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## Ladies Sport Participation Program

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The AMRA has once again added another unique program to the Calgary and Edmonton Motorcycle Shows. First we introduced a one of a kind National Indoor Race series, and now for 2008, a Ladies Sport Participation Program!

**For the first time ever, a limited numbers of Ladies learned the basics of how to ride a motorcycle in the AMRA Race Hall during the Calgary and Edmonton Motorcycle Shows.**

The Alberta Mini Roadracing Association (AMRA) is pleased to have introduced our '**Ladies Sport Participation Program**' at the 2008 Calgary and Edmonton Motorcycle Shows. The program promoted under 'She Learns to Ride' by the Canadian National Sportsmen's Shows and with the support of Too Cool Motorcycle School in Calgary and NAIT Motorcycle Riding Training Programs in Edmonton the AMRA was able to provide instruction to over 120 Ladies.

Almost 70 Ladies in Calgary and just over 50 Ladies in Edmonton were able to experience the basics of motorcycle riding with a one hour 'wine tasting' type motorcycle lesson.

AMRA Event Coordinator Bernedette participated in the program in both Calgary and Edmonton. Despite organizing one of the largest and fastest growing mini roadracing clubs in North America she had never found the right opportunity to learn how to ride a motorcycle. Like most of the ladies entering the program her primary experience with the machines was as a passenger. Only one of the ladies entering the Sport Participation Program claimed to not be nervous, the rest came in nervous, slightly apprehensive and with a few butterflies. Bernedette, who had participated in the very first session hosted by Too Cool Motorcycle School at Calgary, was able to assure the ladies that they would soon forget all about being nervous. Sure enough the skill of the instructors and the small class size (maximum of 10) allowed for an almost instant trust between the trainers and the students.

Once the Ladies were all geared up, Instructors spent a few moments discussing some basic motorcycle theories with the trainees before they were lead to the motorcycles. The machines for the program were a combination of Yamaha TTR 125's, Honda CRF 100's, Suzuki DRZ 125's and Kawasaki KLX 125's (supplied by Blackfoot MotoSports-Calgary and the AMRA). The smaller and less intimidating machines were chosen to inspire confidence in the participants. With the controls being essentially the same as street machines, they worked very well for the 'wine tasting' introduction.

Once the ladies were on the bikes and comfortable they were asked to kick start the bikes. With the help of the Instructors and their team, the ladies were all sitting at the controls of a running motorcycle: a position most had never been in before! A few more minutes to talk about the basic controls: clutch (the lifeline), throttle, gears and brakes and in no time the ladies were finding the friction point on their machines! With eyes up and a good riding position participants were 'moving off'. Confidence exploded! You could literally see the ladies start to relax as they realized that this wasn't going to be as hard as they thought it would be. After working the clutch and throttle a few times and becoming more and more comfortable the participants moved around the first corner and then the second corner and in no time were making their way around the entire track! With Instructors posted on every corner giving tips to the students such as 'eyes up' and 'relax your arms', the ladies were kept confident and secure – an essential step for the beginner.

All too soon the session was over. The ladies dismounted from their machines and instantly the difference in them was apparent. A glow of confidence, accomplishment and huge smiles had taken the place where a nervous air had been only a short hour before!

Many of the Ladies who participated in the AMRA introductory Sport Participation Program are actively looking into further training and looking at buying a motorcycle of their own. Bernedette has signed up with Too Cool Motorcycle School to take the basic motorcycle course and get her license in the spring. Bernedette states 'I am

not ready to go racing, at least not yet, but I can't wait to get back on a bike! It's really exciting and now I get why so many people love the sport so much!

The AMRA wishes to thank the Calgary and Edmonton Motorcycle Shows, Too Cool Motorcycle School and NAIT Rider Training Program. With your support the inaugural presentation of the AMRA Sport Participation Program is an undeniable success.

The AMRA looks forward to spring and warmer weather when we can start our outdoor Ladies Sport Participation Program sessions. We have scheduled sessions at our track in Calgary every Wednesday starting in May. We also have specialized training sessions once a month for corporations or group bookings.

Everyone is welcome to come out and try our sport and enjoy the recreational side of motorcycles. The AMRA actively encourages the participation of all members of the community but space is limited in the training programs. So that the student can get the most out of their session class sizes are kept small and pre registration is strongly recommended. Programs currently include the Sport Participation Program for Ladies, demonstration programs and youth sessions for members aged seven and up.

For more information on how you and your family can become involved the Sport Participation Program for Ladies or the sport of mini roadracing contact [amra@shaw.ca](mailto:amra@shaw.ca). The AMRA is a non profit amateur sport association and a member of Volunteer Calgary; we are currently looking for volunteers for the 2008 season. Sponsorship opportunities are now available for the 2008 race season.

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