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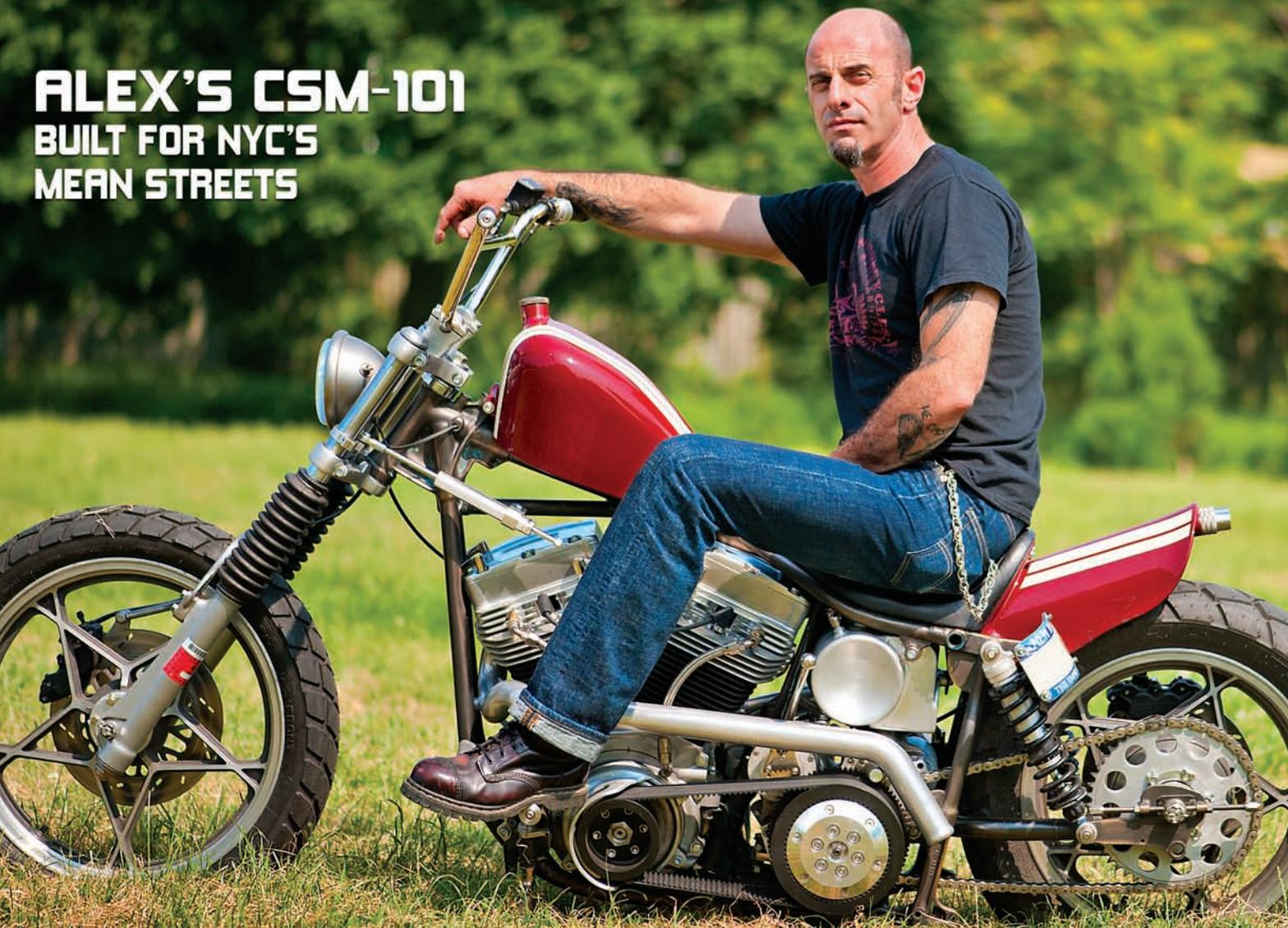
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ON THE COVER

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.



