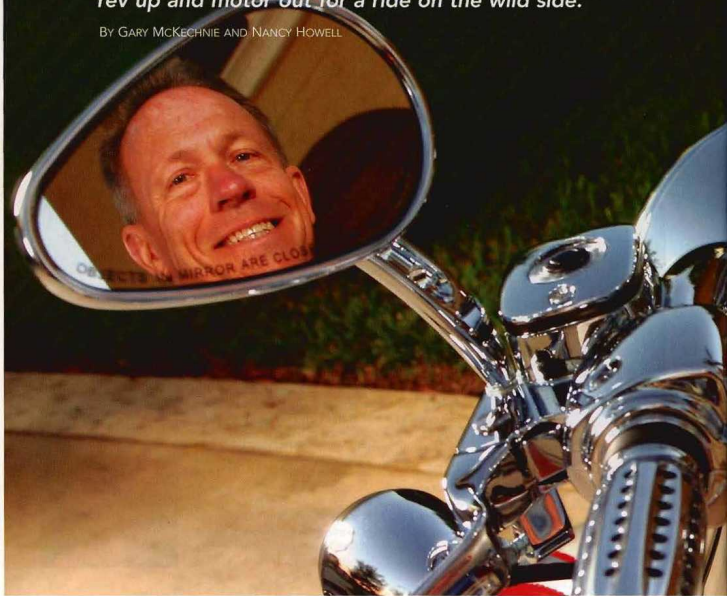


THE ART OF MOTORCYCLING

When the spirit of the open road calls, these Orlandoans rev up and motor out for a ride on the wild side.

By GARY McKECHNIE AND NANCY HOWELL



The art of motorcycling is more than merely riding a bike. Motorcycling is the rare pastime that combines transportation with a passion for life. Riding a motorcycle links serenity with discovery; it defines freedom, self-expression and adventure. It satisfies a range of desires from adrenaline to Zen.

While they've earned a reputation as a symbol of counterculture cool, motorcycles are not just for leather-jacketed toughs. In fact, with more prominent people embracing motorcycles as a

spirited form of recreation, riding a motorcycle has become downright respectable. This is especially true in Orlando, where pleasant weather opens up our roads to a year-round calendar of weekend rides, weeklong tours, and quick stress-relieving after-work excursions.

So as you travel around Orlando, peek beneath the helmets of riders astride small scooters and tricked-out V-twins. You may spy some familiar faces—people who have come to appreciate that motorcycling is an art.

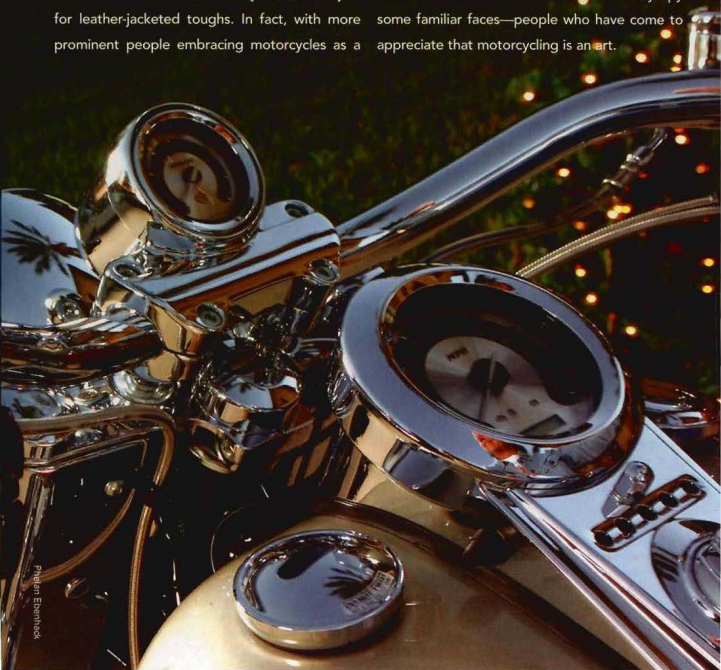


Photo: Ebenack

Tom Morgan

CEO, Hughes Supply

Just because you have an insatiable urge to ride, don't think you can just pick out a bike and head for the Black Hills. In fact, before any man can saddle up he must contemplate the risks, consider his skill level, test his eye-hand-foot coordination, and then ask himself, "Is my wife actually going to let me ride a motorcycle?"

Even though Tom Morgan is the powerful CEO of Hughes Supply, at home he has to answer to the boss. Although he had ridden in his youth, Morgan knows he couldn't have ridden another mile until the missus gave her blessings.

"When I turned 50 and the kids were grown," Morgan remembers, "is when Dianne gave me permission to ride again."

