

Los Angeles Times | LOCAL

LOCAL U.S. WORLD BUSINESS SPORTS ENTERTAINMENT HEALTH STYLE TRAVEL OPINION SHOP

L.A. NOW POLITICS CRIME EDUCATION O.C. WESTSIDE NEIGHBORHOODS ENVIRONMENT DATA & MAPS LOCAL PLUS

TRENDING NOW ▲ SYRIA | KENYA MALL ATTACK | MADRE FIRE | GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN | EMMYS | TED CRUZ

Search

Latina bicyclists answer macho bike culture with their own chain gang

In many Latino families, women are considered fragile. That doesn't apply to the members of the Ovarian Psycy Cycles Brigade.

Comments 29 Email Share 6K Tweet 200 Like 15.3k 12



Evelyn Martinez, in the green vest, shouts instructions as she leads other members of the Ovarian Psycy Cycles Brigade on a ride through Boyle Heights. The all-female group is both an answer and a challenge to aggressive male biking culture. Like men's bike crews, it defies L.A.'s monolithic car culture with an in-your-face ethic. (Gary Friedman, Los Angeles Times / June 23, 2013)

Connect

Recommended on Facebook Like 1575k

Log In Log in to Facebook to see your friends' recommendations.

Bob Hope's 1939 Toluca Lake 'dream house' is for sale
3,345 people recommend this.

Principal proud of transgender

advertisement

Daily Deals »
50% off 4-star San Francisco hotel over the holidays - by Travelzoo

1 dead, 2 injured in bike-bus collision at Camp Pendleton



\$50,000 reward considered in hit-and-run that killed bicyclist

Cyclist hit by minivan in Newport Beach dies of wounds

Victory for California cyclists: Riders get their three-foot cushion

By Denise Florez
September 22, 2013 1:53 p.m.

Growing up, Evelyn Martinez's mother didn't want her to ride a bike.

"She thinks it's not safe for women to be riding late at night, and cars are dangerous too," Martinez said.

Moreover, her mother told her: "Bicycles are for men."

But after a chance meeting last year, Martinez joined an all-female, predominantly Latino cycling group that is both an answer and a challenge to the aggressive male biking culture. Like men's bike crews, it defies L.A.'s monolithic car culture with an in-your-face ethic, reflected in its name: the Ovarian Psycy Cycles Brigade.

The group says the name "is a play on words intended to be playful and simultaneously create some sort of acknowledgment/acceptance/pride in one's historically oppressed body."

Without blushing, the women use "feminine positive" slogans and catchphrases too risque for a family newspaper.

"This is a way to empower ourselves and use language that describes and empowers us," said Maryann Aguirre, this summer's group leader.

Martinez isn't the only one in the group who started riding at a later age because of parental apprehension. In many Latino families, women are considered fragile and must be protected.

"A lot of the times the women that have never had the privilege of riding a bike is because they don't have the resources, or it's the fear of physically falling, or no one was there to teach them or motivate them," Martinez said.

The nine core members are mostly Latinas in their 20s from Boyle Heights, East Los Angeles and Lincoln Heights who work for nonprofits. Each month, they organize a women's "Luna Ride" during the full moon, usually around their neighborhoods.

Their August ride, the biggest of the year, was a takeoff on Critical Mass, a monthly ride that spread from San Francisco to 300 cities, including Los Angeles. Just over 100 female riders joined the 30-

Accounts of the Kenya mall attack differ

Twitter IPO could help it compete with tech giants

Shutdown threat reveals split in GOP

Moon 100 million years younger than thought?

L.A. Metro Court Tickets
www.CheapTrafficAttorneys.com
Traffic Ticket Lawyer \$189.00 Metro Court Special

mile ride from the Watts Towers to Hollenbeck Park, making five other stops along the way. They often choose political themes for their trips; July's was the California prison hunger strike.

The women also sponsor coed rides — although the men might have to listen to a lecture on male privilege and machismo.

Cycling is growing among young women but still lags far behind men's participation; only one in five riders in Los Angeles is female, the Los Angeles County Bicycle Coalition reported in 2011. The cyclists believe more women will turn out for rides with a female stride.

With male riders, "there's that whole bro-ish kind of stuff," Aguirre said. "We're not about who can ride fastest, we're about sisterhood."

