

# SHADY ACRES MOTOCROSS

## Dirt Bikes Down On the Farm: Shady Acres Motocross Park

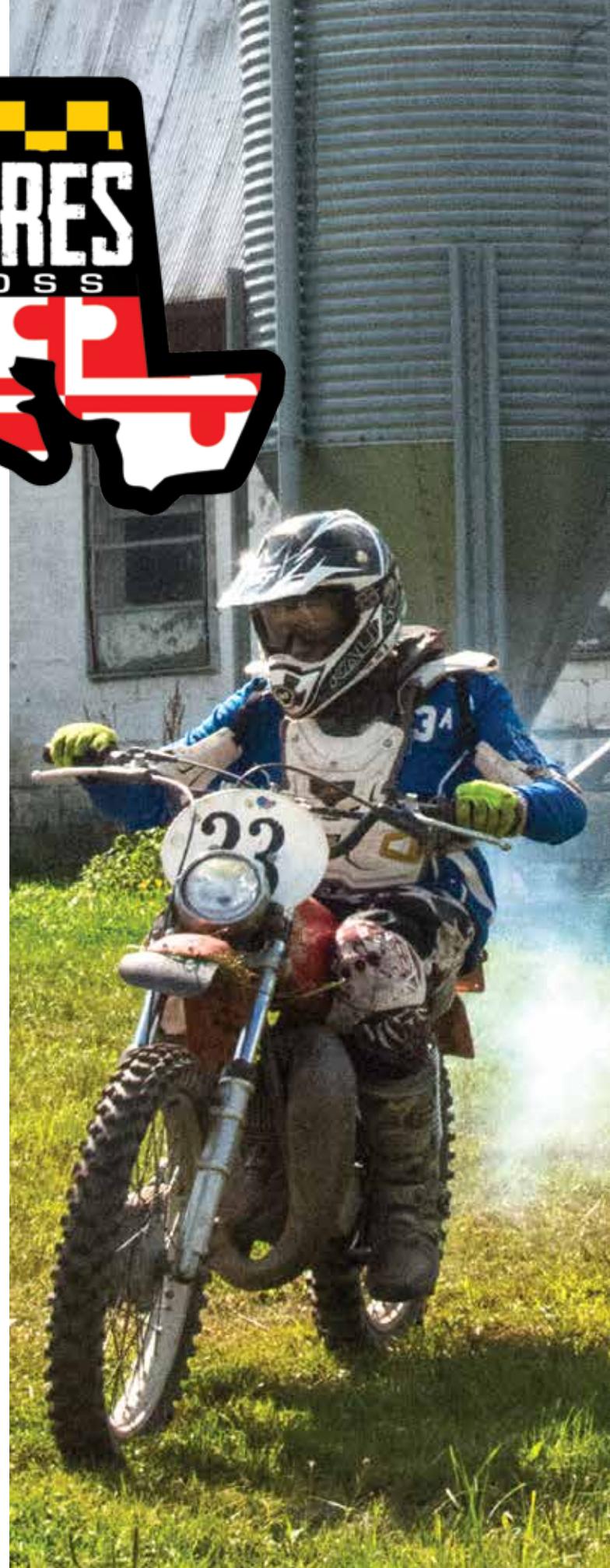
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Photography by: **Lance C. Bell**

Tim Thomas grew up on a dairy farm near Friendsville in Western Maryland's Garrett County, but his passion has always been for anything with a motor, especially dirt bikes. In 1996, Tim's mother gave him a Honda CR125 as a graduation present with the stipulation that the wheels not leave the ground. Unable to resist temptation, he abandoned his farm chores to try his first motocross race in West Virginia, and he became a devotee of the sport.

In 2010, Tim and his wife Paula, who own a timber company, became third generation owners of the 175 acre farm, which they have transformed from milk production to motocross venue. They kept the name Shady Acres that Tim's father Rusty had given the farm, as a tribute to him. When they built the track in 2013, Tim and Paula set a goal: to host a national meet within ten years. They did it in half that time. They have been surprised by how quickly their motocross park has become popular. In fact, during peak race season, they sometimes have difficulty getting to their timber business.

Shady Acres Motocross Park offers two courses. The motocross track caters to those who like jumping and fast speeds; it is full of lengthy jumps, tight turns, loamy berms, and fast straightaways. The four mile woods course is for those who prefer wooded terrain, tight technical single track, and steep hill climbs.

**Exiting the dairy barn during  
the cross country race.**





**Warming up the engines for the start of the cross country race.**

Each year, Tim and Paula schedule a motocross series that usually consists of eight races, and a grand prix series of three races. Local and regional riders from roughly ages 3 to 65, both male and female, take part in these races. Classes based on bike type and skill levels from novices to professionals are available.

In 2018, Shady Acres held AHRMA events for the first time. With over 3,000 members, the American Historic Racing Motorcycle Association, Ltd., a not-for-profit organization dedicated to preserving, restoring and competing on classic motorcycles, is the leading vintage racing group in North America and one of the largest in the world. The association's enthusiastic membership reflects this country's strong interest in classic bikes. Round 12 of the AHRMA 2018 Preston Petty Products National Motocross Series, Round 11 of the AHRMA 2018 Race Tech National Post Vintage Motocross Series, and Round 7 of the AHRMA 2018 John Penton/Preston Petty National Cross Country Series took place at Shady Acres on July 28 & 29.

