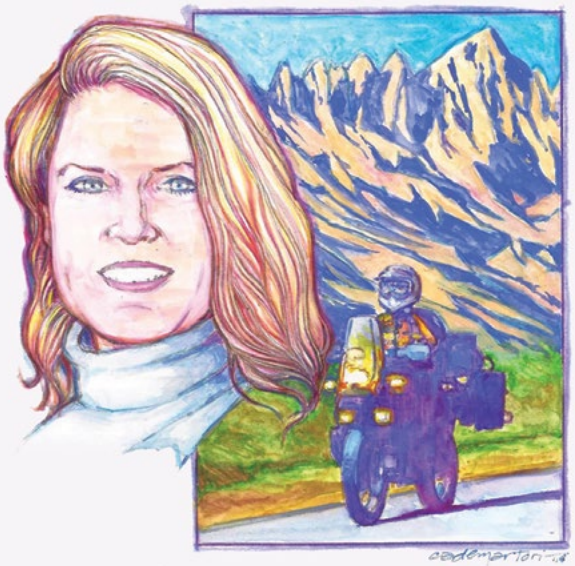
DIVERSITY+



By Alisa Clickenger

STREETMASTERS

Some riders may innately know it all (or at least think they do), however ignorance doesn't discriminate! Fortunately, neither does Steetmasters as our class was a diverse mix of riders Male and female. Slow, look, lean and roll. That's what I was taught by the Motorcycle Safety Foundation when I first started riding motorcycles more than 20 years ago. A whole lot of miles later, and a whole lot of motorcycle training later, I found myself in a Streetmasters Precision Cornering Class wondering why it had taken me so long to get there.

One of the first things instructor and Streetmasters co-owner Walt Fulton taught us was that we fix our mistakes as we go along. And I was doing just that by attending. Fulton knows a thing or two after logging more tthan 1,000,000 miles of motorcycling on the road and track. Walt's also been the editor of three motorcycle magazines, a motorcycle journalist, a BMW Legends racer and a professional motorcycle accident reconstruction expert, plus working for Kawasaki. Ladies, looking to learn from another woman have access to Nancy Foote, who has been riding for more than 30 years and Colleen Kevany, a retired motor officer. They can help show women how easy it can be to become a confident rider.

We started the day with a classroom session, which proved a great way to ease into the theory of cornering techniques. Streetmasters teaches the art of the delayed/late apex, and I found the theory, as well as the drawing the delayed/late path of travel on paper, extremely helpful for my visually-oriented learning style. The moral of the story? Stay as wide as you can for as long as you can. To quote Fulton, "Apex is everything."

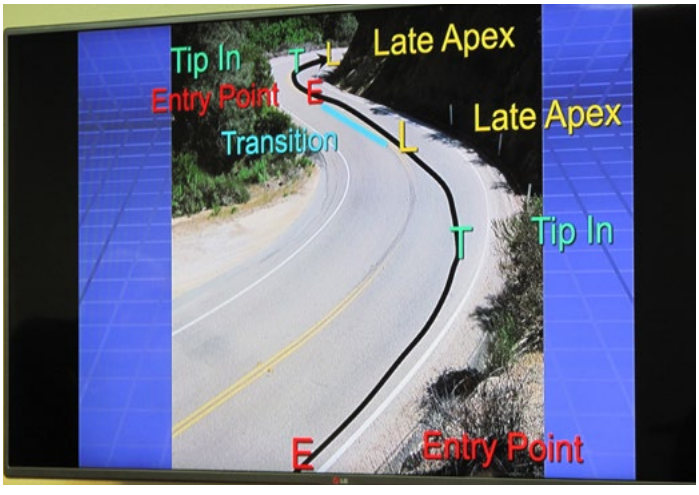
After the classroom session we headed for the track. The class was held at Horsethief Mile at Willow Springs, where the Streetmasters team already had a parking lot course set up for us to practice cornering drills and tight maneuvers before entering the track. Each exercise of the day build upon the next, until we were footloose and bad-apex-free on the track on our own.

Each exercise, for me, added layers of confidence. Each exercise also showed me how much learning — and practicing I still have to go. Majority co-owner Nancy Foote was also on-site encouraging us, keeping us safe, and at times cajoling us to keep at it until we mastered each exercise. Foote worked with us fixing common problems such as lack of head turns,

linking each corner to the next, and adding speed to the exercises as we mastered new skills.

The entire Streetmasters team worked like a seamless unit bringing our disparate group of students on all makes and models of motorcycles, as well as a wide variety of skill levels, together as a tight-knit group early on in the day. Enthusiasm was high, and the "team effort" spirit was infectious. Even we students cheered each other on and gave open encouragement as we each improved dramatically both in the drills and on the track as the day progressed.

Streetmasters has been training riders since 2004, and has gathered a top-notch team. Just like the pinstriping analogy



they used to execute the perfect set of curves, painting from point to point to point, so built my skill and confidence throughout the day. Linking up new habits and overriding old, bad ones became a relaxing endeavor linking one corner to the next.

Ignorance may be bliss, but I much prefer being a more confident and competent rider. I'm definitely going to practice what Fulton taught us about fixing our mistakes as we go. I am also going to register myself in another Streetmasters class this Fall.

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