So he has with a vengeance. Now astride his 2006 Harley-Davidson Fat Boy, Morgan can once again experience the pleasures he first discovered while riding dirt bikes. And he does so now with a bit more finesse, having created the platinum-level version of the Hell's Angels, a loosely affiliated group of friends from Isleworth called the I-Hogs. Donning their club jackets, Morgan and developers and fellow CEOs Glenn Miller, Bob Noble, Ned Grace and Patrick Kirkland head for the back roads to escape on short day and weekend trips around Lake County and, occasionally, longer runs to the Keys. And when the roads of Central Florida feel too confining, Morgan heads north; north to Big Fork, Montana, where he's stashed his

second bike, an H-D Road King. Here the land is wide and free, just the right place for the new homes and barns Morgan is building with a few of his fellow I-Hogs. Soon, very soon, it will become the base of their summer riding operations.

"For me, riding is a great way to be with friends who enjoy the same things," Morgan

says of his rekindled passion. "It's also a method of relaxation. There's a great sense of peace that comes along in the late afternoon when it's the end of the day and you're by yourself, cruising along. I've enjoyed a lot of those moments with just the wind in my face and the sound of the pipes in my ears."





Scott McKenzie

DJ, WOMX-105.1

If it takes a wife's approval before a guy can buy a Harley, Scott McKenzie found that this is also true of a smaller bike. When he decided he wanted to buy a 49-cc Kymco ZX50 scooter, McKenzie still had to clear it with his wife.

"I worked on her for months," he admits. "If I had come right out and asked Fran to say yes, I would have looked weak. So I had to wait for her to see me looking at it on the Internet so many times before she said, 'OK, you can buy it now.'"

As a novice rider, McKenzie recognized (quite sensibly) that he wasn't ready for a large motorcycle. So McKenzie bought the Kymco "because it looked a little more motorcyclist" and then hit the highway where, he recalls, he felt like an intruder on the road.

But as he adapted to his new life as a rider, he began to understand and experience the same sensations shared by his biking brethren.

"I know it's just transportation, but it takes me to a different place," he reminisces. "This scooter will go

anywhere. On one ride I ended up by a lake where there was a single bench and no one around me. Remember when you were a kid and you had days when you felt like there was nothing to do? As an adult, you go into denial when you have free time like that. But



Pheasant Eberhach

that day I just sat there. And I sat there for 20 minutes and just watched the lake and watched the boats go by. I can't tell you how great that was."

As McKenzie sees it, the bike is his ticket to freedom. "I really had no good reason

for starting this, and I wish I could come up with a functional reason for wanting it, but it just looked like fun. The scooter takes me to a whole new place where I can say, 'I'll be back in an hour,' and I can just go and I don't even know where I'm going."

Judge Patricia Fawsett

Chief Judge, U.S. District Court
for the Middle District of Florida

Not everyone who loves motorcycles feels the need to buy one. Just ask Judge Patricia Fawsett. "I've had a lifelong fascination with motorcycles, but I also have a lot of competing interests," she says. "So while I've thought of buying my own bike, I realized that instead of owning one, when I'm ready to ride I can either rent a bike or borrow one."

It'd be natural to assume that the pressure of judging high-profile federal cases is the impetus for Fawsett to ride. In truth, the reason is far less about stress and far more about freedom.

"I'm not a person who feels stressed," she observes. "But I am an outdoors girl and I love to ride on country roads. And through my teens and young adult years I've loved the feel and experience of riding right out into the country. But for the fact that I have these cases in front of me, I would be riding those roads right now."

Courtesy of Judge Fawsett



Phelan Elmhack

John Lowndes

Founding Partner, Lowndes, Drosdick,
Doster, Kantor & Reed, PA

While riding scooters with friends in southern France, John Lowndes became infatuated with the possibility that, upon returning to the States, he could roll toward his 75th birthday knowing that he could soon be doing something different—and exciting.

And he did. When he came home, he went out and bought a 50cc Vespa, the cute-as-a-button scooter popularized in the Gregory Peck-Audrey Hepburn film *Roman Holiday*.

While it's easy to spot the dapper attorney in his business suit, after work when he dons his white helmet and sunglasses and windbreaker, he's nearly incognito. Then, astride the white scooter with the blue seat, Lowndes tools around downtown and into Winter Park, darting down side streets and past parks. It brings back memories of his first rides along the Riviera and triggers a keen zest for life.

"I started out with a little trepidation, but now I really enjoy riding," Lowndes smiles. "Plus, I can get up to 35 mph on this, so I guess it does spark a little surge of adrenaline now and then."



Bishop Thomas Wenski

Roman Catholic Diocese of Orlando

Five years ago as his 50th birthday loomed on the calendar, Bishop Thomas Wenski, leader of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Orlando, gave himself his own blessing to resurrect a long-neglected desire to ride. Soon after, his friend Tom Equels persuaded him to buy a bike, and so he did. His Honda Shadow 1100 has given Wenski a new outlook—as well as a new way to get to work.

"I oversee nine counties in Central Florida, and I've used the motorcycle to explore the Diocese," he explains. Seeking a

different motorcycling experience, "during one weekend last February I went out and rented a Harley-Davidson Road King. I figured if I had my collar on, I'd become a traffic hazard, so I had an assistant in a car carry all my vestments and the things I'd need when I'd reach a parish. In two days I covered about 360 miles, and when I'd reach a church, it was like Superman running into a phone booth. I'd take off the jeans and the boots and put on the collar and robes and black clothes and perform the service. It took almost everything out

of me not to buy that bike."

