

# STURGIS THROUGH THE EYES OF MICHAEL LICHTER



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because he  
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but he has  
**lived it.**

**PHOTOGRAPHY BY  
MICHAEL LICHTER**

History... Each of our lives is rich with our own personal history. Our individual stories are often told and retold by family, friends, or strangers whose paths ours have crossed. At times, the stories are even told in our own words and with our own voices. It is not captured only with words though, but with the images that are so often at the heart of preserving all that has come to pass.

*Opposite Page, "The Kiss"*

*This page, "Main Street Backlit"*

# For sixty-nine years,

motorcyclists have been making history with an annual trek to the riding promised land, Sturgis, South Dakota. The gathering has changed and evolved dramatically over the years, but the love of motorcycling and motorcycles that brings this group of riders together remains unchanged. The region is visually stunning and the history that makes this rally legendary is rich in imagery. A precious few have captured this imagery and among the most historically significant is photographer Michael Lichter.

There are many words used to explain the passion that is riding, and lifestyle is among the most accurate. The Black Hills and the Sturgis Motorcycle Rally provide a near-perfect motorcycling experience for riders seeking either riding solitude or the camaraderie of like-minded people. It also provides the perfect opportunity to record visually all that is motorcycling, and Michael has accomplished just that.

He is thoughtful and intelligent and possesses a unique combination of gentleness and quiet strength. Most of all, he understands the lifestyle because he has not just photographed it, but he has lived it as well. Michael began riding more than 30 years ago and he has been influential in motorcycling journalism for just as long. He is among the few of this generation who know the experience of sleeping on the ground in a municipal park in the City of Sturgis long before the event exploded into the surrounding countryside.

He is a long-time contributor to Easyriders magazine and his work has been included in many books on motorcycling. Those works include several large format books on custom motorcycles, individual books on legendary builders Arlen Ness, Billy Lane and Indian Larry, and ten coffee-table books that are diverse in content with two specifically about the

Sturgis experience. He has published over 1,000 articles on motorcycling and custom bikes. Among his credits are motorcycling images specifically requested by Willie G. Davidson for a 100th anniversary book on Harley-Davidson motorcycles.

Michael is involved with the world of art not just as a creative force, but also as the curator of many important and well-respected exhibitions. He is currently presenting the Arlen Ness Awesome-Ness exhibition at the AMA Hall of Fame Museum in Pickerington, Ohio. For ten years he has presented exhibitions throughout the Black Hills at venues like the Journey Museum with diverse themes such as Bikes, People, Attitude or Speed Demons: Race Inspired Motorcycle Art. He is always looking for new ideas or themes that will inspire riders of all types.

**Many of us were introduced** to the world of motorcycling through the imagery found in movies, music, and word. Classic films *On Any Sunday* and *Easy Rider* as well as still images of legends like Marlon Brando on his Triumph motorcycle have called generations to all types of riding. Thoughtful riders have been inspired by reading Pirsig's *Zen* and the *Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* and many of us were captivated by the images of Evil Kneivel found on childhood lunchboxes while we were still too young to ride.

In 2009 Michael is presenting *Rebel Rousers: Motorcycle Icons that Inspired Us to Ride* to explore these iconic influences on motorcycling. He is excited to be working with the *Legendary Buffalo Chip* in a newly constructed 7,000 square foot building being built as a home for important and historic motorcycling exhibitions. The excitement is mutual as *Buffalo Chip* owner Rod Woodruff explains "Michael has such great personal integrity and that integrity translates directly to his art. His portrayal of the biker lifestyle has shown the world the value of this way of life and all riders have benefitted from that story being told. We are tickled to have him at the Chip."



*"After the Storm"*



*"Flames"*



*"Choppers at Junction and Main"*

Renowned motorcycle photographer Michael Lichter will host the 9th annual Motorcycles as Art Exhibition at the Legendary Buffalo Chip located four miles east of Sturgis on Highway 34. The exhibition is free to the public and is open from 8am - 11pm from Saturday, August 1st through Friday, August 7th during the 2009 Sturgis Motorcycle Rally.

The theme for 2009 is Rebel Rousers: Motorcycle Icons that Inspired Us to Ride which allows Michael to explore the iconic influences on motorcycling found in film, song, and print. With 20 incredible bikes and a large display of two and three-dimensional art being presented, this exhibition promises to provide a thoughtful and interesting look at many of the significant forces that have inspired generations to the motorcycling lifestyle. The Sturgis Motorcycle Rally offers riders an abundance of great things to do, and this Michael Lichter exhibition is a must see event.

## Rebel Rousers at the Legendary Buffalo Chip

Michael Lichter



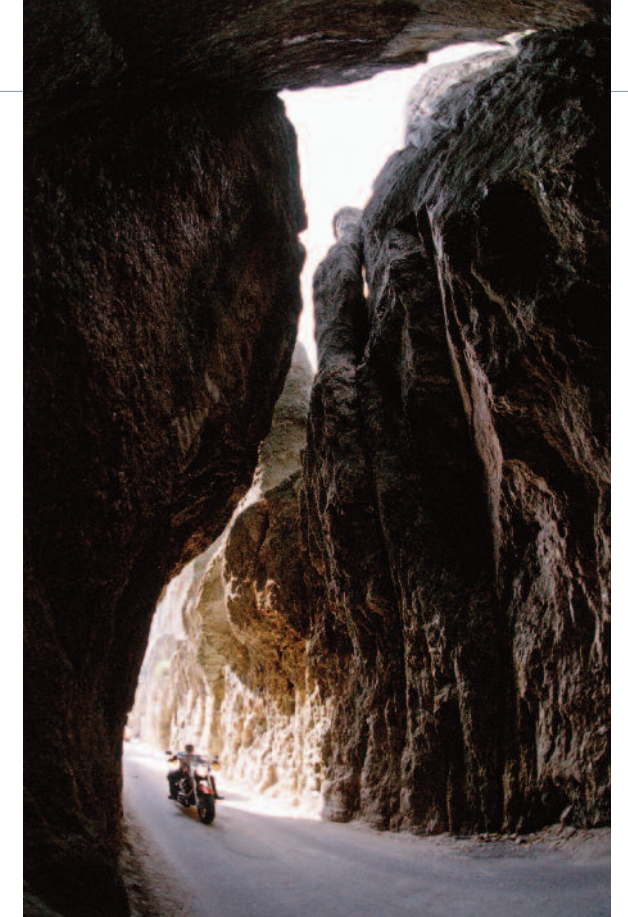
## His work has allowed him to see the beauty that is America

and to travel abroad to Canada, Europe, Japan, Mexico and New Zealand. At events, Michael is often found deep in conversation with other motorcyclists or presenting his work to enthusiasts from around the world. He can be spotted in the most desolate places framing the perfect shot or standing in the rain on Main Street capturing the reality of rainy days and motorcycling.

Long before motorcycling photography became the focus of his life, Michael was a jazz drummer. Legendary jazz musician Duke Ellington once spoke of his profound belief that respect cannot be demanded, but must be commanded. That philosophy is the essence of Michael Lichter's career and he commands the respect of all who meet him. They respect not just his photography or the ethic and talent required to create such an incredible body of work, but they respect the man as well.

Michael has quietly been a driving force in expanding a broader understanding and appreciation of the motorcycling lifestyle through his visual medium and personal appearances. No matter how profound an impact his work has had on the motorcycling community, it is secondary to how he has enriched the lives of those with whom he has personally shared his career and life.

Enjoy this look at the Sturgis experience through the eyes of this extraordinary man. **S-09**



"Needles Highway Slot"

"Early Morning"

