

OMM BULLETIN

One More Mile Issue 107 Year 17 January 2016
Riding is a way of Thinking @ www.ommriders.com

The OMM website in Turkish and English offers reports, articles and pictures of OMM group activities. www.ommriders.com

Further news on training are available on ARA web sites



View from the Cockpit Paolo Volpara

I recently had an interesting exchange of documents on the concept of "Good Rider" basically trying to answer to the question "How can one define a good rider?"

The exchange let me thinking... and riding with this idea in mind.

I asked around, to riders that I respect and, as you can imagine, I got different and sometime discordant definitions.

What makes you saying "*hey, this is a good rider*"?

Because, be sure, you have a categorization in mind, although you may be too politically correct to express it publically.

We all divide riders between "GOOD", "BAD" and "WITH POTENTIAL": unfortunately, there are no sure criteria to substantiate these categorizations.

Or maybe not, maybe we can find some common ground or at list enough ground to create a good definition (readers are invited to come in now).

Let's assume that you ride on clear sunny morning with a Rider that in any case, under any circumstance and in any condition does not exceed the 50 kilometers per hour speed.

After one hour of sharing the ride, after 50 kilometers of absolute boredom would you define this rider as "GOOD"?

I do not think so and I do not know one rider that will do so.

Here we have a common element: SPEED.
A GOOD rider moves at speed; a BAD rider is slow.

Before you start shouting at me about social responsibility, safety, restrain and all similar paraphernalia keep me company for the next categorization criteria.

Let's us go back to the sunny morning ride and see our FAST biker riding fast, at his usual speed through a busy street, just when schools open... to keep his splendid speed he then overtakes blindly in a mountain road and ... so on ... always at sustained speed.

Will you define him as a GOOD rider? Certainly not since he has no AWARENESS of the situation, no SENSE of RISK whatsoever.

Now we may have a second element to agree with:
AWARENESS with SENSE of RISK makes a GOOD rider while a biker without it may look as BAD one.

The hypothetical ride continues: the rider is fast, the sense of risk and awareness is elevated but then you, riding on his tail notice a too frequent use of brakes and throttle.

Yes fast, yes aware, still this rider react too briskly and too jerky, it faces the road situations (of which he is aware) with a sense of surprise, with a last minute reaction.

The ride is stop and go, reactions never consistent braking sometime for an incoming vehicle and some other time ignoring it. The rider is rough with the bike and you are getting slightly sick. No GOOD, he lacks the smoothness that comes from ANTICIPATION and PLANNING. If he had a passenger helmets will bang as a deer's fighting for female attention.

A third area of agreement?

A GOOD rider must have a PLAN that anticipate what is going to be done A fast biker, aware of the situation with alerted sense of risk without anticipating PLANNING is a BAD rider (and he makes you sick, not to mention the passenger)

While you are suffering on the back you may as well discover some of the by-products that lack of planning brings on the ride: corner after corner and straight after straight the fantasy of your friend on two wheels finds new lines, new positions and, obviously, new actions-reactions.

He brakes sometime before the bend, sometime into it, sometime after it ... he moves on the left side of the lane for no reasons and other times he skirts the extreme (and dirty) right side of it... he gears up & down before speeding up or after opening the throttle... in few words his ride is inconsistent and you can never guess what he will do next.

You take a safe distance and you think that, after all, this is not – unfortunately - a GOOD rider.

He is fast, aware with active sense of risk, he plans with anticipation but he does not apply a consistent SYSTEM in the execution of his plan. And "consistent system" is just a hyperbole since any system is per se consistent.

So, choose the world that you prefer "consistent" or "systematic" and then agree with me on a fourth element for the definition of GOOD riders. FAST, AWARE with SENSE of RISK, PLANNING with ANTICIPATION and with CONSISTENT EXECUTION (or SYSTEMATIC in action).

