

Gear up and get going

As many motorcycle owners stuck through the clogged and congested city streets would attest, the need to take to the open road is a powerful pull. Turns out this desire is shared by many two-wheeler owners in the city, who have come together to form communities to celebrate the joy of motorcycling. From groups dedicated to popular models to a mixture of vehicles ranging from gearless scooters to superbikes, Bengaluru has it all.

N.I. John, the founder of Bangalore Bikers, explains that he took the decision to start a group mainly to promote safe riding. "Back in 2007/2008 I experienced first hand that we are not very sensible on the road. Many lose their lives due to rash riding without any protective gear. So I decided that I must do something to promote safe biking and at the same time, tourism in India. The idea was to explore hidden places and showcase them." Founded in September 2009, the group now has over 4,000 members.

While Bangalore Bikers is open to anyone who owns a two-wheeler, there are many who choose to stick to a specific make of motorcycle. "The city has a number of popular clubs for owners of specific motorcycles," says Kapil Sangal, CEO of Throttle Auto Solutions, a social platform for bikers. "There are clubs dedicated to Bajaj Avenger, Pulsar and the Yamaha RX series. KTMs and Royal Enfields also have huge followings, and then there is also the Bangalore Exotic Superbikes Team and the Bangalore Riders Association of Triumph," he adds.

Continued on Page 2

Bikers can now take a pick from the number of motorcycling clubs that call Bengaluru home, finds SOORAJ RAJMOHAN

REVVING TO GO Bengaluru has a motorbike club for almost every make of bike



...Gear up and get going

Continued from Page 1

There are those who prefer riding solo, but the biggest draw of the motorcycling club is the sense of fraternity. "I have gone for my fair share of solo rides, and though the solitude is nice, it can get a little boring after a while. I was briefly part of a group before moving cities, and the satisfaction you get from discussing motorcycles over chai at a stall by the highway is quite special," says Nitin Prashant, an IT professional who recently moved to the city.

John and Kapil concur that the many clubs in the city have a lot of mutual respect for each other.

"We often see each other when out for rides, and sometimes take a break together. All the admins of the groups are well-connected, and events organised by one club are often enthusiastically supported by the others. The Independence Day ride and World Motorcycle Day rides are some of the biggest events that

happen in the city, and most of us often ride up to the India Bike Week (IBW) event, which happens in Goa," says Kapil.

The presence of platforms like Throttle, which serve as a one-stop solution that let bikers identify groups, plan rides and search for ride companions, goes to highlight the rapidly growing biking ecosystem in the country. With the variety of motorcycles available in India also on the rise, the makeup of motorcycling clubs is now rather diverse. "I'm

a superbike rider myself, and Bengaluru has around 100 superbikes on its streets. The most popular one is still the Suzuki Hayabusa," says Kapil, while John adds that age is also not a major factor when it comes to joining a community.

"We've got people from 18 to 85 in our community, though the average age would be between 30 and 35."

While different clubs have different schedules and ideologies, the general routine involves the

occasional meetup and a lot of rides - with safety being paramount. "Safe riding is an art and we must learn this art. Once you set your budget for a bike, you have to keep a budget for your gear as well," says John firmly. However, for the informed biker who wants to join a group for the fun of motorcycling, the community is always ready to receive members into the fold with open arms. "We conduct welcome rides once a month where we teach new members the principles of safe riding. Once a member finishes the welcome ride with us they are eligible to join us for our official short and long rides," John concludes.



PASSION On the road