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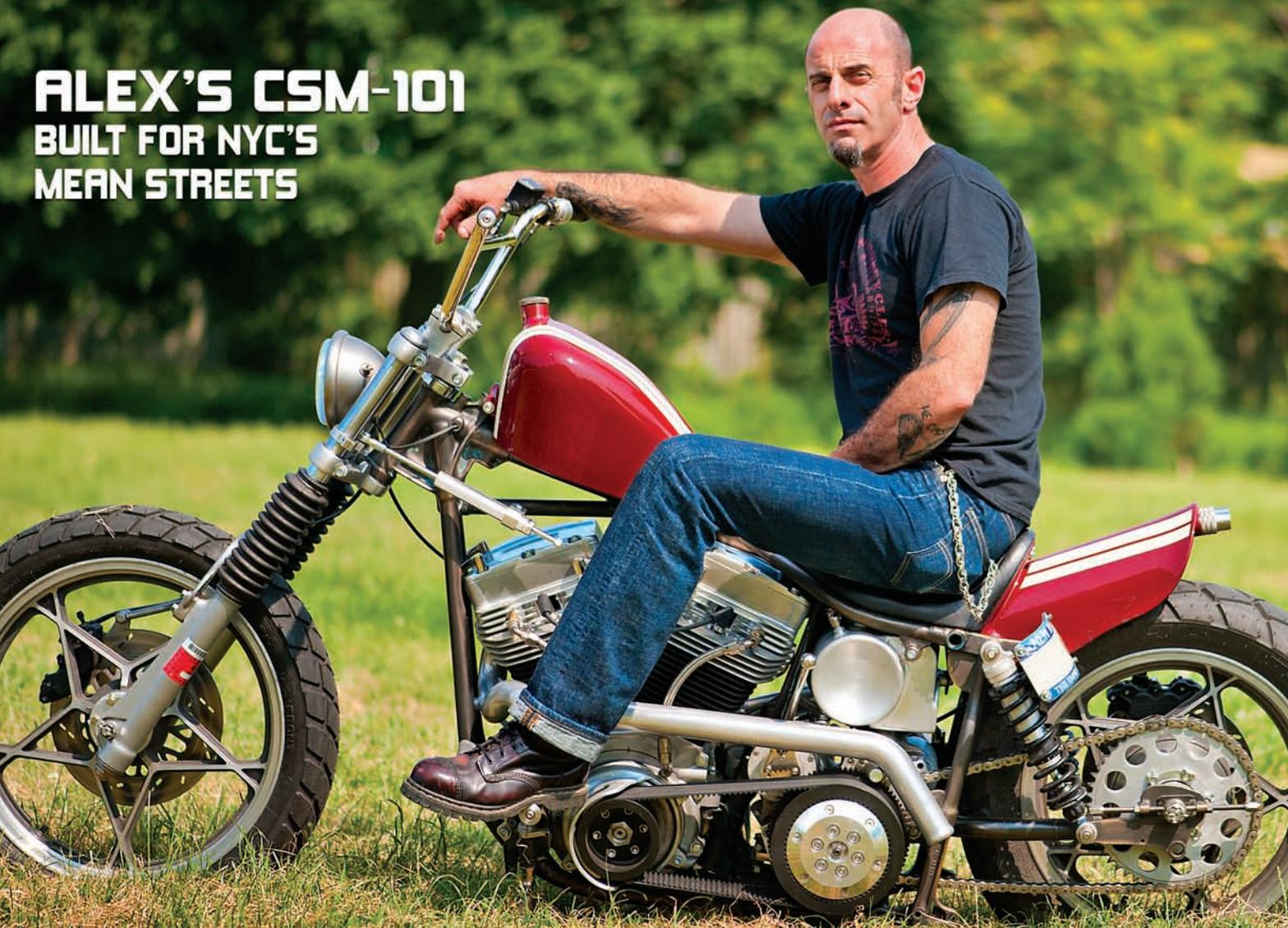
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NOVEMBER 2011

Volume 21 Number 8

# IronWorks®

## ALEX'S CSM-101 BUILT FOR NYC'S MEAN STREETS



### SPOTLIGHT

SALINAS BOYS' COLE FOSTER

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# 10

## ON THE COVER

Volume 21 • Number 8 • Our 178th Issue

Taking on the urban jungle via two-wheels requires a certain attitude. Confidence behind the bars is a must for the pilot but the bike, too, must demand its space and roll with presence. This isn't news to Alex Lerner whose builds exemplify a savvy grasp of the places where they'll clock up their miles.



