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WIRED

JULY 2001

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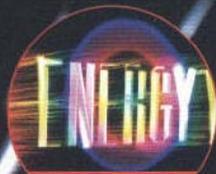
POSITIVE ENERGY

**Dear Mr. President:
There Is A Future For Smart Power**

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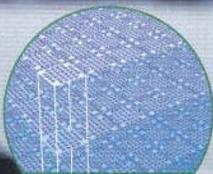
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WIRED MOTOS

WILD ONES

BY ERIC PUTTER

PHOTOGRAPHS BY CRAIG MAXWELL

GEAR UP WITH SIX TECH-SEXY CYCLES AND LET THE MEEK INHERIT YOUR DUST.

Motorcycles generate adrenaline. Perfectly legal when used as directed, these complex systems work in high-speed synchrony to make the rider feel more alive. "A good ride or race makes me think, 'This is what life's about,'" says Lynn Conway, a chip-design pioneer and motocross buff. "Take a few risks and you experience something magical." The exhilaration comes from mastery as well as speed. As Akamai chair and CEO George Conrades explains, "Motorcycling requires learned skills and total concentration – particularly when you're carving the perfect corner."

Sportcycles (like the Y2K Superbike pictured at right) and motocrossers lead the creative curve, with electronic engine-management systems, fuel injection, progressive suspension-damping circuits, and ultra-lightweight materials. Professional production-bike races keep the technology progressing, as everyday riders snap up the winning designs. Tech advances trickle down to cruisers, which, unlike their predecessors, enjoy solid brakes and competent handling. Touring bikes – built for comfort, not speed – focus their ingenuity on fancy stereos, intercoms, heated handgrips, cruise control, and bulletproof reliability. Accessories from goggles to saddlebags keep the appetite for innovation in high gear (see "Built for Speed," page 110).

What's in the future? BMW bikes now have antilock braking systems and catalytic converters – where cars venture, so too will motorcycles. Also, expect the influence of scooters to grow. Designer Glynn Kerr predicts that we'll start seeing scooter-cycles equipped with 14-inch wheels, ABS, airbags, and six-step, electronic, push-button gearshifts mated to twin-cylinder, 600-cc turbo-diesel engines. City bikes outfitted like this will blow away Porsches between stoplights – and still beat 100 miles per gallon.

Electrically heated togs that plug into a bike's battery – produced by Aerostich, Widder, Gerbing, and others – have been selling for decades, but they're getting lighter, more efficient, and easier to use. Andy Goldfine, who designed the Aerostich Roadcrafter suit, says up next are onboard systems that integrate with electric vests and liners to provide complete climate control – ventilation, heating, and refrigeration. All of which will enable you to ride even more. >>>

Motojournalist and racer Eric Putter (canyoninc@att.net) has been writing about bikes, ATVs, and snowmobiles for more than three decades.

