

MORE VINTAGE! CANNONBALL RUN, 1920 EXCELSIOR, S&S FLATTY

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Volume 23 Number 1

IronWorks

UNDERCOVER SPORTSTER

DRAG SPECIALTIES
EXCLUSIVE!

GREY GHOST II
MORE BONNEVILLE
ACTION

RESCUE INK
STANDING UP FOR
THE DEFENSELESS



**BIG
WAYNE'S
CALIFORNIA
DREAM**



**5 GREAT
RIDES**

**Powerplant
Pan Bobber**



**Rich Phillips
Blade**



**Lock Baker's
Knuckle**



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ON THE COVER

Volume 23 • Number 1 • Our 189th Issue

This time around, we give our bolt-on builders at home a nod with a look at a late model Sportster that Tom Motzko dolled up with help from the Drag Specialties catalogue. From the visual cues like the Performance Machine wheels and the Arlen Ness fairing to the performance parts like the Hawg Halters brake calipers, S&S air cleaner kit and the Roland Sands Design exhaust, all the parts on this Sportster are ones you could bolt up to your bike in the comfort of your own garage. (or driveway!) Winter's here, so get some wrenching done while you enjoy this issue of IronWorks and gear up for next season!

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Organ Donor

It was a picture perfect summer day and I was riding through town in my car with the radio playing; life was good. The tranquility of the moment was interrupted by the police car in my rear view mirror with the lights on. I wasn't speeding or under the influence so this was no big deal. The officer walked up and asked me the standard rhetorical question, "Do you know why I pulled you over?" to which I replied, "No sir," which was difficult to say with a straight face because the officer was younger than my two older kids. He came back and sheepishly handed me the ticket and half apologized; I think this was his way of telling me that he thought a seatbelt ticket was a little silly and his boss wanted him to get revenue from the public. He said, "I see you have a cycle endorsement, do you ride?" to which I replied, "Yes I do and I'm an organ donor."

I love motorcycles. The machine, culture, and rowdy people are tons of fun but I accept the fact that motorcycles are dangerous. I'm not talking zip-your-wiener-up-in-your-britches-dangerous; I'm talking life-and-death-dangerous. So I thought it was kind of silly when I got that seatbelt ticket in a 5000-pound truck because the danger I was in, while driving that truck without a seatbelt, was a fraction of the danger I succumb to every time I throw a leg over a motorbike and go for a ride. I accept the fact that I'm a heartbeat away from my organs being harvested; therefore I label myself as an organ donor.

The label I have bequeathed upon myself may sound morbid but I assure you that I do not worship the devil and I have no strange genital piercings; I'm just being realistic. It's a basic risk and reward thing. Every single time I ride a scooter I live out an Indiana Jones movie (in my mind) and that is a fair trade for the inherent risk. Sometimes I'm rewarded when the machine and I conquer a road under challenging circumstances or exceed the speed limit. (Note: doing a buck-fifty in a car is different than doing a buck-fifty on a bike.) Other times the reward comes from riding with buddies and getting in trouble. I love to tell interesting stories and my juiciest stories come from road trips. And sometimes the reward comes from working on



bikes with friends and tinkering with these American machines that we all love. Sure, collecting stamps, bird watching, gardening, organizing my sock drawer, petting the dog, and watching reruns of the Gong Show are less dangerous but the payoff just is not there for me.

So the last time I scratch built a bike was 17 years ago before I got side tracked with this BAKER Drivetrain thing. The time has come to build a fun bike that ain't too pretty and I've decided to name it the "organ donor." I have this hot rod 139" Kendall Johnson motor kicking around the shop and got my Rolling Thunder frame coming so this winter's project is going to be a street legal 1/4 mile machine that can also run the land speed record stuff on. I have no intention of participating in sanctioned racing and I'm not looking to break any records, I just want to get some thrills and eat a little rice on the street. Just like riding on the street, my reward will be measured in my mind and how many gigawumps per cubic inch of adrenalin my adrenal glands put out.

One of the shortcomings of turning my motorcycle hobby into a business 17 years ago was that I forgot about Bert and his family. The business always took priority over everything else. I know it ain't right but that's the way this episode of Jerry Springer played

out. No, no, no, I'm not looking for pity here or tiny violins; pity is for people who ride Hondas. I wouldn't trade all the money in the world for the rich experiences I've had working in this dysfunctional V-twin culture and I look forward to doing this for a long time to come. But I'm going to focus on being a better husband, better dad, and most importantly letting Bert have a little fun starting with this bike.

I'm gonna take a little break from writing this column. I appreciate all the kind feedback from readers of this column and it troubles me to take some time off but I will put the 10 or so hours it takes me to write and re-write, and re-write this column to good use. I also have this huge R&D project that me and the engineers are working on and hopefully Marilyn will let me report our progress next year as the damn thing comes to fruition. Look me up at the rallies next; I will have my fun machine and have a few stories to tell.

Editor's Note: A street legal quarter-mile machine hand built at Baker Drivetrain? You bet we'll make room in IronWorks for that! Count on seeing details of the build in these pages as it happens along with IWV blog updates. If it's worth Bert Baker's time, it's worth ours! IW

