

SHOPS

By David Swarts



David and Debbie Roy own and operate North Texas Superbikes, a high-performance motorcycle service shop that specializes in high-end work for track-day riders and racers in Texas.

NORTH TEXAS SUPERBIKES

David Roy has learned a lot of lessons in his journey from being a snowboarder and pre-med college student to owning his own high-end, high-performance tuning shop. At various times along the way Roy was an apprentice mechanic at a motorcycle dealership; an illegal street racer; managed motorcycle dealerships; raced as a privateer in AMA Pro Superbike; and served as a regional sales, technical and racing manager (eventually, simultaneously!) at Ducati North America.

Now, as the owner of North Texas Superbikes, Roy enjoys sparing his customers from having to learn the same expensive and painful lessons he has. And he prides himself on helping them progress as racers and achieve their personal riding goals.

Roy wasn't allowed to have motorcycles as a kid growing up in San Diego, California, so he did the next best thing and raced his Volkswagen GTi in SCCA autocross events without his parents knowing about it. "They would just ask why I was putting tires on my car so often," said Roy, who moved away after high school to study pre-med at the University of New Mexico. "After I moved out, I bought a bike. My first bike was a Yamaha YSR50. It looked like a toy. I rode it around campus and stuff. I did that for a few months, but it got boring. So I went in and bought a Yamaha FZ700. I got on it and never looked back."

During college, Roy quickly found that he enjoyed snowboarding and riding motorcycles a lot more than his studies. He soon found himself working at a Kawasaki dealership and racing up and down the curvy roads leading to the ski resorts, literally. "We were racing up and down the ski basin for money," said Roy, adding that a friend soon pointed him in the direction of the racetrack. "Going racing probably saved me because we were doing that every weekend."

In 1989, Roy traveled to Second Creek Raceway outside Denver, Colorado to get his first racing license. Soon afterwards, he and his then-girlfriend Debbie eloped to Las Vegas to get married. While in Las Vegas, Roy stopped at Kawasaki of Las Vegas, and he was offered a job on the spot. After relocating to Las Vegas, Roy started racing with CCS and continued working at the dealership even after he landed high-profile sponsorship.

"In 1991 I got sponsorship from John Paul Mitchell Systems and Patron Tequila from John Paul DeJoria himself, through a program called the Dream Fulfillment Program," said Roy. "I was just a Novice, but I qualified for the Race of Champions at Daytona. They took a film crew with us to Daytona. They flew me and my bikes to Florida. I was on ESPN. That was great for a while. Then his brother died in a motorcycle accident. He said, 'I would feel bad if something happened to you.' And he pulled the plug."

The setback didn't stop Roy from chasing his racing aspirations, and he quickly moved up to the AMA Pro ranks. "I did my first AMA National in 1993," said Roy. "I ran everything but Daytona in 1994 and finished just outside the top 10 in



the 750cc Supersport Championship. In 1995, Mark Miller and I [racing as Mark Miller Racing] were eighth in the AMA SuperTeams Championship. I think I finished 15th that year in 750cc Supersport because I crashed a lot. Then in 1996 I crashed more because I got the new GSX-R750. I ran in Superbike almost all of that year and crashed it almost every weekend. I got hurt pretty badly at Loudon. I was chasing Mat Mladin coming out of Turn 2B during Superbike qualifying and high-sided. I fractured my pelvis and didn't race anymore that year."



(Top) North Texas Superbikes' previous location of over 10 years in Lewisville was so small it didn't even have an office. The new 3000-square-foot location in nearby Lantana, Texas, has enough room for an office and a customer waiting/hangout area complete with sofa and big-screen TV. (Middle) North Texas Superbikes services all makes, models and years of motorcycles, but most of the work involves late-model, high-performance models with a recent increase in Aprilia work. (Above) After working for Ducati North America for six years and racing Ducatis for several of those years, David Roy specializes in building and tuning Ducati engines, servicing both air-cooled two-valve and water-cooled four-valve versions. Photos by David Swarts.

AMA Pro Thunder Championship (finishing seventh in the 2000 Championship) while still working for Ducati North America. But the company was in a constant state of flux during that time period. A new round of management changes in late 2002 resulted in the management of its racing operations being moved back to Italy, and Roy's position was eliminated.

"Once I left Ducati, I tried to do something that I knew, and this was the best thing," said Roy, who opened North Texas Superbikes in 2003 in Lewisville, Texas, an affluent suburb less than 30 minutes north of the Dallas-Ft. Worth airport. "When we first opened it was a 'shop' shop, with lots of apparel and parts and accessories. And it wasn't the normal thing—we were in a retail center in between a Pizza Hut and a dry cleaner.

"It was good, but we didn't have the flexibility that we have now with noise and stuff," explained Roy. "We would run the dyno for six or eight hours a day and the neighbors would complain and complain. The noise would actually get up in the rafters and rattle the whole building. Then people would complain: 'I smell gas!' And there were issues with a used car lot taking up the whole parking lot. It was really tough."

In addition to doing retail sales and service work, North Texas Superbikes also served as the Dunlop track-side race tire vendor for the south central region from 2007 through the 2010 season.

"When we started out there was no market share for Dunlop in our region," remembered Roy. "So we started [supporting] Mike Sanchez and Randy Kienast and built it up to where we had 30-40% fitment. Then when we stopped doing it market share tanked again."

After 10+ years in the original location, North Texas Superbikes was forced to find a new home. "They sold the property," said Roy. "We were in the middle of negotiating our new lease and the new management came and said, 'We don't want you here anymore. We don't want a bike shop. You have until the end of the month to get out.'