In your ride, you now stop for coffee (or for tea or for any other natural reason) and you being a good friend do not discuss what you observed. After all riders who live in glass houses shouldn't throw stones...

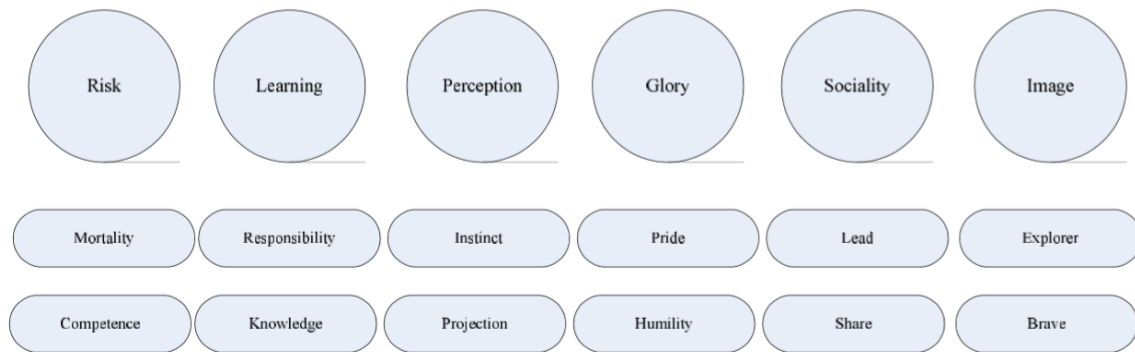
It is your friends who start boosting about the ride adding story of how good he was and how excellent he will be, how sad it is that other riders do not have his knowledge, skills, intelligence, courage and good look. Knows all, done all, right all time.

Here lies a fifth (and for today last) element of possible agreement: a GOOD rider is kind and modest gracefully exercising HUMILITY as first tool for further LEARNING.

Now I put down the side stand a wait for your reactions.

In 2006, some of you will remember, we published a set of OMM bulletins developing the "12 spheres of Motorcycling": if we can find an agreement on some of the five points presented and if you can present some others, we will develop this year the common IDEA OF GOOD BIKER.

This will not change the world we live in nor we resolve the critical issues that affect our daily life; it will nevertheless help us in getting better as humans and bikers... or I hope so.



Links

In May 2004 Joe Glydon died aged 56. Glydon had been a columnist in CityBike for a decade or more, and his prose was admired by many of the wordsmiths in the industry.

Overtime my passion for Motorcycle Magazine faded away and I found most of them boring and untrue amplification of the marketing efforts of the industry. I still like the style of CityBike (take a look at the [back issue of December 2015](#)) and I still miss Joe's voice, his way of thinking, his furious shouting at the lukewarm taste of banalities. Since his death a breath of intelligent, original, fresh, irreverent air disappeared from the biking community.

Here some of his thoughts:

"Recently I have sensed a more pronounced "I've got mine" attitude among my contemporaries, particularly those who have been freshly cast upon the white sand beaches of retirement.

This newfound contentment seems to extend beyond a hammerlock on fiscal well being to manifest as an aversion to inquisitive discourse.

Incendiary verbal prompts not infrequently fall upon deaf ears these days; subversive and seditious notions are met with gazes at watches and the horizon.

My mind echoes: "Is it us, or is it them?" though nowadays the more appropriate question must be: "Is it me, or is it them?"

It is much easier to excuse the complacency of youth: 20, 30, even 40-year-olds were brought up by television. Except for the reactionary minority among them, whose company I cherish and find thoroughly refreshing, children of the past 40 years have rarely found any incentive to distinguish between propaganda and fact.

Sanctioned opinions are represented and accepted as intelligent opinions; unpopular or politically incorrect opinions are damned as patently ignorant.

Why bother thinking when opinions have been consensus-branded, like hip and tawdry products? Yes, I can accept the conditioned complacency of youth much more readily than I can accept a dismissive wave of the hand from those who I know, know better.

