

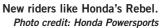
## MOTORCYCLES:

## WAY MORE THAN MERE transportation By David Fluhrer

**SINCE 19TH CENTURY DAREDEVILS** first grafted the internal combustion engine to a bike, the motorcycle has always been way more than mere transportation. Millions of today's riders hit the road for wind-in-the-face freedom, adrenalin-pumping thrills and relief from the daily grind. As one anonymous cyclist has said, "Four wheels move the body. Two wheels move the soul."











Women are the fastest-growing portion of new motorcycle riders and motorcycle purchasers."

— Diane Ortiz, Big Apple Motorcycle School So if you're ready to soothe your soul behind a set of handlebars, rest assured there's an abundance of motorcycle resources. From advocacy groups to training courses to helpful Long Island dealers and clubs, you'll get plenty of good advice to put you on the road.

For starters, the experts emphasize safety, since the chances are good that you'll be hurt if you crash a motorcycle. In 2017, the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles reported 629 crashes and 37 deaths in Nassau and Suffolk counties, with more than 80 percent of incidents involving rider injuries.

"An educated rider is a safer rider," says Andrew Liuzzi, president of motorcycle advocacy group ABATE of New York, based in upstate Northville.

He and others recommend the Basic RiderCourse from the industry-sponsored Motorcycle Safety Foundation (MSF) for proper hands-on instruction and help with your state motorcycle license.

Since manufacturers don't have their own rider academies on

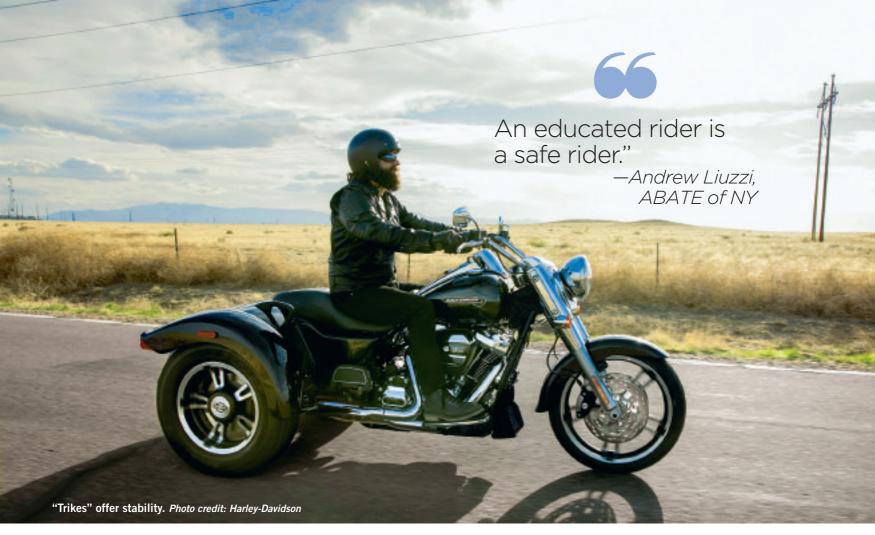
Long Island, Hicksville's Big Apple and Selden's On the Road Again are the go-to local motorcycle schools offering the \$350 MSF course. "They're reputable and they have very good instructors," says Tony Camizzi, director of the 250-member Long Island Harley-Davidson Owners Group.

Choosing a starter bike depends on your dimensions and riding preferences. Manufacturers' suggested beginner models are usually lighter and less intimidating, with engines at 500 cubic centimeters or less, and pricing for most between \$3,000 and \$7,000. Harley recommends the Street 500; Honda, the Grom, Monkey and Rebel series; and Kawasaki, a selection ranging from the streetworthy Ninja 400 to the off-road KLX 140. "There is something for off-road, dual-sport, commuting, adventure riding or just all-around fun," says Kawasaki spokesman Brad Puetz.

"Everybody's different," notes longtime dealer Phil Zegarek of Mineolamoto in Mineola, who matches new riders to Yamaha, Suzuki or Indian motorcycles. "It's like trying on a shoe. One

The Kawasaki KLX 140 is a starter dirt bike. Photo credit: Kawasaki Motors Corp., USA





might fit and the other might not." Adds Big Apple owner/founder Diane Ortiz: "Most of the manufacturers have realized there are people of all shapes and sizes that want to ride. You need ways to make it fit so you're comfortable, especially as more women come into motorcycling. Women are the fastest-growing portion of new motorcycle riders and motorcycle purchasers."

For older riders, there are also "trikes," or three-wheeled bikes, delivering a similar experience with added stability. And for the tech-savvy, Harley is launching the allelectric, \$30,000 LiveWire in August while BMW is using the autonomous features on its prototype "riderless" bike to make everyday motorcycles even safer.

The allure of cycling remains powerful. Maureen Guest, 57, of Sayville, who's been riding for six years and owns a Harley Sportster, says she's been encouraged to step outside her safety zone and and seek adventure. "When I'm riding, I feel empowered," says Guest. "I feel like I've mastered a skill that many people wouldn't even dream of accomplishing." LIL

David Fluhrer writes Newsday's weekly classic car and motorcycle columns, and publishes Inthedriveway.com, an automotive website.

BMW's autonomous bike is a test bed for safety advances. Photo credit: BMW Group

