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# IronWorks®

## KIRK TAYLOR'S JOHNNY CHOP TRIBUTE BIKE HONORING TIME WELL SPENT



**IW SPOTLIGHT**  
MILWAUKEE'S COOK CUSTOMS

**METAL DRAGON**  
A FIRE-BREATHING SOFTAIL

**DREAM RIDES BAGGER**  
ABLE AND STABLE

**STEADYMATE CHOCK** • MAD JAP CUSTOMS • **SAM KANISH** • ROAD GLIDE BLACKOUT • **BERT BAKER**  
ANDREWS CAMS • **SUSPENSION EXPLAINED** • ROAD GLIDE UPGRADE • **POSIE ON HP & TORQUE**  
**1961 PANHEAD** • CTEK CHARGERS • **PROJECT XR1200** • HOW IT'S MADE: MUSTANG SEATS





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## ON THE COVER

Volume 21 • Number 6 • Our 176th Issue

Tribute bikes are nothing new but most of us would agree that forging rolling art from metal alloy and honest sweat is a righteous way to honor someone we cared about who is no longer among us. Motorcycles that claim this genesis are always more than the sum of their parts and it's the story behind those parts—and how the builder assembled them—that enhances the bike. Kirk Taylor's tribute to Johnny Chop, photographed here by Stephen Berner, hits all the high points: born from a genuine connection, handled in a respectful manner, and producing a striking result.

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## SPOTLIGHT: Cook Customs

Dave Cook is a guy who's been around the block a few times—and sometimes he takes that lap of the city block on his motorized couch! But no matter his mode of transport, you can bet that any vehicle bearing the Cook Customs stamp will have its share of visual appeal and functional dependability with a spark of astonishing cleverness tossed in. That's because Dave's been on the scene for some time now and he's here to stay. Visiting with Dave at Cook Customs on Milwaukee's east side, and meeting with his band of merry-makers, convinced us of that. Join us on page 24.



## Choices

Sitting in the Editor's chair requires making a lot of choices. Part of making choices is explaining yourself, and I get to do a lot of that, too: the usual why this and why that. Selecting bikes to run in the magazine is one specific area we get asked a lot about. How do we select bikes for features? How do we select shops and builders for spotlight stories?

So to keep on track and on point, we use a guiding principle applied to identifying the bikes for *IronWorks*, described thusly: "bikes worth celebrating." Okay, I can see eyes rolling, but bear with me. I describe a bike worth celebrating as the sort of machine that has handmade, thoughtful touches, a machine that is uncommon in its design, function, manufacture, collection of parts and appearance, and stands out in a crowd for the right reasons. These are machines you have to get down on your knee to appreciate fully, that draw you in and beg to be understood, carefully scoped out, and ridden.

Ultimately, "bikes worth celebrating" are fun to look at. This is about the pursuit of fun, right?

A machine worth celebrating is a platform for ideas and for showcasing the artist/builder's talents. This is how a builder reflects an understanding and a respect for the functionality of the two-wheeled art form, as the machine must work and perform the duties of a motorcycle. And they need to be fun to look at.

So do the bikes that you and I hose down in our driveways, ride daily, and keep in our sheds, garages and living rooms in general and for the most part qualify as bikes worth celebrating? Well, we as owners certainly celebrate our own machines and rightly so, but in the world of media, not so much.

We love our personal machines and we lavish attention on them and honor them as family members, and that is what keeps our passion propelled forward. But alas, when it comes to what appears in a printed publica-

tion, we strive to find the top-shelf gems that you are not going to see at most local bike nights. Isn't that the point?

It's a hustle, ferreting out and telling the stories behind these cool machines that are for the most part off the radar. But it is our responsibility to bring you the very best that's out there. For the record, it matters not one whit if a bike rolls from a shed, bedroom, or pro's shop—cool is cool and if the machine in question is, we want to know about it, we want to feature it.

Another choice: do we use our valuable pages to showcase reader's letters and reader's rides or do we bring you more unusual and high quality machines you've probably not seen before? We choose the latter. Really good reader's rides (and we have fea-



tured many) become bike features anyway, as we contact the owner to make a shoot and story happen.

