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VITALS

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TAKING A RIDE WITH

EWAN MCGREGOR

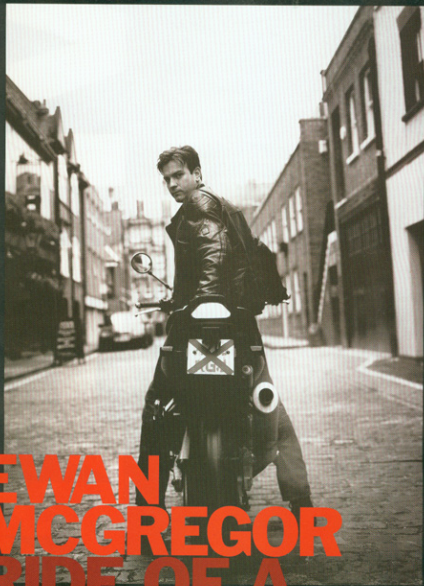
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EWAN MCGREGOR rides a motorcycle around the world and all he gets are some lousy bug bites, a TV deal and an unrelenting urge to talk about two-wheelers. To follow in Mr. McGregor's tracks you'll need a good **MOTORBIKE** and some choice gear, which Vitals gloriously provides. Since there's an outside chance you've had quite enough of Harleys and highways, Vitals charts a NetJet to sweep you over to Italy where one man rules: **GIORGIO ARMANI**. It's the 30th anniversary of the Armani brand and an occasion for Vitals to get exclusive access to the designer, including his ideas on running a business and living like a global superstar. The good life, as Armani points out, isn't complete without a drink in hand. Chianti Classico, perhaps? **THE VITALS GUIDE TO WINE** encourages everyone to suck it up: Wine is fun and easy (if you make the sommelier do all the work). To drink the nice stuff — a 1982 Château Pétrus always hits the spot — you're gonna need some cash. For inspiration, look to **WALL STREET** guys, photographed in their element for Vitals. If you're in need of some practical moneymaking ideas, read our helpful, bite-size tips on managing your bank account. And trust us, lazy bones, you're going to want to dog-ear these pages. Finally, Vitals goes for broke with a page-busting collection of 100 tips tailored for sloths like you. We're calling it **100 SERVICES FOR THE ÜBERLAZY MAN**: Too unmotivated to squeeze toothpaste? Can't muster the strength to feed your goldfish? Too languid to plow through a long-winded magazine feature? Vitals doth provide.



**EWAN
MCGREGOR
RIDE OF A
LIFETIME**

**MCGREGOR CHATS WITH HIS
BIKING BUDDY CHARLEY BOORMAN
ABOUT MOTORCYCLES, THEIR
WORLD TOUR AND THE INDIGNITY OF
MOSQUITO BITES BELOW THE BELT**



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PHOTOGRAPHS BY **JULIAN BROAD**

Obi-Wan Kenobi has hung up his light saber, but Ewan McGregor still has his hands full. He's appearing on the London stage in *Gays and Dolls* and starring alongside Naomi Watts in the Marc Forster-directed psychological thriller *Stay* (in theaters October 21). Recently, McGregor blazed his way onto TV with Bravo's *Long Way Round*, a six-part series documenting the 20,000-mile, round-the-world motorcycle trip he took with fellow actor and best friend Charley Boorman.

MCGREGOR: Hello, Charley. It's lovely to see you.

BOORMAN: I've seen all your movies.

MCGREGOR: Thank you very much. A perfect start.

BOORMAN: To begin, where did your bike passion come from?

MCGREGOR: The first time I rode a bike I was 5 or 6 — it was a little kid's motorbike. There was something in the smell of it and the fact that I didn't have to do any work to make it move really quickly. You know, I still, today, at 34 years old, get the same excitement about getting on my bike.

BOORMAN: I suppose it's the sense of freedom as well. Putting the helmet on and that anonymity.

MCGREGOR: Yeah. Nobody knows who the fuck I am. I'm just someone who's cut them off on a bike.

BOORMAN: What bikes do you own now?

MCGREGOR: I have a 1200cc Suzuki Bandit that I use a lot — it's kind of like my everyday bike.

BOORMAN: But what about the bike we went around the world on [a BMW R1150GS Adventure]? What are your feelings about that puppy?

MCGREGOR: I love it to bits. The thing about those bikes is you can ride them forever — they're the most robust engines in the world. And the most comfortable bike to ride. We rode them into the middle of Mongolia and Siberia and Alaska, Canada and America. I don't think I've got it in my nature to be a racer or such, but I definitely have it in my soul to be an explorer, an adventurer.

BOORMAN: To do the trip, you basically had to learn how to ride off-road in three days before we left.

MCGREGOR: I assumed the off-road riding we'd be doing would be really flat, grassy plains, that you'd be able to ride at 60 miles an hour while eating a sandwich. I mean, that couldn't have been further off. We went through 3000 miles of fuckin' hellish road. Hellish road. There wasn't a road at all anymore. It was like a minefield.