As the oil of brilliance thins over the puddle of human discourse, I try to make amusing swirls in the micron-thin film of my own intellectual superficiality"

"Like any other broad-based avocation, motorcycling has its share of irritating assholes. One group that never fails to give me the pip is the brotherhood of self-righteous safety mongers I like to call the boy scouts.

They're easy to spot. They favor big adventure-touring-oriented bikes. They waddle off these bikes, so swaddled in compound layers of synthetic armor that their movements conjure images of tragic birth defects lurking beneath the foam and Cordura.

Their helmets are top quality, headset-equipped and often featuring flip-up chin guards. Their gloves are engineered to imprint plywood; their boots to stall chainsaws...

As good foot soldiers of the establishment safety coalition, the boy scouts have had their impact on our sport. Advocating the more lucrative forms of dress and the more prudent modes of behavior, they have brought reformist motorcycling to the streets.

Like pulpit-less fanatics of motorcycling religious right, they bellow from the phantom altars that they occupy on curbs and in parking lots. They call for the burning of white T-shirted pagans with dirty jeans and Lucky's rolled in their sleeves. They call for the redemption of misguided youth who ride in shorts and tank tops. ...

Boy scouts love attending, and discussing at length, riding classes conducted at racetracks. The racetrack aura seems to give them a sense of manly daring while the rigid rules and protocols provide a sense of security"

Ride and Think – June 2000

This closing section is dedicated to the edition of old articles appeared over the year in OMM Bulletin (this one is from June 2000). With this media entering in the 17th year I believe that most of the young riders did not have the opportunity to meet OMM in the early times and they may enjoy some notes from the past.

I just edited some of the historical and irrelevant references: after all... the older I get the better I was.

THE DARK SIDE of MOTORCYCLING

I have been thinking about the phrase pronounced by one of my friends who sustained a serious accident on motorcycle. *"I am reconsidering the use of the bike and I will never travel with a passenger again - he told me - I have seen the Dark Side of Biking"*.

This last phrase rumbled for a while through my mind *"Did I see the dark side of motorcycle? -I kept asking myself - and, if so, when, where, how? "*

Like most of the old riders I had my good share of accidents and broken bones, my portion of punishments for stupidity, distraction, bravado and sheer bad luck

I decided that the best way to personally discover the Dark Side of Motorcycle was to go back and remember, re-examine, re-live those dramatic moments and, with the wisdom coming from age, discover, if there, a side of my favorite sport that I did not considered before.

This I did and I saw once more faces of pilots, friends, passengers, I saw corners that I misjudged, cars that surprised me, muddy paths with hidden traps, meters of asphalt sliding under my fairing... but I did not find the "Dark Side".

Then, just before dismissing this subject, I stumbled once more in the little poems, maybe emphatic and a little "heroic", but with a great message in the closing part:

"When you have done this, and yet thrill to the promise of the un-risen sun that will soon shine upon the hook and crook of a gnarled mountain trace, fully apprehending the machine's propensity to deal death or exalt life -- then will you have become a motorcyclist"

"The machine's propensity to deal death or exalt life" is a good way to explain our passion for fast, powerful and

awesome bikes. And it is also the road to understand the Bright Side of Motorcycling.

Biking is a sport and like any sport it requires attention, preparation and caution; like any sport it places the players in anomalous situation, potentially risky; like any sport it involves a certain level of planning and it brings the human in close contact with dangers.

We were nor born for rushing at high speed at few centimeters from a rough, hard, abrasive surface called asphalt. Our body is not naturally equipped to sustain impact against immobile object at high speed and our reflexes are often inadequate to deal with the change of reality generated by the push of more than 100 horsepower. Mastering the power requires knowledge, discipline, experience and humility.

