

THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO TEXAS MOTORCYCLING  
LONE STAR SWAP MEET COMES TO DALLAS (SEE PAGE 8)

# RideTexas®

## RIDE THE OLD BUFFALO ROAD

D.A.R.T.  
TIPS

ROCK A URAL  
SIDECAR  
MOTORCYCLE



BUDGET-FRIENDLY  
GIFT LIST FOR  
MOTORCYCLISTS

DAYTRIPPIN': Fall Foliage / Hill Country Christmas / Texas Forts Trail



# MONKEY SEE, MONKEY DO...

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## HOW TO ROCK A URAL SIDECAR MOTORCYCLE

**T**hey call them “monkeys” -- the daring dudes and darlings who sit in the bucket beside the jockey driving a sidecar rig. Riding a motorcycle with a sidecar is unlike any other form of motorized travel. It requires a surprising degree of athleticism from both rider and passenger, at least if you want to maximize performance and handling.

Adding a sidecar to a motorcycle opens up a whole new realm of possibilities for taking others along on the adventure. Maybe you’ve seen videos of side-hack racing where a platform is bolted to the motorcycle and the passenger (monkey) climbs from side to side, dragging an ear on inside turns and lying over the rear fender like a drunken cowboy when turning away from the car. The reason for all these gymnastics is that once you bolt a sidecar to a motorcycle, the whole assembly becomes as stiff as a Roman chariot. It does not lean. When pushed, it either slides or turns over with scarce forgiveness in between. The monkey acts as ballast.

On a conventional sidecar motorcycle, however, the monkey is less active because of the confines of the car. Hence, the driver must be even more conscious of inputs, which will keep the machine upright and on track. One example of a conventional sidecar rig is the Ural, a robust, relatively low-powered machine with a WWII Russian heritage and an attitude.







If you like wheelies, the Ural provides a unique twist on that feeling.



### DON'T SCARE YOUR MONKEY!

As with the Ural, most street-legal sidecars are mounted on the right side of the motorcycle. When turning right, the car or “chair” becomes light and can lift; hence the term “flying the chair,” an unnerving maneuver if the monkey is not conditioned to such aerobatics. Beyond a certain point, the whole assembly risks toppling over. The only way to arrest an imminent accident is to steer left, widening the turn and often veering into oncoming traffic -- not a desirable condition. Left turns are more forgiving, but the forces acting on the handlebars can be daunting until you learn to anticipate and work with the natural tendencies of this apparently dastardly contraption.

### BEAR WRESTLING

If sidecars are such a handful, why would anyone want to ride one? The answer becomes evident to ambitious riders with an adventurous spirit. In short, it's a blast. Riding one briskly is not unlike wrestling a bear atop a moving train. The dynamics can be surprising to everyone involved, but success is thrilling, if not a relief, at least to the winner.

### AMNESIA HELPS

If you choose to give it a go, first, forget most of what you know about riding a motorcycle. Counter steering (“push right to go right”) does not work. Instead, you simply turn the handlebars in the intended direction of travel. Expect the steering to be heavy. After all, you are changing trajectory on more than 1,000 pounds of man and machine. There are, however, some dynamics that can be helpful when understood and anticipated.

When braking, the car pushes ahead and tries to swing the whole rig to the left. Accelerating reverses the action and steers the rig to the right. Because of these tendencies, an untrained rider might feel as if he or she had just spent the day practicing jiu-jitsu with a gorilla. The astute pilot will incorporate these dynamics into the ride. While running down the highway, you can steer with the throttle by making small corrections. Add a touch of power to move right and ease off a tad to correct to the left. This technique alone reduces fatigue and can become automatic quickly. Add harder acceleration and more aggressive braking, and you can deliberately fly the chair or skid into a turn at will.

Right turns and a high traction surface, such as pavement, can be sketchy, especially with a light car.





## FIND THE LIMITS BEFORE YOU RISK A CRASH

Riders who push these limits safely in a controlled environment can dial in their skills to the point of near perfection. Once a level of mastery is achieved, fear is replaced by the thrill of railing corners in both directions and occasionally levitating your monkey, preferably after securing their permission. Soon, the natural urge to put a foot down when the car lifts will diminish, and the welcome joy of flying should take its place. It is a sensation much like riding a really good wheelie.

Provided that the terrain is compliant, right turns can be enhanced by easing the sidecar wheel off the inside road camber. Done well, this tilts the rig to the right, establishing just enough lean to help keep the car down and tracking through the turn. Left turns on gravel, wet pavement, or

Left turns are made much easier when rolling off the throttle and tapping the rear brake.



even dry pavement (if you really want to get aggressive and it's a safe environment) can essentially be done like a rally car. Tap the brake as you enter the turn, and the whole rig will enter a controlled skid. Fun? *Oh, yeah.*

With only 41 horsepower, the Ural is no speed demon, so it's essential to maintain momentum when approaching a hill. This is true both on and off road. Using a version of the above techniques helps keep the kettle boiling along twisty, hilly terrain.

There are, of course, other nuances to riding the Ural well, but these will get you started. The Ural is also a great way to make new friends at every gas station. They are people magnets. Ease into each element to prevent an upset, practice often, and enjoy the ride.

For more information on the 2024 Ural Gear Up motorcycle and the Ultimate Overland Motorcycle Build, see <https://www.overlandexpo.com/ultimate-overland-motorcycle-2024/>. 📍



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