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# 25

## SPOTLIGHT: Salinas Boys

Cole Foster's Salinas Boys style was distinctive from the get-go; the slim, lithesome bike he built in 2001 for CCI stood in stark contrast to the fat-tired behemoths so popular at the turn of the millennium. But keeping focused on what he wants to build isn't a problem for Cole, a builder whose organic themes flow from within, not prompted by current fads or trends. Let's be frank; that's why his work gets our attention.



## The Life

The next month (I am writing this just before leaving for Sturgis) is going to be a busy one, just as the last one and the one before that have been. There is so much going on event wise, all over this big country of ours, that putting a calendar and a dance card of events together can be tough. I don't recall ever having so many options.

Let me further qualify, I don't recall ever having so many *good* options, many of these new events, runs, rides, shows, and other experiential drama look pretty cool and relevant, not simply opportunities for carneys and cheap accessory guys to pick my already thin wallet clean. I see lots of smaller bike and rod shows, rides and runs popping up and widely attended with characters from near and far. It's pretty cool when guys from the east head west, northerners head south, and vice versa for runs, just to hang out and make friends and to put faces with names.

I think we can thank our favorite appliance—the Internet—for providing the connective tissue allowing us the ability to reinvent and connect individually on a grand scale instantaneously. It used to be that you had to actively scout local 'zines and sheets, and bulletin boards of shops to see if there was an event happening. Or, if the organizers had their act together and had some cake, they'd advertise on regional radio, maybe even advertise in national magazines like *Easyriders*, *Supercycle*, or maybe *Street Chopper*—or better yet, get some editorial coverage (with weenie bites and boob shots, of course), from Michael Lichter, Rip, Marla (and Scooter), Frank Kaisler, and of course, Bandit. There were fewer events. They were mostly regional and usually had little to do with commerce. Rather they were about the simplicity of enjoying each other's company, usually in a small town or in the woods at a remote location. It took years for the word to get out as op-

posed to today where it just takes one tweet to build a substantial presence.

I see lots of small events springing up, which are throwbacks to this hankering for earlier simpler times when camping, coolers and creeks were the staples of a "run." I think that's cool; it's good to see things get back to grass roots, that's the seed of new growth. Lots of seeds mean some will stick and thrive.

Personally, I am not so big on camping. I did my time in tents, quite a bit of it actually. At this point, after a long day on the bike, I like to get a room with AC, take a



shower, check my messages and email, look for dinner, maybe a place I can walk to and have some adult beverages, plug my electronica in to recharge, and call it a day. I think this may be a sign of softening (valuing comfort), and of ah, maturing (taking work seriously). I don't know when I got soft. I can't put my finger on the date—I wish I could. Something happened and I'm not sure what precipitated it. Now, don't get me wrong, I don't apologize for this condition. I am just a little surprised that it happened to me... ha!

I've been watching this softening for a while now. I think it was around the time when we somehow got permission for dressers to be considered cool. When I

got my first dresser, Big Blue, they were definitely *not* cool. No sir, no way.

Dressers were great for travelling, they were utilitarian, made sense, and handled great. Owning a dresser was the outward commitment to travelling or riding with a partner, otherwise why would you buy something so comfy, big, slow, ugly, and well... uncool? I finally gave up trying to explain my bike and just ignored the haters.

The desire for achieving greater distances drove me to consider a touring bike. Having a fairing allowed me to triple my daily travelling mileage. Putting in 750 miles a day on the big bike is easily accomplished and you still feel like you've earned your Hungry Man Breakfast with Meat...patties not links, please. Anyway my point is the slope is slippery once you start down the "comfortable is smart" path. Backrests? Not cool, but they sure are nice on a long day. Cup holders? You decide! You get the point. My POV is that baggers are not inherently cool but man are they great for travelling with a bunch of stuff at locomotion speed—in style, safely and comfortably. Ironically, the custom bagger enthusiasts of today are the same folks that called 'em garbage barges and sh\*t wagons just a few years ago Funny how things turn.

So I look at some of the longriders in the current chopper culture and I feel a little soft, unworthy, a mite jealous, and maybe a little in awe to be honest. I mean these folks, more than any others the way I see it right now, are living the dream—they own the scene. Riding their handmade slim and sleek machines, sleeping in the dirt, camping with their bedrolls near an open fire—the ultimate and perfect epic David Mann image. *This* is why we were initially attracted to the culture; to get some of that, right?