The 2018 AHRMA races saw riders on the woods course handling off road terrain, ranging from crossing bridges,

to skirting ponds, to trekking through the family dairy. Average lap time on an antique bike was around ten minutes. Other racers navigated the motocross course with its sharp turns, steep uphill, multiple jumps of lengths

ranging up to 80 feet long, and several whoop-di-do sections where the rugged "washboard" surface presents a special challenge.

The 262 AHRMA riders came from all over the United States. The oldest racer was an 86-year-old from New York. Another octogenarian drove in from Michigan with his wife, while a slightly younger participant from Oregon had to finish his lawn work before his wife would let him leave for Shady Acres. The oldest bike competing was a 1930 Indian; due to the historic nature of this

association, even the newest bikes were from the 1980s.

For this special race weekend, members of Oakland Chapter 67 of the Eastern Star prepared food and drinks, including a traditional sausage gravy and biscuit breakfast, and donated the proceeds to the Shriners' Hospital.

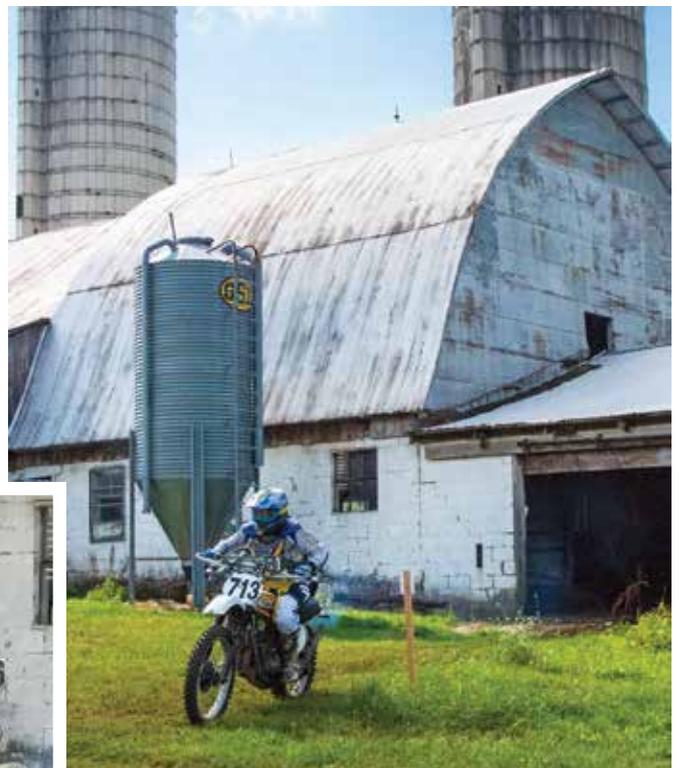
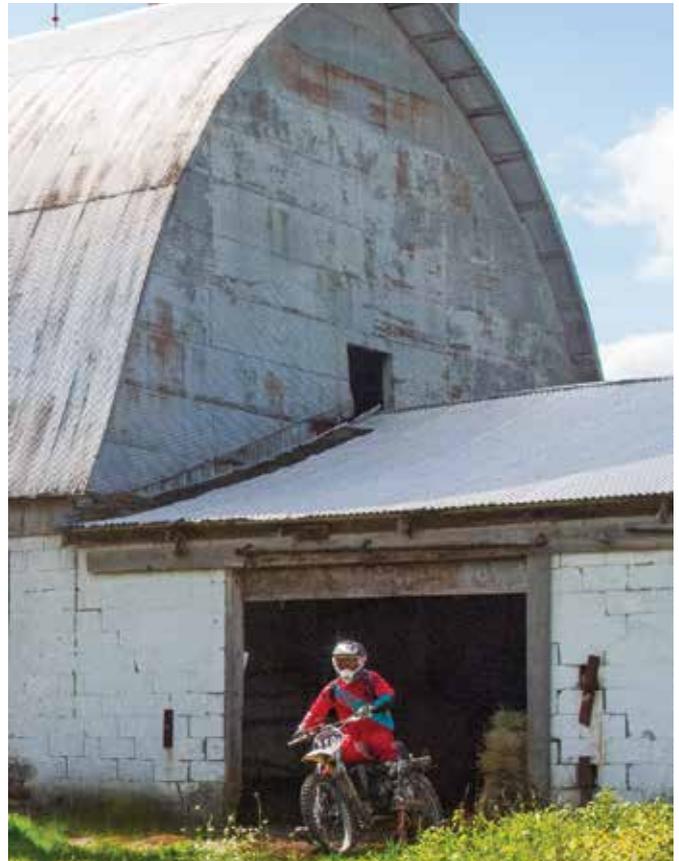
Local riders usually drive in for the day, but some participants coming from a distance, particularly for two-day



**Catching air on the table top jump.**

events, camp out on the farm, sleeping in trucks, campers, or recreational vehicles. Others rent houses or hotel rooms in the area. Many families enjoy this activity and getting to know other families who become friends. It is a congenial crowd; competitors will fist bump and then try their best to win.

Whether you prefer to be a spectator or a competitor, you are welcome to visit Shady Acres Motocross Park. Spectators pay \$10 a day to watch the races. Racers who want to improve their times or physical conditioning can come and train for a reasonable fee on non-race weekends from noon to 5 p.m. A website is being constructed, but in the meantime, check Shady Acres' FaceBook page for information about upcoming competitions.



**New this year — racing through the barn!**

A run through the barn is fun and presents a different kind of challenge to the cross country race.

**Shady Acres Motocross Park**  
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 @shadyacresmotocross