FEATURE BIKES

Urban Assault Vehicle	10
<i>Built tough to live tough</i>	
Nate's Shovel	22
<i>Younger rider, older bike</i>	
Tom's Perfect Pan	32
<i>Older than old school</i>	
Road King Custom	36
<i>Owner inspired, builder prepped</i>	
Bringing back a classic	48
<i>Old is new again</i>	



FEATURE STORIES

X-Wedge Road Glide	44
<i>If you want one, build one</i>	
Northeast Roadtripping	52
<i>On bikes you'll know</i>	



IW GARAGE

Smart Products	40
<i>EZ-up stand & Reda gas can</i>	
Doug Morrow's 124"	55
<i>Twin Cam in stock cases</i>	
Super E TLC	58
<i>Rebuilt to run</i>	
FXR Custom Bag, Part 2	60
<i>E-Fab finds a way</i>	
Suspension Solutions	63
<i>Answers to common ailments</i>	
103" Upgrade	65
<i>Thanks to Feuling, SuperTrapp and TTS</i>	
Project XR1200	67
<i>Addressing suspension and handling</i>	
All About	69
<i>The Leatherworks Part 2</i>	
IW Product Review	75
<i>Lick's Cycles helmet</i>	
Avon Venoms	80
<i>Tried and tested</i>	



DEPARTMENTS

Letters	20
<i>Horsepower vs. torque</i>	
Buyer's Guide	71
<i>Keeping old bikes running</i>	

REGULARS

Steve B	6
<i>The Life</i>	
Sam Kanish	14
<i>Why not wave?</i>	
Bert Baker	16
<i>Home Invasion</i>	
Marilyn Bragg	18
<i>War Woman Road</i>	
Margie Siegal	76
<i>First year Excelsior</i>	
IW Eye	82
<i>Worth a thousand words</i>	



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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A Yearly Sojourn With Friends

If its June, its time to head north to Laconia

Story and photos by Stephen Berner

Travelling a lot during the year for business, like many do, means that time at home is precious. Time spent with friends becomes tougher to come by as we get caught up in our own stuff: jobs, family matters, and personal minutiae. Keeping the crew together also is harder in some regards these days and in some ways easier. Like you, my group has a var-

ied makeup: some folks have kids, some don't—and in that regard some have small, high maintenance kids, others have teens in college. It runs the gamut. And so some are always "in" and for others it is very spotty attendance wise, especially during soccer season and the various Mother's and Father's Day type activities.

Bike Week in New Hampshire is one of those events that my core group of longriders tries not to miss. As bad as the weath-

er can be (and it can be very, very bad, let me assure you), it is one of the few rides that we try and bust out for as a group. We've had as many as 20+ people join our posse and ride with us (friends of friends, etc.), but for the most part I can always count on at least 6 of the stalwart, blue chip attendees on attending, no matter what. We look forward to this one week of doing nothing but touring the beautiful Northern Kingdom of Maine, New Hamp-



Jeb



Joe



Dave



Scott



shire, and Vermont, and scouting new places to eat in the many small towns that dot the large, remote area. On average the distances are not huge when compared to "out west" miles, as these are twisting winding roads for the most part, but five days generally results in about 1800 miles of tread worn from our tires.

This year was tough on a lot of folks. Family commitments, work and business responsibilities, and the like kept a number of people from joining us. But on the other hand we had some new riders join. The balance retained, its good to have new faces in the crowd who haven't seen the places we visit, allowing us to experience the spots anew through their fresh eyes and reactions. It always works out, it just does.

As it turns out a few of the IW Garage

Project machines attended this year: Pupkin's 2010 Road Glide (black out and Stage 1+), DaveD's Road Glide (Stage 1) and Project FLHX (107 engine build), so I had a chance to see how they looked and performed and get close up to get some riders' reactions.

Pupkin's been really happy with his machine; so happy in fact that we've not taken the time to schedule the last phase of blacking out his bike; taking care of things like the fork legs, docking hardware, etc. His bike sounds loud but good, especially when he cracks it. Not so sure the neighbors are happy, though. The bike hasn't sat still long, that's for sure. He went back to Rosa's Cycles for a quick re-tune to address a mild flat spot but since then all is well with Pupkin. His bike looks

good, runs great and sounds like an F-14.

