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## THE MAKING OF "BIKER CHICZ OF NORTH AMERICA"

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by Wil De Clercq. It's hard to believe that it's been a year since Biker Chicz of North America was published. Originally the book was intended to be written at a later date but I decided it was a good time to do "Biker Chicz". My co-author, Edward Winterhalder, wanted a book that celebrated women riders and focused on the positive aspect of the biker lifestyle. It was a novel concept, because when it comes to motorcycling, market studies suggest non-motorcyclists prefer to read about the criminal element on two wheels. It's what mainstream media likes to concentrate on, written by people who don't know the depth of their topic, the history, and the billion-dollar economic role motorcycling plays in society.

Our original intention was to write about ordinary women motorcycle riders who were more or less the average girl next door. But

somehow we ended up with women we considered to belong to the current royalty of North American female bikers – the players, movers and shakers.

We've been asked why we only wrote about women who ride Harley-Davidson® motorcycles and none of the other brands. The reason is simple enough: Harley® bikes are the most identifiable and representative of the biker culture, and they lend a common continuity thread to our narrative.



Interviewing the women featured in Biker Chicz was a fascinating experience for me, one that enriched my own being. Their zest for life, for making a difference in other people's lives, for their occupations, and for their motorcycles made for compelling writing.

I interviewed each woman by phone over a period of three months. I used a set of general questions that were common to all. Then I proceeded accordingly to unlock their persona with specific questions. Each biker chick had submitted a brief biography to us – some had their own

websites chockfull of info – and the specific questions were posed to delve deeper into the background they had provided. Sometimes we drifted off-topic, talking about mutual interests, etc., but those talks always provided further perspective into their character.

Do I have a favorite biker chick? Well, uhm ... no. I found them all equally interesting and engaging because they're all survivors and strong women – women who break down barriers and stereotypes. Women who know who they are and comfortable being who they are – women who know what they want out of life and who have gone after it on their own terms and continue to do so. Women who have

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made a difference!

As I interviewed the ladies I wished I could have met some of them a long time ago. Like I'm asking myself, where were these women when I was young? I've always been attracted to independent, gutsy women and it's safe to say that all twenty-two women featured in the book are independent and gutsy. Their stories would have been worth writing even if they didn't ride motorcycles. Then again, riding motorcycles is part of what defines them and sets them apart from their non-riding sisters.



Let me assure you that no punches were pulled in the writing of the book. All the women were very candid and spoke freely about the things that have been good, bad or indifferent in their lives. Ultimately, they all turned whatever was bad or indifferent in their lives into something positive. A lesson we can all learn from.

The writing of Biker Chicz of North America was one of the most worthwhile and satisfying projects I have ever been involved in. Ed and I recorded the lives of twenty-two amazing women bikers for posterity. No woman or man,

riders and non-riders alike, can read this book without getting something out of it. I'm sure quite a few women who don't ride a bike will want to after reading Biker Chicz. I believe the book will be as relevant in twenty years as it is today.