



By Alisa Clickenger

WOMEN WHEELS WINE

It was a sunny Sunday afternoon, but with 200 miles of back roads along the California coastline and a wine tasting event at the end of the long journey, my pace was anything but sluggish. Pushing the Vanderhall Speedster through the Malibu hills then down the California coastline, slow was simply not an option. Although the Vanderhall is the type of vehicle that makes a destination unnecessary, this was a case where there were places to go and people to meet. Doffo Winery was hosting its Women Wheels Wine fundraiser.

The event was to benefit Motorcycle Missions, a 501(c)3 non-profit corporation helping Veterans and First Responders who deal with PTSD and suicidal ideation find hope and healing through motorcycles. Motorcycle Build Mentorship Program is a program aimed at getting warriors with PTSD connected with the motorcycle community, working with their hands, and subsequently renewing their sense of passion and purpose for life.

Motorcycle Missions was founded by Krystal Hess, a nurse and customizer who suffered from PTSD after escaping domestic violence in her marriage and witnessing a loved one's suicide attempt. Hess turned her tragedy into triumph through motorcycling and founded Ricochet Customs, a powder-coating and customization business. She says the goal of Motorcycle Missions is to instill a life-long passion for riding and building motorcycles that will help sufferers enjoy a happy, healthy and balanced lifestyle after trauma.



Motorcycle Mission's founder Krystal Hess and the first all-women build. Next time we see this little Honda will be the finished project at the Long Beach IMS.

The Motorcycle Build Mentorship Program that Motorcycle Missions created gets them actively participating in a motorcycle build AND working with their hands. This helps facilitate the healing of PTSD by renewing their sense of passion and purpose for life. Motorcycle Missions aims to build two to four custom motorcycles per year, ensuring that participants have access to tools, lifts, welding equipment, and hands-on instruction from start to finish.

At the Moto Doffo event Motorcycle Missions announced their first all-women bike build. Like Motorcycle Missions' other builds, the participants meet once a week until project completion. Then their bike gets shown around the country at various shows for at least six months before it is sold or raffled off to raise money for future projects.

While it may seem unusual to mix motorcycles and wine, it is, in fact, business as usual for Doffo Winery. The winery has a long tradition of artistry with both wine and motorcycles, thanks to family patriarch and winery founder Marcelo Doffo. Marcelo collects and restores motorcycles, and when he ran out of space in his garage, he started storing his bikes inside the winery itself. Combining his passions has become a de facto way of life and it is one of the big draws for this unique winery and vineyard.

The entire Doffo family rides motorcycles and several generations of Doffos are regularly seen at the track all at one time. The entire family is also at the Doffo Winery, with all children growing up with wine running through their veins. Marcelo's son Damian once served as assistant winemaker, and now serves as general manager. Marcelo's daughter Samantha is the winery's events coordinator and is responsible for turning Doffo Winery into the Temecula Valley destination that it is today. Marcelo's daughter Brigitte Doffo-Cartaya runs the tasting room and is responsible for creating the wonderful vibe in the Doffo wine tasting experience.

After the unveiling of the Motorcycle Missions' latest project bike and a meet and greet with Motorcycle Missions founder Hess, The Real Deal's Jessi Combs offered a welding demonstration and lessons to any interested women. Talented Theresa Contreras also offered a pinstriping demonstration and a raffle was held with all proceeds going to Motorcycle Missions.



After the kick off party, the real work on the old Honda scrambler begins for the ladies. We can't wait to toast the finished product at the Long Beach IMS tour stop. Maybe we will have to return to Doffo a few more times for progress reports? Where did we leave the keys to that Vanderhall Speedster?

More details on Motorcycle Missions and the application for the program can be found at:
<http://www.motorcycle-missions.org/programs> 