One Sunday evening In June, 10 howling and cheering women started off from the Soto Street Metro station for the Supermoon Ride, celebrating the biggest and brightest moon of 2013.

Instead of the typical spandex gear, the women wore skinny jeans, houndstooth and plaid printed tights, studded vests and huarache sandals. Two of the women had T-shirts with the group's logo, the torso of a woman forming the ovarian "gang" sign: thumb and forefinger touching to represent ovaries and fallopian tubes.

As they passed Cesar Chavez Avenue, a few obscenities rang out from passing motorists. The Brigade didn't hesitate to respond.

Passers-by occasionally encourage them, including older Latinas who say they never had a chance to ride a bike, Martinez said.

"Older women come up to me and tell me 'Mija que bueno! Es muy bien ejercicio! (That's so good my daughter! It's really good exercise)," Martinez said.

Aguirre, 23, is a single mother who started biking two years ago with the group; now it's her main mode of transportation. She even tows her 5-year-old daughter to day care in a trailer.

Martinez, meanwhile, has lost more than 50 pounds over dozens of rides in her year with the Psychos.

"I wanted to be able to show other women on bikes that your weight, age or size doesn't matter," said the 21-year-old. Now her mother wants to learn to ride too.

denise.hloez@latimes.com

Copyright © 2013, Los Angeles Times

 Comments 29  Email  Share 6K  Tweet 200  Like 5.3k  12

MORE FROM THE TIMES

Victory for California cyclists: Riders get their three-foot cushion

'Dancing With the Stars' recap: Latin Night, first celebrity goes home

Dodgers Manager Don Mattingly faces tough choices for playoff roster

Trojans get ready for 'crazy' Sun Devil Stadium

McCartney, Timberlake concerts close stretch of Hollywood Boulevard

FROM AROUND THE WEB

Britney Spears' Down-to-There Neckline Leaves Almost Nothing to the Imagination (PHOTO) / *CelebMom*

When should you worry about that back pain? / *eMed*

Is it depression or your thyroid? / *HealthGrades*

Johnny Depp's Daughter's Revenge is Pretty Awesome / *Elizabeth Street*

What Kids Who Don't Eat Vegetables Look Like When They Grow Up  / *Nick Mom*

Recommended by

\$19 Car Insurance - New

Auto-Insurance.QuoteLab.com/CA

Get a Free Quote & Save 55-75%! (California Residents Only)

Comments (29)

[Add / View comments](#) | [Discussion FAQ](#)

Dr. What at 10:52 PM September 23, 2013
They don't need bikes, they need treadmills.

davidmarsh1 at 5:35 PM September 23, 2013
And in related news, a 7 year old girl was killed in a car hopping accident at a Low Rider show in Whittier. Cars, with overbuilt hydraulic suspension lifts, that are hopping around like frogs at a "Classic Car" show? This is Latino culture...as is this dumb bike ride, I guess. I had thought better. Well, enjoy yourself folks. Lot's of luck in the game of life. And you Cholitos out there- consider this dead child when you decide to stuff your car's trunk full of batteries, hydraulics, and then make asses of yourselves. And the Cholas on bikes? Certainly you could have done better than Ape the behavior of a bunch of senseless White Morons on bikes.

Hobie16 at 4:25 PM September 23, 2013
Veni, vedi, velo.

Comments are moderated for language and registration is required. The Times makes no guarantee of comments' factual accuracy. Readers may report inappropriate comments by clicking the Report Abuse link next to a comment. Here are the [full legal terms](#) you agree to by using this comment form.



Photos of the Day

[More »](#)

Most Viewed Latest News

Kenya mall attack: Terror group claims gunmen, hostages alive *09/24/2013, 3:04 a.m.*

Kenya mall attack: Official accounts of siege differ *09/24/2013, 1:51 a.m.*

AIDS nonprofit group faces union campaign *09/24/2013, 12:00 a.m.*

Azusa brush fire grows to 190 acres, officials say *09/23/2013, 11:03 p.m.*

Sparks' season comes to an end on Brittney Griner basket *09/23/2013, 11:02 p.m.*

Video

Morning Forecast - September 24... [Sacramento](#)
CBS Sacramento Sep 24, 2013



Morning Forecast - September 24...



Violent Night In Oakland Keeps P...



Natomas Smoke Shop Burqarized



Mary Jo White Shakes Up the SEC