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IronWorks®

TPJ'S DOMINO

AN HONOR & A CHALLENGE



IW SPOTLIGHT
GMS RACING ENGINES

PAPA CLUTCH
SHIFTING GEARS IN IOWA

LA SPEED SHOP
SUPER COOL IN SoCAL

WALT SIEGL'S SPEEDGLIDE • 1942 WLA • BERT BAKER • THE LEATHERWORKS • PROJECT XR
RACE TECH'S SUSPENSION BIBLE • SAM KANISH • CYCLE ELECTRIC • ONE ARMED BOB'S TRIKES
CALIFORNIA TOURING • BRIAN KLOCK • BIG BIKE OUTFITTERS • E-FAB'S LOCK BAKER





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ON THE COVER

Volume 21 • Number 7 • Our 177th Issue

Any bike builder will tell you: the idea in your head for the bike nobody orders stays in your head—unless something prompts you to build it. In this case TPJ's Bryan Schimke got the nod from Michael Lichter to participate in the Eternal Combustion show at Sturgis 2010—so the building frenzy began. It wasn't the first time a bike rolled into a show just under the wire with its bleary-eyed builder in tow, but Bryan made it and that's what matters. Everyone likes a happy ending, right?



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1942 WLA



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SPOTLIGHT: GMS Racing Engines

When going fast at the race track is what you do, the street bikes you build are likely to exhibit the same attitude: let's go, let's get there fast, and let's do it now! That's the case at GMS Racing, a shop in western Pennsylvania known in local racing circles for pushing the limits of motorcycle engines for street and track applications. And as you'll see, builder Gregg Dahl—true to the culture he lives—hasn't skimped on the go-fast power in the street bikes he builds, either.



Anticipation

Over time I've come to recognize butterflies, poor sleep, and an overall itchiness to simply get on with it, are all the hallmarks of pre-road trip anticipation. I travel a good amount and I always get butterflies before I leave home—always; be the mode of transportation two-wheels, my cage, or a plane—or as the case often is, a blend of all three.

I chalk the feeling up to anticipation because I am not nervous per se, rather I think what gets my brain going is the stream of adrenaline caused by a clear visualization of venturing into unknown territory. Looking forward to heading out with-

out a clear destination or plan in mind is something that many non-moto folks have trouble understanding and accommodating, but it is the dream of most bikeriders to do just that: get lost without an agenda and simply have an adventure and go "make some stories." I live for those days, seeing new sights and being where there is little familiar. Being "lost" has always gotten my juices flowing and chasing that feeling has led me on

some adventures over the course of my life, I'd wager, just like you.

A few days before a trip I start mentally reviewing what I am going to be doing and get a grip on what I will need, what I have in hand, where I am going and who I will be traveling with, if I am not alone, which is usually the case. This pre-trip planning almost happens in the subconscious, a stream of hmmmms and ahhs and a review of mental sticky notes. Travelling on a bike for any length of time requires you understand the requirements of packing your gear as well as selecting just what you will need... and this is coming from an admitted over-packer. Experience camping, bicycle riding, or backpacking helps prepare the moto-traveler for the realities of space/weight constraints and the challenges that lie therein. Good luck with

that. I am still trying to figure it out, although I think I am closing in on being efficient and frugal with the space on my machine. Honestly, my solution over time has just been to make more room.

Weather is what it is, a non-event. You will hit weather no matter what you do and you simply need to be prepared and prepared to react appropriately. If it rains, you put on your raingear and, if you are part of my crew, soldier on. Some folks pull over, wait it out, or stop for the day—we don't. Being macho is not the intent here; it is simply that we believe that if you travel on a motorcycle, which is a weath-



erproof machine made to operate in the outdoors, it is possible to continue on and make your destination. Even in the days of plastic bag rain suits we operated (foolishly and uncomfortably) this way. The only thing that I don't like doing is starting a trip in the rain. When rain looms large on the horizon before departure, I ask the road gods for an hour or two of clear so I can get a rhythm going before I get drowned. Usually it works.

Anticipation also brings us back closer to experiencing the special feeling we had as kids, that seems so rare to experience in our adult years – that "gee whiz, wow" and "check that out" feeling. I hear Gomer Pyle in the background, "Golllee, willya lookit that!" when I come upon some strange sighting that reminds me I am free-ranging, far from home. America is

simply an amazing place to just get lost and adventure. I implore you, get off the red lines and see the blue lines, and even better yet, check out some gray lines. Adventures start when you are far off the grid; two hours from an Interstate is usually sufficient to insure you are in adventure territory.

How many of us take the same rides, the same roads, eat at the same spots and do the same thing nearly every time we get on our machines? Most bikeriders I know (myself included) are creatures of both habit and ritual, and those characteristics, if not monitored and put on a leash, can be anathema to the pursuit of adventure. To bust out of the regular routine, I look at a map and, having highlighted the rides taken

previously, look for uncharted territory—and it seems to be working.

Now please understand I am not getting down on those that like heaping helpings of "the usual," quite the opposite actually. I take comfort in knowing the roads, the ride, and the route of the familiar, and take advantage of this familiarity by riding a bit more spiritedly than I might in places far from known. If you know the roads you can dial it up. Do that in unfamiliar

territory and it can earn you trouble. Give and take, ying and yang—there are no absolutes, just an aspiration of balance: new vs. familiar.

Adventure and anticipation, the thrill of piloting our machines, seeing the sites and visiting places both familiar and new, are what helps fuel our enthusiasm for our V-Twins. Add friends to the mix and you've got the makings of some stories and tales you'll cherish and regale folks with for a lifetime.

