

# Scootering is a hoot

*Winnipeg a paradise for Manitoba club members*

OK, so you weren't exactly born to be wild. There's a Winnipeg group that can show you how to get your motor runnin' and head out on the road to find adventure and feel the wind whip through your hair.

Scoot over and we'll tell you why folks have been burning rubber to join Scootering Manitoba since the club formed in early August.

Mike Brandes just gassed up his 2001 Yamaha Vino for \$3.41.

Colin Parker paid \$49 to insure his 2003 Yamaha BW.

Robyn Tully says her car (fuel rating: 13 L per 100 km) has formed cobwebs since her husband gave her a scooter (fuel rating: 3L per 100 km) as an engagement/birthday gift in 1999.

Erwin Lagman's wife gave him a 2003 BW for their third anniversary. She drives the SUV; he scooters.



**Carolin & friends**

Carolin Vesely

Simply put, by Russ Watts, scootering is a hoot.

"You actually come to work a little happier," says Watts, who scoots to and from work on his 1985 Honda Aero. He's already clocked 3,600 kilometres this year.

Then there's this little-known scootering fact from Chris Nykon, who reconciled his Harley dreams with a 2003 Vino.

"Chicks dig it. Grandmas, too."

Indeed, Scootering Manitoba's roster currently has 62 names — male and female, ages 15 to 65.

"We're still getting between three and five new members a week," says club founder Claudio Sousa. (The club is also open to moped riders, as well as the wheel-less who want to learn more.)

Scooters, which typically go for between \$2,000 and \$3,000, have been around for decades. They're as common in Europe as SUVs are in Calgary.

Colin Stark has been riding motorbikes since 1977 and scooters for 12 years.

"I was riding the scooter more than the bike because it was more fun," the 35-year elementary school teacher says. "The kids love it. I'm the scooter guy."



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Club founder Claudio Sousa (centre, on white scooter) poses with other members of Scootering Manitoba.

OK. But isn't it, um, kind of uncool to be a "mild one" instead of a "wild one"? Zipping around town on a 49cc "bike" that tops out at around 50km-h, wearing a helmet and protective gear?

Brandes, a burly bearded gent who stands over six-feet tall, says kids sometimes laugh at him while he scooters through school zones, but "most people think it's cool." He loves his Vino so much, he souped it up — chrome trim, oak dashboard with a clock, mahogany floorboards, windshield.

Winter aside, Winnipeg is a scootering paradise because it's so flat and lacks thoroughfares that push speed limits to scooter-prohibitive levels, the Toronto transplant says. "I bought a motorbike (a year after the Vino), but I want to sell it."

As with motorcycles, scooters can be dangerous in the hands of an unprepared rider.

Sousa, who rides a 1974 Lambretta and

is also a motorcyclist, emphasizes that while Scootering Manitoba is a social club, its mandate includes education, training and following rules of the road. Although there is no mandatory training for scooters, you need a Class 5 driver's licence, a helmet and the ability to handle a 250-pound vehicle.

"The biggest misconception is that it's like a bicycle and that you can ride in shorts and sandals," Sousa says.

"Our club philosophy is to make people safer and better riders so we can take care of the safety and have more fun."

For more information about Scootering Manitoba, call 299-8379 or check the Web at: [www.scootering-manitoba.com](http://www.scootering-manitoba.com)