

Women Who Roll:

Martha Forget, Black Dog Cycle Works

Martha Forget used to be an executive in the mortgage industry. And then the world of finance went kaput, so Forget took her communications and customer service skills and left the big city for Sandpoint, Idaho, to work in her husband Kurt Forget's burgeoning business, Black Dog Cycle Works. The "boutique-style" company designs, manufactures and distributes parts for the adventure touring market. You can find Forget riding her KTM 990 around the Pacific Northwest. Last August she completed a three-week journey to Alaska with Kurt. Dealernews talked with Martha about her new life in one of the industry's growth segments.

On her role at BDCW: I handle customer service, inventory control, dealer management and [am the] shipping manager. Kurt and I work very closely as a team on marketing and strategy. If a customer calls, they most likely talk to me first, and if I am unable to assist them with highly technical questions, they get Kurt.

Many of them know that I am not the technical geek; however, I not only ride a KTM 990 Adventure but have installed most of the aftermarket items on my bike and offer pretty solid advice. Apparently I have my own following.

On working in a historically male-dominated industry: I was a sales executive for many years in a predominantly male field of home mortgage trading. So for a former tomboy it wasn't too difficult. The most amazing thing in the motorcycle industry, though, is that I am treated immediately as an equal by our customers. When they find out I ride a 990, they are impressed, and I have immediate credibility. No judgments made and definitely no attitude. Can't say the same for banking industry.

I wish there were more of us. Many exist in the apparel side of the business or in the cruiser market, but I can tell you there are very few women in the adventure market. I believe as this market segment grows so will the percentage of women. Every time I look for great adventure riding gear for women, I am reminded that this is a predominantly male industry.

Advice for other women in the industry: Get on your bike and ride. Take a class in the dirt. Don't be intimidated by the lack of females in this market segment. It will grow. Remember, you can lower many bikes to fit. BMW has already responded by offering bikes with lower suspensions. These are fun bikes and a fun group of riders. The camaraderie among this group of motorcycle adventurers is unparalleled.

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