



photo courtesy
Chris Marin



Leticia

C L I N E

What other styles of bikes have you ridden (sportbike, dirt-bike, adventure, etc.)?

Leticia I started on dirt and moved to the whole Harley scene, then road racing before landing in the custom / garage built / vintage mods era. I'm in now. I haven't spent a lot of time on adventure bikes though. Florida isn't really the place for that type of riding however it is something I am looking to explore over the summer with a 2-month trip. I have to be honest; the adventure bikes frighten me a little. They are big and have the combination of power with off road capabilities that sounds like fun but could get a girl like me into a lot of trouble. But honestly, if it has 2 wheels I'll ride it, even if only once.

How did you get started?

Leticia I grew up with my dad building bikes in the living room of our house. My baby photos are of me sitting on rat bikes and choppers and after a while it just became instinctual. I favored the smell of grease over flowers. My dad put me on a Honda 50 when I was 4 and I never looked back. We would spend summers in his garage taking apart bikes, polishing all the pieces and putting them back together, he would handle each piece as if it were a rare and ancient artifact all while telling me what its function was and how it related to life. He was quite the philosopher and at the time, to a preteen little girl it was annoying. Once I got older I started to appreciate his life lessons more and we would

ride to biker events together. When I started announcing for Supercross and Motocross races I would bring my dad with me and then when I had my son I bought him a Honda 50 for his 4th Birthday to continue the tradition.

Why did you stop... and why was it important to continue riding again?

Leticia My father passed away the summer of 2008 and it devastated me. I rode his Softail to the funeral and then I never got on a bike again until spring of 2010. Before then my life was consumed with a motorcycle race every weekend, dealers conventions, motorcycle events and just riding but I suddenly found myself unable to go to any of those things. I changed my life completely, moved to NYC and became the director of Marketing and PR at a fortune 500 company. The stage was set for me to be the next powerful lady in business but it wasn't me. After 3 years of being on autopilot I woke up and moved back Florida to find myself again. One year to the date of this interview I took my son to Daytona Supercross. The smell of the exhaust and dirt, the excitement on my little boy's face as he watched the race only assured me of where I belong. The ride home was emotional but I knew what I had to do. The next day I rented a Thruway, rode 300 miles to a bike event and bought my dad a patch to place on his grave. The following week I bought my Iron 883 and now I ride all over the country. I was afraid that riding would be too unbearable sad to not share it with my father but strangely I feel closer now to him than I ever did before. And that's one of the great things about motorcycles, they're more than a form of transportation they also are a form of transformation.

What life skills have translated that was gained from motorcycling growing up with motocross/family motorcyclist?

Leticia You know how there are crazy cat ladies in the world? Well, I'm kind of like that but with motorcycles. I relate everything to being on my bike. When I am unsure about something I think about riding at night and how I can only see 10 feet ahead of me with one headlight. Just because I can't see my destination doesn't mean that I won't get there or that it doesn't exist. Sometimes you just have to take baby steps and trust that you will arrive safely. I think that being a rider has taught me the value of life and the importance of letting go. It's showed me that there are many ways to go somewhere and that there are ways that have yet to be explored; that getting lost isn't necessarily a bad thing so long as you keep moving. It's taught me to slow down (even

though I ride fast as hell). There is no time for deadlines, complexities, watches or cell phones, it's just you, your thoughts and mother fucking nature and that's the best therapy anyone could ask for. My bike is an extension of my body... I maintain it and it maintains me.

Do you think there is a general stereotype for female motorcyclist?

Leticia I think there used to be a stereotype of motorcyclist in general. If you were a male or a female you were considered reckless and somewhat trashy. Events like the DGR and this wave of vintage bikes with more feminine riders has helped change that. We're no longer this stereotypical leather brigades of whiskey drinking, cigarette smoking and town disturbing hardcore chopper riders that everyone thinks of when they hear the word motorcycle, and the chopper riders were never that either. There are different classes of riders and people tend to think that we're just one group. Instead we are a group of people living our lives and preserving a part of history in the process. Whether it be just commuting to work or riding to events with friends, I think we are inspiring others to think outside the box and to try something new. To be more specific to women, I think men have really embraced the woman's movement. The only complaint may be that men tend to assume women don't know the mechanics of a bike and not all of us do but the same can be said for some men out there, I think having more women builders will help break us ladies away from this mindset and if it doesn't we can just kick rocks at them as we pass by.

How do you feel about the way women are portrayed as sexualized in fashion on motorcycles? (Ex. Supermodel half-naked posing on real riders.) Since you are both.

Leticia This is something I struggle with constantly. Most wouldn't think it but I truly hate drawing attention to myself, it just so happens that I work in an industry that's based on how much attention you receive. Women have a certain sexuality that men don't possess and there is nothing wrong with celebrating this. Even though I have made my living posing nude or in a bikini it still bothers me when I see a model who doesn't ride posing on a bike half dressed. Not because she's half dressed but because she doesn't ride, and it just keeps the stereotypical biker babe flame going longer. I try to extinguish it by not posing in bikinis on bikes and I have a contract that states that I have to ride in every one of my bike shoots. I've often said that modeling ruined my biker career because to be taken serious as a rider after you've

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photo by
Chris Mowry

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done Playboy is nearly impossible.... "Hey my bike is right here!" It's been a long road to be taken seriously and I'm almost there but I still deal with adversity. Just the other day the head of Triumph calls me because someone wrote in demanding I be taken off of their new ad campaign because my sexuality doesn't represent real women who ride at all. People will always struggle with the fact that just because you play one thing online doesn't necessarily mean that's who you are and that if you are pretty you can't ride. Unfortunately there are a few out there that have given us lady riders a bad name but people like Frevveva (Lanakila MacNaughton, rider and photographer of women riders) who highlight the combination of sexuality and realness of women who ride helps.

