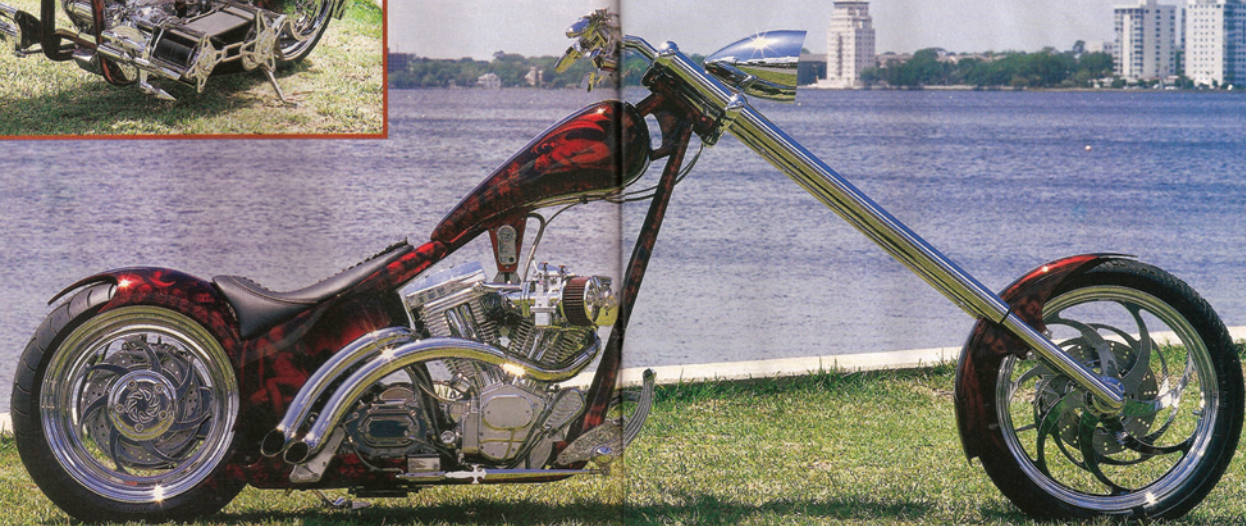




BY HOWARD KELLY
PHOTOGRAPHY: DAVE WELCH

If you look in the dictionary for a definition of "bordering on insanity," odds are, it would describe the task Dave Welch took on early this year. Welch runs American Made, a very successful shop in Carson City, Nevada, that turns out custom bikes and parts all year long — a task that any busy shop owner will tell you is difficult — but Welch decided to push it to the limit last year. He arranged to move the shop to Jacksonville, Florida, and wanted to do it without interrupting the flow of the shop one bit. Come to think of it, bordering on insanity might not be a strong enough description.



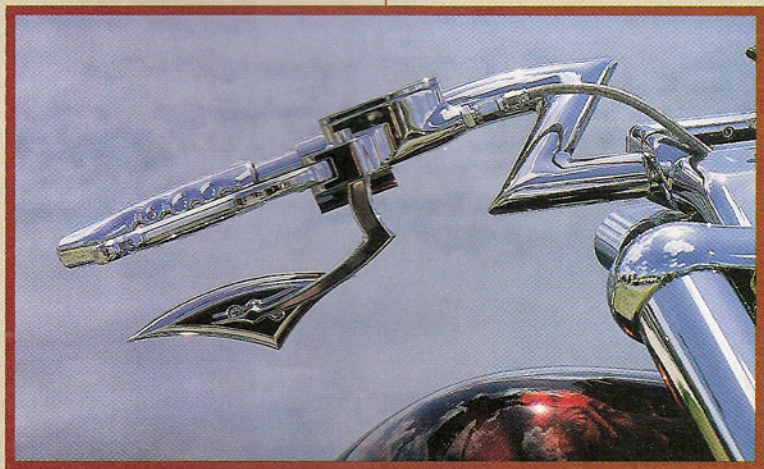
AMERICAN MADE BUILDS A DREAM COME TRUE

FOUR THINGS



Miraculously, Welch and his crew pulled it off without any major problems. The new shop opened, customers started walking in the door, and things were back to normal. Welch was relaxing from the stress and was ready for a big project when he met Mark Yaklin, a big man with a big project in mind. Yaklin had four points he wanted addressed in a custom project: The bike needed to fit his 6-inch, 7-foot frame; it needed to be comfortable enough to be a rider; cool enough to win Best of Show awards; and finally, the paint had to be on the extremely high side of wild. Welch simply said, "no problem."

To win any show you put a bike in, attention to detail is paramount. With that in mind, Welch went for the nicest motor he could track down — a Boxer from Terry Components. Built from titanium-enhanced forged billet, the Boxer displaces 106 ci and is simply beautiful. Inside is a pair of JIMS flywheels, and the rods carry JE pistons. An Andrews cam, dual Edelbrock carbs with a NYC Custom Cycles air cleaner, a Dyna ignition, and Hell Bent pipes were the winning touches on the jewel-like motor.



Next on the show win list is a striking Covington's, that is connected to a Legend Air Suspension unit to smooth out the bumps in the rear. Up front, a massive 63mm fork from Spyke measures in at 24 inches over and is mounted in 6-degree Thunder Cycle & Design triple trees. The crowning touch on the frame package was a billet aluminum single-sided swing arm, also from

Covington's, that is connected to a Legend Air Suspension unit to smooth out the bumps in the rear. Up front, a massive 63mm fork from Spyke measures in at 24 inches over and is mounted in 6-degree Thunder Cycle & Design triple trees.

The Boxer motor was mated to a HiTech Dominator belt drive that had been given quite

a bit of extra chrome dazzle by Paughco. A Baker six-speed transmission, polished to match the jewel-like look of the motor, rounds out the drivetrain.

Mobility of the rider/showpiece comes from combining a 21-inch Ego Tripp front wheel with a matching 18x8-inch rear wheel. Both are covered with Metzeler's, the rear wearing a massive 240. Halting a speeding chopper can be a challenge, but Welch decided the best way would be P.M. calipers front and rear to squeeze the Ego Tripp rotors.

Next on Welch's list of making a killer bike was sheetmetal design. A Milwaukee Iron front fender needed just a little tweaking to be just what he was looking for, as was the case with the Independent gas tank. An oil tank from Daytec was stretched and made to be part of the frame design, and an internal strut rear fender was built to stretch down the center of the back tire. With all this accomplished, it was time to box the metal and frame up and ship it to Benny Benson Painting in Mound House, Nevada, for a molding session and basecoat application. At that point, Bart McCoy's Airbrushing took over to do the intricate graphic design so






FOUR THINGS

Benson could apply the final clearcoat.

Finally, Yaklin's dream was ready to become a reality. The American Made crew added a set of LA Chopper's bars, P.M. hand controls, Yaffe mirrors, a Headwinds headlamp, Accutronix forward controls, Damon's taillight/license mount, and a Danny Gray seat. Words couldn't describe the reaction that both Welch and Yaklin had when they saw the bike in the sunlight. This bike was a winner from any angle they looked at it. The only thing left to do was ride it.

Yaklin thumbed the starter, clicked it into gear, and disappeared for about two weeks. When he returned, he had more than 1,500 miles on the clock and was in heaven. He had also placed the bike in a local show that he found out about while picking up oil for his first service — he won. Welch wasn't surprised, but he was looking for a new challenge.  WWW.STREETCHOPPERWEB.COM

