

# THE THRILL OF THE RIDE



## ***Stay Ahead of the Curve—and on the Road.***

**T**here's no doubt about it. Motorcycling has experienced a renaissance. Gone are the days when just the word "motorcycle" brought to mind ZZ Top look-a-likes with grizzled appearances and bad attitudes. Today's bikers are just as likely to be doctors, lawyers, Sailors, or Marines.

Whether you just bought your bike or have been cruising along for years, you're part of a growing number of people enjoying the benefits of motorcycle riding. The upside of biking includes better fuel economy, ease of maneuvering, and especially the choice pier-side parking spots for those of you stationed on ships.

Although benefits such as these, coupled with the invigorating sense of freedom motorcycles provide, is leading more and more people to purchase two-wheeled vehicles, the realities of riding a motorcycle remain unchanged. Successfully piloting a motorcycle is more involved than driving a car, and the consequences of being unsuccessful are far greater. For example, you don't have to worry about balancing a car at slow speeds or at stop lights. A motorcycle responds more quickly and precisely to your commands than a car. That means it's less forgiving of mistakes. Perhaps most important to keep in mind, a motorcycle is less visible than a car.

Some riders pride themselves about knowing everything about how their motorcycle works. Most new riders know considerably less. This magazine starts with the basics—the most elementary aspects of motorcycling, and moves on from there.

Training and awareness are the keys to success when riding motorcycles. Since 1973, the Motorcycle Safety Foundation has set the standard for rider education and training. Millions of riders have graduated from MSF's Basic or Experienced *RiderCourses*. They also partner with the Navy and Marine Corps to provide the necessary training to allow you to ride your motorcycle on base. Each year, nearly half a million newly-trained motorcyclists benefit by learning to manage the risks, ride within their limits, and become responsible, licensed riders. If you haven't taken the basic course, now is an excellent time to sign up. If it's been awhile, consider signing up for some upper-level training.

This magazine will address topics ranging from the all-important personal protective equipment to the differences between sport bikes and cruisers, but make no mistake, this magazine is not a substitute for attending an approved motorcycle-safety course and obtaining refresher training throughout your riding life. Learning never stops. However, until you take a course and afterward to add to the knowledge you gain from the hands-on training, you can use this magazine to reinforce your knowledge of how your bike works. It can also help you understand the basic mental strategies of motorcycle-safety awareness and risk management. This is just one more tool to help you stay ahead of the curve and on the road ... safely. ■