

Track Day

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Femmoto Track Day

Track Days For Women



The morning of September 20, 2003 was a beautiful sunny day and I was excited. I'd been waiting for this day for three months; it was Femmoto track day! This meant I was actually going to ride on a racetrack today, after riding on the street for three years. This 48-year-old Grandmother has never ridden on the track. This is a big day! What makes it even bigger, is the event. I read about Femmoto in an article sent to me by one of my friends. It was held last year in Virginia and over 50 women participated. When I learned they were bringing the event to the Bragg-Smith Course in Pahrump Nevada, I immediately signed up.

What I like is that on the first day of the event, Saturday, only women get to ride. This was an important issue for me as I probably wouldn't have attended had this not been so. As a street rider with no track experience and only a little instruction, going out on the track with all the guys was too intimidating. [Sportbike Track Time](#) and [Pacific Track Time](#), along with several manufactures who brought Demo bikes for us to ride, would make this a memorable event. On Saturday the only bikes we could ride were the ones graciously provided by Aprilia, Triumph and Moto-Guzzi. They each had several different models for us to choose from. We looked over the bikes and signed up to ride the one's we wanted for each of our 20 minute sessions.



At 8 am sharp the riders meeting started. They covered track rules, passing issues for the different classes, what the different flags mean and several other safety issues. The thoroughness of the instruction was impressive. I was listening intently and trying to take it all in even though my heart was beating faster and faster with the knowledge I would soon be riding. The Intermediate Class would go out first, so when the riders meeting was over they prepared for their ride. The Novice Class was large, about 40 women, so it was split into two groups. We stayed for some additional classroom instruction from Mike of Sportbike Track Time. He explained that we would go out in groups of four to five riders following an instructor. The first two laps of the session would be sighting laps only and under a standing yellow flag. Then we would pick up the pace a bit. After all the questions were answered, we were ready to go.

Boy, was I nervous. I remember thinking, "I am a 48 year old Grandmother, why am I doing this?" Then I got on my first choice of bike for the day, an Aprilia Tuono. Into the first long right hand turn, then back over into a long left hand turn, up the hill and into a sharp right hander in turn 3, up into turn 4 and up the hill into a double apex in turn 5a and 5b, and so it went. I finally let go of my death grip on the bars down the front straight, as I remembered all that I had learned from riding and talking with others - relax!



We had 20-minute sessions and I wanted to get the most out of each moment on the track. When my first session aboard the Tuono was done I got off the bike in pit row and made

my way back to our pit area - I couldn't quit grinning. What an adrenalin rush! Whew, I made it and I LOVED it! I peeled out of my leathers, it was about 90 degrees, and headed up to the tent for our next instruction session. I met up with several other women who just got off the track and they looked just like me, grinning from ear to ear.

As the day progressed we were given more exercises to try each time we went out on the track. Even though I was on a different bike each time, I learned something new every time. The instructors were excellent and if you felt like you were in a group going to slow, they would move you up. If you felt like you needed to slow down they would move you to a slower group. Now this is how to do it.

Of all the bikes I rode, the Aprilia Tuono, an Aprilia Mille, a Moto-Guzzi Breda and a Triumph Speed Triple, my favorite was the Tuono. It was the most similar to my bike, a Suzuki SV650 with a [Progressive Suspension shock and fork springs](#), steel braided brake lines and a [Staintune](#) exhaust.



I learned several things on this weekend. First, I could get on any bike and ride it reasonably well. Second, I got to practice looking through the corners. I've been having problems with this on the street. Being able to focus solely on the track, without worrying about a truck pulling out in front of me, enabled me to focus harder and work on some riding issues. Though I will probably always ride on the street simply because I love riding, I improved many of my skills by practicing on the track - which means I will always do track riding when possible.

I want to express my sincere thanks to Bonnie and Monte Strawser, the driving force behind Femmoto, along with Mike and Sal and the other instructors that participated that day. Also Rupert Bragg-Smith, owner and designer of the fantastic Spring Mountain Motor Sports Park, the manufacturers that let us ride their bikes, Aprilia, Moto-Guzzi and Triumph, and the sponsors and promoters, Moto Euro, Michelin, Women rider magazine and SpeedTV's Corbin's Ride On series. Without their joint effort, this event probably could not have happened. Sign-ups for the next ride are now available and my name is already on the list! The date of the this event is September 18th, 2004 - again at [Spring Mountain Motorsports Park \(Pahrump\)](#) . To learn about the event go to www.femmoto.com or call Sportbike Track Time at (888) 390-4020. Hope to see all you women out there!

Laura Couch

[Top Of Page](#) | [New Models](#) | [Home](#)

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