Our machines were made for travel. Get out with your friends and use 'em, get 'em dirty—and let us know what happened when you did!

Here's to gearing up, getting out, and getting lost!

Stephen Berner
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Walt Siegl's Speedglide

...with a foot in two worlds

*Story by Walt Siegl, Stephen Berner
Photos by Stephen Berner*

Last November when I was visiting Walt Siegl's motorcycle shop in rural New Hampshire, I spied a few errant pieces and parts that looked like they had homes. But there wasn't enough evidence all in one spot to get a sense of what was going to come out of the bits and pieces, so to speak. In passing, Walt mentioned that he'd sent a Shovel engine to Rosa's

Cycles for a special rebuild and that I should take a look at it when I was there next, as it was going to be extra hi-po; the bike it was going into was going to be a sweetheart.

A few days pass, I am on the phone with Andrew Rosa, and relay I'd been up to visit Walt and that he'd mentioned an engine I should take a look at. Andrew laughs and says, too late, the engine is gone – already been shipped to Walt. But he described it to me: a 93" shovel (alter-

nator) stroker monster, a well-mannered monster, but a monster nonetheless. He'd run it on his engine stand and, once cooled, boxed it up for delivery. I called Walt and asked him to let me know when the bike was done so I could come up and see it. This was a big build, and a quick turnaround job to boot. The bike was called the Speedglide.

The IMS show in NYC is held in January. Walt had a booth and display this year. He brought the finished Speedglide





with him to show publicly for the first time. I was knocked out. The bike was surprisingly simple but, upon closer inspection, actually quite sophisticated. There was a lot going on. The bike appeared to be a British/USA hybrid, really cool. The frame work alone had me jazzed. Since the weather this past January sucked mightily, I asked Walt to clue me in as soon as the weather changed and I'd come up and shoot the bike before it got delivered to the lucky owner in the spring.

April rolls around and I get the call, jump in the truck, and head to New Hampshire to go a visitin'. Having a chance to spend some time with this bike is a treat. It is pretty, it is finely finished, it is surprisingly neo retro/modern and it has a real Brit flavor. And then there is the sledgehammer-like 93" stroker, sitting in the



pretty, reedy looking chassis, ready to smash and break things and go fast as hell. Talk about contrasts.

Catching up a bit while I fawned over the machine, I followed Walt in my truck to the backwoods location where I shot the bike. When I finished up, Walt asked if I'd like to ride the bike back to the shop, maybe 15 miles or so. Yeah, let me think on that like a nano second—hell, yeah! The amount of sand and winter detritus on the road was a bummer: no throwing this machine into corners on this ride. But still, it was wonderful to have a chance so few will.

Sit on the decidedly British seat, key on, petcock switched, make sure it's in neutral (no green light, sorry,) reach down and hit the clean, hidden in plain sight micro switch to fire the bike. Blammo, the engine fires and settles into the distinctive loping Shovel stoker idle, where each pow coming from the exhaust is akin to a shotgun blast. Instant shit eating grin on yours truly. Ha!

Feet up on the mid controls, crack the throttle, let out the clutch and immediately you are shocked at how light the machine is and how powerful and responsive the engine is. The sensation is akin to riding a good handling motor, very much a point and shoot affair in terms of handling. In a word, excellent. Smartly the brakes are also responsive, allowing you to drive the machine confidently. Smooth, torquey and with the BAKER transmission, a snick-snick experience is assured: no hunting for gears, everything works perfectly. It was a treat taking this machine for a ride. It begs to be thrown into corners and it's cool to downshift as you enter a corner only to crack the throttle and feel the torquey Shovel pull you out.

Back at the shop we got to the business of dinner and drinks and before we knew it the day was done and our visit was complete. I called Walt a few days later and asked if he'd care to explain the bike a bit. Here's his response.

The owner of the Speedglide grew up in the Midwest, so big Harleys were his in-



roduction to the motorcycling world. He had owned a bunch of them before he moved to the east coast where he was charmed by the British bikes of the '60s-'70s era that were everywhere in the big cities. Over time he ended up owning both brands. He enjoys the nimble characteristics of the British bikes, but misses the deep breath and long legs of the Big Twin when he travels. The guy is seriously infected by the motorcycle bug and rides a lot—and he rides hard.

So this is where I come into the picture. His request was a bike built by me that had its footings in both worlds.

I built a frame to reach a ride height that allows quick steering when combined with the correct tire size while maintaining the long trail that speaks Harley. The Baker 6-speed is the choice for bikes that also have to live on the open road, so I picked their kicker unit with custom gearing to match the engine configuration.

Speaking of engine! None other but Andrew Rosa built this powerhouse. We had a few phone conversations regarding plans before he built the engine. His getting the job done in a very short time allowed me to complete the project on schedule. I cannot say enough about how professional Rosa is. I put that motor in

the frame, took the bike out for the first spin, and there were no leaks, no funny noises, no huffs and puffs that come so often with "custom" Harley engines. The bike has power on tap anywhere throughout the rpm range, in any gear.

To support the frame geometry, I chose a '60s Ceriani fork updated with contemporary cartridges and Progressive springs. A lot of time and machining went into the use of 4-pad Brembo calipers on those fork legs that were originally set up for a drum brake. Rear shocks are Works Performance built to my specs. I had the chance to ride with the owner of this bike. He is quick, sure footed, and likes to maintain momentum. So needless to say, he is happy with the package.

Visually, I'm really happy with the way the bike came together. To me, it's a perfect marriage of the Triumph/BSA world and Harley-Davidson's heavy footprint.—Walt Siegl IW

*RESOURCE

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