

That first ride for a new passenger

As motorcyclists we often take first timers out on the back of our bikes for their first experience. One way of doing this is to show off your great riding skills by throwing the newby on the back of your bike, pop a wheelie down the driveway followed by a power slid into the street and find the best twisties you can find and see how much metal you can rub off your floorboards, and don't forget to show off that high speed riding. This method should only be used on someone you really don't like and don't care if you ever see again. Well maybe not even then. Make sure if you use this method you are wearing your helmet and body Armour because when you stop the passenger may pommel you into oblivion as he or she gets off never to get on another bike again in their life. This will also go a long way toward helping that bad image of motorcycles we have gotten over the decades.

The proper method is to make this experience as pleasant as possible and let the new rider know before they get on the bike what to expect. Start by showing how the bike is controlled, throttle, clutch, shift and brakes. Most people do not realize that each limb of a driver has a control tied to it. Let the new rider know about wind and noise so that this is not s surprise to them. Wingers usually also need to explain that the voice they hear in the helmet is not god talking to them but is just the intercom and that we will be able to hear them also. This will cut down on the screaming you hear. Make sure that your new passenger has proper riding gear even if you have to supply it, helmet, eye protection, long sleeve and pants at a minimum. Gloves and boots would also be a good idea. Make sure they are dressed warm enough to handle the wind.

Next you need to explain that a bike leans to turn around corners and that this is natural and is the only way to get the bike to turn. As you ride you will try to keep the lean to a minimum but they will notice it. Remember that a little lean to you is the bike is tipping over to a new rider. Let the rider know that they need to stay in line with the bike and look into turns to help you. You will also want to explain that some movement on their part will cause the bike to do things you may not want the bike doing as the driver. Let the rider know that motorcycles are capable of very fast acceleration and are very nimble. Let them know that we do not stay in the same lane position but may move around in the lane as needed to keep the ride safe. Riding over hazards is not as good of an idea on a bike as it is in a car.

Now that your new rider has a idea of what to expect you can teach them how to get on the bike and how to sit and hold on and where. If you instruct them right they will not put any scuffmarks on your bike or leg. Before you leave make sure that you both have a good idea of how long the ride will last and a destination if needed. Keep the first ride short or put in lots of stops. It is a good idea to take a new person out for a quick ride before you take them on a group ride. This will keep you out of an embarrassing argument in front of the group if the new rider

just hates riding. Keep the ride slow and try to keep lean and movement to a minimum. You can gradually increase both as the new rider get accustom to the motorcycle. This you will need to watch the new rider to judge for yourself or ask if the person is comfortable using the intercom. You may also want to let them know you are going to add to the ride as you do it.

If you have done this right the new rider will now know the joys you have had on the bike and will either want a bike of their own or will want to come back for another ride. If you did it wrong you may have finger nails imbedded in your side or back or a dent in the side of your helmet. And you will have added to the bad image thing.