

On Sale Until 03/07/2011

WWW.IRONWORKSMAG.COM

MARCH 2011

Volume 21 Number 2

IronWorks®

WALT SIEGL'S SORDILLO SALT FLAT

ONLINE AT IWBLOGGER.COM
MORE FEATURE BIKE IMAGES
ON THE BUMP

GET IN GEAR
RIDING APPAREL BUYER'S GUIDE

**BIGTWIN MAGAZINE/SWEDEN • FALL FOLIAGE RIDE • OCC TRIKE • 1917 INDIAN
HARRY'S FXR • E-FAB METAL HOW-TO • RIDING IDAHO • DRISCOLL'S FLATTIE
DADDIO'S RED HOT ROAD KING • TRIED & TESTED WESCO BOOTS • BUELL BROS.**





ON THE COVER

Volume 21 • Number 2 • Our 172nd Issue

Walt Siegl Motorcycles, tucked away in the wilds of New Hampshire, builds some of the most sanitary machines this side of the Great Divide. Say hello to this issue's cover bike, Sordillo Salt Flat, a hand-wrought piece of long stroke, functional, V-Twin go-fast machinery that is simply stunning to see in person. Check out more of this great bike at Ironworksmag.com, on the BUMP.

FEATURE BIKES



Driscoll's '47 Flathead	8
<i>A durable distraction</i>	
OCC Trike	24
<i>Far out custom from TV's cool kids</i>	
Red Hot Road King	32
<i>Daddio's convertible bagger</i>	
Harry's FXR	50
<i>Accessorized Swedish style</i>	

FEATURE STORIES



Meet BigTwin	20
<i>IW's new Swedish connection</i>	
Way Out West	28
<i>Margie Tours Yellowstone</i>	
Klock Billboard 'Shield	44
<i>Clear, classy, Klock</i>	
Riding Cape Cod	46
<i>Perewitz's Fall Foliage Run</i>	
Home Hobbyist Welder	54
<i>Eastwood outfits your shop</i>	
JIMS Bag Latches	70
<i>Iron Glass adds a special touch</i>	
Wesco Custom Boots	77
<i>Keeping the dogs happy</i>	

IW GARAGE



Electric	56
<i>Three-phase explained</i>	
Demystifying Audio	58
<i>Head unit is the boss</i>	
Paint & Finishes	60
<i>Chasing perfection</i>	
Metal	62
<i>E-Fab on tank fab</i>	
All About	64
<i>Custom boots, proper fit</i>	
Gasket Materials	66
<i>It's all in the ingredients</i>	
Buell Brothers	68
<i>Keeping records straight</i>	



DEPARTMENTS

Letters	18
<i>What's on your mind?</i>	
Buyer's Guide	72
<i>Getting geared up</i>	

REGULARS

Steve B	6
<i>Diagnosis, a rare art...</i>	
Sam Kanish	12
<i>Biking bloopers</i>	
Brian Klock	14
<i>Creativity over cash</i>	
Marilyn Bragg	16
<i>Getting lost rules</i>	
Margie Siegal	78
<i>1917 Indian Tracker</i>	



SPOTLIGHT

Walt Siegl Motorcycles

Taking the time to carefully view the machines built by Walt Siegl, you can't help but appreciate that a lot of effort and focus went into defining his unmistakably clean and classic style. Walt's talented take on the modern urban custom is flavored by time riding the bad streets of NYC, tempered by time spent on the racetrack flogging state-of-the-art Ducatis. Enjoy Walt's work, and get down on one knee with us to take a closer look.



Diagnosis

I was reminded recently about the salient differences between hearing, listening, and of the importance of being able to take a step back and diagnose a situation.

