

MOTORCYCLING THE HEARTBEAT OF AMERICA

By Barb Anwari

From sidecars to slickers, leathers to bike-lifts, it was all there. Youngsters favored knee-high mini-bikes. Mature riders vaulted onto massive iron ponies.

Purring above the crowd hullabaloo was the bracing hum of silky-smooth engines. From early December through mid-March, the 1999 Cycle World International Motorcycle Show presented by Toyota Trucks toured north from California, through the Midwest, down to Florida's famed Daytona Beach. Every venue churned with men, women and children.

At the Cleveland, Ohio show, riders and bikes alike were fully dressed in oiled leather, branded with names like Honda, Buell,

Around The Track

Toyota's 99 250 MXC incited enthusiasts with sleek styling and bold colors.



Ducati, Harley-Davidson, Kawasaki, Enfield, Victory, and Yamaha. Cleveland's International Exposition Centre surged from opening until closing with heady excitement. Visitors were free to swing aboard dressed-out models, such as the 1999 FLHR Road King by Harley-Davidson, with its sleek lines and a mandarin orange and black custom paint job, or to straddle a piece of history,

such as a 1959 C100 Super Club Honda or a camouflage-green British Enfield with ammunition-boxes for saddle bags.

Regardless of what make or model they fancied, visitors kept up a running dialogue with each other, politely exchanging remarks and rejoinders. The camaraderie on the floor mirrored that on the open road. There, riders typically pass each other with a salute, wave, or nod. It's a close knit community, now several million strong.

THESE GUYS DON'T THINK BIKES ARE A DRAG

By Leah M. Kerr



Brown

Antron Brown started last season as a 22-year old rookie from Chesterfield, N.J. This year he returns to the prestigious National Hot Rod Association's Pro Stock Bike series as sort of a conquering hero. Team owner Troy Vincent, a cornerback for the NFL's Philadelphia Eagles, was pleased that rookie Brown finished the 1998 drag racing season in seventh place.

This year, the team knocked out last season's bugs and replaced weak links. The team purchased new equipment, no longer leasing it. "Now I feel we have the power that it takes to win," says Brown. Veteran African-American crew chief, Harry Lartigue, joined Vincent's team, bringing along rider Tony Mullen. Despite his bike "blowing up" a couple of times and a shaky finish or two, Brown knows his team achieved something. "We're buckling down," he says of the upcoming season. "This year we're looking for both teams to finish in the top five, if not the top three."



Gadson

Last year was another good year for AMA/Prostar drag bike rider Rickey Gadson. For the second season in a row he captured the Championship in the Pro Superbike class and placed number two in 600cc Super Sport. This season the Kawasaki-sponsored rider has upped the ante - he'll ride bikes in four separate classes. That puts him under pressure to hold onto number

one in Superbike, move up a slot in 600cc Super Sport and try to make his name known in both the Pro Modified and Street Bike Shootout classes.

This season, riders will be allowed to add the boost of nitrous oxide to optimize their air intake and boost horsepower. "It's like an equalizer," says Gadson of the compressed gas. "Everybody now feels like they have an edge." This season should prove exciting, as Gadson predicts that the current elapsed time record of 9.30 seconds may drop to 8.50 seconds.

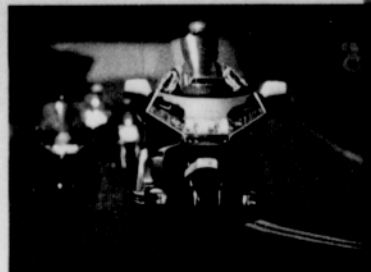
Kawasaki is proud of their star spokesperson. Last year, Gadson made the model ZX9 the first nine-second production bike ever.

The Ultimate Motorcycle Vacation

By Barb Anwari

Roll out that ridin' machine for the ultimate motorcycle enthusiast's vacation. All roads lead to the sixth annual "Great Smoky Mountain Honda Hoot" June 22-June 26, 1999 in Asheville, N.C. The event, hosted by Honda, drew more than 10,000 attendees last year.

Expect more of a family vacation than a bike rally. Talk and ride with some of motorcycling's living legends, such as nine-time off-road champion Scott Summers and six-time National and World Supercross Champion Jeff Stanton, the Hoot's 1998 Grand Marshal. Pre-registration is suggested. For more information, call 1-800-347-1289.



Motorcycles in last year's Honda Hoot

Correction: It was incorrectly reported in the Spring '99 edition that Wendell Scott died in 1969. He died in 1990.