



## MOTOMARK1

# MAXIMUM CONTROL COURSE

*Text By Lisa Hecker • Photos by Ron Orem*

**P**ractice doesn't do a lot of good if we're not applying the proper techniques. In order for practice to be beneficial, training should be conducted under the critical eye of a professional instructor. Training introduces us to new skills, reinforces the good skills we already have, and alerts us to areas where we need to improve. After formal instruction concludes, we should be able to put into practice all the techniques we learned in training.

For long-distance riders, practicing is especially important. We spend hours and hours on the bike riding thousands of miles. Sometimes we're slabbing it to the next bonus and sometimes we're enjoying our favorite back roads, but just because we are logging the miles doesn't necessarily mean we are reinforcing critical techniques that will help in an emergency — or when making a U-turn after we've ridden past a bonus.

We've all seen riders paddle-walking their bikes in a parking lot or gas station because they can't perform slow speed maneuvers. We've also heard

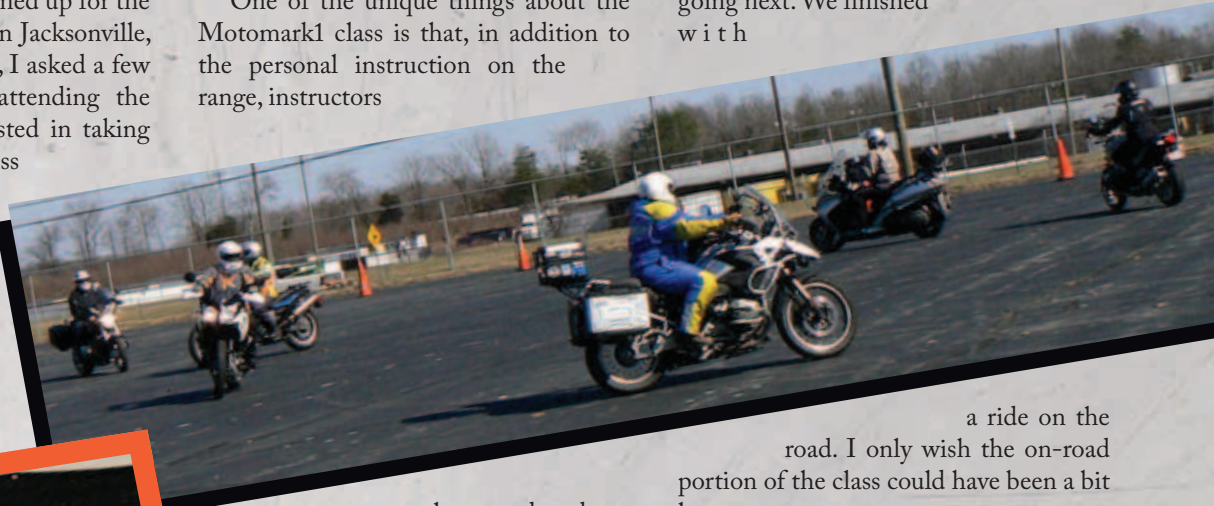
of riders who weren't able to stop quickly enough and ran into the back of a car. In order not to be labeled as one of "them," we need to regularly practice handling and collision avoidance skills. Iron Butt riders are fastidious about preparation, but when was the last time you took a motorcycle training course or practiced a quick stop?

In mid-December, I signed up for the IBA's annual Pizza Party in Jacksonville, Florida. Shortly thereafter, I asked a few friends, who were also attending the event, if they were interested in taking a motorcycle training class on our way south from Maryland to Florida. I had become aware of Motomark1 after reading in *Iron Butt Magazine* about the Overland Confidence Course (Winter 2012). I

noticed, reaction, braking techniques and lane placement used by motor officers. In the morning we concentrated on our head, eyes, clutch and throttle all working together for precise bike placement. We started out weaving through widely spaced cones, but the instructors moved the cones closer together as our skill improved.

One of the unique things about the Motomark1 class is that, in addition to the personal instruction on the range, instructors

mirrors as we came to a stop. We also practiced tight circles and U-turns and then put all of the day's training together into one long exercise that included weaving through cones, offset weaves, circles, U-turns and stopping. We talked about lane position, reading the terrain and observing the road so that we could anticipate where the road was going next. We finished with

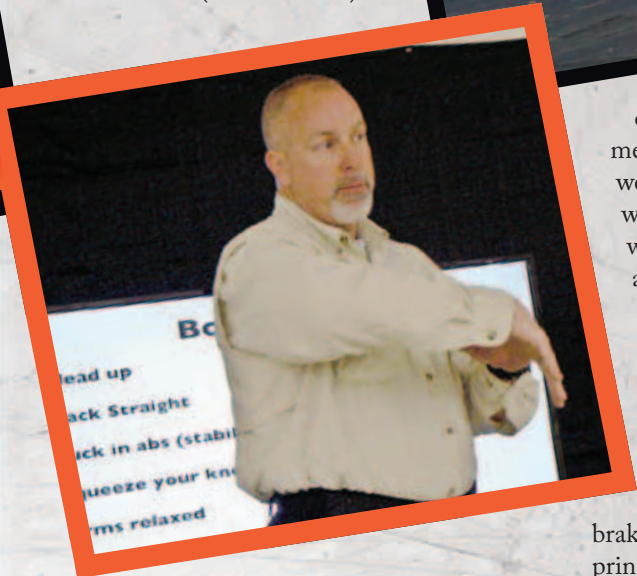


a ride on the road. I only wish the on-road portion of the class could have been a bit longer.

I learned better clutch and throttle control techniques, which will hopefully help the clutch on my BMW R1200GS last a bit longer. The experience was so rewarding that I plan on taking the Maximum Control Level 2 course later this year. At just \$295, the lessons I learned will pay dividends long after the class has ended. —

also record students on video and during every class segment. After each training exercise, we went back into the classroom and watched the video of the exercise. We watched ourselves doing the exercise and were able to participate in the instructors' critique of our performance. The visual aspect of seeing ourselves was exceptionally helpful, as it sped up and reinforced the learning process.

In the afternoon, we worked on braking techniques. The principle we worked on was first checking our mirrors while stopping to simulate whether a vehicle behind us was stopping as well — this way a swerve maneuver could be initiated instead of stopping if needed. Mark even held up traffic signs behind us, quizzing us afterwards to make sure we were actually checking our



approached Mark Brown, the owner of Motomark1, who graciously accommodated our request to organize a group Maximum Control Level 1 course.

We met at Motomark1's training facility in Burlington, North Carolina on Tuesday morning. After some brief introductions, we got right down to the business at hand — training. We started in the classroom with an overview of what we were going to do that day before going outside to the range.

Motomark1 markets their Maximum Control course as the next step after what used to be called the Experienced Rider Course, the MSF Basic Rider Course II. It is based on the introductory phase of hazard perception, recog-

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