

Dean McDermott: Life in the Fast Lane

BY GARY KOZ MRAZ

I first met Dean McDermott while covering a story at the Auto Club Raceway and again at Original Mike's for the Ride for Autism where he and Tori served as Grand Marshalls. They were both moved by friend Jenny McCarthy's plight. Her book, *Louder Than Words: A mother's journey in healing Autism* passionately describes dealing with her son's Autism, diagnosis and treatment.

With his kids in one arm, signing autographs with the other I was impressed at how genuinely engaging he was, spending the entire day chatting it up with everyone who wanted to meet him. The Reality TV show *Tori & Dean, Home Sweet Hollywood* is in its fifth season and been picked up again. We of course talked motorcycling and Dean invited me for some laps at the track. I have long delegated 180 mph to the pilot of the 747 departing LAX... leisurely cruising mountainous terrain is more my style. It turns out Dean's becoming quite the cruiser himself as of late, totally diggin' his Victory Cross Country. I have Victory's Pearl White Vision and mentioned he should ride my turf. Deans only been in L.A. four years and hadn't yet ridden the Santa Monica Mountains. Plus, this way he would have to chase me around the twisties. He jumped at the suggestion but neglected to mention we'd be chased around by a camera and sound crews for Home Sweet Hollywood ... hey, I'll give them a run for their money.

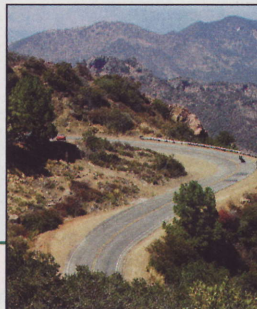


We met up at Neptune's Net on PCH in Malibu. Opened in 1958 this casual clam shack overlooking the Pacific Ocean is known for fresh fish at reasonable prices. Definitely a biker hang out on weekends for good reason, it's right at the entrance of Yerba Buena Road and some of Malibu's best riding. Serving up the cuisine on paper plates and plastic cutlery we dined on the outdoor patio. So what do motorcyclists talk about? There are so many bikes, so many places to ride and so little time. Dean started riding motorcycles at the age of 16 but his first wife got testy and hit the kill switch at 30. And there was a moment he gave up motorcycling because it was stressing Tori out but now she rides on the back and McDermott is back racing against the clock. Yeah he's crashed a few times, but that's par for the course. He is sponsored by Scorpion Sports and takes racing very seriously. He keeps telling Tori that it's far safer on a racetrack than it is on the street, which is completely true but we won't bring that up for today's ride.

My plan to impress Dean with an extensive knowledge of Southern California's incredible destinations dissipates as he starts reminiscing about riding. *"Motorcycling isn't about the past, or the future it's about being present in the here and now, it's a kind of Zen of the zone...especially while racing"*. He

continues talking while gazing out at the Pacific Ocean as if somehow possible to ride there. It becomes obvious during our conversation motorcycling isn't a Hollywood act that makes good TV, he gets it. He's always planning for the next race, the next ride while juggling the responsibilities of work, home and reality that's not televised. Dean has never seen life as a pint half empty, living life full measure has consequences but at 43 he's masterfully balanced all the loves of his life, Tori, his 3 children and riding motorcycles.

Westward Ho...to the twisties we go!



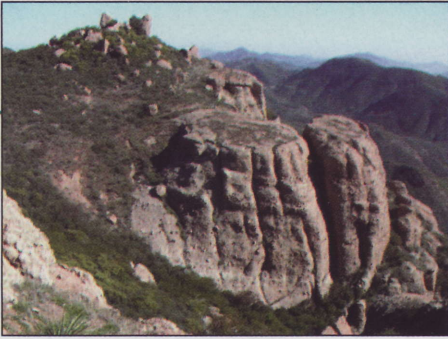
We wind our way up the twisties of Yerba Buena Road, some of which are strictly 10 mph turns often scattered with loose gravel or sand. Connecting to Little Sycamore Canyon Road spectacular views of the ocean and mountains abound. He's blown away; it's hard to believe your only 30 minutes away from the smog and congestion and of the San Fernando Valley. Speeds pick up here and riders need to respect the road, one small mistake and you'll have a long time to think about it. Making a quick stop at Circle X Ranch we reflect on how well these Victory motorcycles handle and their aggressive lean angles. The smell of pine fills the air and the peaceful serenity here is truly inspiring. We Californians tend to get jaded, almost everyday is great riding weather. Dean grew up in Toronto where motorcycles sit garaged a better part of the year and you can tell he relishes the ride, takes the moment in and makes it his own, his enthusiasm is contagious.



Grand panoramas' right in —
San Fernando valleys backyard



Great riding and unusual rock formations pop out of this mountainous landscape



Sycamore Canyon Road connects to Mulholland Drive and soon we're at the infamous Rock Store. Made entirely out of volcanic rock it was a stagecoach stop in the early 1900's. Ed and Vern purchased this building in 1961 and created a small town grocery store then restaurant. Its location became a motorcycling Mecca and anyone and everyone who rides passes here on weekends. Jay Leno was hanging out here the weekend prior.

If you ride in L.A., you'll stop by the Rock Store

Continuing on we skirt Malibu Lake then to Cornell road to Paramount Ranch. Back when westerns were popular the studios had to pay the union workers extra if they worked farther than 35 miles from Hollywood and these studio ranches were within that magic circle, only a few have survived. Gunfight at the OK Corral, Gun smoke and Dr Quinn's medicine Woman are but a few of the hundreds of films and TV shows shot here.

Hidden hideaway, Malibu Lake

We head back to the city and Mulholland Road changes to Mulholland Raceway. Until the 1970's this part of Mulholland was almost a private race course. People would race dusk till dawn until finally law enforcement shut that practice down but the name lives on. Dean is adamant about rider's safety and feels if you need to go real fast take it to the track. It's a great place hone your riding skills and truly understand the dynamic and limits of motorcycling. Everything he's learned translates entirely into becoming a better rider on the street. Finally back into the congestion of the city we stop by his man cave. Dean laughs out loud, "Motorcycling rocks, when was the last time you had that much fun in a car?!" Filled with all things fast we talked about our run, tattoos, cigars and about the next ride and the next race. We all ride for our own personal therapy, its a unique bond that unites all riders, whether it's 1000 bikes on a charity run or solo on a dark desert highway, we riders love life in the fast lane.



Crossing the Bridge from Malibu Lake



SPRING RALLY
June 4 - 6

2010 EVENT SCHEDULE

Street Vibrations®
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June 4 - 6
Sparks, NV

Good Vibrations®
July 16 - 18
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Fall Rally
September 22 - 26
Reno/Sparks, NV

American Heat®
October 16 - 17
Palm Springs, CA

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