



CHOPPER CITY USA

CHOPPER CITY'S SMOOTH HARDCORE



In the late '60s, my friend, Ace Asack, built a pretty nice '55 Chevy 2-door post sedan in the gasser style that was popular then. He stuffed a cool looking straight-tube axle sans brakes up front under the 327/365hp engine and four-speed tranny he got out of a wrecked '64 Corvette and stripped out most of the interior except the stock seats and dash. After spraying it bright yellow in his backyard, he finished it off with a set of big and littles and it looked pretty damn good to me. I couldn't wait to go for a ride. Unfortunately, when I finally did it wasn't quite as charming, shall we say, as I thought it was going to be. It was unbelievably loud and rattly in the nearly all-metal, stripped interior from the solid-mounted engine ("Hey that's the way the drag cars do it," Ace said.) whose vibration made the whole car resonate as it went to what seemed an astronomical redline between each shift.



**Builder: Dave Welch
Chopper City USA**

Like a good ride, the road isn't always a straight line to where you're going. With stops, detours, and maybe just getting a little lost and counting on your intuition to figure out where you should be heading, the trip becomes more interesting. Dave Welch of Chopper City USA has been one of those life-changing rides and said, "I've been into motorcycles since I graduated from AMI in 1980, but it wasn't how I made my living though. We owned a couple of different computer companies and did real well with a web company. I locally did most of the websites for a lot of the motorcycle parts manufacturers like Touge, Bob Davis Ltd. and March Performance to name a few. It was very hard taking most companies into a website back then." According to Dave, he made a good living at persuading Old School aftermarket companies to join the 20th Century and embrace the mysteries of internet shopping, but something was missing. "What got me out of computers was just boredom. I started a mail order company for motorcycle parts in '96 or '97 and worked from there until starting Chopper City somewhere around 11 or 13 years ago. I can't keep track anymore," said Dave.

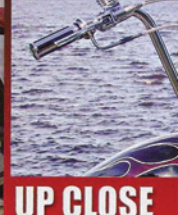
"I started building custom bikes before the madness started back then. I started right out with \$55,000 to \$60,000 bikes," said Dave. "Now, we have changed our style of bike, we've tried to adapt to what the market wants and the market doesn't want \$60,000 bikes." Besides making fun, affordable, rideable custom bikes you can beat the rest out of, Dave makes Harley-Davidson to any degree a customer wants. "I started modifying Harley-Davidson about six years ago, it's just something different. I really enjoy it," said Dave.

Check out all of Dave's work at www.choppercityusa.com or call 888-721-1969 for more info.

Worse yet was trying to make it steer or slow down on twisty New England back roads. Ace furiously saved away at the huge diameter, thin-rimmed stock wheel while insane downshifting produced more braking than the stock rear drums did. It was a thrill ride I only took once after somehow safely getting back to ground zero. Somehow that new '70 GTO I rode in the day before and thought was too factory polished now seemed to make sense. How could something like Ace's '55 look so cool, but be such a P.O.S. in the real world? Today, I often ask myself the same question after taking a spin on some custom motorcycles.

Dave Welch, owner of Chopper City USA in Orange Park, Florida,

must have had some similar experiences as his cool looking creation for Ian Scott addresses the issue of how to make a really hot, hot and motor cycle that's a pleasure to actually ride. "It's so sick of big-inch V-twins that vibrate so much that when I get on it [hrottle] my



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mirrors are vibrating and my eyeballs are bouncing up and down so fast I can't even see," said Dave. "I like power though." This explains Dave's wisely-intelligent [my words] choice of a 125hp JIMS 120" TC 8 motor to build a bike around. "I like the 8 motor and that JIMS 120 has the most horsepower. It's like a rocket ship," said Dave. "Also, I don't know that most builders would agree with me, but I find it way easier to build a frame around a 8 motor."

Dave had the idea for this bike in his head for a while, but it took a trusting customer like Ian, who initially wanted one of Dave's traditional bobbers, to get this show on the road. "He said, 'Go for it,' so I did."

said Dave. "I tried to stay skinny, the backbone's 1.75" and the downtube's 1.5" while the bottom rails and swingarms are 1.25" tubing. The whole idea behind the frame was to make it as light as I could with a nice low center of gravity and don't stretch it out too much. I wanted to make more of a canyon racer, really take the turns. Ian lives in Sedona, Arizona, where there's mountain roads with really nice riding out there. Not a place for a big long chopper." It's not all function, though, as Dave carved out a beautifully curved frame that looks good where it is and disappears otherwise.

The DNA chromed springer adds 3 degrees of rake to the frame's 36-degree according to Dave, but still allows for quick and comfortable

UP CLOSE

Ness Retro Hand Controls

If there's anybody who should have an understanding of what it's like when it comes to the retro craze currently going on in the custom motorcycle world, it's the man himself, Arlen Ness. Remember, he was there when retro was cutting edge. It's not surprising then, that the Ness-Tech lineup would include a set of hand controls labeled Retro. Utilizing modern-day technology wrapped in an ode to days gone by, the 6061-T6 billet aluminum brackets are machined with fins like an old Corvette valve cover contrasting to the smooth levers, caps, and perches. Available in all chrome or black anodized finishes, the block with fins is the winner here, in my opinion. Master cylinders for the brakes come in two bore sizes for single or dual applications while the clutch-side lever can be ordered in hydraulic or cable operated versions. The clutch master features a large 11/16" bore that Ness claims leads to easy effort and great feel at the lever.

