to see. Mark Dapin's *Strange Country*, which I read recently, is a really good example of the genre. I wish I could say the same for *Is That Thing Diesel?* Unfortunately I found this piece of self-indulgent twaddle really disappointing on many counts. I won't go into them all but will mention three:

1. Self-indulgence and Self-importance. This trip turns out to be Carter's vanity project. It's all about him and how many maaaates he has and how wonderfully they treat him on the 'Big Lap'. He shows no interest at all in the local people he encounters along the route, except on those occasions when they get in his face. He and his mates indulge in the biggest piss-up you can imagine, drinking themselves into oblivion most nights in various local hotels and motels - that's the extent of Carter's interest in the communities he visits.
2. False pretences. In theory, Carter is riding Betty the Bio-fuel Bike around Australia to test its viability as an alternative form of transport. It soon becomes clear that Carter has zero knowledge of and interest in alternative energy issues and he certainly does absolutely nothing off his own bat during the circumnavigation or in the book to promote the concepts. Admittedly he does give the occasional interview to the local media, such as when he was hospitalised at Longreach for a few days following a crash. He frequently bemoans Betty's lack of power, and he treats the bike quite brutally by speeding beyond its capacity, causing damage to the equipment which leads to several break-downs. He makes it very clear that what he really wants is to be zooming along on a really powerful, large bike, in a high-octane petrol jaunt with his fellow bikers. Somehow I feel the Adelaide Uni folk were comprehensively gypped by this imposter.
3. Blokiness and Sexism. I presume Carter wrote the book with his biker mates and blokes in general as the intended audience. Certainly the tone of the book is pitched at the very lowest common denominator in Australian society. It is full of macho tales and gratuitous bad language, along with some toilet humour of the big fart variety. The women he meets along the way are sexualised, with descriptions of their 'hot' breasts and bottoms, and very occasionally their faces. It was particularly galling to have Carter refer regularly to his wife, Clare and their daughter, Lola, as 'my girls'. No, Paul, Clare is a mature woman who has given birth, she is NOT a 'girl'. The only thing I seriously do not understand about this entire mis-adventure is why Clare stays with him. I also think his mind-set is so outdated and bogan. In our

contemporary society, in which alcohol abuse and alcohol-fuelled violence are serious concerns, his homage to the blokey boozer biker lifestyle is not only pathetic and passé but also inappropriate.

It surprises me that Paul Carter has been a publishing success, because he really is a bit of a bovver boy, a piss-head and also rather a wanker. His prose style is easy and fluid, and it is not hard to read the book in quick fashion. Undoubtedly its low-brow language will be accessible to the least-educated in Australian society. I am happy to admit there are some genuinely funny moments in the story. However it is one of the least satisfying books I've read this year. My expectation that I would read something interesting and educative was an unfounded assumption on my part. This is simply a bloke's memoir, targeted at similarly-minded blokes. I understand his earlier volume *Don't Tell Mom I Work on the Rigs* has been a best-seller. It certainly won't be on my TBR list.

A grudging 1 ★

Kirsty (alkalinekiwi) says

Decided to read something funny while resting up in bed today trying to get over a cold.

I haven't read any of Paul Carter's other books though I think I will look out for them and I did see a volume combining all of his books but if they are as funny as this one I look forward to it.

This was a fairly quick read which had me in fits of laughter, Paul Carter reminds me of some of my hardcase male relatives.

lluke says

enjoyed it more than i thought i would, mostly i find this sort of thing pretty self indulgent, but paul is a self-aware man-child (if there can be such a thing)... and the book isn't really about the lap around australia, but more about him realising that now he has a wife and child, his life has changed... and he loves it.

Elisabeth Sowerbutts says

I wanted to like this book. I've driven around Australia (not on a bike!), and I've worked in the mining industry so I could relate to the writer's tone and language. Unfortunately his un-examined sexism sounded all TOO true to me, and we didn't even get onto the trip until well over 1/2 way thru the book.
