

VICTORY RIDER BLOG: SGT BLAKE LOCKHART IS A VICTORY RIDER, ON AND OFF DUTY



Life is full of memorable firsts. There's the first day of school, first love, baby's first steps, and so many more. Blake Lockhart, Evening Shift Traffic Sergeant for the Tyler [Texas] Police Department (TPD), says all Victory riders can claim an additional, very special first:

"Everyone who has ever ridden a Victory motorcycle remembers their first ride on it," he said. "For me, it was a warm, late summer evening in Tucson, Arizona. The year was 2011. We'd just gotten off the plane... and it was already dark. I was used to the unrefined workings of my duty bike back home. Boy, was I surprised when I first experienced what a well-designed, well-built, modern American motorcycle was like to operate! It really was love at first ride: smooth braking, lively throttle, superb balance, and so comfortable!"

And remember, he took that ride on a Cross Roads in the dark, so his impressions were based strictly on the bike's performance and comfort, not on its sleek styling. He took another memorable ride the following day. That's when – in the Arizona daylight – the bike's style impressed him as well.

"I rode her up Mount Lemon. It was daylight and what a view – the mountain wasn't too shabby, either! I will long remember that ride!"

Sgt. Lockhart was helping evaluate Victory Police Motorcycles (VPM) for the TPD. All the evaluators were highly impressed, and the department now uses a fleet of 16 VPM models in their daily patrol work. Prior to his memorable "first" ride, Sgt. Lockhart had never ridden a Victory.

"That was the first one I've ever been on," he said. "To me, what stood out first and foremost was the riding position. You sit in the bike, not just on it. It was natural, comfortable, you felt like you had more control of the bike. It has a low center of gravity, is very well balanced, and I couldn't

believe how smooth the braking was.

“It was a very, very comfortable bike, and what stood out was the precision. You could tell it was a very well made machine. I thought the way the bike handled, it was really a better design that what I was used to.”

He said the TPD officers adapted quickly to the Victory motorcycles.

“There was some adjustment in getting used to them, but it’s a lot easier going from a Harley [-Davidson] to a Victory than going from a Victory to a Harley. The Victory is more forgiving because it’s a better designed bike.”

Sgt. Lockhart was so impressed by the Victory motorcycles, that he made the switch personally and became a Victory owner. He didn’t purchase just any Victory. No, he bought the one that had changed his riding life forever.

“Not long after our transition to Victory motorcycles, I caught wind of a sale of demo bikes at Victory Police Motorcycles,” he recalled. “It was so late by the time I heard that there was only one demo bike left for sale. Wouldn’t you know that it was the bike I’d fallen in love with in Tucson! I knew she had not been babied – in fact, I knew that officers can be downright brutal when they’re testing equipment. But I also knew that these bikes can handle treatment that would render lesser bikes inoperative... And now the first Victory I’d ever ridden was for sale? I just had to have that bike. A few months later, I did!”

He has customized his Cross Roads with an audio system so he can listen to music as he rides, a Power Commander V fuel controller, skid plates under the floorboards (like those commonly installed on the police bikes), and covers from Stokers Dallas. He will likely add a Lloydz Motorworkz timing wheel soon, too.

On duty, Sgt. Lockhart splits his time between office work and patrol work on his VPM. Off duty, he’s rolling up some impressive mileage on his personal Victory.

“I’ve had that bike to Florida and back twice, I’ve been to the Rocky Mountains, and to the mountains of eastern Oklahoma,” he said. “I plan on going through West Texas this year or next year, and on a recent weekend we were in the mountains of Arkansas.

“I rode her back from Bike Week in Daytona Beach, Florida, a trip of 1,075 miles! I’d hate to do that on any bike other than a Victory. I think most people would agree, considering how many trailered bikes I saw that trip.”

Some of this riding is done with the TPD’s fleet manager, who owns a Victory Cross Country. That means the man who oversees the fleet is impressed enough to make a Victory his personal bike. Sgt. Lockhart says that’s easy to believe.

“It’s not hard for a discerning person to look at these bikes and determine they are excellent machines,” he said.

Sgt. Lockhart has been with the TPD for 19 years, and the last couple years have been enhanced by the opportunity to ride Victory Police Motorcycles.

[TOP](#)



“In the months before the Victory [police bikes] arrived, I started really liking my duty bike [a Harley],” he recalled. “I started thinking maybe I could buy it at auction, but then the Victories arrived. I got on the Victory – I remember this distinctly – and I said ‘what the hell was I thinking? Why would anybody want to ride a Victory at work and come home and ride a Harley?’ No!”

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1

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