My workshop is a crowded space with two bikes, two workbenches, four sewing machines, two rollaways, machine tools, a spare parts stash taking up one wall, buckets, ladders, rolls of leather... it's basically 10 pounds in a five-pound bag. Where there isn't stuff, there are stickers covering every exposed surface. The inexperienced walking among us might say it is cluttered, but I like to think of it as an efficient, comfortable, and productive workspace, and since it's all I have (and believe you me, I am *not* complaining in the least), I cope.

Bringing a new tool into my shop requires I get rid of something, and this time my object of affection is an important new tool for my leatherworking endeavors—it's a sewing machine. I sold a machine I wasn't using to make room and fund the purchase of this new one.

Setting up a hand-powered sewing machine is similar to setting up a new computer or a new machine tool, in that all the adjustments that you've used in the past on prior equipment is meaningless. You are, for all intents and purposes, starting from scratch, creating new baseline adjustments and settings from feel, experience, and intuition. So you have to pay attention to what is happening based on your inputs and observed changes. In essence, you are calibrating both yourself and the machine to work together harmoniously.

Well, harmony is not always easily achieved and the critical calibrations are not easily identified and implemented unless you are darn good at listening, observing, and diagnosing what is happening. Most of us, myself included, are not so good at this and we fumble and bumble. We read the instructions 50 times and for the life of us can't figure out what the hell is going on, trying to determine if the issue at hand is based on operator error, lame-assedness, or a machine fault. It can get frustrating and after a while you find yourself looping back on the efforts that netted you nothing the first go-round. In a word, ugh.

I've been there a few times—at the crossroads of hair pulling, crying, and getting a can of gas and a book of matches and ending it right there. One of the most memorable of these meltdowns was trying to dial in the then groundbreaking innovation of the S&S Super E. This was around 1993, as I recall. I had my FXR all prepped for what I thought would be an easy morning of wrench twirling and afternoon riding. Well, that was not to be the case and after eight solid hours of losing my mind trying to get the bike to run properly, I threw up my hands and ran to the fridge for an adult beverage to wash down the sour taste of failure. Eventually, I figured it out. Between intake leaks, a stuck float, and improper accelerator pump adjustment, I finally got the carb dialed in. Then I found out the problem was a broken coil wire. Pfeh.

Sitting in my shop last week with my spanking new, made in America, hand-powered sewing machine, I commenced to get some hands on experience and feel where the settings needed to be—time to test, to learn, and to listen!

Six hours later, my knees were locked solid; I was up to my arse in thread, leather scraps, and snips. I had tried everything I knew to get a passable result ending with nada, nothing, junk, and plain old, "it ain't gonna happen." About 2:00 a.m. I finally gave in—after a near complete disassembly and then reassembly of the machine—and still nothing. It was clearly time for a Woodford.

Calling the manufacturer helpline or tech desk for a clue is like stopping and asking for directions when you are hopelessly lost on a road trip with your family. It's the last resort; I am not wired to do it naturally. So with tail between legs, I called the manufacturer and asked for help.

Tony picked up the phone with a cheery, "How are ya, Steve? How's the machine working for ya?" I felt like I was confessing; "It's not going so good, Tony. I am not worthy and maybe it wasn't meant to be. I think this thing hates me." (Sniff, sniff.)

"Nonsense," he said, and then he began his virtual diagnosis. I call them the "didyas." Didya check your top tension? Where is it set? Didya check your bobbin tension? How is the machine's timing? Is the needle cocked? Do you have the right



needle? What thread are you using? Is it bonded, left or right twist? What material are you sewing? It went on like this for half an hour. I had checked, adjusted, and done everything perfectly to spec and it still didn't work. We were stumped; my ear was hot from being on the phone for so long. Then he said, "Turn the cone of thread over; what is the thread made of? What's on the label?" I complied and said, "Polyester," like every other cone of thread I have in my cabinet.