With his Shadow giving him passage to heaven on earth, Wenski is seeing the world from a different perspective. "There is that spiritual pleasure in riding a motorcycle," he says. "You can smell the countryside and experience things that you don't get inside of a car. And it gives you time to center yourself and to think. It's a way to set aside problems and relax. It's a healing experience that makes you better able to tackle your problems when the ride is finished."

Joe Lee

Retired CEO, Darden Restaurants

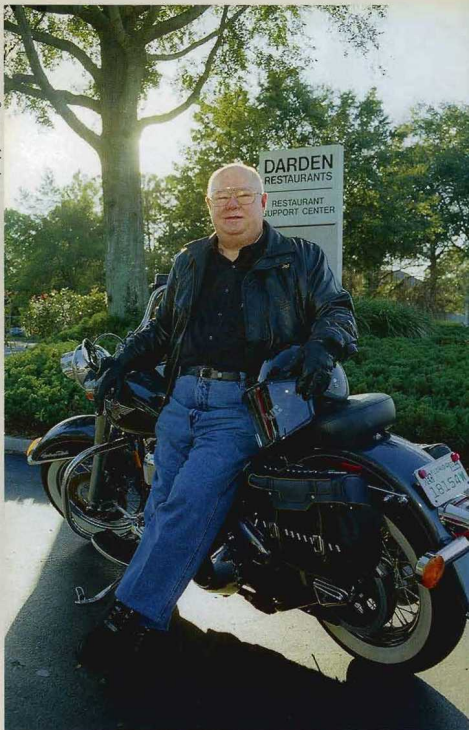
It didn't take a mid-life crisis to ignite Joe Lee's fascination with motorcycles—it was an adolescent crush. Way back in the early 1950s, before he entered his teens, Lee worked on farms in north Georgia to scrape together enough cash to buy a spitfire of a bike: an Allstate by Sears. Fast forward to Orlando, 1970, where Joe Lee is back in the saddle. Taking a break from Red Lobster, he rides Honda and Yamaha dirt bikes with his wife and kids in the sprawling expanse of pre-Disney Central Florida.

Now, at 65, the recently retired CEO of Darden Restaurants has all the time in the world to again concentrate on his first passion. Now the proud owner of a 250cc dirt bike and a significantly larger H-D Road King, he's already mapping out rides with his son through the twisted hills of north Georgia, and anticipating week-long road trips.

"I think there are three things about biking that affect me," Lee says. "One is the nostalgia of it. I start thinking about riding when I was young and the fun times I had. The second part of it is the experience of just getting out and riding, which is closely associated with the third thing, and that is getting back to nature."

For Lee, the fresh delights of an open country road beckon. "When you ride out in a rural area and smell the grass and flowers and the blossoms of flowering trees—it's really nice, and very nearly the closest thing to that little dream everyone has of floating over the tree-tops. It's a delightful experience that, if you've done it, you'll understand. If not, you never will."

Courtesy of Joe Lee





Steve Goldman

Retired CEO, Distributed Processing Technology

Turn back the clock to 1969 and you would have seen Steve Goldman speeding around Georgia Tech in Atlanta on his Honda 125 or slipping and sliding on icy winter freeways, but not caring, really, because he was on his bike.

And after he graduated and prospered and found himself enjoying the luxuries of a home in the south of France, he reacquainted himself with the *joie de vivre* of two-wheeled travel. Buying a fleet of nine 125cc scooters (one of which would make an indelible impression on his friend John Lowndes), Goldman and his wife, Melanie, would lead scooter caravans around cliffs and canyons and into the Alps or down to the Riviera.

Returning to America in 2000, Steve and Melanie said adieu to the scooters and bon jour to a pair of Harley-Davidsons; a Softail

Deluxe for him and smaller Springer Softail for her. But then the lure of the open American road was too strong to resist, so they packed up the bikes, shipped them to Los Angeles, and got ready for adventure.

"There was hardly any planning and definitely no schedule," says Goldman. "We planned on riding for six weeks, so we could do whatever we wanted when we wanted."

And with that they headed north and stayed true to their course. Hugging the Pacific Coast Highway for 2,000 miles between L.A. and Seattle, they lived a lifestyle dictated not by a clock or a computer, but by life itself.

"It was incredibly memorable," Goldman recalls. "I've been to San Francisco and to L.A., but now we were able to see how they are all connected, one mile at a time. And there were cool moments like the time in Big

Sur when we went to this little restaurant that doesn't look like much, but they had set up chairs and tables in this little brook and we dined while sitting in the stream. There was a jazz band playing and people were there sipping wine. It was beautiful."

Now home and planning their next voyage of discovery, the Goldmans can take their pick of four motorcycles, having added a Softail Deuce and Screaming Eagle V-Rod Deuce to their collection. Knowing that the great outdoors awaits, you can bet the Goldmans are going to wring every ounce of pleasure out of their bikes.

Says Goldman, "When you are riding through countryside in a car, your reference point is the car. On a motorcycle, you can smell nature and you can feel it and you can hear it. It's like flying low. It's nature. It's total exhilaration." *TM*