Finishing off your bars gets a little easier too if you decide to pony up for the Ness 3-bush-ton switch block assembly for the Retro controls that does its best to quietly integrate itself into the controls. The cool part is that it's not a dedicated assembly and can be mounted on either side depending on your requirements.

If you somehow have a little money left in the cookie jar after setting up your bars, Arlen is ready to tempt you once again with his matching Retro foot controls. The matching, lined foot brake master cylinder brings a touch of cohesive-ness to the controls and adds a bit of beauty in an area often neglected on a build. Visit www.arlen Ness.com for more info.



SPECIFICATIONS:

Year / Make: 2007 CHPP Chopper City USA

Fabrication/Assembly: Dave Welch Chopper City USA

Build time: 4 Months

Engine: JIMS Harley-Davidson Twin Cam B 120ci
Zebra finish; heads & case are natural, cylinders are black powder-coated and diamond cut

Cases/Flywheels: JIMS

Rods: Screamin' Eagle Adjustable

Pistons/Cylinders: JIMS

Heads/Cam: Screamin' Eagle

Ignition: Daytona Twin Tec

Carb: S&S G

Pipes: Dave Welch Chopper City USA - Hot Tips by Vance & Hines

Air Cleaner: Velocity Cone

Transmission: HD 5-speed

Primary: Rivera/Primo Brute IV Extreme 3" Open Primary with King Fin Belt outer cover by Joker Machine and Chopper City USA top Cover

Clutch: Rivera/Primo Pro Clutch

Frame & Swingarm: Dave Welch Chopper City USA

Rake: 36-degrees

Forks: Chrome Springer by DNA

Rear Suspension: Adjustable Shocks by DNA

Front Wheel: 21x2.15 60 Spoke by DNA

Rear Wheel: 18x5.5 60 Spoke by DNA

Front Tire: Metzeler 90/90H21

Rear Tire: Metzeler 200/50R18

Front Brake: GMA 4-piston

Rear Brake: GMA 4-piston/Hawg Halters sprocket

Fuel Tank: FatKatz

Oil Tank: Dave Welch Chopper City USA

Fenders: 9" OneTonHo

Handlebars: DNA Mini Apes

Risers: DNA 4"

Headlight: DNA

Tailight: Run/Turn/Brake Bullet Turn Signals

Hand Controls: Retro by Ness

Grips: Dovetail Grips by Jay Brake

Foot Controls: DNA

Chroming: Meclec Plating

Paint/Graphics/Molding: Sporka Custom Cycle Colors

Polishing: Brite Side Polishing

Seat: Pan/Chopper City USA/
Covered by Outlaw Custom Seats

Featured Custom Chopper City USA Smooth Hardcore

handling in conjunction with the adjustable DNA softail shocks out back. Ian's insistence on a reasonable 200mm Metzeler aft with a skinny 21" Metzeler up front both mounted on retro-cool looking 60-spoke DNA wires assures quick transitions on the winding road through Oak Creek Canyon, Arizona's first designated scenic highway. "The thing I wish I would have done a little different was to go with a fat 21 on the front, but, hey, we already had the wheel," said Dave. GMA 4-piston calipers front and rear keep the red-rock canyon walls at bay during one of Ian's strafing runs. "I drive fast and I want to be able to stop fast. You can't stop fast unless you put some decent brakes on the bike. These guys that build bikes with no front brake crack me up," said Dave. "They're never gonna ride that bike with any speed 'cause you're not gonna stop. It's past scary, it's stupid. I won't build a bike without a front brake."

There was no need to screw around with the JIMS 120, it was already a fast, reliable, and proven mill. Dave fabbed a sleek set of header-wrapped pipes out of his scrap pipe bin capped by Vance & Hines Hot Tips adding a bit 'o glamour. "It sounds really good, there's no baffles," said Dave. Must be fun on the canyon walls. He did dress it up a bit with Roland Sands' finned rocker box and timing covers matching the Joker Machine finned cover on the Primo Brute primary. A stock H-D 5-speed tranny turning a chain final drive pushes this relatively lightweight machine along just fine.

A modified Fat Katz tank looks choice sitting on the curved top tube and flows with the frame. Jesse James supplied the OneTonHo rear fender sitting just behind the simple frame-mounted seat pan covered by Outlaw Custom Seats in Sugar Hill, Georgia. Mark Sporka of Sporka's Custom Cycle Colors in Jacksonville, Florida, layed on the bad-boy black with red metalflake flames paintjob. Bolt on the DNA mini-apes, Ness hand controls, DNA foot controls and headlight and call it a day.

So was this smooth, good handling, good braking, powerful hot rod a success? "I put quite a few miles on it. I had a blast. Ian rides it quite a bit too and when he's not on it, his son's on it," said Dave. "They say if you do anything long enough, you got to get good at it."

- Buck Manning

Photos courtesy of Chopper City USA

