

## The Value of a Compatible Riding Buddy

ONE OF THE BEST THINGS ABOUT RIDING a motorcycle is sharing the experience side by side with a buddy. Your riding buddy is the one person with whom you feel most comfortable riding, the one with

whom you share that silent biker communication on the road. At its best, a one-eyed glance can convey things like "Got to go to the bathroom," "hungry," and "need gas."

It's a wonderful type of relationship once you've found it. Your riding buddy can be a friend or a significant other. A riding buddy may not always be someone you hang with outside of motorcycling; your relationship with this person can be reserved just for the road.

If you already have a riding buddy relationship, you know what I mean. If you don't have one, I suspect that is by choice; you probably prefer to ride with a big group or ride alone. While I love riding by myself and enjoy that liberating feeling of conquering the road solo, I enjoy journeying with that certain buddy even more. Some of my best riding experiences have been shared with just one other person.

Who that person is and how you get along with him or her has a big impact on your riding enjoyment. Have you ever ridden with someone new and could tell that your riding relationship with that person just wasn't jibing? That the person is thinking and doing everything differently than you? If you've experienced this, I'm sure you know what I mean.

Riding buddies will do just about anything for each other on the road. They won't leave you stranded in times of trouble. If you're running late, he or she will wait for you. And a good riding buddy is always looking out for you.

This trust and understanding don't happen overnight. There's a sizing up process that takes place between two potential riding buddies, with each person putting the other through a series of silent tests. Here are some of the tests my riding buddies over the years have had to pass: 1) Does this person have a riding style similar to mine? 2) Does he or she share a similar eating and bathroom stop schedule with me (or at least be tolerant of mine)? 3) Can this person deal with stopping a few times to allow me to shed clothes when temperatures climb? (I'm always cold so I have a lot more layers to remove when it heats up, and I can't always guess on the first stop how many layers to remove. I might have to stop again.) 4) How flexible is this person? Does he or she mind impromptu stops to take pictures or visit cool shops? 5) Is this person in his or her own world on a motorcycle or is he or she



conscious of me? Because of geographical moves and life changes, I am now enjoying a road relationship with my third riding partner ... and I can tell you there are some kinks that are still being worked out. More on that later.

Right now I'm guessing that some of you reading this (probably the men) disagree with my assertion that there is a mental screening process for a riding buddy. I can see why. Most guys just go out there, get on their bikes and ride without thinking much about who, what, and why. Women think too much. Why should it be any different on a motorcycle? For a woman, riding can be such a life-changing experience that finding a partner who shares all or most of her reasons for riding becomes supremely important to her overall enjoyment of the activity.

My latest riding buddy happens to be the first one of the opposite sex — my significant other. It's taking a little bit longer than with past riding buddies to find that groove with one another. The reason, I believe, is because he's a man and I'm a woman. There are some generalized gender differences getting in the way, like my need to stop more to use the bathroom. I like to stop and shop more than he does. He's more in awe of scenery and always looking out for wildlife more than me, so he slows down at the drop of a hat quite a few times during a scenic ride, putting me right on his tail. That uneven speed thing is something I try to deal with, but really it just irritates me. I prefer to ride at a constant speed, thank you very much. He likes long days in the saddle on multiple-day rides. I prefer a more modest pace. But because I love this man, I try to go with the flow and not be so demanding. I'm sure he does the same.

After five years of riding just with each other, I can tell he's itching for a male riding buddy, just for a change of pace. And I wouldn't mind another woman to ride with now and then. Compatible riding buddies are hard to come by. If you have one, make sure you appreciate him or her. They're worth every mile you travel together.

**Editor's note:** If you've got press releases, story ideas, or anything worth mentioning with regard to women and motorcycling, e-mail them to Genevieve at [GSchmitt@WomenRidersNow.com](mailto:GSchmitt@WomenRidersNow.com). You can also visit her web site at [www.WomenRidersNow.com](http://www.WomenRidersNow.com).