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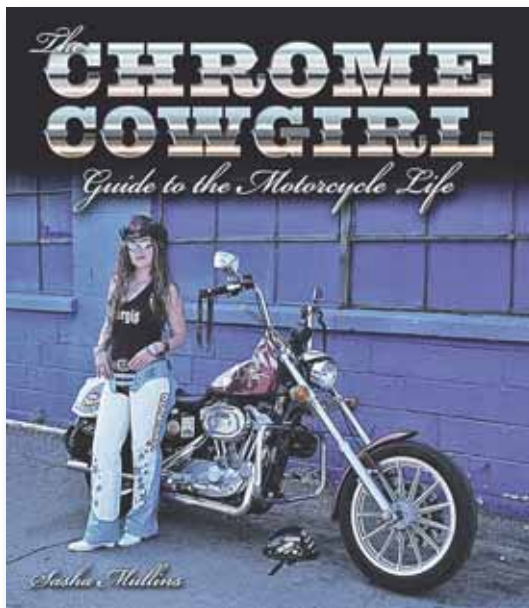
The Chrome Cowgirl Guide to the Motorcycle Life

by Sasha Mullins
Motorbooks, \$24.95, 192 pages
www.motorbooks.com

Reviewed by Loretta Jackson

Sometimes a book meets a pair of eyeballs that recognizes the real thing—a woman rider whose pen has captured the feeling of the open road and other elusive delights, fears and thrills about motorcycle life. The emotions are known only to those of us with up-close, firsthand experience. Sasha Mullins is the real thing, and her book is a unique compilation of feather-light reading, humorous how-to and free-spirited advice presented in “roadacious” biker lingo.

Sasha Mullins embraces freedom. Her trips are “ridelicious” and she has shared her years in the saddle by offering a succulent motorcycling menu of more than 200 photos, dozens of precious freehand drawings, soul-stirring journal entries and tasty bites of biker commentary from a renowned circle



of legendary female motorcyclists—wind sisters.

The author is a hot babe with a big smile who wears many hats quite stylishly. She gives advice on truck stop shopping and buying gear that offers comfort but also makes your butt look good. She’s a maven of packing for practicality and pleasure. She gives makeup tips, too: Never wear false eyelashes when you ride over 25 mph or they’ll wind up looking like dead caterpillars on your eyelids. Mullins also offers some good tips on bike maintenance and safety. Did you know that, in a pinch, a pair of red panties can cover a cracked taillight?

She can tell you how to pick up a dropped bike and how to negotiate the hazards of making personal pit stops at gas stations. Mullins has picked up lots of little tips in her current incarnation as a motojournalist, artist and musician. This is a biker celebrity chick—one who has been on the Travel Channel, Discovery, The Learning Channel, BBC and Outdoor Life. In addition, she’s made herself comfortable at pig roasts, rock concerts, rallies and revelries at bike weeks throughout bikerdom. She’s raced, ridden dirt bikes and cruised on her Harley down the highways of most of the United States.

The book pays a hearty high-five to chrome cowgirls of yesteryear and today. The spotlight shines here and there throughout the pages upon unconventional females such as Adeline and Augusta Van Buren, who in 1916 flung off their high-society restraints and rode cross-country on an Indian motorcycle. Mullins has a vast reservoir of stories about strong biker women impatient with boredom and too much quiet. The new book is close kin to Mullins’ first book, *Bikerlady: Living & Riding Free*. A popular website—www.bikerlady.com—rose from that effort.

Currently, Sasha Mullins is expanding upon the hubbub stirred by the arrival of *The Chrome Cowgirl Guide to the Motorcycle Life*. She’s creating a fun-centric Web community—www.chromecowgirl.com—that can be a focus of news and camaraderie for readers and riders alike. In her spare time, she is a member of Motor-oadeo M/C, an alternative country rock band from Nashville comprising musicians who ride. If you ever met someone who knows everyone—that’s Sasha Mullins.

Proof that she has more two-wheeled connections than should be legally allowable are the couple hundred photos in *The Chrome Cowgirl Guide to the Motorcycle Life*. Mullins is looking pretty saucy as she poses with the likes of her chrome-mate Patrick and Bandit (Keith Ball of Bikernet.com), former Senator Ben North-horse Campbell, Charlie St. Clair from the Laconia Rally and Races and master bike builder Cyril Huze. Her all-time favorite bike builder, Indian Larry, is there too, snuggling up for a face-to-face sit-down with her on one of his low-slung customs.

The Chrome Cowgirl Guide to the Motorcycle Life strikes compatible chords in the heart of any motorcyclist who can tell whether or not someone really has been there, done that and loved every minute of it—except for downpours near Sturgis and fog as white as the head on a frosty beer.

Sasha Mullins loves life. She loves her motorcycle—a customized Harley chopper with the moniker Tigerlily. She’s had plenty of adventures aboard Tigerlily, one of which was finding her chrome-mate. And in the chapter where she writes about her beloved, there’s a top 10 list of how to be a Chrome Cowgirl biker bride. She cautions: Don’t go over 30 mph with a veil on your head, or else it’ll look like the bottom of Lily Munster’s dress.

The book is finding an eager audience among women riders, those who would like to ride and biker history buffs. Men take a good long look, too, as they wrap the book as a gift to their own chrome cowgirl.

Women motorcycle operators pack a wallop in the motorcycle marketplace, says the Motorcycle Industry Council, citing nearly 4,400,000 American females who own chrome. If you are a wind sister, reading this book will refresh your soul and remind you of your blessings. If you’re a guy, the photos and historical vignettes will entertain you long enough to get to the next photo of sexy Sasha Mullins. And if you are not yet a full-fledged motorcyclist, reading this book will fire you up for sure. You’ll learn a lot on every page. ▶

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