



LISA GRISSON  
RONN REEGER

# RUBBER SIDE DOWN

## Dispelling Myths Getting Inspired with Choppers

Laying in a hospital bed after an almost fatal motorcycle crash, Gary Reese, co-owner of **Midessa Motorcycles** ([midessamotorcycle.com](http://midessamotorcycle.com)), knew then that he wanted to own a motorcycle shop. Ironic – even crazy – you might think, but for man who's been passionate about motorcycles all his life, this seems perfectly logical.

What was a seemingly unjust turn of events for a passionate motorcyclist turned out to be the handywork of the *Motorcycle Gods*. Apparently, Gary is supposed to be doing exactly what he is, because if it were not for his crash he admits he would probably still be selling something for somebody else. "Because of my crash and having been out of work for so long learning to walk again, I was at a place where I had to do something different just out of necessity. Really, looking back, it was the perfect time to take a leap of faith," he told us.

Learning to walk again and still on crutches, Gary went to meet his business partner, **Dr. Finch**, at the location Midessa calls home today at 8100 W. Hwy 80. Gary knew there was a market in for custom choppers, but convincing others of this market proved to be frustrating. Finally, it was **American IronHorse** that gave Gary the chance to live his dream. Today, Gary is one of the Top 20 dealers in the nation for **American IronHorse**, as well as **Big Dog Motorcycles**! He also carries the **Wild West** line of cycles and his newest addition is the all-American made **Victory** line. It is this addition that busted the seams on his store and gave him reason to expand.

For a guy who started out in a 5000 sq ft. building with nothing but a box of t-shirts, Gary has done well for himself. But more importantly, he is having fun. Of course, with any business, it is not without its headaches and challenges. "The fun still outweighs the headache, so I know I am still where I am supposed to be", Gary told us.

When we set down to talk with Gary, we found him to be a very down-to-earth guy. And generous, too! He actually took a couple of *IronHorses* and a *Big Dog* off the show room floor and let us ride them! "I think this will be an important part of your research for your article", he told us with a wink. "Why argue?", we thought! He went on to tell us "So many people have the wrong idea about what it is like to ride a chopper. They think because the front end has a long rake, it is difficult to turn. It's not difficult, it is just different."

So off we went on these brand new choppers, cruising around the city with Gary. All we could think was "Oh, please don't let the road gremlins have their way", but in classic fashion the *Motorcycle Gods* came to the rescue and

after we made our first turn, we knew we were going to survive unscathed – us and the motorcycles!

It has been said that information allows us to understand, but it is experience that really allows us to know. And so now we know there is no reason to fear riding a chopper. As is the case with any new bike there is an adjustment, but once we got into the groove we found them to be quite fun. Probably the funnest (is that a word?) part of all, was the heads we turned. Bottom line, they are head-turning, beautiful bikes with lots of power and way FUN!

Gary also set us up to tour the *American IronHorse* facility and see first hand how they are made. So off we went on our *Harley's* to the *IronHorse* plant in Ft. Worth where we were happily greeted by our personal tour guide, **Vicki Vowell**.

Vicki walked us thru the manufacturing process. We got to watch the wrenches wrench, the seat makers mold, the machinists make parts and the airbrush artists lay down their art. We had always wondered just how "custom" those paint jobs really were. Now we know – they really are custom!

With 50 different graphics options, a palette of 18 base colors and 36 accent colors, 9 different wheel options and 3 different engine options, *American IronHorses* are truly custom. There is even a **COMPLETELY** custom option that starts with a blank canvas and the idea in your head.

Currently, *American IronHorse* offers 3 different styles of choppers: the *Texas Chopper*, the *Legend* and the *LSC*. When we rode with Gary, **Ronn** rode a *Texas Chopper* and **Lisa** rode a *Legend*. Gary told us the *Legend* is the longest of all the *IronHorse* bikes because it is stretched to allow for closer-in handlebars and controls – the perfect bike for the shorter folk. In the cruiser style line-up of bikes *American IronHorse* also offers 3 different styles: the *Slammer*, the *Tejas* and the *Outlaw*. And in '08, they will be introducing 3 new bikes to their line-up.

We had a blast – from talking with Gary, to riding choppers to seeing how they're made. If we had to sum it all up in one word, we would say "INSPIRING"! But, there is no substitute for experience, so we hope conveying our experience with choppers inspires you to go and try one for yourself.

Special thanks to Gary Reese for giving us the gift of his time, sharing his story, letting us ride choppers, and arranging for our personal tour – thanks for inspiring us! Special thanks to Vicki Vowell for our personal tour. When you look at the *IronHorse* website ([americanironhorse.com](http://americanironhorse.com)), she is the power behind that engine, as well as

the designer for the soon-to-be unveiled women's line of clothing. Vicki, thanks for the gift of your time! And special thanks to Paula in the gift shop for the *American IronHorse* pins we are now sporting. Keep the rubber side down!



[WWW.MIDESSAMOTORCYCLE.COM](http://WWW.MIDESSAMOTORCYCLE.COM)



**MIDESSA MOTORCYCLE**

The 2007 MASTIFF

8100 W. HWY 80  
1 MILE EAST OF MIDLAND AIR TERMINAL  
432-563-4109



**bigdog** MOTORCYCLES **Test Ride** A BIG DOG MOTORCYCLE TODAY