

Re-Energize Your Ride

by Genevieve Schmitt

I HAVE A SECRET to share with you. It's something no motorcyclist should ever admit to, but I'm going to bring it out in the open, expose the secret, come clean on something I bet a lot of other motorcyclists have experienced. A couple of years ago I grew bored of riding my motorcycle, disenchanted, burned out. It was no longer exciting for me to go for a ride on my bike. The joy fizzled to a chore. What used to get me all jazzed—the whole act of planning and preparing for a ride—was now a dreaded task. Then, after I returned from a ride, I'd come home feeling much the same as before I left. Just ho hum.

Riding my motorcycle became a lot like going to the gym for a workout. I wasn't feeling up to it, but I knew if I went I'd probably feel better afterwards. Well, unlike going to the gym and getting that fresh dose of endorphins flowing to remind me why I work out in the first place, riding my motorcycle no longer provided that natural high it used to, so I wondered why I was even getting on my bike anymore.

Can you believe I'm even writing about this? I'm a full-time motorcycling journalist for crying out loud! What's my problem? Why was I feeling this way? How could I write about the virtues of motorcycling and inspire others if I was not feeling any of those virtues myself? I knew I had a serious problem and I wasn't quite sure how to deal with it.

To make the situation even worse, my well of article ideas started drying up. Riding my motorcycle used to inspire me, but when my friends invited me to go riding on the weekend, I dug up every excuse not to join them. "I work all week in motorcycling. I need to take a break from it this weekend," was my most frequent response.

Being the analytical type, I analyzed what might be contributing to my depressed motorcycle state. Did I make the wrong choice of working fulltime in motorcycling? Is that why I'm burned out? Maybe I should not have gone on those high-mileage two-week motorcycle vacations two summers in a row. Maybe that contributed to my burnout. Maybe I need a new bike? A 12-year-old motorcycle is hard to get excited about, you know? Maybe I should invest in some new motorcycling gear. I'm a woman. Shopping for new apparel should spice up the situation, right?

My motorcycling state of mind returned to its former glory at the beginning of this past 2006 riding season. I'm back to my old



motorcycling self, energized about riding every chance I get. Looking back, the reasons for my downturn were a combination of everything I had thought. My riding life needed some re-energizing and here's how I did it.

Because motorcycling is what I think about all during the workweek, when I rode my bike

it was hard to not weave work into it somehow. Now, when I go on a pleasure ride, I leave the camera and notepad at home. I enjoy the ride without forcing something to come of it that I could use in my work.

I've come to the conclusion that my old bike is part of the problem. It's no fun any more to hold on to my 1994 Dyna in Wyoming's gusty prairie winds as I made my annual trek to Sturgis, checking and rechecking the status of my bungee cords, the carbureted Evolution engine screaming at the top of its lungs at 75 mph. As I watched my friends putter along at 80 mph effortlessly on their tour-pack laden Road Kings and Ultras, I was thinking, "I need a new bike."

And with that new bike will come some new motorcycle apparel. For women, clothes can help instill a new attitude. I need boots, a jacket, and chaps that say, "This is me." For the last few years, my look consisted of whatever new apparel I received from a manufacturer wanting me to do a review. Where's my motorcycle identity in that? The start of the true blue motorcycle-riding Genevieve began when I plunked down \$280 for a pair of distressed brown leather, square-toed boots. Now that's more me, not the shiny, black, new leather boots I found myself wearing the past few years.

I need to start riding to new places and seeing new things. Once I have that new motorcycle, I know I'll be more excited about doing that. While I've been riding for 16 years, much of that time I've been riding to the same rallies. This year I ventured out of my rally comfort zone and attended Americade for the first time. I'm glad I did because it was something new, and new things excite me. I need to create new riding adventures.

If you find yourself in a two-wheeled funk, maybe you can learn from what I am going through. Motorcycling is a wonderful thing, but sometimes we can get too much of a wonderful thing. I never want to take my motorcycling life for granted, because when I step back and take a long hard look at it, few things in life compare to it. **FZ**

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