

International

Female

by Debra Chin

Founder of MotoChic Gear®

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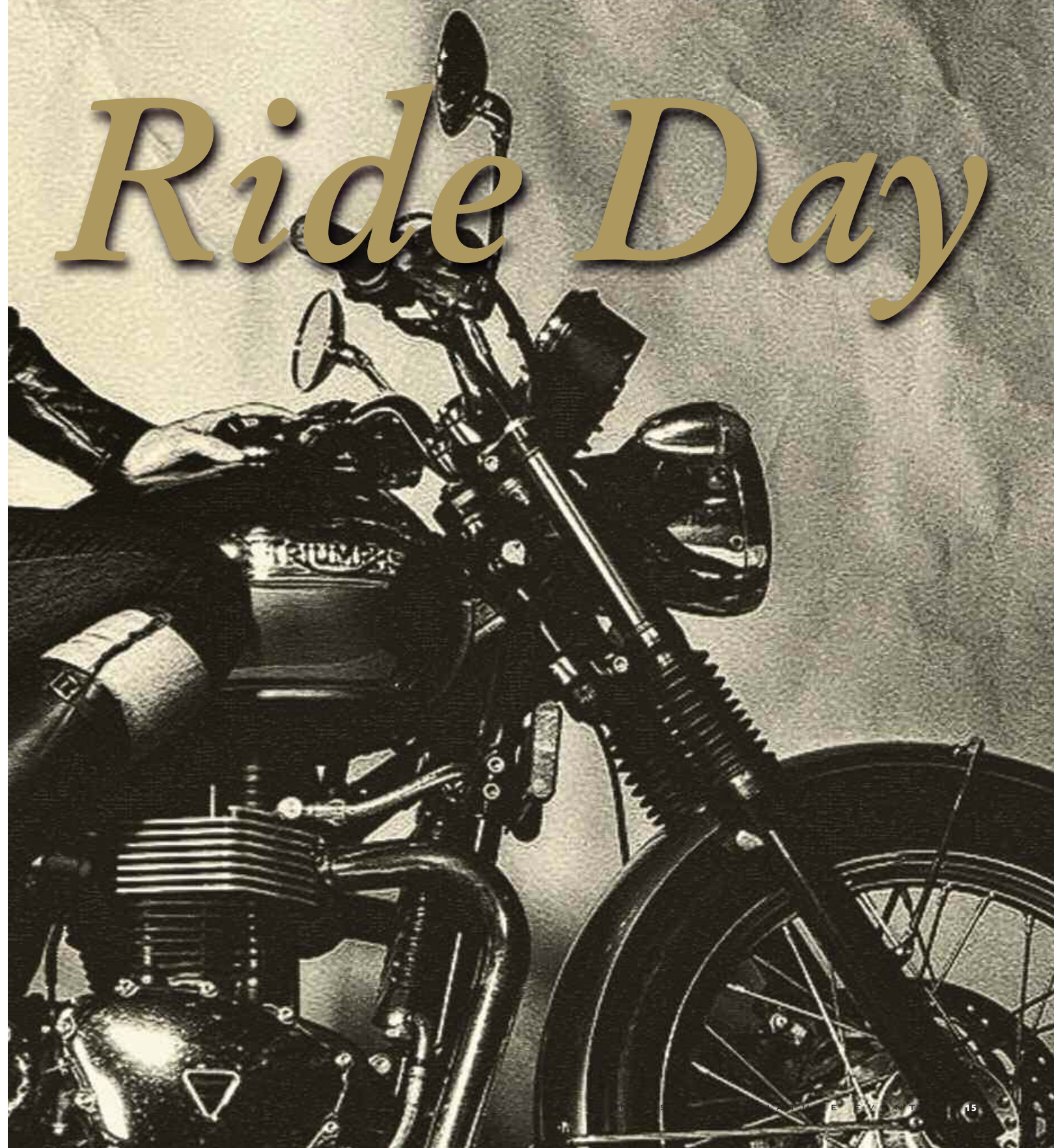
Ginger Damon

Founder of Gigi Montrose

Moto Couture

*We've Come a Long Way, Baby...
Women on Two Wheels*

Ride Day





The Quail Motorcycle Gathering is classic, prestigious, and world-renowned. It celebrates the historical evolution of motorcycles, drawing refined spectators from around the world. Guests are captivated by its meaningful exhibition of a world on two wheels. As women, the evolution of females in motorcycling intrigues them the most, especially since this year, the Gathering is being held on May 6, 2017 — International Female Ride Day.

International Female Ride Day is for women to be seen riding, to get out and be noticed. Vicki Gray created this day eleven years ago for women to celebrate riding, meet fellow female riders, groups and clubs. Since its inception, the whole premise is to "Just Ride!" and to female riders like ourselves, this is our day!

In the early 1900's, when Dorothy "Dot" Robinson Goulding, the daughter of a motorcycle sidecar manufacturer, immersed herself in the world of motorcycling, everyone wanted to think she was just out to have a good time. They didn't believe she set out to change the

world. She hadn't embarked on a mission to become the "First Lady of Motorcycling." She grew up riding. It brought her joy and it felt natural to allow motorcycles to become a larger part of her life.

