



Phoenix Motor Leathers, Letting the Love Flow
by Greg Ormson

When you meet Tina, you can't help but be impressed by her integrity. And when you walk into Phoenix Motor Leathers, the obvious statement from every corner of the store is care. Attention must be paid to accomplish anything, and Phoenix Motor Leathers has obviously paid attention to their customers, their brand, and their mission. "We are bikers here to provide gear for bikers," she said.

Phoenix Motor Leathers was established in the year 2000 but in 2017 it was newly rebranded. In June this year, they moved to their current location at 128 West Main St., - smack dab in the middle of Friday Night Bike Nights in Mesa. On September 1, they will celebrate their Grand Opening at the store which corresponds to the first fall Friday Night Bike Night. It's easy to believe this won't be the last celebration offered by Phoenix Motor Leathers, for this store looks every bit a rising success story.

Tina has a staff of full and part-time employees and they're all bikers. They care deeply about the biking community, and I can testify to this from personal experience, as not long ago I purchased a leather jacket that had to be returned. When I reminded Tina of my positive experience, she said, "We're just bikers trying to help bikers. It's the reason we're here." The cynic will counter that everyone says that, and it may be true, but I experienced it, and bikers are wise enough to know the test of truth is experience and everything else can hit the road.

A shopping experience in the store sets it apart. It's not like some leather shops trotting out a bunch of dusty boxes for boots that have dried out, or displaying a couple helmets and some discount T-shirts. Phoenix Motor Leathers appeals to the eyes with its well-lit, smartly arranged, clean shop. Frosting on the cake is that you're greeted with a smile and treated with courtesy, and the sparkling

chrome racks are draped with gorgeous brand leather-wear and accessories.

The shop features a complete sewing service for patches and repairs, has a strong selection of helmets, boots, travel gear, and a wealth of eye-catching biker candy; "It's the largest selection in Arizona," Tina said.

She doesn't labor under the notion of business as a headache, and her positive attitude is infectious, "It's not a hassle, it's a breeze," she said. But don't be fooled. Behind this breezy version of success in business, customer engagement, and service to the biking community is a well-trained and analytically planned business venture.

From the first job she had at 18 - working in California at Santa Barbara Yamaha - Tina said she loved the biker community. "I was lucky, because the owner was trying to promote women in cycling and I happened to be there. They were very supportive of me," she said.

A description of her hiring end game might surprise: "Hire the best people you can and don't interfere." This may seem simple, but its undergirded by years of study, work, supervision, leadership training, and experience from her previous career.

"When providing leadership," she said, "I highlight the importance of work-life balance, recognition and praise for positive contributions, investment in people, and advocacy for my team. Everybody wants to be part of a good team and be recognized as a contributor to that team."

When asked if she had a message for the biker community, she enthusiastically responded, "Swing by the shop."

"We are part of our community and we care about it," she said, "and we try to make it a fun environment. I have a number of customers that come in just to hang out for a while. They swiftly become friends, and there's always a kindred spirit when they show up. It's almost as if we were neighbors."

The shop gets involved with all the neighbors

by setting up in vending areas and meeting people at events like the Westgate bike nights, the Desert Wind Harley-Davidson bike nights, and a number of other bike events to which they are invited.

"We go and have a blast, and all of it goes back to my employees," she said. "They are hand chosen, and every single one of them has that special spark that we need at the store and during events."

Like many businesses, Phoenix Motor Leathers experiences people walking through the doors looking for sponsorships. "I try not to turn anybody away, but it must be a legitimate charity," she said.

The power of online shopping is part of the new reality for any business, but Tina has an educated view on it, "Because of our sewing shop, we are in a unique position to know what happens outside the shop. Many people come in asking if we can alter a piece of clothing because they bought it online and didn't have a chance to try it out first."

Most of all, the staff is open, and they want to tattoo their reputation on the community as a well-equipped shop going out of its way to care and to serve. "We want people to come here so we can meet them and they can know our brand and get to know us. We've just established a new logo, and one of the fun things I do is pay for it if you have our logo tattooed on your body. It's a brand-new thing we've arranged with Mesa Tattoo Company, new to the area."

So next time you're looking for biker gear, don't just cruise the Internet, get out your bike and cruise down to Phoenix Motor Leathers to check out the shop. You'll find a rich selection that's sure to entice you into opening your wallet and letting the love flow, because that's what you'll experience at Phoenix Motor Leathers.

Stop in at 128 West Main St., Mesa, call 480-827-1868, or visit on the web at PhoenixMotorLeathers.com. Please mention you read about 'em here in *AZ Rider Motorcycle News*.

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