If we got into this Harley thing when we were younger, we sure didn't get into it for dressers and cheap motel rooms (ala SteveB style as of late). At least I sure as hell didn't. I wanted some adventure; I wanted some of "that." I wanted a tough



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guy Dick Allen style chopper with a long front end sporting a spool hub and a rear car tire. "Hell yeah, sign me up. I am not interested in meeting nice people on Hondas." I wanted to be camping with my pals in the dirt sharing lies and good times, like the guys I saw in *In the Wind*. I saw those images and I was hypnotized. I wanted to get out there in the worst way. I wanted to see this place, America, where I was from, that I knew nothing of. I wanted to see it from the fringe, not from a tour bus or station wagon.

I'd like to think guys and gals get into the H-D culture and ride their bikes in an attempt to capture a bit of the rustic and rougher time gone by; simpler times, dirtier times, times of real friends, times of hands-on maintenance, times of wild rides spent in community, sharing the same experience, and reveling in it. No going to hotel rooms at the end of the night to chill to the sound of your own air conditioner and *Housewives of Hideous County*. "Sit your ass down by the fire NOW, where do you think you're going? It ain't bedtime yet."

Hang by the fire, drink and tell stories until you nod. Wind up sleeping in the open, heckled by your friends as you pass out. If you are lucky you have a tent to crawl to and you make it. Some wiseass with a camera can't help but capture the scene. Hope it doesn't rain. If it does, the bike will be a bitch to start tomorrow. But if it does rain and it doesn't matter; eventually it'll stop, it'll dry.

Mornings are slow, smoky from the fire, and filled with the scent of cowboy coffee. Sit on the ground or log, have a smoke, amused by the antics of those freed from the expectations of a "normal" and well-behaved morning. You eschew the comforts of a hot shower, cable TV, and wireless connection, followed by the ubiquitous and indigestible continental breakfast, where afterwards your electric leg insures you get 'er going reliably, quick and easy—not that there is anything wrong with that.

Good times, living the life, moment by precious moment. Whatever your style. Peace. See you out there.

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Reader Service No. 15



# CSM-101: ALEX'S URBAN ASSAULT VEHICLE

## Tough, powerful stuff from NYC

Story by Alex Lerner and Stephen Berner • Photos by Stephen Berner

We met Alex a few issues back while presenting one of his hand built machines, the Russian Concussion, a stunning feat of overkill engineering and tractive strength that was a tour de force of safety wire and burly Eastern bloc design. The bike was as understated as it was outrageous and met the challenges of NYC with great aplomb. As with any great machine, it had a bevy of admirers and one of them coughed up the cake necessary to own the near-bulletproof two-wheeler, resulting in our Russian protagonist not having a bike of his liking to ride.

So he built the machine you see here, the CSM-101. The name? Don't ask.

To begin to appreciate the machine presented here for your consideration, you need to understand the place in which it was built: NYC, while its owner lived in apartments. Squirrelling away parts is tough in a place like NYC because, like a homeless vagabond, your stuff winds up living in boxes (that invariably grow legs and walk off), which you move frequently, either out of the way or to a new location. You have to have a clear reason and vision to go through this gut wrenching drama and a heaping helping of intestinal

fortitude. So appreciate when Alex talks of "collecting parts for a few years," that this, in and of itself, is a major commitment and hassle.

Working in the bike business certainly helps Alex find the tools, materials, space, and focus to get the work done but finding the time is tough because, as a full time fabricator at Indian Larry Motorcycles, Alex doesn't have a lot of time for his own projects. But he gets it done; the man is relentless. When he selects a part, it is the best part. When he has an idea, he pursues it. Just take a look at the front end to gakk what I am saying.



### CSM-101

Owner: Alex Lerner



### GENERAL

**Fabrication:** Alex Lerner  
**Year, Make & Model:** 1973 frame, 2011 H-D engine  
**Assembly/Builder:** Alex Lerner  
**Timeline:** 8 months

### FORKS

**Builder:** Alex Lerner  
**Type:** H-D 39mm triple trees, mated with 1970 R75 BMW legs  
**Triple trees:** Designed by H-D, modified by Alex Lerner

### ENGINE

**Year/Model:** 2011 Twin Cam  
**Rebuilder:** Alex Lerner  
**Displacement:** 95 c.i.  
**Balancing:** S&S  
**Pistons:** CP Pistons, flat tops



**Cases:** S&S Twin Cam/Evo  
**Heads:** Branch Performance  
**Cams:** Gear driven S&S 510G  
**Lifters:** Feuling Hydraulics  
**EFI/Carb:** S&S SuperB  
**Air Cleaner:** Alex Lerner