"The place was full of stuff. I told them I couldn't get out that fast," said Roy. "I have a friend who knew the new owner. He talked to him and they were going to let us stay, but they doubled our rent. So my rent doubled for two months."

Roy said he found a brand new office/industrial unit nearby in an unincorporated area that better suited the needs of his business. "In the old place we were really cramped with no room for an office and we kept stacking bikes and bikes and bikes," said Roy. "We only had about 1800 square feet up there, and now we have 3000 square feet here. And this is county land with no automotive zoning restrictions. And best of all it's just three minutes from my house."

The following year, Roy landed a job with Ducati North America, a job that required him to move to Florida. "I started as a regional sales manager for them," said Roy, "and then I became the technical manager, and then I took over the racing department. Then I was doing all three jobs at the same time, which was pretty hectic."

After getting a podium finish on his new GSX-R600 during a WERA National Challenge event at Las Vegas in 1997, Roy crashed while snowboarding and suffered shoulder injuries that kept him off a racebike for more than a year.

When he returned, "One of my dealers asked me if I wanted to race a Ducati," recalled Roy. "He said, 'I have a 996 SPS. Do you want to go race it?' So I picked up the bike in Sarasota and drove to Homestead and didn't know anyone and pretty much won everything. I was racing with Josh Hayes and Grant Lopez, swapping the track record back and forth. I think I beat them in a couple of races."

After that weekend, Roy switched over to racing Ducatis and spent the next few seasons campaigning a fairly stock Ducati 748 in the



(Above) A Dynojet Model 250i dyno is used to diagnose problems, clean up fuel-injection mapping and reflash ECUs. (Right) The shop is an authorized sales and service center for Öhlins, Penske and Traxxion Dynamics. (Below) A 50-foot trailer allows the shop to offer arrive-and-ride at-track service plans to customers who do track days and race.



Although he can now run his Dynojet Model 250i dyno as much as he wants, Roy says he actually runs the dyno less, mainly using it for diagnosing bikes, cleaning up maps and reflashing ECUs. But dyno work is only a small portion of what North Texas Superbikes does. Roy and his two employees do everything for all makes and models up to and including full racebike builds (including paint work), engine building (Ducati engines are Roy's specialty) and authorized sales and service on suspension components from Öhlins, Penske and Traxxion Dynamics.

The new location is also better

because it's easier, overall, getting North Texas Superbikes' 50-foot-long race trailer in and out, and that trailer is also a big part of the company's booming business.

"I run almost a concierge service for the races," said Roy, who brings in extra mechanics to work with his customers at all of the CMRA and WERA race weekends North Texas Superbikes attends. "Some of these bikes are always with me all season long and during the off-season. I'll do all the prep, the paint work, the maintenance and then we haul them to each round. So we'll have eight to 14 guys pitted under our full-length awning. We do all

(SRP) suited for racers and track-day riders looking for greater access to track time.

"It's a track-day-based program at Motor Sport Ranch, in Cresson, Texas," said Roy. "It's a membership program. If you belong to our SRP program you can ride on any member day at Cresson, and there's between 15-20 member days a month. So basically for \$100 per month you can ride at those days. It's a country club track so you have to be a member to ride there [North Texas Superbikes is a corporate member of Motor Sport Ranch], but with our program you become a member of SRP and you can go there on any member day and we don't have to be there with you.

"Our members still have to pay for their track time, just like any member does on a member ride/drive day. I have to pay for my track time when I go, and I have to pay membership dues. So our guys are basically paying member price for the track time without having to buy a membership for \$5000. They don't have full membership privileges, but they also get discounted pricing on all parts and services with our shop."

Roy says through his SRP program he has introduced lots of customers to riding on the racetrack, and many of those customers have gone on to get their racing licenses. And that's one of the things Roy says he is the most proud of as a motorcycle business owner.

"We're always bringing in new riders every year. We've brought 20-30 guys in that became licensed racers and new members of the CMRA family, because that's what it is down here," said

Roy, who says he sponsors five different CMRA racing classes. "It's nice to be able to bring these guys and girls up, because when I came up there weren't a lot of people out there to help you come up. It's cool to be able to take the knowledge I've gained over the years and give that to my guys so they don't make some of the same bad decisions. I've probably forgotten more about racing over the years than they know when they come in, so it makes it easier for them to progress at a safer pace. So my guys are really safe and really competitive."

Like many of us, Roy took a meandering path to get where he is today. Thanks to his years working in different segments of the motorcycle industry and racing at the club and Pro level, Roy has learned lots of expensive and painful lessons. Now, through his business North Texas Superbikes, Roy is turning his hard road into an easier and safer path for his paying customers.

And by helping the riders and racers of north-central Texas and beyond, David Roy is helping the sport of motorcycling grow.



the service all weekend, we keep their gear, we do everything for them so they can roll in and ride like rock stars. And it's all for one price. So even if we stay up all night doing a motor [swap] it costs them the same. It's a service I wish I would have had when I came up. It would have been way easier than thrashing on my own stuff and trying to focus and ride the next day."

With this program, North Texas Superbikes operates the largest motorcycle road racing team in Texas, according to Roy. "I can't even count how many Championships we've helped guys win since we started this back in 2006," said Roy. "Our biggest source of pride is our lightweight program. We like dominating the lightweight classes."

CMRA racer Jim Whitten, riding his North Texas Superbikes-built Ducati 848 chassis fitted with an air-cooled, two-valve 1000cc Ducati engine, has "won four Championships each year for the past couple of years," according to Roy.

North Texas Superbikes also offers a special membership program called Superbikes Rider Program