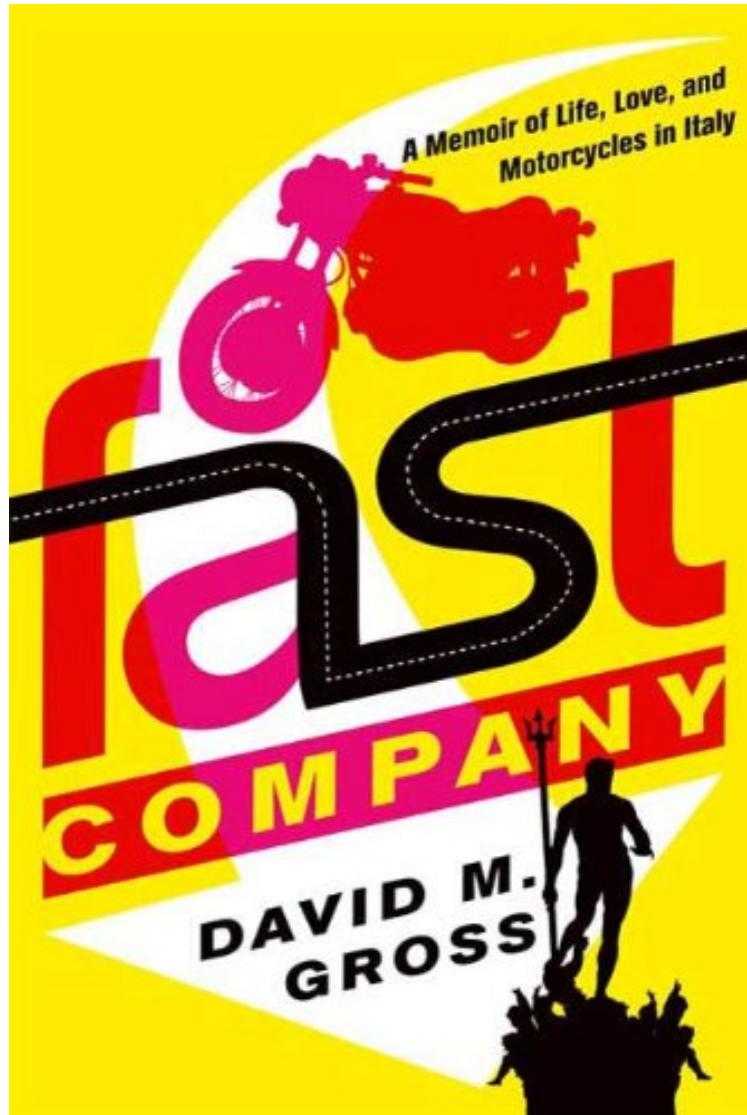


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Fast Company: A Memoir of Life, Love, and Motorcycles in Italy

David M. Gross

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David M. Gross : Fast Company: A Memoir of Life, Love, and Motorcycles in Italy before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Fast Company: A Memoir of Life, Love, and Motorcycles in Italy:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Good but over-embellished with metaphorBy Fitzgerald IrishI bought this book because I am a fan of Ducati and figured I'd learn a lot about the company and maybe Italy from reading Mr. Gross' memoir.As an account of the Texas Pacific years at Ducati, Fast Company largely delivers. Gross recounts the trials and tribulations of restructuring a small, passionate, stubborn, and sometimes irrational group of employees at Ducati. His accounts of his experiences with pivotal Ducati people like Federico Minoli and Pierre

Terblanche were certainly enlightening (note: he never uses real names in the book). My major gripe with the book however was that Mr. Gross was trying way too hard to use elaborate and flowery descriptions for many experiences in the book. By slathering on too much butter to his narrative at times I found myself skipping paragraphs just to get through the verbosity. For some the soaring and meandering metaphors are welcome but I like my non-fiction to be more to the point. Shakespeare he ain't. Gripe aside there's a lot in the book about Italian culture (specifically Bolognese culture) but more importantly the culture of Ducati. The only thing I really wished there was more of, was insight into Ducati's racing culture. In a way, this book epitomizes the real-world gulf between those who are passionate about Ducati as a racing brand and those who are passionate about Ducati as a lifestyle brand. If one is in the former camp this book isn't offensive, but it may leave you wanting a bit. 1 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Ducati, the people By biomimetic It's the little things about this book that make it worth while - the culture of Bologna, Evan Dando idiosyncrasies, drunk GP riders, Ducati's somewhat odd corporate world view. It's also in some ways the book's Achilles heal; Gross's writing isn't bad, but it falls short on a few occasions, possibly because of publishing house lawyers, where his portraits of people retreat to the glib and flat. It's sort of unfortunate (and I suspect that it's mostly the publishing house lawyers). His portrait of his boyfriend, the people of Borgo Panigale, and his riding experiences are compelling. I'm surprised Ducati didn't want to sign off on this officially. It's what's best about them. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Audio narrator's "Italian" accent was horrid. Not even close to the real thing. By Jo T. My review is of the narrator, not the actual book/story. I could not continue to listen to the audio book because the narrator's Italian accent was not an Italian accent. (Sounded kinda Russian, maybe). Listening was brutal. Really painful. I had to stop. I grew up in an Italian neighborhood, with immigrant parents. I know what all kinds of Italian accents sound like. It might be one of the easiest accents for an English speaker to mimic. If the narrator could not competently perform an Italian accent, it would be best to use no accent at all. It's just that simple.

