

## And You Thought Riding In The Rain Was Hardcore: Aerostich's Zero Below Zero

By Surj Gish

Most of us here at *CityBike* have ridden in some pretty hairball-y conditions. Stormageddon 2014, the 2016 Treasure Island Mini-TT, floods, mud, you name it. Well, except snow—although Sam has been trying to convince me to get on board with an exceptionally crazy story idea for a couple years, in which we ride tire-chained motorcycles into the Sierras in a snowstorm. Maybe this'll be a future Stupid Adventures of Sam 'n' Fish thing.

Snow and freezing conditions aren't generally part of our riding conditions here in the Bay Area, though, in spite of occasional exclamations of "I'm freezing to death" at the TITT. So we have to look elsewhere for *truly* hardcore motorcycling. After all, Aerostich's "rideable days" map shows 365 for San Francisco, meaning that maybe every four years we have to stay

home one day because it's just too cold or wet or whatever. In the Bay Area. Riiight.

Last winter, Aerostich partnered with Zero Motorcycles on a Stupid Adventures-esque idea. The result: *Zero Below Zero – Electric Motorcycle Everyday Commuting All Winter in Duluth Minnesota*. Zero provided Andy Goldfine and the rest of the Aerostich crew with a Zero FX, to answer the question that motorcyclists the world over we certainly asking: "Will an electric motorcycle work for everyday transportation all winter long in frozen Duluth Minnesota?"

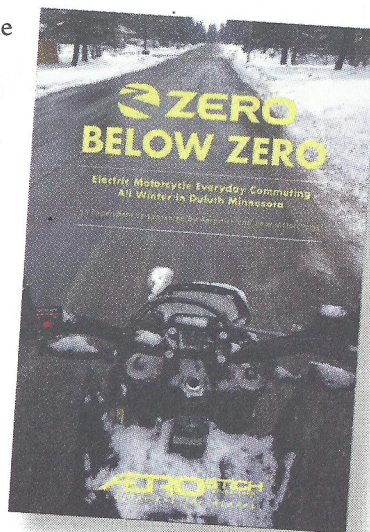
In case you're a self-indulgent, entitled, left coast weenie with zero knowledge of "flyover states," and you're asking

"Duloooo... what? Where?" I'll clue you in. Duluth is up against the Canadian border, on the shores of Lake Superior (as in superior riders, unstoppable by little things like snow), where temps can get down to 25 below zero on the coldest days—thus the clever-but-factual *Zero Below Zero* title.

By the way, As I write this, it's 59 degrees and rainy in Oakland, but 11 degrees in Duluth. That's a work from home day for this chickenshit California moto-commuter.

*Zero Below Zero* is essentially a print version of the blog ([Aerostich.com/blog/zero-below-zero](http://Aerostich.com/blog/zero-below-zero)) the crew wrote to track the project. I like it quite a bit, in no small part

because it reminds me of *CityBike*: mostly black and white photos with some color in the middle, the whole thing based on a questionable, even inadvisable idea.



The story starts with their surprisingly minimal prep of the FX: heated grips, an Aerostich-designed and produced battery warmer (they stored the bike outdoors the entire time: "No sleeping inside nice warm garages."), ports for heated gear, studded tires and a thermometer, presumably to track the likely exponential ratio between descending temperatures and insanity. They also added a skull with red LED eyes: "In case anyone had any questions about the sanity of our plans."

There's a bit of a marketing component in both the blog and book, which isn't to say you shouldn't read it. It's interesting stuff, but it's also a nice testimony to the gear used and the apparent durability of the FX, which—spoiler alert—didn't experience any real issues, although it looks pretty fucked by the end of the winter. I got a chuckle out of Andy's feedback on the bike, which includes gems like "fly-dope-hip-whatever" and a desire for a steering lock that positions the front wheel pointed straight ahead, to "see the potential of the far horizon." Spray-coating the engine would help with some of the fucked-ness I mentioned, and he'd keep the LED-lit skull, in case you're wondering.

Unlike some of the moto-books we get our hands on, which are often one-sided, photos-from-the-archive, brand history circle jerks, *Zero Below Zero* is a truly interesting read, partly because the story itself is just kinda nuts, partly because it helps us understand where electric vehicles are in an (extreme) real world sense, and partly because it reminds us to stop being such pansies. It's just rain. You won't melt.

You wanna be a hardcore moto-commuter? Read *Zero Below Zero* and consider your bar raised.

\$10. Softcover, 135 pages. Get yours at [Aerostich.com](http://Aerostich.com).

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