

# Racer Cafe expands accessories for bikers

Tired of feeling unappreciated as a customer, Rob Wienhoff decided to open up his own shop for motorcycle lovers.

At Racer Cafe in St. Charles, customers are welcome to drop in anytime. It doesn't matter if you're stopping in to say hi or dropping off your bike to get some new wheels — motorcyclists are always welcome, he said.

"We opened it up with the concept of putting the customer first again," said Wienhoff, of Geneva. "We're going to know your name and who you are."

Racer Cafe first opened in early 2006 on Sidwell Court in St. Charles. Wienhoff moved the shop in May to its new location and doubled its size.

The shop, 392 38<sup>th</sup> Ave., sells a variety of gear and accessories for motorcycles and can put on just about any upgrades for bikes. Customers also can drop in for minor repairs to their motorcycles. The shop, however, does not do any engine work. And though Wienhoff will occasionally sell a bike at his shop for a friend, new or used bikes are not normally part of the stock.

But what Wienhoff says will always be in stock is customer



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appreciation.

"We started this place with the sole purpose of giving bikers a place to come where they can be respected and treated properly," he said.

Even the shop's Web site shows its appreciation for customers with a variety of topics including everything from a section on bike parts and how they work to a listing of racing schools. The Web site even caters to bikers' appetites with a listing of favorite recipes sent in from customers.

Wienhoff, who has "dug motorcycles" since he was in diapers, said eventually he plans to add a small restaurant for his customers and expand their services. But for now, customers are happy to have a place where they can just hang out or meet up with other bikers for a ride.

The shop holds special events, such as a bike show or a bike rodeo, once a month. Customers also are treated to free soda and snacks.

"It's part of the customer experience," Wienhoff said of the events

and extras.

Eric Buettner, Wienhoff's brother-in-law and manager of the shop, said he enjoys seeing regulars drop by and is happy to know most of his customers by name.

"I try to remember everyone's name," he said adding it might take two or three times before he gets it. "A lot of the people who come in ... they've become friends. We're developing a good group."

Both Wienhoff and Buettner said they don't cater to any specific type of bike or motorcyclists and that the shop sells parts for a variety of makes and models.

"No one really judges anyone," Buettner said. "If you're on two wheels it seems everyone is fine with that."

The shop is open from noon to 8 p.m. Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Saturdays and 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sundays. The shop will host a motorcycle rodeo from 1 to 3 p.m. on July 22.

To reach the shop, call (630)443-5178 or visit online at [www.racercafe.com](http://www.racercafe.com).

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Robert Wienhoff, left, and Eric Buettner opened Racer Cafe in St. Charles as a friendlier alternative to big dealerships.