Sport Bikes vs. Harleys

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**Thesis:** The differences between Harleys and Sport Bikes range from the actual bike, to the rider and everywhere in between. However there are similarities between the two as well.

**Audience:** Motorcycle owners and general public

**Purpose:** To give light to the differences and similarities between two types of motorcycles and their owners

To some they are a symbol of freedom and independence. To others, they are a symbol of rebellion and total disregard for the law. The subject at hand is motorcycles. Most everyone knows what they are and a good portion of the population owns one. There are very good reasons for owning on such as fuel mileage, excitement, and the thrill of being out on the road without a bunch of metal around you with the wind blowing against you. There is also negative side to owning one like insurance and bad accident protection. But when you own one you can’t help but feel a brotherhood that only another owner could share. However, inside of this brotherhood of motorcycle owners there are differences that have caused motorcyclists to split in to two groups. Those who own Harley type motorcycles and those who own Sport type motorcycles AKA (crotch rockets). The differences between Harleys and Sport Bikes range from the actual bike, to the rider and everywhere in between. However, there are similarities between the two as well.

Harleys are a more classical bike with more “old school” type owners. They have been around since the early 1900’s and have had many more uses than a means of personal transportation. In World War Two, soldiers used them as a quick and convenient way to transport themselves and a very light load of luggage around base and, in some cases, used to cruise the local towns and cities. The popularity of the Harley type motorcycle carried on in to the sixties where they began to become a popular item of gangs and they began to become a symbol of violence and rebellion. Today Harleys still have the same basic design that they did over sixty years ago. The riders of Harley Davidson’s nowadays are still very classical in that they still wear old style leather vests and classic, half head, helmets. This is because the majority of people that ride Harleys are those who lived in, or around, the biker gang era that started in the early sixties. Middle aged to old men who often have beard’s, fu Manchu mustaches, or some kind of facial hair are the usual stereotypical rider of a Harley Davidson.

Street Bikes are generally imported bikes from a European or Asian company such as Yamaha, Suzuki, Honda, and Kawasaki. They feature a completely different riding position and engine design. Street Bikes started becoming popular in America very late in the 1900’s and were completely used for organized racing on enclosed tracks. Today they have developed in to one of the most speedy and maneuverable vehicles on the road. Geared for speed, Sport Bikes can reach speeds over one hundred miles an hour without breaking a sweat. Their agility is untouched and has remained unmatched by any other type of motorcycle. The riders of Sport Bikes most commonly teenagers to middle aged adults. Due to the hunched over riding style, Sport Bikes are not suitable to an older person because of the amount of stress that is put on the spine.

When put side by side it is easy to see the overabundance of differences between the two. A couple examples are as follows. The riding style; Harleys feature a upright seating position with a more laid back and comfortable seat. On Sport Bikes however, you are force to lean over the gas tank in a similar position to the fetal position which is for aerodynamics and a streamline shape. The riders themselves are also different. Harley riders usually dislike Sport Bike riders in a couple of different ways and vice versa. Most Harley riders prefer a slower, steady, and laid back ride. Whereas most Sport Bikers prefer a speedy trip with many twists and turns so they can push themselves and their bikes to the limit. Another reason is because Harley riders are mostly middle aged to old people and see Sport Bike riders, which are majority kids in their teens and twenties, as speed demon hot shots who put themselves and others on the road in danger. On the other hand Sport Bikers will describe Harley riders as old men and women who are sour and think they own and control the road.

With all the hatred and differences put aside, they are all the same thing which is a motorcycle owner. They both share the same passion for being out in the wind and weather with nothing surrounding them and holding them back. There are special events all over the nation at all times of year that bring both types of riders together for a similar cause like bike shows and bike parades where the proceeds are often given to local charities. Other events also include poker runs and scavenger hunts which influence the bikers to travel around a certain area to see the sites and ride with other fellow motorcycle owners. This goes to show that, even with all these differences, Harley owners and Sport Bike owners are not so different after all.