As moto-consumers we buy stuff and make lots of choices nearly every day. There is a lot of gear designed for V-Twin enthusiasts and to help navigate the waters of choice we choose to use as much of the best, relevant product as is reasonable. We also endeavor to report back on how the gear we got worked—a check-back, if you will. It takes time to bring a product out and that is why the check-back is important. We weave product usage into much of our editorial so over time you get a sense of how things are performing as we travel about using and abusing our stuff.

Tech is an area that is always up for discussion. Do we show splitting cases and ground up engine builds or do we show the

type of work that most modern machine owners are contemplating? While I have to admit a personal fascination with seeing connecting rods and pistons on scales, I am pretty sure—based on what I've heard and been told—that talking about stage 1/2/3 upgrades and the options therein (cams, intake, exhaust, tuners) is a little more along the lines of what most long riding, aftermarket supporting owners want to learn about, so that is where we focus our attention. Not to say we won't be cracking cases in the future...

As the TC population gets more miles under its collective belt, we will be delving further into the maintenance issues encountered and that is where things will get juicy, as the aftermarket always comes up with

good solutions and enhancements to keep us on the road. Keeping older (pre-TC) machines on the road is also on the agenda, so we will have the bases covered... hopefully.

*IronWorks* Spotlight, the single shop/multi-bike feature we've developed, has turned out to be successful, with readers and builders alike being pleased at this innovation. So we are going to keep it up. Finding the shops that we feature hasn't been a challenge, and to boot, there

are many talented folks that we know about which we just haven't had the time to visit with, but we will. We are always on the lookout for talented shops we haven't featured so if you know of one clue us in.

Having choices, choices, choices: it's a part of what is so great about being an American and a big part of what makes owning a V-Twin so much fun and interesting. We want you to know the fact that you made the choice to read *IronWorks* means a lot to the *IronWorks* team and we hope that you choose to let us know what's on your mind. Check us out at [ironworksmag.com](http://ironworksmag.com) and on FB and if you want to save a few bucks, choose to subscribe.

Ride safe, long and like the wind!  
Stephen Berner  
[steveb@steveb.biz](mailto:steveb@steveb.biz)

## Mad Jap Kustoms From the Great White North

*Cold months inside result in cool customs*

**M**eeting Dale Yamada, proprietor of Mad Jap Kustoms in Calgary, Alberta, Canada, in Daytona at the Limpnickie Lot during Daytona 2011 was something I'd planned on. I'd seen Mad Jap Kustoms' work in other publications and thought it was handcrafted, detailed out and intense—*IronWorks* territory for sure. I knew Dale would be at the Lot and we'd connected before the event, promising to hook up.

Shooting the bikes on the side of the Stone Edge Skate Park in South Daytona was *not* something I'd planned on, but the environment somehow fit with the flavor of

Dale's machines; a little chaotic, a little loud, a ton of details, lots of interruptions, enhanced by a cool soundtrack that let you know you weren't at home but immersed in what you love. It was the thrum of machines motoring by. I think that flavor was captured pretty well in the images.

Dale is an interesting guy with influences that belie the youthful exuberance of his machines. Influences he recounts are of stripped down, hell-raising machines, the sort of outlaw bikes that have turned the heads of countless young children, indelibly marking them and influencing their direction and idea of what is cool, genuine and wor-

thy of pursuit. Dale grew up deep in the community of worshippers of internal combustion, be it powering over-the-road big rigs, hot rods, GP bikes or H-D choppers.

Dale grew up living the mechanical V-Twin life; not *opting* in, rather *born* in. He doesn't talk about it, he doesn't wear it like a flag draped round his shoulders; he just lives his day-to-day existence by its clear-wrought tenets. When I talk to Dale, an old soul, I think of the phrase, "death to false bikers." His patience for those that want to buy "authentic" is thin. Dale does best when he is talking with knowledgeable enthusiasts who can relate to the great import and history that this subject matter holds. If you haven't done some homework in terms of outlaw chopper and custom history before meeting Dale, you'd be best served to.

Mad Jap: quite a moniker indeed. Asking Dale straight up where his business name came from earned a straight up response: it was his departed Dad's nickname, a larger than life character well versed in the black arts of two-wheeled motorcycling whom Dale misses daily. What else was he going to call the business that his Dad encouraged him to pursue, one that he was, by birthright, born into?