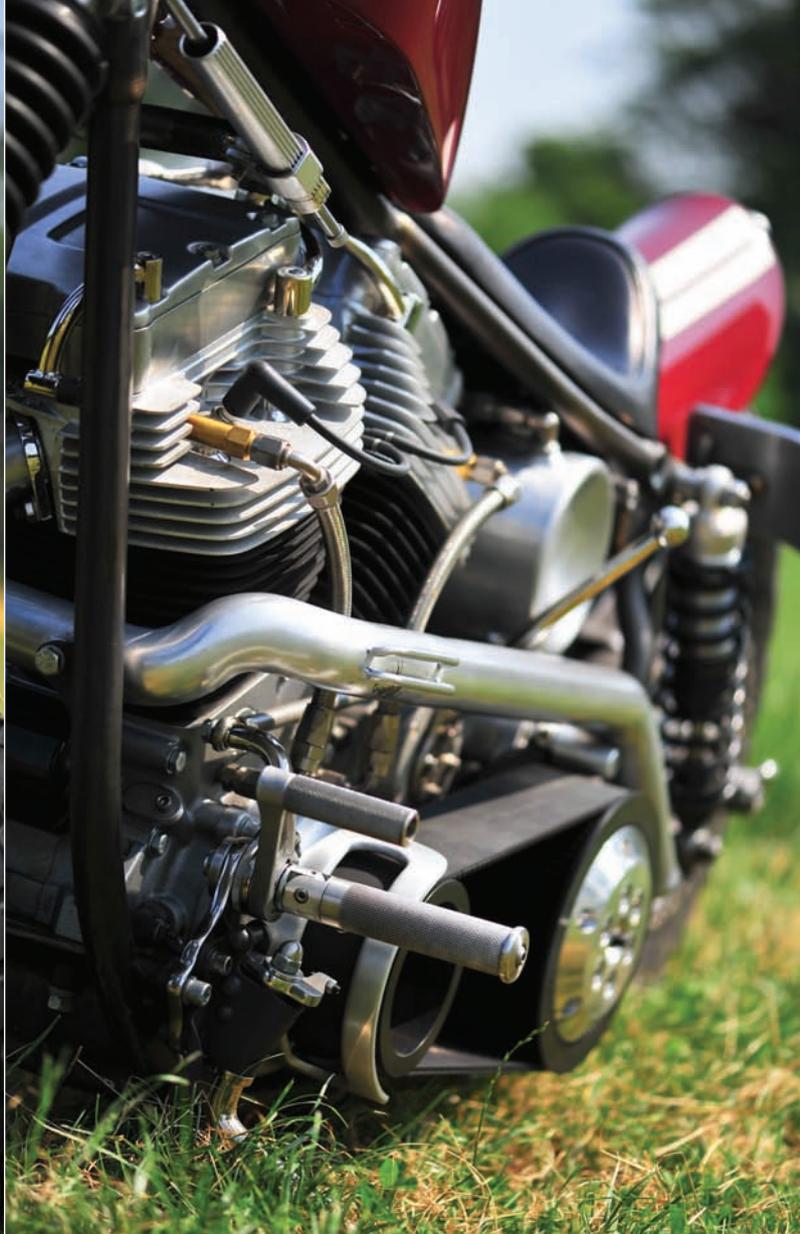
**Pipes:** Alex Lerner, Sebastian;  
Ceramic Coating by Halo Cycles  
**Ignition:** Morris Magneto

#### **TRANSMISSION**

**Year/Modifications:** 2011 Baker 4-speed  
**Trans sprocket:** 24 teeth  
**Wheel sprocket:** 50 teeth  
**Primary Drive:** Tech Cycles 3" belt drive, electric start  
**Secondary Drive:** Chain Drive

#### **FRAME**

**Year:** 1973 FL Custom built to accommodate TC engine  
**Designer/Builder:** Alex Lerner, Dr. Ralph;  
prep for brass plating by Sebastian  
**Type:** Twin Shock  
**Material/Diameter:** DOM



I'd like to call out some special touches which bring this machine to a level not many achieve in terms of precise functional detailing. The rear axle adjusters, besides being pieces of art, are also functional, strong, and exact. You'll notice that all critical parts of the frame have been strengthened and the cool tail section is actually a strong-as-hell solid piece of elegantly shaped man-steel that ties the rear of the bike together in a tight and ultra tough package, both visually and structurally. All fasteners are top shelf Grade 8's. AN fittings as well as braided line have been liberally sprinkled throughout, communicating clearly that this is a tough machine that isn't made to mess with, and is too well done to let small stuff like oil dribbles or rattles bring it down.

