



Building the Bonds of Sisterhood on Long Rides



As the sun began to rise, casting a golden hue over the horizon, a group of women revved up their motorcycles in preparation for the days ride. Today wasn't just any ride though, it was a ride that would take them 575 miles across the state of Florida and back home again. With the wind against our faces and the roar of our engines in unison, we set off toward the rising sun. The camaraderie among riders was palpable, each one of us united by a common thread of love for motorcycles. We rode through small towns and big ones, wooded roads and interstates, our small little convoy a spectacle of solidarity.

We began our day in Hudson, a small town in Pasco County on the West Central Coast of Florida. As a group we had decided to participate in the annual Soaked and Sore Ass Poker Run hosted by Full Throttle Magazine. It wasn't too hot yet, and there wasn't any rain on the horizon. We drew cards for our first poker hand and set off quickly, looking to get some miles down before the strong heat of the day took over.



Pausing only for a very quick bite to eat, we reached our next check point in Clermont fairly quickly by cruising on back roads we were familiar with. This part of the trip was "our turf", the area we most often ride on when out and about on the weekends together. It just seemed like a regular day with the girls up to that point. After drawing our next hands, it was on to Merritt Island on the East Coast of Florida.



This part of our trip gave us a few challenges. Because of the amount of miles we needed to cover that day, we decided to scoot down the Florida Turnpike. Riding on the Florida Turnpike was probably the lowlight of an otherwise amazing day. Not much to look at, no curves to speak of, and no changes in speeds for almost a hundred miles. Some vehicles were just crazy, and it was difficult to stick together as a group at times, but we persevered and made it to our third checkpoint. It was getting pretty hot and miserable by then, so we took a few minutes to use the restroom, rehydrate, and problem solve a saddlebag that the bolts came loose on. From there we pushed onward down Route 1 making stops to rehydrate and draw cards in Grant and Fort Pierce. We encountered just a few sprinkles along the way, but no deluges, and the overcast sky gave us a small reprieve from the oppressive heat. By now we were getting hot, tired, and frankly a little bit cranky toward each other at times. But we still

were just past halfway, so we regrouped, rehydrated, and pressed on like the badass women we are.

The next leg of our journey took us back west around the southern side of Lake Okeechobee and through some very quiet rural areas. Long lazy curves, a plethora of trees. It was just like riding near home. We were so lucky through this section of our ride. The rain kept falling on the horizon just in front of us. Cooling the air and keeping the sun behind the clouds - which was a good thing, because after our fifth checkpoint here we still had over a hundred miles to go to reach our destination and we were chasing the sunset. We wanted to make it to Port Charlotte before the sun went down. We needed to check in at the last checkpoint held at Black Widow Harley Davidson to turn in our “poker hands” and successfully complete the ride.



Just as darkness fell, we pulled into our last checkpoint of the evening. WE MADE IT! We turned in our hands and went to fill our bellies. We had skipped lunch in order to make our destination on time and we were starving. One thing I can say about our group is that we are a food motivated bunch. Missing lunch had made us all kind of hangry. Some water, grub, and a restroom made it all better. (I’m sorry for what I said when it was 109 degrees outside). The rewards for the run were announced at 10 pm. It ended up being a successful poker day with two of our women winning awards. After chatting with a couple on a motorcycle we met along the way, we tiredly rode to our hotel to call it a night. Freshly showered, we chatted briefly about our day and hit the hay.



As the sun rose the next morning, we met for breakfast and took our time getting ready for the ride home. Even though we still had 136 miles to go, it seemed like such a short venture after squeezing in 439 miles the previous day. We checked our bikes, put on our gear, switched leaders and sweeps, and then headed out on the final leg of our journey.

As I rode with the ladies home, I let my mind wander just a bit and reflected on the experience of my first truly extra long-distance ride with these remarkable women. The camaraderie of women on long-distance motorcycle rides is a testament to the spirit of adventure and the strong bonds that can form on the open road. We amazing women riders shared a sense of empowerment and freedom as we traversed diverse landscapes and faced the challenges of the journey together. Whether it’s the shared experiences of navigating new terrains, the mutual support during the long ride, or the collective joy of reaching a destination, the sense of sisterhood that develops is a powerful aspect of motorcycle riding. The camaraderie that develops on these rides is not just about the miles covered, but also about the shared stories, laughter, and memories that last a lifetime.

Bonnie Heller