BOORMAN: I remember once watching you, Ewan, going into a pothole and completely disappearing and coming up the other side. Now that's a pothole. And what about favorite countries? I mean, is there one place that sticks out to you?

MCGREGOR: Yeah, Mongolia was the place that had everything. I was looking for in terms of adventure and in terms of cultural difference. It was the furthest away from our way of life. And the people were incredibly friendly. I loved it there. I long to go back to Mongolia.

BOORMAN: Oh, there's Russia —

MCGREGOR: — When there was this derelict house in the distance.

BOORMAN: Yeah, it was really thriving!

MCGREGOR: We stayed up all night and chatted in the daylight. Everyone got so drunk.

BOORMAN: I was shitfaced and woke up with Vladimir, who I had

completely fallen in love with, and then he got his AK-49 out, and we started shooting bottles and things.

MCGREGOR: Everyone was pissed, shooting guns. I got the fuck out of the way.

BOORMAN: People ask me a lot, "Did you end up having nothing to say to each other?" But the thing about it is you can ride the same road but have a completely different view of that road.

MCGREGOR: That's right. We'd see the same things but sometimes experience them in different ways. That was something we learned to allow each other to do. Early on, I would be like, "No, it wasn't like that." But then we learned that that's the beauty of it: We were traveling down the same road, but we learned to have our own individual experience.

BOORMAN: Are there any funny, embarrassing moments from the trip that stand out?

MCGREGOR: I will never forget the shape of my penis after I got three massive mosquito bites on it. Like, you know, Twiglets? It looked like a Twiglet [pretzel stick].

BOORMAN: Well, I remember looking at your ass.

MCGREGOR: I did save you the sight of my penis. But it was a very strange experience having the shape of it altered.

BOORMAN: All right. Where did you get the idea to start doing these bike trips?

MCGREGOR: I think it started when I was in Australia making *Moulin Rouge*. I was riding a Harley Softail then and took off for five days. I'd never really done that before, but I was so in need of being on my own at that point. So I took off on my bike. And it was brilliant. I just found a spot on a farm and put my tent up and slept underneath the stars, really, looking up.

BOORMAN: Did that inspire you to start taking rides throughout the world?

MCGREGOR: Definitely. So there was the trip up and down a bit of Australia. And after *Down With Love*, I rode across France for seven days. And then after *Big Fish*, I bought the Harley and I rode up to Los Angeles from Alabama. It took me five days, staying in motels. It was a taster of that kind of quiet time that comes from sitting on a bike for hours. You get a lot of time to reflect on things. I think one of the greatest things about the around-the-world trip was, you just find yourself on that Kazakstan steppe thinking about something that happened to you when you were 10, and you go, "God where did that come from?"

BOORMAN: And to wrap up, finally, is the force really with you?

MCGREGOR: Please.

BOORMAN: It doesn't work, does it? Because we sat in Ukraine on the border forever.

MCGREGOR: Oh, yeah, for 12 hours. "These aren't the papers you're looking for, move along." I tried it.

BOORMAN: It never worked.

MCGREGOR: No — it didn't work, sadly.

SEE EWAN ONSTAGE

McGregor rides his Suzuki to London's Piccadilly Theatre, where he's winning raves for his role as Sky Masterson in the hit West End revival of *Gays and Dolls* (through December 3, tickets from \$27; 011-44-161-389-5500). When he is offstage, McGregor heads to his favorite restaurants, the **Wolsley** (011-44-200-7490-6996) and (his lunchtime pick) **Amber Cafe Bar** (011-44-013-8644-2217).

opposite NEIL BARRETT BLACK LEATHER JACKET, \$140; LOUIS BOSTON, BOSTON, 617-262-6000. GUESS COTTON BLUE JEANS, \$89; 800-394-8377
ROGAN BLACK COTTON T-SHIRT, \$60; BARNETS NEW YORK, N.Y.C., 212-826-8900. CAT FOOTWEAR BLACK LEATHER SHOES, \$130; CATFOOTWEAR.COM



WHERE TO BUY EWAN'S MOTORCYCLES

A true enthusiast, McGregor owns six motorcycles in total, he keeps four at his home in London and two in Los Angeles. Here's where to find them, including the BMW he rode around the world.

Suzuki Roadit 1200S,

\$2400; SUZUKI-MOTORCYCLES.COM FOR DEALERS

KTM Duke II (discontinued), FROM \$5700;
CHECK EYELETTRIDER.COM FOR AVAILABILITY

MV Agusta F4-1000 S,
\$25,495; MVAGUSTA.COM

Vintage 1969 BSA A65 Lightning, \$5495;

BASTERMOTO.COM

Honda RC51, FROM \$12,000
POWERSPORTS.HONDA.COM FOR DEALERS

Harley-Davidson FLTRI Road Glide,
FROM \$17,345; HARLEY-DAVIDSON.COM FOR DEALERS

BMW R1150GS Adventure, FROM \$15,470;

BMW-MOTORCYCLES.COM FOR DEALERS