The engine is an oddity—a hot rod oddi-

ty at that. TC, mag fired, carb fed, this machine is too tough for the streets. Sticking with a 4-speed allows the pilot to spool the engine up when mach speeds are desired. You are simply *not* going to stress this engine out in a bike that weighs nearly nothing. Suspension is smart; Works Performance units allow the pilot some real quality comfort and handling... no bad manners here. Exhaust pipes have built-in heat shields to keep precious parts from getting scorched.

The front end? Well, the front end is off the hook, insane, subtle, outrageous, and something you aren't going to see anywhere else. I mean, really; who combines Japanese, German, and USA-fabbed parts for a front end? Alex, that's who. The motor mounts are beautiful, elegant, and a demonstration of design sensitivity in

their subtleness and execution. The bike is in for a serious dose of safety wire madness if I know the routine of our friend Alex. Next winter he will be making busy, drilling holes and wiring.

Robert Pradke, the master blaster, put some fine spritz on the carcass, and so the bike looks smoking in its glossy coat. From every perspective, the mix of parts, finishes, and handmade touches set this machine apart from the pack. Make no mistake, even though this machine is a handmade beauty and an engineering one-off it gets a thrashing, a sound thrashing, every time it leaves the curb. Being shown no mercy is a hallmark of Alex's riding style. Suffice it to say, I'd advise against lending him your personal ride—unless, of course, you were planning on having him do some work to it... or wanted it pressure tested.

## ACCESSORIES

**Bars:** BMX style  
**Risers:** Alex Lerner, aluminum  
**Fenders:** Alex Lerner, steel  
**Headlight:** 5 $\frac{3}{4}$  H-D **Taillight:** Alex Lerner  
**Speedo:** None

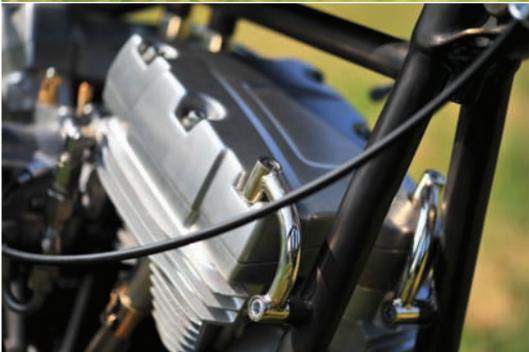
**Front Pegs:** Alex Lerner, Uri Machining  
**Rear Pegs:** None  
**Electrics:** Alex Lerner  
**Gas Tank:** H-D / Alex Lerner modified; steel  
**Oil Tank:** Alex Lerner, aluminum  
**Oil System:** Feuling oil pump

## WHEELS/TIRES

**Wheels:** 1980 Suzuki GS 1100  
**Tires:** Metzler 60/40  
**Front/Size:** 19" **Rear/Size:** 17"  
**Brakes:** Caliper & Rotors: Brembo/Suzuki

## PAINT

**Painting/Bodywork/Molding:** Robert Pradke  
**Color:** Burgundy/Cream  
**Chroming:** Powdercoating: Super Chrome



Alex shares the following: *I started collecting the parts a couple of years ago, always keeping in mind that there would be a new project in the works.*

*I built the front end a couple of years ago, which was pretty challenging. As you can see, it's a 39mm H-D triple tree with 36mm legs from an R75 BMW, fitted with a 1980 GS 1100 rim. Afterwards, I scored a 1973 FL frame in pretty good shape. I already had a Tech Cycle primary. All I needed to start the project was a motor and transmission. I wanted it to be a strong running, reliable motorcycle, so I decided to build a Twin Cam style motor.*

*For the ignition I used a Morris Magneto. For the carburetor I used an S&S Super B and to be cool I added external oil returns. All of this was an experiment that I hadn't tried before on a Twin Cam (except for the magneto). I am reporting back that it worked out great. I have a 100 HP motor that pulls strong in every*



*gear. For a gearbox I used a BAKER ratchet top 4-speed. It's an exact replica of an original 4-speed. It looks small and "right."*

*To fit this motor I had to modify the entire top of the frame (seat post, backbone, seat tubes, etc.). It's in nice and tight. Thanks to Indian Larry Motorcycles and the whole crew for their help and support: Bobby and Elisa, Sebastian, Dave, Dr. Ralph, and Eddie.*

Alex Lerner and the CSM-101; a handmade machine, a two-wheel hell-raising sculpture whose design touches and toughening are an acknowledgement of the hard life this two-wheeler is intended to endure, all while showing class and demonstrating Alex's love for innovation—in a package with sledgehammer-like power.

Nice job Alex. Thanks for letting us feature the CSM-101. **IW**