



Photo provided courtesy Trillium Motorcycle Tours

Liz Jansen of Trillium Motorcycle Tours leading a group of riders through the Georgian Bay back country.

Breaking Ground

Ontario's Motorcycle Touring Industry Blooms

by **ELIZABETH BOKFI**
Contributing Writer, TMN

For those of us that began riding many years ago, long before the graduated licensing system that is in place today, to see a female motorcyclist was rare, if non-existent. Back in the early '80s when I began riding there were no motorcycle safety courses - just boyfriends as instructors and bikes that had seat heights that, for a chick barely five feet tall, made planting both feet on the ground very difficult. Times have changed and so has the face of motorcycle touring. Spotting a female rider is not uncommon.

For Liz Jansen of Trillium Motorcycle Tours, recognizing the motorcycle metamorphosis came after a two-month solo motorcycle journey across North America in 2002, following a significant transition period in her personal life. Encouraged along her journey, Jansen decided upon returning home to combine her passion for motorcycle travel with a service for other motorcyclists - a touring service that would cater to the specific needs of riders looking for a more structured tour. A veteran rider for 30-plus years, Jansen drew from her experiences on the road

and built a motorcycle tour service that would cater to riders from all lifestyles and all levels of experience.

Acquiring a license to operate a registered travel retail operation in Ontario through the Travel Industry Council of Ontario (TICO), Jansen's motorcycle tour company came alive, under the name Trillium Motorcycle Tours. According to Jansen, "It had never been done before, was outside the box and took a lot of persistence to achieve."

Now in its seventh year, Trillium Motorcycle Tours has bloomed into Ontario's premier motorcycle tour company offering packages throughout Ontario and even occasionally in Quebec. Some of Trillium's one to six-day tours available are fully guided packages that include:

- High-end accommodations and meals
 - Northern Ontario tour including scenic flight in bush plane and fresh caught shore lunch
 - Wilderness camping in Ontario (new)
 - Weekend getaways, staying in B&Bs that are operated by motorcyclists (whenever possible)
 - Ladies only spa weekend
- Trillium strives to provide its custom-

ers with a high level of rider safety and satisfaction. All routes and accommodations are researched thoroughly. Trillium Motorcycle Tours is partnered with Grey-Bruce and Algoma-Kinniwabi Tourism Associations, adding to the company's marketability. Getting a lot more attention this year are Trillium's corporate rides.

"As riders, we know first-hand how new relationships can be formed or existing ones strengthened by riding together," says Jansen. "This kind of bond can't be formed at association meetings or golf tournaments. Strong relationships are a huge component to what helps our businesses and careers thrive. Progressive corporations have realized this and we've had the pleasure of organizing events for them to invite employees and/or clients for a unique and highly effective experience. Some of them are making this an annual event."

Receiving great response was Trillium Tours' Professional Women's Networking Ride. The concept emerged from one of Trillium's corporate rides.

"Most of the participants on these are men," explains Jansen. "So why not offer a similar experience to the women? The

women that have responded are pleased to have something that's novel and an opportunity to relate to other professionals and business women on a whole different level. Our motorcycles are an amazing bonding agent." Jansen is working toward organizing another networking ride for September.

Tour guides have additional skills training, and are the core of Jansen's service. Trillium will plan as much or as little of your self guided tour also. Organized rides to celebrate birthdays, anniversaries and other special events can be arranged. For out-of-province riders, Trillium is able to assist with motorcycle rentals.

Whatever a rider's needs, Trillium Motorcycle Tours makes every effort to accommodate. Adventure and fun is always part and parcel for Jansen. Having many repeat clients, Jansen says, "We always have an adventure and always a good time."

We veteran riders might have benefited from tour services like Jansen's back in our early riding years. We might not have had a VISA® card to our name, but Trillium could, "be everywhere we'd want to be." **TMN**