

# THAT SHE

# BLOWS!

Bikers Hit the High Seas BY ERIC ELLIS □ PHOTOGRAPHY: CRAIG MURROW



**P**igs don't fly, but Hogs can sail. The past three years, for one week in November, bikers have ditched their chaps and iron steeds for flip-flops and chaise lounges as they board a mega-luxurious cruise ship headed for the Caribbean. For most people, thoughts of boats and bikers blend together like motor-oil and water, one floats and the other sinks. However, for Dean and Debbie Anderson, the dynamic duo behind the Hogs on the High Seas Rally, the idea of creating a floating seven-day party made perfect sense. ►

## ■ THAR SHE BLOWS



Like most die-hard Harley fanatics, the Andersons used up every minute of vacation time they had to hit as many major rallies and H.O.G. state rallies as possible. But, as we all know, too much of a good thing can be bad. In the Andersons' case, they weren't tired of going to rallies, they were fed up with all the negative aspects, like price gouging, foul weather, and bike theft. "We enjoyed the events, but they all seemed to be the same wherever we went," Dean said. "Despite a little excitement every once in a while, we were basically experiencing rally burnout. It was time for a change."

What they came up with was the perfect setting for the last rally of the season, aboard one of Royal Caribbean's largest cruise ships and traveling to some of the most beautiful locations in the Caribbean: Labadee, Hispaniola, Ochos Rios, Jamaica, George Town, Grand Cayman, and Cozumel, Mexico. As the rest of the Harley world is settling in for a long winters' hibernation, more than 1,300 bikers walked a gangplank destined for seven days of fun, sun, and yes, motorcycles on the open sea!

"It's no secret Harley people like to travel," said Dean. "We gave them the opportunity to experience everything associated with the rallies, without the worries, like cleaning the bike after every ride, getting a D.U.I., or having their bike stolen."



Although the passengers can't bring their bikes on the boat, there is still plenty of iron and chrome to look at with more than 20 vendors and bike builders on board displaying their goods.

"We have companies such as Ego Trip Wheels,

Redneck Engineering, Hallcraft's, and Mustang Seats come along and set up booths. Passengers can shop for parts for their winter project, maybe they'll even be lucky enough to win one of the \$200,000 in booty the vendors give away, or if ►

## ■ THAR SHE BLOWS



they're really lucky, win a \$40,000 custom bike," Dean said.

At most rallies, attendees spend hundreds of dollars a day on food, drink, lodging, and entertainment. The Hogs on the High Seas have seven-day packages starting at just over \$1,800 for two people and includes chow 24 hours a day, a room with an awesome view, and organized parties with stops at places like Jimmy Buffett's Margaritaville in Ochos Rios and Harley-Davidson of Grand Cayman.

For those who would rather walk the plank than be stuck on a boat for days on end, there's plenty to do to keep even the biggest landlubber ►



## ■ THAR SHE BLOWS



entertained. All the activities bikers love are incorporated, but specially designed around the cruise theme. There's the Buxom Wenches contest, "I'll be taken' that T-shirt" swap, Poker Walk, Pirate Bingo, and a couple formal dinner nights, biker style (leather required). If lounging around with a cabana girl at your beck and call is your idea of relaxation, there are several pools to keep you cool in the average 80-degree temps. You can also challenge your fellow bikers to a game of round ball on the b-ball court where "no blood, no foul" is the only rule of the game. Need to brush up on



your golf etiquette? Get a foursome together and test your patience at the miniature golf course. Watch out though, that 19th hole can leave you spewing your lunch off the starboard bow.

Of course this wouldn't be a successful Harley

event if there wasn't some sort of charity event involved. "We didn't want to collect money for a major charity in which our donors wouldn't be able to see their dollars in action," Dean said. "We wanted to choose a charity that received very ►

## ■ THAR SHE BLOWS



little attention for funding or medical advances. We also wanted our passengers to see their donations equating to fast results." What better way to achieve this goal than to help dialysis patients?

Dialysis patients need treatment every few days, therefore taking a vacation is nearly impossible. However, the Andersons found Dialysis at Sea, an organization which provides up to 14 dialysis patients the opportunity to receive the treatments they need while out at sea. "Our goal was to provide an opportunity for motorcycle enthusiasts or their friends on dialysis to attend our rally and have the time of their lives," Dean said.

Even though they were able to provide dialysis on the ship, the cost of treatment combined with paying for the trip is often way more than most patients can afford. So, the Andersons set up a donations fund to help pay for the treatments. "At this year's rally, we are proud to announce that our 1,367 rally participants contributed \$31,771. Enough to pay for the dialysis staff, equipment rental, plus treatment for 14 patients." But the Andersons don't stop there with their generosity, for every 100 people who register, the Andersons pay for half of one patient's balcony stateroom. Also, if the charter sells out five months in advance, they will pay for the patients' airfare from anywhere in the Continental U.S. and Canada.

However, it's not just dialysis patients who enjoy the biker-themed cruise the Andersons set up. "Every year we have 20-50 terminally ill cancer patients who come aboard for one last ►

## ■ THAR SHE BLOWS



trip. We pulled some strings to get them cleared by their doctors and on board. We've had to carry some of them back to the ship because they had too much fun, but that's okay, this is a celebration-of-life kind of rally," Dean said.

The Andersons lined all their black powder cannons in a row and established an event that encompasses everything bikers love: traveling, partying with other bikers, looking at bikes, shopping for parts, and giving back to the community. If ditching your biker garb for an eye patch, peg leg, and a parrot on your shoulder while you travel the high seas in search of



foreign treasures sounds appealing to you, check out [www.hogsonthehighseas.com](http://www.hogsonthehighseas.com). If the pirate in you can't wait until next November to swab the deck, or your first mate is begging

you to take her to see beautiful scenery and wildlife, the Andersons have just put together an amazing Alaskan biker cruise scheduled for June 26 to July 3. **HB**