



DVD extra: Discover 'Brutal Beauty' at the roller derby

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By [Steve Jones](#), USA TODAY

In the past decade, there literally have been hundreds of all-female roller derby leagues formed in cities across the United States and around the world. The sense of community and girl-power ethos, not to mention the chance to kick some butt, has attracted women from all walks of life.

Director Chip Mabry's *Brutal Beauty: Tales of the Rose City Rollers* (2010, American Toaster Productions, not rated, \$20) gives an insider's view of a league in Portland, Ore., that lets the skaters tell how the sport changed their lives, the sacrifices they make to play and how it provides a competitive outlet that they don't get from their day jobs.

As Rose City Rollers founder Rocket Mean explains early on, "Women are drawn to the cultural aspects of what being part of the derby says about them ... but also the physical aspects of it. You're going to get out there. You're going to get dirty. You're going to knock the crap out of people, but you're still going to hold on to your femininity."

Mabry introduces the stars of the league, whose 200 women compete on four teams — Guns N Rollers, Break Neck Betties, [High Rollers](#) and Heartless [Heathers](#). Their ranks include doctors, lawyers, teachers, social workers who take on entirely different

personas when they lace up their skates. Passion and joy fuel them on the track, where many of them found boosts in self-confidence and self-esteem.

With names like Smack Ya [Sideways](#), Marollin' Monroe, Angry Wrench, White Flight, Madame Bumpsalot, Cadillac, White Flight and Scratcher in the Eye, there's no room for daintiness. Blood Clottia exhorts her teammates, "I want to see us kick some lipstick off some bitches."

They are also shown in the broader context of their lives — at home fixing dinner, watering plants, getting new tattoos, dealing with injuries and talking with supportive spouses and boyfriends. There is also insights from the handful of men who are team mascots, officials and coaches (including one who explains the difference between a jammer, a blocker and a pivot using chocolate-covered and plain donuts).

The film's pace quickens in the second half, as the skaters compete in their league and on a trip to a regional tournament in California, where they dream of winning a

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spot in the national competition.

Brutal Beauty takes on a certain poignancy near the end as the season concludes and the players contemplate their futures, which may mean retirement for some or switching teams for others. There's no miraculous Hollywood ending, but the little triumphs ring true and the emotions are much more honest.

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