

Freewheelin' in Paradise

For motorcycle riders of all types, the Hudson Valley offers glorious room to vroom

by Steve Hopkins

King Don the Last

Some enthusiasts, like Don Gomo of Hyde Park, enjoy the Harley experience as well as something sportier. Among a slew of other bike activities, Gomo serves as director of the Buell Riders Adventure Group (BRAG) — Buell being the brand of sport bike produced in association with Harley-Davidson, which owns 98 percent of the company. Gomo owns four bikes: two Harleys and two Buells. He and his wife Athena (who is the treasurer of BRAG) ride all over the Valley.

He's also a member of cycling royalty. "Up in Lake George, at last year's Americade, I was voted to be the King of Americade for this coming year. I might be the last one, actually, because they're going to put the contest on hiatus after 21 years. They take into considera-

BOTTOM PHOTOGRAPH BY MICHAEL POLITO

tion your riding skills, to see how you handle a motorcycle in slow conditions, because the person who wins has to lead a parade through Lake George. And the other side of it is an interview, to see how you are personally. They want someone who represents Americade, because it's basically a PR job. They want to see if you can talk to people and that you don't freeze up in front of cameras."

Gomo is an able spokesman. "Motorcycling is a massive sport, and women are probably the biggest demographic, at this point, buying bikes. You see all the marketing these days being addressed to younger riders and to women." He touts the Valley as well. "The Hudson Valley area was featured in a *Rider* magazine write-up as one of the nicer areas to go riding in," he says.