

From Behind the Lens

by: Colleen Swartz

In Praise of the Biker Chick

If this is the first time that you are reading this column, I feel compelled to give you a brief description of what it is I do for a living so that you have a better understanding of where my perspective on this topic originates from.

I am a photographer who specializes in shooting bikes and biker events. Sometimes I can be found in my studio in Milwaukee, sometimes in studios around the country shooting bikes for magazines. Often I am shooting a bike on location or covering an event. Nearly everywhere I go, I also bring a mobile photographic platform which serves as my base for my night time job, which is, quite simply, creating 8x10 souvenirs for rally attendees to take home.

This platform becomes a hot bed of entertainment and excitement when the sun goes down and my ability to shoot freelance bikes has gone. I travel with 2 or more beautiful models who will gladly pose with you and your bike for a photo opportunity which I will turn into a print for you to take home and show your buddies the wild and sexy time you had without them. It is fun for me, the models and the customers and we all love doing it.

We regularly can be found at major rallies such as Daytona, Myrtle Beach and Sturgis but I do tons of smaller events around the Midwest and each of these events has a different flavor and customer and biker chick.

What I have noticed over the years is that there are all kinds of women but only certain ones deserve the title of "biker chick". Let me run through my experience with some categories of women that I come across.

1) Desperate Housewife: This woman has recently purchased a new pair of pink cowboy boots with ridiculous heels which would render her completely unable to ride a bike or walk more than 3 blocks but they do match her recently purchased chaps and rhinestone studded pink cowboy hat. She does not ride with her husband to the rally, but rather flies in once he has gotten to the destination. She hates the heat and the dust which continually gets stuck in her layers of thick pink lipstick but she wouldn't miss the rally for the world because she must keep her eye on her husband lest he have some fun while he is away. She often looks at distain in the direction of the "biker chick" who is sitting on her old man's knee, drinking a beer and flashing her tits at his friends. When I ask her husband if he would like to bring his bike up on stage to shoot with his wife or my models, he shoots a sheepish look towards his Desperate Housewife and mutters that she would divorce him if he ever got his photo taken with a pretty girl. So I ask her if she would like to pose on her husband's bike for him and she usually goes into some sort of feminist rant about how she cannot conceive how evil I am for exploiting these young girls in such a blatant manner and how can I live with myself and oh, by the way, she doesn't think that they are that pretty anyway.

2) Aftermarket Woman: This can be a wife or a girlfriend or both. She is generally in her 40's or 50's and is sharing one hell of a mid life crisis with a man who is probably going through one of his own judging from the \$45,000 chopper he just bought. She has gotten her lips, tits, thighs and ass done and she is feeling good about it. Her husband/boyfriend adores her and loves throwing money around. She may not shoot with us the first night she sees us, but she comes back dressed to kill the next chance she gets and she poses on her husband's bike (often topless to the trill of the crowd and her significant other). She poses with the models and her husband. She may even do a costume change or two. She is fun and lively and confident and the center of attention and she loves every second of it. She is cool but she doesn't ride her own, she doesn't camp, she doesn't do day rides (too hard on the hairdo) and she definitely doesn't act anything like this when she is at home.

3) The Rosanne Barr Woman: Just picture her. She is overweight and hates it. She isn't happy and won't let anyone else be either. She hates us because she hates everyone especially those who are fun and young and pretty. She scowls at us and drags her poor, unhappy husband past us as quickly as possible and watches his face to make sure he isn't looking. I don't know what to say to her. I want to tell her that she is pretty and accepted but she can't get past herself to believe it anyway, so why bother?

4) Arm Candy: These women are all ages, the only determining factor is that they are usually at least 15 years younger than man that they are with. They don't say much and hover nearby their significant other letting them be the life of the party. They will gladly pose on the platform if asked by their husband/boyfriend but are somewhat self conscious and reserved.

5) Cool Wife/Girlfriend: These women are the best! They have come to a new place with their significant others for them to have a good time. They drag their men up on stage to pose with the models. She doesn't need or want to be in the shots (ok, maybe one or two) but the focus is on making sure their men have the time of their lives. They reach in their pocket books to tip the models and they encourage them to do crazy and sexy poses with their men. They laugh and enjoy watching their men turn red on stage and they revel in the photos when they are done. They love the good, clean fun that we provide because they are not stupid and they know what kind of trouble men are apt to get into so they take full advantage of this opportunity to be, well, cool. They come in all shapes and sizes and ages and they are the women who will always be invited back to future rallies by their husbands and his friends. Every woman should take a lesson from these chicks. They are cool.

6) Biker Chicks: Here is the panicle of the female food chain. Biker chicks cannot easily be identified at Myrtle Beach or Daytona or even Sturgis. But where these girls really shine are at the out-of-the-way rallies across the country. They ride their own to the rally or ride the whole way on the back of their old man's bike. They carry a bandana, knife, flask and electrical tape. They don't pack a lot of crap and they hang with the boys seamlessly. They are willing to camp out, shower under a garden hose, piss in a bush, get rained on, have a farmer tan, cuss like a sailor and drink like a Kennedy. They love tattoos, long hair, beer and loud music. They are adored by their old man and his friends and misunderstood by most other women. They are faithful and kind and fun and resourceful. When they get home from the rally they are exactly the same person as they were out on the road. They don't lie or put on airs, they don't shy away from hard work or hard play. They know more men than women and they like it that way. They are mothers and wives and they are young and old. They are the salt of the earth and every one of them is beautiful.



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Now don't get me wrong, I am not saying that every woman fits into one of these categories, not at all! I'm not even sure where I land in the whole line-up! I just know that a good woman is a blessing to all who are fortunate enough to be around her and it doesn't matter your age or your size, it is dependant on your attitude. Nothing is more important than treating your life like the adventure that it is and living each day like a Biker Chick!

And that is how I see it, From Behind The Lens.

Colleen Swartz

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