What could be improved with female riding gear?

Leticia EVERYTHING! With that being said, I think companies are doing the best they can with offering product and not claiming a compete loss. Women's bodies are hard to fit. We're all built very differently. I think a good start though is for companies to forget the color pink, leave off the bedazzling and don't just make a smaller women's version of a man's prod-

uct you already offer. I'm not tall, I'm not into arts and crafts, I never liked the color pink and if I wanted to look like a man I would by an extra small men's gear. Give me style and function. If you offer both I don't care how much it costs. I'd find a way to justify the purchase... after all one of the great qualities of being a woman is the art of justification.

What projects are you working on?

Leticia I am currently filming a 6 part women in motorcycling series called "Beyond the Glass Ceiling." Its short 6 to 10 minute clips that will be available on an online platform. I'm halfway through filming now and its coming out really amazing. Basically I travel all over the US and ride with different women riders from all levels of riding, at the end we have a sit down where they tell me their stories. Kind of like the film version of your magazine. I couldn't think of a more fitting title than the name "glass ceiling" which is an old political term that was used to describe "the seen, yet unreachable barrier that keeps minorities and women from rising to the top regardless of their qualifications". My hope for the show is that encourages more women to get out and start doing something they never thought they could before. Even if the show isn't a

success at least these women will go home with a well-produced beautiful moment in time that they can show to their grandchildren to show them just how badass they are one day. Aside from that, I am in the process of customizing my Harley from #83 and rebuilding an old 75 Honda CB 450. I have a few trips planned. One is a cross-country 2 month trip that I cannot wait for. I'm always moving so having only one project is foreign to me.

Have you inspired other women to ride?

Leticia I hope so or it would have all be in vain... or vanity, both words work. Not that I only ride to inspire but it is my main focus. I've had women write me telling me that I inspire them which is the greatest feeling in the world and makes me tear up every time. What I really want is for them to find inspiration within themselves and if I just helped them see that then I am more than happy. I truly believe that everyone is born with greatness and sometimes a little nudge is all they needed.

It's hard to get the true story through the social media looking glass and contrary to some people's beliefs I use it to inspire not to gain fame. To me, fame isn't about

what you did or who you are, fame is more about how many lives you've touched and I just hope that that's what I'm known for when I'm dead and gone, not how many followers I had.

In your experience, what has been the largest obstacle for women to start?

Leticia It really depends on what genre you want to start in. I know for racing it can be more challenging than just riding because of the associations and sponsor regulations. If you're just riding in general, then I think the biggest challenge us ladies face would be overcoming our own insecurities. Since we were born we are taught that women are the "weaker" sex; that we should uphold to some old school standards of femininity. Just because we are dainty, or girly or smaller doesn't mean we can't get dirty or do what's considered a masculine interest. I think this subconsciously holds a lot of us women back and at the same time it's the fire that ignites other women to ride even harder.

Define how you see yourself inspiring others?

Leticia I use my social media as much as I can. I'm known to be a long-winded IG'er and go on with stories that I think would inspire. I also like to highlight other

women riders on my page and tell their stories too. My goal in life is to be an inspiration, to get people to understand the importance of making life one worth living, regardless if that includes motorcycles or not. I have made my fair share of mistakes along the way but instead of dwelling on them I use my experience to influence and inspire others. And I make fun of myself a lot because life is best served with a side of laughter.

What key values do you recommend to other motorcyclist? How do you demonstrate these values?

Leticia I think the some of the most important values I don't really do that great of a job of demonstrating. I ride a lot in improper gear and I do stunts on busy roads, which is so stupid, but I just hope that people don't do as I do. Other values are to just enjoy the ride. I know that sounds cheery as fuck but it's true. Motorcycling is fun. It turns an everyday commute into an adventure and it gives you an opportunity to go to places others never knew existed. This I do demonstrate by doing and posting the story about it and hope people do as I do. I also instill these same values in my son and ride with him every week. To us, motorcycling is another way to

connect, to forge the blood bond deeper. When we ride together we can't talk to each other but we still communicate with this undefining sense of understanding and connection that only people who ride know about.

Do you ride with many fellow female riders?

Leticia I ride with all that I can. I hope to ride with them all. I'm very lucky in the aspect that I work in the industry and travel a lot so I'm able to meet a lot of the women I follow. At home I don't really ride with many. I belong to Café Moto Club in Orlando FL and it's men and women. Before then I was a lone wolf, riding by myself or with my father. I only started riding with others last year so it's still a strange thing to get used to groups. I love riding with both men and women equally. With women I don't feel like I have to be tougher around which is relaxing. I have found that is one stereotype as women live up to is cuteness, however, that doesn't exist in motorcycling. It's as if we all hold the same respect for each other because we know that throwing your leg over a bike may be fun but it's not easy and your life is more at risk. We look out for each other and that's a very comforting place to be in.