

# Celebrity Bikers - Past and Present

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*Article by: Evo Cummings*

There's a very long list of celebrity bikers. Harley Davidson motorcycles have been the chosen toy of both the rich and the famous for a very long time. This phenomenon took place almost immediately after the bike was manufactured. I've often wondered what the Bad Boys did to set themselves apart in pre-Harley days. I wonder if people who rode motorcycles were even considered to be rebellious or tough before bikers were featured as such in the motion pictures of the fifties. I know that James Dean in "Rebel Without a Cause" and Marlon Brando in "The Wild One" were considered to be THE original motorcycle movies of the day. I believe that the bikers in the latter movie that terrorized the locals while Johnny (Marlon Brando) romanced the local law's daughter, have made a mold and formed negative opinions that many are loathe to put aside decades later.

After awhile the coast seemed to be clear for peaceful law abiding citizens to hop on their bikes and ride without being social pariahs. Then enter Dennis Hopper and Peter Fonda of Easy Rider fame. Who can forget all those really bad clothes, dirty looking hair and what about the hand gestures we had not seen on the silver screen before?

Parents lived in fear of their babies growing up to be motorcycle riding ruffians and members of Hell's Angels. The mention of the name of this infamous club brought fear to the hearts of many. The existence of this group didn't do much to promote a positive Harley or biker image in those days. We're happy to say that things have gotten better in that situation.

Owners of the Harleys of modern day don't necessarily fit into the rough and ready persona that has preceded them. While Harleys seem to have become a middle class working man's toy, there are many riders among the wealthy and even the SUPER wealthy. I suppose celebrities, moguls and millionaires need stress relief just like the blue collar worker that punches a clock, maybe even more so.

Malcom Forbes, the founder of the famous financial publication of the same name, didn't become a motorcycle fan until he reached his late forties. He seemed to enjoy collecting motorcycles about as much as he seemed to enjoy making money! Malcom seemed to open the doors for businessmen going through their mid-life crisis to go out and buy a Hog and hit the roads.

Jay Leno, is an avid collector of Harley Davidson's and vintage automobiles. Jay was a mechanic for awhile in his younger days and still likes to tinker on engines. That's one thing you don't see many celebrity riders doing! Most movie stars are just along for the ride, so to speak.

There are many celebrities that enjoy riding motorcycles and many still prefer Harley Davidsons. Even President Clinton appeared riding a Harley during his Presidential campaign! And let us not forget the ladies. The list of well known biker babes would include Tina Turner, Liz Taylor and Lauren Hutton. Many women are becoming independent motorcyclists. Whoever you may be, famous or ordinary in every sense of the word, once the Harley bug bites, it's jump on and ride with the pack or be left behind!

By Evo Cummings

Evo Cummings has been an avid motorcycle enthusiast for years. He is the owner of a bike building, customizing and repair shop which has produced more than one award winning custom built motorcycle.

Many of the custom bikes made at his business, an ongoing diary of the activities of this motorcycle shop which are featured in his freelance articles and used motorcycles for sale are covered at his website, [GoGoCycles.com](http://GoGoCycles.com). Use of this article requires an active link to [gogocycles.com](http://gogocycles.com).