

Riding around

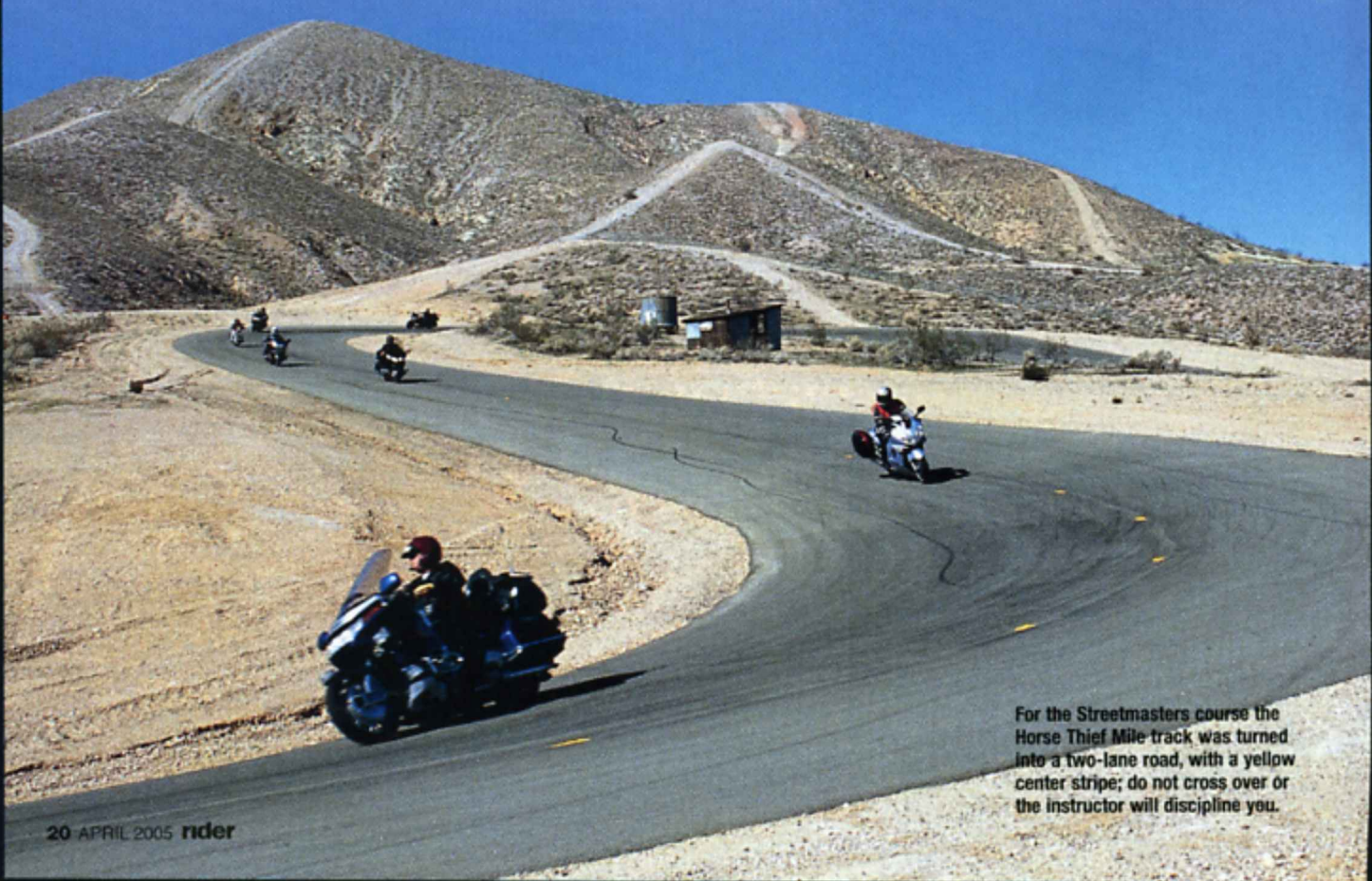
Streetmasters Motorcycle Workshop

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY CLEMENT SALVADORI

Any touring or cruising riders who have completed their Bachelor in Motorcycling Arts and want to go for a Master's degree would be well-advised to consider taking this workshop. Streetmasters gives riders real-world instruction on twisty, two-lane riding while enjoying the dog-less, traffic-less environment of a closed track. The main focus is to teach the street rider how best to approach the curves in the asphalt. Whether on the backroads of the Appalachian Mountains or along the narrow, winding stretches of California's Pacific Coast Highway, proficiency in cornering is critical.

The safest place to learn these skills is at a place like the new Horse Thief Mile at the Willow Springs Raceway complex on the edge of California's Mojave Desert. This one-mile course has five 180-degree turns, plus half a dozen more of lesser acuteness, and considerable elevation changes...up and down and twist around. Good fun!

Bob Reichenberg and Walt Fulton have used two guiding principles in developing the Streetmasters concept. First, aim your nose through the corner. It's not follow your nose, because your nose may be pointed in the wrong direction, but aim



For the Streetmasters course the Horse Thief Mile track was turned into a two-lane road, with a yellow center stripe; do not cross over or the instructor will discipline you.

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your nose correctly, looking through that corner to set a proper line. Second, practice the basics, like braking and swerving, until you are able to do exactly the right thing, without thought, when it counts!

As Reichenberg puts it, "Those two seconds between 'Oh @#S%&' and

the crash do not give you much practice time; you need to be a little obsessive about those basic skills and practice them constantly." He notes that crashes on curves usually occur because the rider's approach was wrong initially, a mistake which is compounded by trying to make changes in midcorner.

The closest parallel I could come to my day at Horse Thief Mile was my

two-week stint at jump school many years ago, where we performed the same routines, over and over and over. That was simply to teach us to do the necessary things automatically, rather than to look up at the malfunctioning parachute and say: "Oh, dear, I've got a streamer. What should I do now?" Reichenberg and Fulton work the same way, teaching the rider to make the right decisions before




The training drills, focusing on stopping and on swerving, may not have been as much fun as track time, but were essential.

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entering the corner, then to follow through with the proper technique.

Last November some 19 Gold Wings, and one Virago rider, showed up for the preview of

Streetmasters, and they all left grinning. "Enlightening," as one student put it. The full-day course is roughly half on the track, half warm-up and training drills. Through this winter the workshop is being refined and polished, and the first "official" workshops are scheduled to begin in

March 2005. As soon as new venues are found there will be other locations beyond just California. For more info you can contact Streetmasters at P.O. Box 3069, Atascadero, California 93423, give them a call at (805) 464-0544, or run up the Web site at www.streetmasters.info. 

Many students learned that their Gold Wings could lean a lot farther than they ever thought possible.