It's the thick of the mid-1990s boom, and David M. Gross is racking up billable hours for a Manhattan corporate law firm and thinking that there must be more to life. Out of the blue, a friend calls with a tantalizing and risky proposal: How would he feel about moving to Bologna to help turn around a legendary, down-on-its-luck Italian motorcycle company, known for its dominance on the track and its inability to turn a profit? After a brief soul-search and popping his first (unintentional) wheelie during his maiden ride on the company's monstrous superbike, he signs on. And so Gross heads to Bologna, fabled home of marbled meats, radical leftist politics, and bespoke shoes, diving into his new life as the "corporate image consultant" to gearheads and learning to navigate the giddy mores of Bolognese society. He meets the CEO, who can relax only on planes between meetings; the manic, bellicose bike designer, convinced that only his genius can save the company; and the director of the museum, obsessed by the factory's role in World War II. Gross sparks the business's "spectacularization" with sexy ad campaigns starring factory workers who, when not on strike, strut to the espresso machine clad in Versace. Above all, he falls in love with motorcycles, seduced by speed, and realizes that becoming a better rider means tapping into dormant parts of his self that, as it turns out, were just waiting to be unleashed. And when he picks up a handsome, young and closeted skinhead, things really get interesting. . . In sensuous, hilarious, and wildly entertaining prose, Gross pens a wry yet ecstatic love letter to an uproarious city and its style-obsessed denizens, and to the motorcycle that gave him the freedom to live life at its very fastest.

From Publishers Weekly In the economic boom of the mid-1990s, Gross was a corporate lawyer working nonstop for a Wall Street law firm. Miserable, his life "a prison of routine," he instantly accepts his friend's proposal to revive the legendary motorcycle company Ducati Motor Holding in Bologna, Italy. Equipped with only a backpack and the basic knowledge of how to ride a motorcycle, Gross meets a wacky array of fellow employees, learns about Bolognese life and feels the thrill of the open road. His book is filled with insight on the city and corporate color, especially the chapters devoted to his co-workers, who include the World War II-obsessed company historian and the volatile, eccentric chief of design. But aside from his tumultuous affair with a skinhead mama's boy and his birth as a rider, Gross is a passing character in his own memoir. Amid all of the personalities and business chaos, he doesn't establish a consistent connection with the reader. Years pass in his narrative, and outside of some discotheque activities and buddy-buddy revelry, the swirl of triumph and fear accompanying a major, life-changing decision is absent. In examining Italian corporate and social culture, Gross (who has written for Time and the New York Times) has done a solid job; the lack of a personality behind the observations, however, is a liability. (May) Copyright copy; Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From Booklist It was the middle of the 1990s, and at the author's New York law firm, the work was long and hard, leaving no time for a personal life. Gross was good at his job, but it wasn't what he wanted to be doing. Then a friend offered him a new and very different job. Suddenly he found himself living in Italy, spearheading the rebirth of a world-famous motorcycle company. Talk about culture shock: Gross had no idea, when he signed on with Ducati Motor Holding in Bologna, that he would have to learn a whole new set of social rules and a whole new way of living. Except for the fact that its author was an adult when he made the transition from one life to another, the book reads like a traditional coming-of-age story: over the

course of the book, Gross discovers what kind of person he is, what kind of dreams he has for himself. The book is also something of a comedy of manners, as Gross, the typical American, fumbles his way through the considerably more laid-back Italian society. Lots of fun. Pitt, David "[Gross's] sharp, wry memoir meshes well with a close-up picture of a small corner in the global economy." -- The Oregonian "[Gross] embraces la dolce vita...Larger than life...the telling is such fun." -- Araminta Wordsworth, Financial Post