

Hills Harley-Davidson dealer puts motorcyclists high on the HOG

Like the Steppenwolf song says, they got their motor running and headed for the highway... and in the case of Motor City Harley-Davidson, they ended up in the Hills.

After several years in Westland, the longtime dealership has opened in the former Sunshine Acres outlet on Grand River Avenue, between Farmington and Drake.

Harley lovers turned out in droves for an open house May 15 to celebrate the grand opening. Harley-Davidson - the motorcycle - is marking its 95th anniversary this year.

Their classic chrome look and rumbling sound are unmatched, say enthusiasts, who with beards, tattoos and leather vests buy into a lifestyle as much as a mode of transportation.

"I would say there is a lot of pride and confidence," said Dick Rose, who is one of four owners in Motor City dealership. "It doesn't matter where you go. The mystique, the excitement has caught on very well."

Rose, 60, who was president of Action Distributing in Livonia, isn't merely whistling a salesman's tune.

He's been riding Harleys since age 16.

All four owners of the dealership, which includes Tom Celani of Action Distributing, Vic Ventimiglia of Vic's Market and attorney Peter Sarkesian, ride Harleys.

They and 600 others are members of the Motor City Harley Ownership Group (HOG) chapter. The group meets for events - like the annual gathering of Harley owners in Sturgis - and to raise money for numerous charitable causes.

Harleys are the preferred cycle among the motorcycle clubs both noble and notorious - including Hell's Angels in the latter category. Yet the bikes also speak to the individualism, the lone rider roaring into the wind.

"I just ride," said Mike Nesbitt, who owns Nesbuilt Construction. "I don't have to have anyone to ride with. I just love to ride."

Nesbitt, 48, lives in Clarkston but prefers Motor City Harley-Davidson.

He'll be looking to replace his black 1994 Electra-Glide Classic, which has a small pouch in front to store his cellular phone. Only with the engine off does Nesbitt hear the

phone ring for a business call. "I'll be 50 in the year 2000," he said. "A (millennium) bike for a (millennium) year."

Corporate types are more than willing to trade in the white vest for a leather vest and the roar of a motorcycle, said owner Tom Celani.

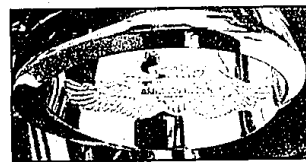
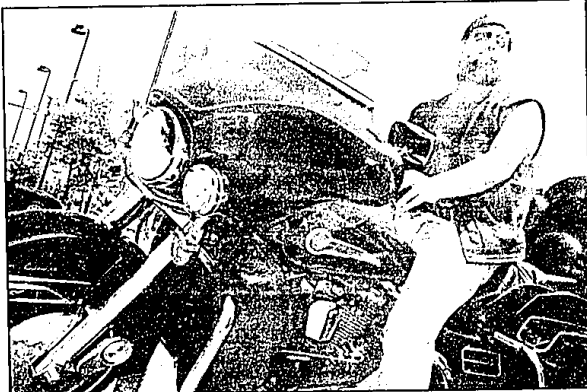
"After working hard in the office all day, business executives just want to get outside, unwind and take an exciting ride," Celani said.

Motor City Harley-Davidson is fitting in with its new digs, which includes a 25,000-square-foot showroom. The full-service dealership sells both new and used Harleys for between \$10,000-\$25,000.

Those enamored with the Harley name - as well as the motorcycles - can also peruse the extensive line of clothing, leathers and collectibles in the logo shop.

Willie Porter, 42, rides a Harley but was buying a T-shirt this week at the shop. He bought his first bike after a tour of duty in Vietnam and rides with the Vietnam Vets Motorcycle Club.

"I've always loved them," Porter said.



Riders for life: Mike Nesbitt, who owns Nesbuilt Construction, is a businessman who enjoys riding his Harley-Davidson bike. Nesbitt, like many Harley enthusiasts, raves about the motorcycle's roaring sound and intricate detail, such as the company logo seen on the left. Motor City Harley-Davidson opened on Grand River recently.



Battling flames: Farmington Hills firefighters from Stations No. 5, 4 and 1 responded to the house fire on Shenandoah Sunday night. The blaze started in a garage with two cars inside and spread to a second-floor attic.

PHOTO BY RON PENNEY

Garage fire spreads to Farmington Hills home

A late night fire that started in a garage spread to the house and caused extensive damage to a second-floor attic in a Farmington Hills home Sunday.

Shortly after 11 p.m., Farmington Hills firefighters from Stations No. 4, 5 and 1 arrived at 29131 Shenandoah to find the garage engulfed.

Two cars inside, a Corvette and a Nissan, contributed to the ferocity of the blaze, which took 30 minutes to get under control. "We had some leaking gas as

well as fiberglass burning," said Pete Baldwin, Farmington Hills deputy fire chief. "It was a pretty intense fire in the garage."

Damage is estimated at \$185,000, "but it will probably exceed that," Baldwin said.

A cause is still undetermined, though fire investigators believe the blaze is accidental - possibly some type of spontaneous combustion in the garage.

A firefighter was treated for an injury at the scene. Some 34 firefighters responded.

State law requires dogs to be licensed by June 1

Do you have an illegal dog?

According to Michigan State Law, all dogs in Oakland County must possess a 1999 dog license by June 1. Licenses may be purchased at the Farmington Hills Treasurer's Office or at the Oakland County Animal Control Division.

To obtain a dog license, dog owners must present a rabies certificate and pay one of the following fees:

dog.

- \$15 for dogs that are not spayed/neutered.
- \$8.75 for a spayed/neutered dog owned by a senior citizen age 65 or older.
- \$13.50 for a senior citizen's dog that is not spayed/neutered.

All dog licenses will cost \$30 on June 2. For details, call the Farmington Hills Treasurer's Office at (248) 473-9550, or the Oakland County Animal Control Division at (248) 391-4100.

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