"Aha," Tony said, "that's it. Seems this machine—because of the way it pulls the thread through its mechanism—doesn't like polyester, it likes *nylon*. (Because of the inherent elasticity in the material, it pulls back quickly after being stretched.) Well, as it turns out, every other machine in my arsenal *likes* polyester. How was I to know that'd be the culprit? Well, had I had more experience with a wider array of machines and materials, I'd have just "known," as Tony said. My experience was in a very narrow band of the entire picture. I only knew what I knew—and in this case, it simply wasn't enough. (Although I do kill at Jeopardy, so am not a total loser.) I'd have never figured it out on my own; someone needed to hit me with the clue by four.

This is one of the reasons I have come to rely on knowledgeable people to help me get my work done, as they know how to "diagnose." My listening skills and experience, as good as they might be, can't compete with the trained and skilled eye/ear/hand of someone who knows how to listen, observe, diagnose, and fix things for a living. That is an unusual and increasingly rare skill set in the age of "replacement over repair," and one to be held in high regard.

Please, check in with us on Facebook or Ironworksmag.com. We'd like to hear from you.

Stephen Berner
Steveb@steveb.biz

Walt Siegl Motorcycles

High style, no nonsense craftsmanship

NYC is known for a lot of things, some good, some not so good. But it has been blessed to have some talented folks live on its cold, hard granite. Some of the two-wheel influentials, such as Indian Larry, have been well covered in the press and conversely some have cruised under the radar of the populist media for the most part. These folks are busy doing great work, creating their own distinctive style, and applying their aesthetic philosophy based on living in a place that tests you at every corner.

Back in the early 90's *The Horse* did a pretty good job of covering this two-wheel ecosystem. They were, in fact, pretty much the only ones covering the NYC scene. Some of these urban bike-building talents, including Walt Siegl, survived the tests of the city and its "live-go fast" lifestyle. Some even developed rock solid reputations despite the flighty nature of the times and moved on from the immolating scene, creating businesses from their passions.

Walt is of the latter variety. He isn't a pursuer of all things media, although over time he's earned his fair share of press (global, I might add,) and has been featured in most every major magazine title, either as a feature or a cover. He's also been recognized by folks outside the H-D community for his high level of craftsmanship and his road racing pursuits. Yes, Walt is a seasoned, competitive racer and he rides a V-Twin—a Ducati to be specific—and he rides the snot out of it.

Meeting Walt Siegl is a rare treat these days. Not being a scene-ster, busy doing all of his work himself and living in the woods of New England are lifestyle characteristics that don't exactly point to an action packed social schedule. Walt doesn't get out much, but he works relentlessly in his well-equipped shop, located in a rehabbed streamside mill. It's a cool workspace with great energy and it allows Walt to focus, something that's tough to do in an electrically charged environment, especially one such as Manhattan.



But we are not here today to wax poetic on the wackiness of the 1990's NYC H-D scene, racing, or the merits of Ducati. We are here to take a look at some of the work to come out of Walt's shop hidden in rural (and beautiful) New Hampshire. He made the move with his wonderful family from NYC over two years ago and hasn't looked back. I'd describe Walt as a true craftsman of the European order. He does it all: designs, welds, bends tubing, paints, machines parts and tunes. There is not a system on a bike over which he doesn't have mastery. Walt isn't a blowhard, doesn't jump for the spotlight, and would most probably blush over my description of his abilities. So be it.

Walt's machines are the kinds of bikes that builders and people in the know go nuts over. No screaming yellow honkers or shiny Easter eggs to attract the fanny pack crowd. All the love is in the details of Walt's machines. You have to look carefully and you need to have some knowledge to appreciate what is going on and what you are looking at. A lot of what makes these machines stand out are the small finessed details.

In Walt's H-D infused world, every part is open to scrutiny and improvement; there are no sacred cows. If he sees room for improvement, he makes it—and he makes it beautifully and respectfully. As an example, take a look at the clutch cable stand-offs on his machines; they're beautiful, graceful, useful, and simple. Through this lens, it is also clear that there are some things that

just plain work and don't need to be modified, allowing the bikes to retain their true and birthed persona. They look like Harleys, and that's a good thing. No spaceship-like Jules Verne-esque machines coming out of this workshop, no sir. Walt's bikes look purpose-built and equally important they look like motorcycles.