Dale is a private fellow, his machines not easily accessible, handcrafted and meticulously detailed. Being fastidious, he chooses to work alone; a bit off the radar, following a muse few can indulge, buy, or understand. He's busy taking traditional chopper styling and thinking to a new, refreshingly modern, finely finished level—a place the inventors of it all appreciate when they see his respectful work today.



### \*RESOURCE

Mad Jap Kustoms  
[www.madjapkustoms.com](http://www.madjapkustoms.com)  
403-803-3049



## Knuckle

Three weeks before Daytona my friend Leo called me.

"Yo Dale, I'm going to Daytona you down?"

"Umm, sure man, I'm in."

The result of that five-second phone call is this bike, built in three weeks! It's a real 1940 Knuckle and trans. Yes, I can hear ringing in my ears right now from all you old timers.

The gas tank and oil bag are pure copper, the front end is a modified 1992 Sporty, and the rear fender is an old FL fender. I got the idea to run the chain drive after seeing one of Leo's bikes. The twin carb deal was a leap of faith. I never even got to run it before I made the five-day trip to Daytona from the shop in Calgary.

I drove into Daytona then started working on the Knuckle right away. The damn thing would start but wouldn't stay running. I condemned the carb set up. The original combo had two super B's. I jetted it, changed pilots, and pulled them apart over and over. The spark was good; I just needed the right combo of fuel and air.

The next morning, Leo and I

went out and picked up two new super G's, bolted them on and commenced kicking and kicking, pulling the carbs apart, changing pilots and mains. Finally I pulled the mag, and thank God I brought a spare!

After the second kick, BANG! It was running and running strong. I spent the rest of the night having a few beers with Leo and jetting the carbs. Call me crazy but working on your bike in a parking lot day and night, hanging with your buddy, having some beers was the best part of Daytona.—*Dale Yamada*





## Funk Master

This bike was a comeback build for me after suffering a major accident that left me with a broken back, broken pelvis, severely crushed left leg with multiple compound fractures, and massive internal injuries—plus a bad limp for the rest of my life. I spent a year in a wheel chair and almost two years on and off crutches.

I built this bike because I had nothing to lose and I was going

crazy just waiting around for my body to heal. My house, the shop, everything was on the line. The word got out that I was not building because of my accident and since it was my only income things were looking pretty grim. I built this bike while still in my wheel chair. I built it because I love building bikes and it gave me some hope. I have a ton of people to thank for putting up with me and I consider myself to be one of the luckiest bastards out there!—Dale Yamada





## The Buck Knutty

I built this bike because I had some spare time in between builds. It was literally just thrown together with a bunch of parts from the shop. The motor was a swap meet deal, the front wheel was an online deal (19-inch spool), I traded for the forks, the seat and trans were from an old bike that I got hit riding on and pretty much that's all that was left of it.

The belt drive was off a customer's bike. The handmade stuff includes, bars, oil bag, mids, pipes, gas tank, ...well okay, not! Just modified. The rear fender is a knock off and all the little stuff was dusted off somewhere and bolted on.

After bolting everything together and looking at it on the lift I decided to give it a really nice paint job! So I went to Home Depot to the paint department and looked at all the spray cans on the rack. I couldn't help but notice that they all had a nice picture of a wick-

er chair on the label. Hell, if it was good enough for patio furniture it was good enough for me!

The gas tank art was hand-painted with one shot. Bruce, who is an amazing artist, is retired and does this for the pure love of it. He did a kick ass job on the Rat Fink on the tank.

The front tire is a DOT enduro tire and yes, I purposely put it on this bike. Why? Just pure shock value, that's all. It actually rides really nice.

The first time I took it out was after a swap meet in Red Deer. After the swap meet a buddy of mine came by and said, "Hey, why don't you ride that thing home, dude?" It was freaking cold and windy, over an hour and a half away from the shop, and I didn't have a plate or insurance. "I think it ran for a total of 30 seconds on the lift and you want me to ride it home with you?" I asked him. "Let me get my helmet..."—Dale Yamada