And yet, Dot was an anomaly. Her female presence in the world of motorcycling seemed out of place and was adamantly rejected by society. Initially, it was only in the company of her husband or under the banner of her father's company, that she was allowed to participate. In those days, something about motorcycling made it proprietary to men alone.

Today, finally, the world is appreciating women riders not as anomalies, but as badass ladies who just like to have a good time. They are moms and daughters, businesswomen and renegades, fashionistas and students, racers and hobbyists, adventurers and enthusiasts...ourselves included. Ladies have not infiltrated the men's motorcycling world — they've carved out their own. With other women, in cities, countries and continents across the globe through

community, camaraderie and charisma, they have united!

This was done out of necessity. Women wanted the feeling of freedom and wind-racing excitement, but didn't want to trade in their womanliness for it. It didn't make sense for them to dull down their femininity in order to go fast. Women wanted to be themselves and have a good time on their own terms. "Moto-Enthusiast" is the preferred title as it is the passion, people, sensations, experiences and accomplishments that keep women in the saddle. True dedication to always learning more about themselves as riders and the machine is their inspiration. Riders like Valerie Thompson, Eva Hakansson, Erin Hunter-Sills, Shelina Moreda and Gloria Tramontin Struck, just to name a few, are women who are fully alive in their femininity and totally kick butt on two wheels.

Valerie Thompson, "America's Queen of Speed," is currently the "World's Fastest Female Racer," clocking in at over 304 MPH. Eva Hakansson is a Guinness World Record holder



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as the fastest female motorcycle rider. Erin Hunter-Sills is a 19x motorcycle speed record holder who regularly leaves riders in the dust at Bonneville, Utah. Shelina Moreda is the first female to race and place at the Zhuhai International Circuit in China. Currently in her 90s, Gloria Tramontin Struck is the oldest active female motorcyclist in the world. These women are fast and fierce and there's no mistaking their feminine power. They're not waiting on a prince charming to ride up and whisk them away; they are the superheroes. Their excellence on two wheels is not an anomaly. It's fact.

Although Dorothy "Dot" Robinson Goulding, "The First Lady of Motorcycling," did not set out as a trail blazer for women riders, she eventually and naturally become an advocate encouraging women through her Motor Maids club to try life on two wheels. Today, women ride triumphantly, competitively and unapologetically. Organizations like the Motorcycle Industry Council have recently launched initiatives such as, PowerLily's Gas Tank, which supports the development of women-owned powersports companies. The MIC's 2015 Motorcycle Owner Survey revealed that one in four riders is a woman. Even cooler, the same survey reported that many of those women perform their own maintenance on their bikes.

"It was these female trail blazers who have

impacted us as riders, as enthusiasts and as fellow women with our own stories. My friend Jen Caputo and her tribe showed up. These ladies are some of Hollywood's most sought after stunt women. Jen was very instrumental in having been my first contact with a female motorcyclist! That day I fell in love with motorcycles," Ginger shares. Ginger continues to reminisce, "That tribe, that community of women encouraged me to learn how to ride. They scooped me up and took me out to a dirt bike school."

That night with the support of fellow female riders, I signed up, took the course, got my license and bought my first bike – a Triumph Bonniville T-100, which was my dream bike that I still ride it today!"

Motorcycle manufacturers have begun to take notice and cater to the growing segment of women interested in riding, such as Harley-Davidson's garage parties. There's a growing selection of bikes that are designed to accommodate riders of all sizes, such as the recently released Kawasaki Vulcan S. with its ad-



justable seats, handle bars and foot pegs. After discovering the joys of motorcycling a few years ago, Debra became frustrated by the "pink it and shrink it" approach taken by most mainstream gear manufacturers. "My mission for MotoChic Gear® is to combine leading edge design with high performance materials to create safe and stylish clothing and accessories for adventure-loving women," says Debra. "I'm thrilled to see the growth in

brands founded by fellow women "motopreneurs" such as VnM Sportgear, Worse for Wear, Go Go Gear, Plutonium Moto, and Gigi Montrose Moto Couture." They've chronicled our journey in media, like the recently launched Modern Moto Magazine and the Women's Moto Exhibit. And their sisterhood is celebrated with holidays like International Female Ride Day on May 6th of every year, founded by MOTORESS®, the longest running online global community for women motorcycle riders.

Women have come a long way, baby! Validated by a recent Harley-Davidson study, women who ride are happier, sexier and more confident. Women on two wheels have arrived and are here to stay.

In honor of International Female Ride Day 2017, MotoChic Gear® will donate 10% of its sales proceeds during the month of May to fund scholarships for Shelina Moreda's She'z Moto-Camp. The camp empowers women and girls with strength and confidence through motorcycle skills training.



Photo by Lanakila MacLaughlin | www.womensmotoexhibit.com