DaveD's been real happy with the Stage1 we performed on his 2008 Road Glide at JJ's Cycle. He's thrilled with the bike's personality and get-up-and-go nature. And if I had to make a bet, I'd say that if he finds some extra cash in hand, he will be looking for a set of cams.

As far as Project FLHX goes, the bike rocks! The 107 is just enough motor for the way I ride and the places I go. I find all the power where I need it and the way the BAKER DD7 is set up ratio wise I never hunt for gears. There is no wind up, I just twist and go. Suspension is tight and allows me to overload my Tourpak with gear and not "enjoy" the fish being wagged from the tail effect. I am not recommending overloading your machine by the way; you *should* follow



Recommended if you are in the area.



Sightseeing: off the bikes and in the cool.



Not too much rain this year.



Pupkin and SteveD.



Most of this year's crew.

the recommended weight guidelines with all of the luggage-like items on your bike.

Amway, SteveD was on his spanking brand new, silver surfer Road King and even Zeb showed up on his straight, fresh, new from the dealership Road Glide in pretty black denim. Funny to see everyone on new model year machines, all spiffed, in compliance with all laws, and clean. This is in sharp contrast to the pictures on my office wall of this group on a variety of ratty, well worn, and abused FXR's. The good old days!

A surprise this year was the preponderance of decent weather. The past few years we have gotten drowned pretty good and so we were both surprised and thankful we had to don raingear infrequently. The way that it worked out this year, Pupkin and Jeb headed out two days earlier than Marko and myself, getting hammered with rain for two straight days. Marko and I (FLHX and Ducati 999) just cruised north. We met up with the other characters later that day at a coastal lobster joint in Maine and stayed at a lovely spot in Kennebunk, Maine—the Nonantum—that fed us well and gave us a place to rest our heads.

Now as is our custom we didn't stay on the beaten path. We ventured off and so found ourselves at this nice resort that doesn't specialize in catering to V-Twin motorcycle enthusiasts and had a good number of normal folks and families as guests. Now I enjoy the quiet of a non-motorcycle oriented place. For

me, it is good to *not* hear the sound of boots in the hall and bikes in the parking lot when I am trying to recharge. This is in diametrical opposition to people who'd just as soon stay in the center of the maelstrom and set up tent at the entrance to the beer tent to be closer to the action.

We kept a wandering around northern New England and by Wednesday found ourselves firmly ensconced at our hotel in North Lincoln, NH (about an hour north of Laconia/Weirs Beach). From there we free range like chickens all over northern New Hampshire, Maine, and Vermont, skirting the Canadian border much of the time with destinations based loosely around meals. The Yankee Smokehouse (Routes 16 and 25) is a favorite and we found a few new roadside spots waaay further north.

Of course we ventured down to Weir's Beach, the epicenter of Laconia Bike

Week, and saw what there was to see: trinkets and trash for the most part. We split the crowd and headed up to visit Laconia Harley-Davidson to visit this new location and spend some time with John Hoppe, Debra, Drew, and Dan of Hoppe Industries. I wanted to get ahead and talk a bit about a project we are going to do with them. I just happened to have Andy, one of my crew and a soon-to-be project participant (using a Hoppe product), with me and so introduced him to John and they talked about the project we are going to do with Andy's machine. This is going to be a cool project and I was happy to have a chance to connect the bike owner with the manufacturer personally, so they could talk. That kind of stuff just doesn't happen often and both John and Andy were happy to have met each other. I think it makes things all the more personal (and cool).

So we zigged, we zagged, we got bitten by bugs in a most dramatic and painful manner, and eventually we decided after a week of eating road food to turn wheels south and head back to the realities of our lives, another year's trip in the books. No one got hurt, no bikes broke, we saw some new sights, we covered some miles, and we showed some new guys that their bikes would take them further than a Sunday morning's breakfast destination.

It's all good when you can travel with your friends and return home, everyone in one piece. **IV**



Roadside navigation meeting.