



NEW YORK POST

LATE CITY FINAL

FRIDAY, JULY 28, 1995 / Humid, chance of thunderstorms today, 85-90; leftover showers tonight, 73-78 / Details, Page 30 **

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CYCLE GRANNY: Dot Robinson, 82, astride her pink motorcycle with built-in lipstick case in "She Lives to Ride."

Women go hog wild in 'Ride'

By BILL HOFFMANN

THE term "biker chick" usually conjures up visions of a busty blonde bimbo holding on for dear life to her tattooed boyfriend as he zooms off into the desert on a souped-up Harley.

Alice Stone's impressive documentary, "She Lives to Ride," quickly explodes that stereotype and gives women their due in the history and development of the male-dominated sport.

The film, opening today at the Public Theater, weaves the stories of five independent female bikers from all

FILM review

walks of life through a brief history of women in the sport dating back to the early 20th century.

It's a revelation to see footage of two fearless sisters, Adeline and Augusta Van Buren, as they bravely cycle cross-country on menacing and unpaved roads in 1916.

And the tale of a young black woman who biked solo through the segregated pre-World War II South is positively inspiring.

But the stars of this show are the five very different women who not only embrace motorcycling but go out of their way to promote it.

Dot Robinson is the out-and-out scene stealer. This 82-year-old great-grandmother from Florida rides a pink Harley, which features a lipstick case built into the handlebars.

Dot, who has ridden for 70 years, tells how she really got hooked back in 1935 when she and her husband set the record for fastest time cross-country in a motorcycle with sidecar attached (89 hours).

SHE LIVES TO RIDE

★ ★ ★ 1/2

A documentary produced, directed and edited by Alice Stone. Running time: 76 minutes. Unrated, but contains brief nudity. At the Public, 425 Lafayette St., near Astor Place, East Village.

While she may clock the most number of hours on the road, the other women certainly make up for that in spirit:

There's Jacqui Sturgess, a conservative Manhattan advertising exec in her professional life, who lets it all hang out as leader of the Sirens, a colorful lesbian bikers group.

And Amy Berry, a young black florist who dons a leather jacket, stuffs her pet Chihuahua inside it, and rides to meetings with her African-American cycle club.

There's also avid rider Jo Giovannoni, who founded "Harley Women" magazine after realizing that most other motorcycle publications featured little more than half-naked women suggestively perched across their bikes.

Much to her credit, director Stone presents her fascinating subjects in a straightforward, unhyped manner.

From the beginning, we care about these people as if they were our close friends — and pulling off that trick can be a documentary's toughest challenge.

Stone not only succeeds — but she manages to thoroughly entertain along the way. Even if you never plan to set foot on a motorcycle, "She Lives to Ride" will take you on a rewarding, one-of-a-kind trip.