After spending the day together talking, shooting, and moving the bikes you see here, it became clear to me that Walt wasn't really that interested in these machines. He was done with them, they were complete and as such, were self-explanatory. They were what they were—finished. He had moved on, not an uncommon trait amongst artists. What really excited him were some of the projects on the bench and new bees buzzing 'round his bonnet.

And then it became clear to me; for someone who is as cognizant and respectful of H-D—its past and heritage and unmistakable style—Walt is all about moving forward. He's got things to make, laps to do, bikes to build, and visions yet to realize. Studying Walt's body of work, you can't help but recognize you are watching an artist maturing, each bike another step in the journey.

Walt Siegl relentlessly leverages the past to make way for the future, with a smooth, clean, well executed classic style that shows a maturity and respect we just don't see all that often.



*RESOURCE

Walt Siegl Motorcycles
Harrisville, NH
<http://www.waltsiegl.com>



Motobe

The Motobe came into my life through my friendship with Roger Miret (the lead singer of Agnostic Front; he is also the Rumlbers president, just in case you do not know the guy). I think it was 1989 or '90 when he dragged the Sporty in milk grates into my shop in Long Island City. He picked it up in Miami. Soon enough

he found himself a Shovel project and sold the mildewed parts to my friend, the artist Arthur Sordillo. His wife needed a bike to tool around on, so he asked me to make it pretty.

It stayed a Sporty for many years until Art decided to turn me loose on it again. Only this time he wanted a Sporty that was not a Sporty anymore. Those were his requirements. That's how it became what you see now. —Walt Siegl





Eric's Bike

One of my last friends still in New York until recently, Eric had a lot of parts for this bike on a shelf for a long time and never got to

putting the bike together. He's my friend; I buttoned it up for him and he just loaded it in his van last week, strapped between surfboards and toolboxes, and headed for the West Coast. End of story. —Walt Siegl





Four Speed

I wanted to build a bike with the parts Harley-Davidson became so famous for: the springer fork, the four speed frame with its

low seat height, tall tires on black rims, knuckle head exhaust, and big primary hanging out. To exaggerate all those visually important components, I kept the tank and fender as small as possible. —Walt Siegl





Sordillo Salt Flat

Another Arthur bike. He picked up a set of 1950 Pan cases with papers for cheap. We were planning to build a bike around a small motor and run the bike in the 1200cc class at the Salt Flats. The original cases turned out to be cracked everywhere, so

Arthur opted for a small engine build by the guru Andrew Rosa. The entire project turned out to be quite involved and therefore expensive so Art threw out the plans to go to the flats. At least it turned out to be an interesting motorcycle. The truly difficult part of the build turned out to be working with a cardboard version of a square tank that Arthur made and wanted on the bike. Everything else about the bike had to answer that shape. —Walt Siegl





Fritzcarraldo

The owner wanted a bike for the city that was light and nimble. These were his only wishes. A small group of us built inner-city bikes throughout the '80s and '90s so it was an easy task for me. Our bikes were completely purposeful with no frills attached. They had narrow bars on tall risers to white line and clear the car mirrors, fold up foot pegs mounted as close as possible to avoid car tire contact, and exhausts tucked in and empty so drivers could hear us scream up. Plus

small stroker motors with torquey cams to jump from light to light.

I also started using steering dampers to be able to hold on to the bars after hitting potholes with the narrow glide. I got a lot of strange looks and some foul comments for using them for a while (European sportbike crap, etc.), but eventually the Harley custom world embraced them. No fancy paint jobs either because we rode all year round. Indian Larry started building bikes that were inner city machines, but he used candy paint and fancy plating. Once the TV media discovered him, the outlaw style bike world—as we knew it—started to change.—Walt Siegl

