



rolling along in the valley

By Gloria Smith

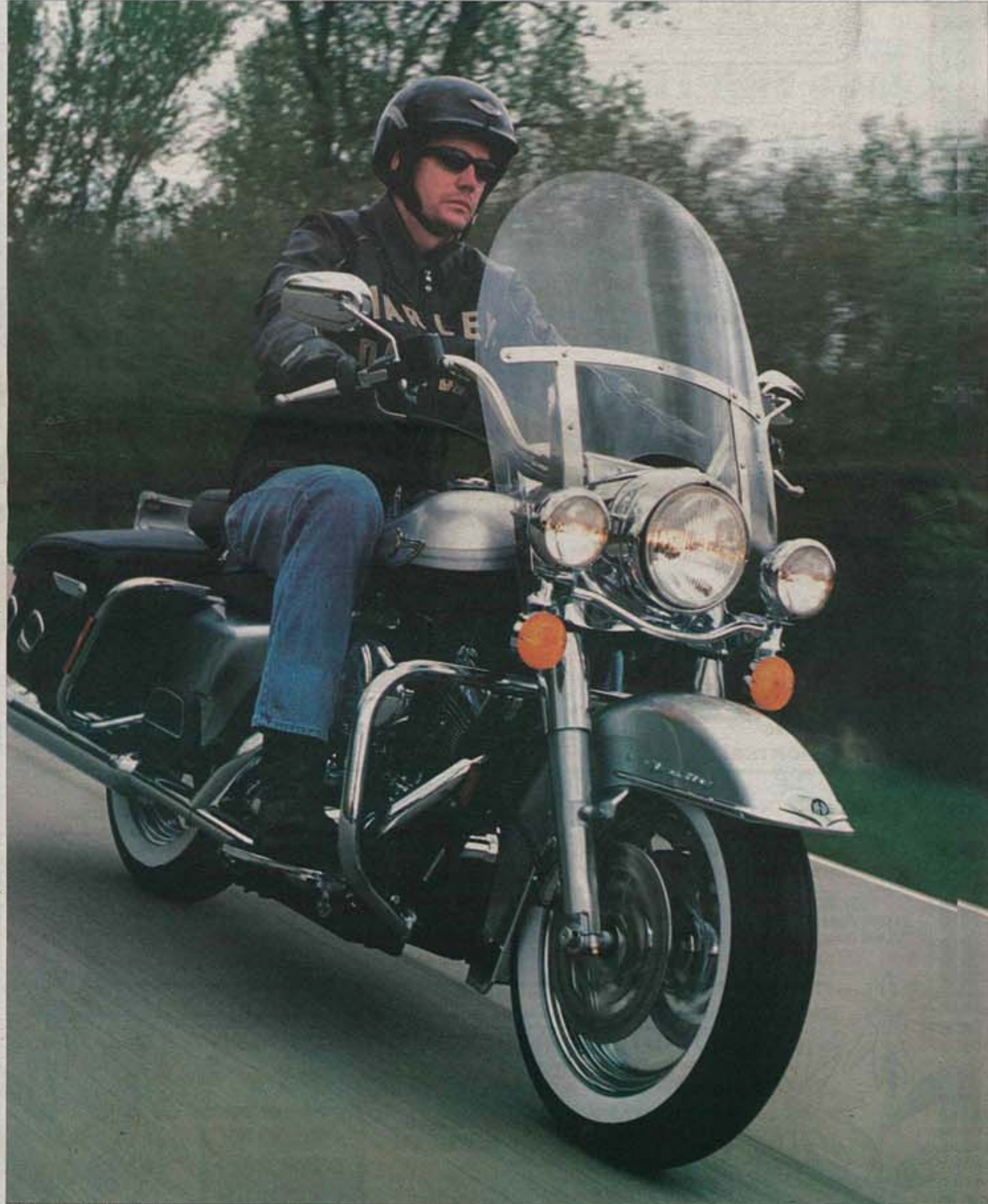


Photo provided by Harley-Davidson



Photo of Hawk's Nest by Gloria Smith

It's a rite of spring. As temperatures rise, off come the tarps and out come those sleek, squeaky-clean, dream machines. On go the helmets, jackets, gloves and boots, and the motor-bikers are off — traveling in ones, twos, and increasingly in droves on the highways, across the mountains, around the valley. They're swarming into diners, pulling into restaurants and lining up at gas stations.

Bikers return here every season with the same passionate determination that drives salmon to swim upstream. But why? A nest of bikers tucked into a nook at the scenic Hawk's Nest lookout on an early spring Sunday in April responded with quizzical looks "It's the scenery first and foremost," John Puglia of Newburgh politely explained. "And some great dealerships."

That day hundreds of cycles were rearing for the trip along Route 97 beside the Delaware to one such dealership. A stop for a bite at the Carriage House (formerly Reber's) in Barryville then on to Narrowsburg and across to Honesdale, Pennsylvania to the Baer parking lot, a dealership founded by George Baer in the 1950s. What drew so many? Judging from the line snaking from a back room all the way out the front door, free food was definitely a factor. "We're known for friendly service," said Gail Baer who, along with brothers Jay and Dwayne make up the three younger Baers who now operate the business.

Looking around, it's difficult to form a stereotype of today's typical biker. Of course, there are the tattooed, leather-vested guys you might expect. But there are also wholesome-looking kids wrapped around their Dads like Snugglis, as well as recently retired couples like Bruce and Betty Anderson of Goshen. They go out for the sheer pleasure of sightseeing. Also in abundance is a group that Gail said is the fastest growing segment in the market — women riding on their own.

Nancy Hornyak of Shohola is a part-time worker at Baer and an avid rider. She feels that the most stunning

views are even more vivid when they're experienced on a motorcycle with the wind whipping across your face, the road passing mere inches underfoot, the smell of fresh-mowed grass filling your senses and friends close at every turn. Nancy is 5'11" and works out every day so she can handle her Heritage Soft Tail Classic. Sound obsessive? Not when you consider that Nancy got married on a Harley.

Author Jean Davidson of Milwaukee, the birthplace of the Harley-Davidson, was born on them. Jean was doing a book signing of her recently released "Growing up Harley-Davidson. Memoirs of a Motorcycle Dynasty" during that busy Sunday at Baer's. She said it doesn't have to be a Harley: "Ride what you can afford...but get out and ride!" The moving experience is in the bike, not necessarily the brand. "Women are definitely the fastest growing group of riders," she said. And they're not just on the back holding on to the drivers; they're riding and owning their own bikes.

In the case of Janis Dordick, owner of Woodstock Harley-Davidson/Buell in Kingston, they're owning their own dealerships and selling them as well. Kim Rose, Janis's daughter, is general manager at Woodstock Harley-Davidson/Buell. They attribute much of their success to location, location, location. The dealership is located in motorcycle heaven — surrounded by mountains that are a breathtaking ride away and among people who helped birth the bike as symbol of a sub-culture that has surfaced and spread. They couldn't exactly tell you if motorcycling is an art, a sport, a science or a religious experience. The dealership is hosting "The Fine Art of Motorcycling 2004," an art show opening with a reception on Friday, July 10th from 4 PM to 10 PM on the premises. It focuses on art pertaining to the "machine and lifestyle of motorcycling," said Kim.

The lifestyle of motorcycling here and elsewhere

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Photo by Gloria Smith
Bruce and Betty Anderson of Goshen.



Photo by Gloria Smith
Motorcycling is a family affair.