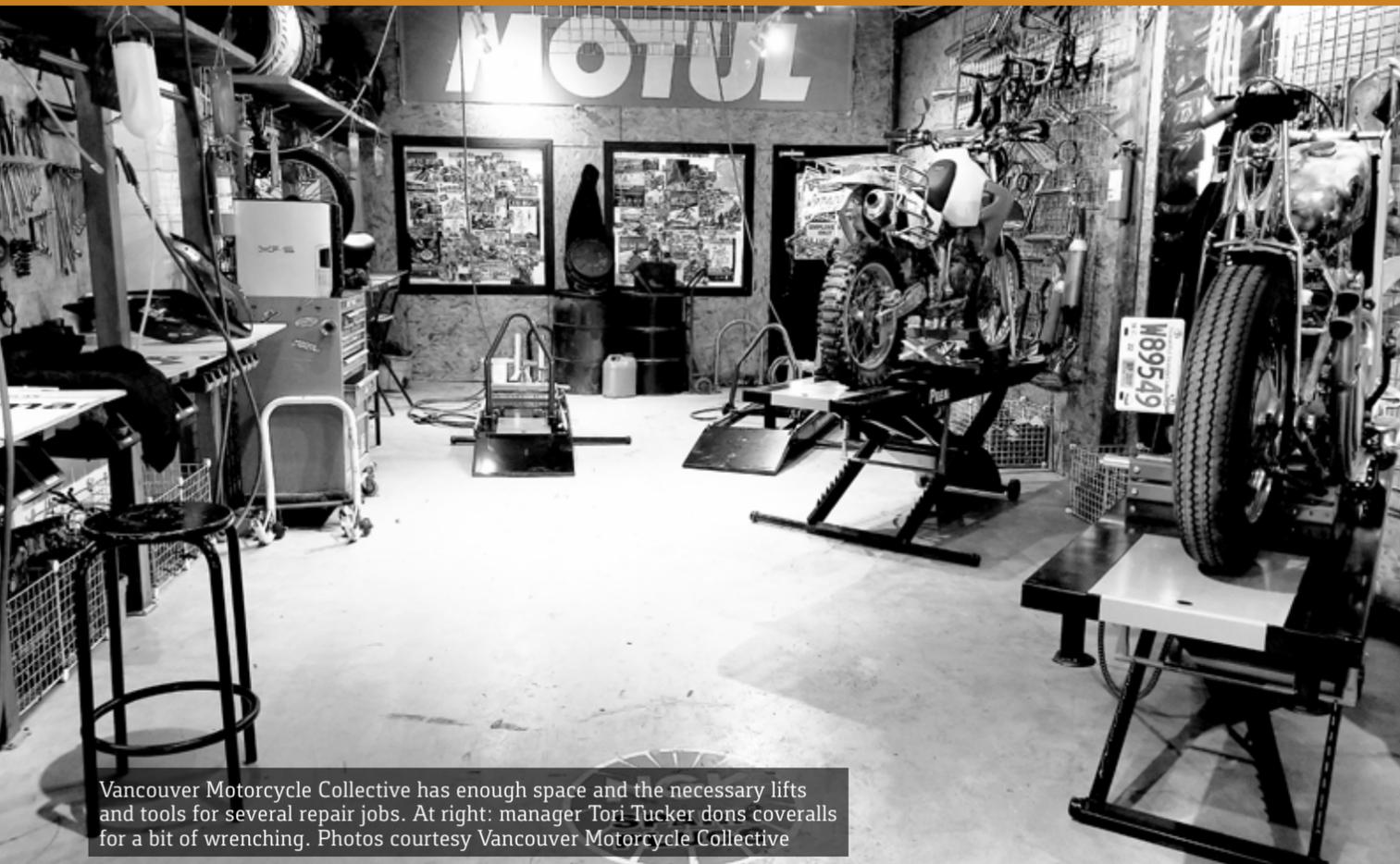


A Place To Work

Vancouver gets a do-it-yourself workshop with benefits
By Steve Thornton



Vancouver Motorcycle Collective has enough space and the necessary lifts and tools for several repair jobs. At right: manager Tori Tucker dons coveralls for a bit of wrenching. Photos courtesy Vancouver Motorcycle Collective

The shared-space facility for do-it-yourself motorcycle maintenance is an idea whose time has come — at least, in Toronto and Vancouver. We covered Toronto's Moto Revere on Dupont Street in the July 2016 CC, and were impressed by the operation there. Now, and for the past year or so, motorcyclists on the other side of the country can make use of a fully equipped garage for performing maintenance or repair work on their motorcycles at a reasonable price.

The Vancouver Motorcycle Collective is a project of Samson Lang, who owns Rising Sun Motorcycles, a service and repair shop located in East Vancouver at 1126 Franklin Street that Lang opened in 2010. The "shared space" garage takes up about 1,500 square feet of the Rising Sun's 6,000, and has everything, according to Lang, that a repair or maintenance job would require, which means enough tools, lifts, stands, and other necessities to accommodate half a dozen or more motorcycle repair jobs at the same time. You can "literally walk in the door with nothing but a pencil in your pocket" and have access to everything you need to tear down your engine, he says.

The need for this kind of shared space facility is rooted in the real estate market and the price of land in Vancouver, says Lang. Property is too expensive there to allow much room for garages, so places where a motorcyclist can drain a bike's oil or pull off a swingarm are limited, and the Motorcycle Collective fills a need that is likely to grow as the population continues to increase there. He also says that "more and more people want to do their own work," and the places where they live don't provide space and don't allow work to be done in underground parking facilities. "Also, I do a little work with BCIT (British Columbia Institute of Technology, a powersports technology training centre) and talking with students [he found that] a lot of them don't have access to the things that made me a good mechanic — which was a ton of space to take things apart and get in over my head, all the precursors of becoming a good mechanic."

The shared space idea is growing around North America, Lang says, for things like community baking, pottery, and other expressions of interest. "Basically all these old school hobbies that people used to do with their grandparents." But for motorcycles, the Vancouver Motorcycle Collective space

is unique in that city, Lang says. (There are likely some DIY garages for motorcyclists in Canada, and Cycle Canada would like to hear from them: cyclecanmag@gmail.com.)

"Our main focus," Lang says, "is education, so that's why our annual and semi-annual memberships both include a full online powersports training program that takes people from 12 to 16 weeks to complete." He says the program is thorough, and is aimed at people "who don't want to give up their jobs and become professional mechanics," but who do want to gain mechanical skills so they can work competently on their own bikes. "We've partnered with a company in the States for the education program, and it's exceptional. In fact any technician that we hire for the Rising Sun side of the business goes through this training."

An annual membership at the collective is \$700, and a six-month membership is \$400. Single and half-day memberships are available too, for people who don't want the

education component and don't need more than a few hours of shop time. "Some people are quite proficient mechanics and just need some space to wrench once in a while."

Lang wouldn't tell us how many members the collective has right now, "but what I will say is that this year, in 2018, we are gonna limit the number of memberships to prevent it from getting so busy that it's hard for people to get in and out." Sounds like the Vancouver Motorcycle Collective is a going concern, and in fact, Lang says, "the response has been overwhelming."

Check it out at vanmotocoop.ca, and take a peek at the Education tab for some interesting notes on the range and types of mechanical training available through the online program — it's impressive. For people who would like to do some wrenching without squeezing their bike into their apartment living room, the Vancouver Motorcycle Collective appears to be an attractive choice. [CC](#)