For the old bikers like myself old these three elements were imposed by the circumstances of the 50's in Europe when a 125 cc. bike was all we could get and it had to go for long time. We learned on not-so-powerful machines with chassis demanding great attention to keep the going straight, with brakes requiring long anticipation and, more important, with the deep knowledge that we could not change the bike in the year to come.

Racing (on and off road) has also been a good teacher: learning from people better than you, always asking for questions, always seeking a better answer.

Reading added new elements to the education: from books like "The Twist Of The Wrist" or "Motorcycle Excellence" we learned better lines to be experimented on the road, better observation techniques to be protect our lives when riding.

Humility was imparted the hard way: you better recognize that somebody is a better rider than you are or face the tarmac.

How long this process lasted?

How long do you intend to ride?

The process of mastering the machine, of applying your mind and body to the bike never ends and it will never stop/
This is the bright side of biking.

"Do you drive a car? Do you ride a bicycle? If so you can ride a bike today" As absurd as it sounds, this is a normal selling proposition from bikes dealer to attract new customers and this is still the current mentality among several fellow bikers.

From the first impact bike looks familiar: a bicycle with engine, responding to the same rules of cars, with just more sex appeal and the initial worry to operate the gears with hand and foot coordination. So, get the bike and ride on the sunset. If you manage to cover the first 100 km. without crushing (putting down the bike while maneuvering or parking it does not count) you can call yourself a motorcyclist, the one who always face the bright side.

Do not worry about learning the sport.

Enjoy the panorama, feel the wind in your hair and leave the helmet to the idiots... it is freedom after all.

Take the bike to the near Bar, make some noise, rev the engine, show your gear ...then park and enjoy the reputation... you are a Biker after all.

Yes, I have seen the dark side of motorcycling but it was the side of Ignorance and you, my dear reader, can stay away from it.

You know “ the machine’s propensity to deal death or exalt life” and you approach the bike with passion, enthusiasm and caution.

Sometime you see the bike’s “propensity to deal death”, sometime the accident happens but all this is still the bright side, exalting life. A lesson to be learned, a close encounter with our mortality, a call back to the humility of learning.

After, we go back to the saddle with more knowledge and more respect.

The Dark side we leave it behind.

This Bulletin is edited by [Paolo Volpara](#) with contributions from bikers in Turkey and abroad.

And now for the legal warning

**WARNING: BIKING IS DANGEROUS and SO IS LIVING
READING THIS BULLETIN MAY MAKE YOU THINK THAT
IS THE TOP OF DANGEROUS ACTIVITIES**

NOTHING IS MORE DANGEROUS THAN BIKING EXCEPT
SOME KIND OF LIAISONS

Before biking, be sure that you had a good meal (it could be your last one) and a good digestion with all that comes with it. Never, and I mean never, ride with empty stomach: nothing to show when you are really scared.

Every accident does not happen by accident: it is your stupidity and you pay for it. “Suddenly” is the way we cover our inattention: police like it.

Using earplugs in your nose can seriously reduce your sense of smell and the aesthetics of your face: same applies for tight booths and underwear.

Brake fluid and Battery liquid are transparent and so is vodka: do not confuse them.

Dedicating too much time to training may make you better and this is politically incorrect.

Riding while training on other kind of activities is extremely dangerous and in some country (Turkey included) highly illegal.

If you smoke, always check what you smoke before opening the door. Smoking while riding may increase the chances of accident especially if you do not have proper ventilation in your helmet.

Finally remember that all that is good is dangerous, forbidden or fattening but biking may reduce the cellulite level and eliminate dandruff. Biking fast may keep you away from jail.

Do not ride fast, do not ride hard, and do not ride for long time or distance. Do not use the horsepower of your bike (is there just for fun and conversation) nor tell your mother, partner or lover that you have a two-wheeler in garage.

Always wear protection does not matter what you are doing. And try to enjoy life as well, in between.

**IF YOU CAN'T BE A GOOD EXAMPLE
BE AT LEAST A TERRIBLE WARNING**