

Winona Bob

I suppose an introduction would be nice - " Hello my name's Winona Bob." I cut my teeth at a young age on a Honda 250 scrambler with 'snuff or nots' ('member those?) I'd prop my 3 yr. old brother ahead of me on the gas tank and we'd go exploring. Man, I can imagine safety nerds having a fit reading this. We both lived and my brother has fond memories of the adventures as do I. My first ride, tho, was a friend's fire-breathing 750 Norton that I gave a young lady her scary first ride on. Man, was I ever hooked! Hadda have me one and soon's I could I traded a '55 Chevy sedan- delivery body and an Edelbrock cross-ram intake manifold for that trusty (but sloooooow) Honda 250. Couple years and owners down the line I scored that self-same Norton that lit my fire and we were hot-rodders for good - no looking back. I put a 16" over Harley springer front end on the Norton and I was the wheelie king for a while.

My friend Pie came back from 'Nam and bought himself an "EL" knucklehead. It was up in Lake City about 65 miles away and he'd never ridden a moped much less a rigid-framed, raked and extended "Hog." So he asked me if I'd go get it for him. Hey, I can ride anything. Sure I'll get your knuckle for you. Talked brother Bill into driving up there in his custom '64 Ford Econoline van that we had installed a hot 302 V-8 into. Just in case, you know - those Harleys liked to break down. Us limey riders were merciless about that shit; called 'em Hogley Fergusons and worse! Got to Lake City and found it was a hand-shift, suicide clutch and 16" extended springer front end to boot. Sure - I can ride it (I think.) I could, I did and that was that - I NEEDED to own a Harley Davidson.

Taking off ahead of Bill and keeping what felt like a sedate pace I found my rear-view mirror empty pretty quick. Thinking the van had puked, I started to turn around and head in search of my brothers when here they came wheezing around a corner. Did I mention that it was a healthy 302? Cause it was. I asked what happened, what took them so long and I was told that I was crazy." Why? "I asked. Bill said " I was going 120 mph and I couldn't keep up." That little 61 cube knuck felt as comfy as the living room sofa at over a ton. "Man I gotta have me one of these! Oh yeah! " Sold the Limey and picked up a repo '64 Panhead from the bank for \$670. This was 1970 you gotta remember - lotta water under the bridge since then. But guess what I still own?

Yep, lotsa motorcycles have had this butt perched on them and gone down the road, but ol' Betsy's still my favorite. Course it doesn't resemble it's original self much anymore - it's been reimagined several ways: (rigid-springer- custom paint jobs.) Currently it looks like my buddy Pie the knucklehead owner once called it, " your 1964 Super Glide." But, hey, it's still mine and that's what counts.

That venerable ol' Pan's been all over these United States with me - from the North Shore of Minnesota to "almost heaven" West Virginia. Been to Spokane,WA. in 1974 for the world's fair and San Francisco to meet the Hells Angels. Visited East LA (never saw Cheech or Chong, tho) and rode the panhandle of Idaho. Seen the huge hole in Arizona called the Grand Canyon along with the Painted Desert. Saw all of Wisconsin, lots of Iowa , South Dakota, Wyoming, Utah, Nevada, Oregon, almost said Florida - that woulda been a lie- cruised the Sunshine State on my '88 Softail Springer. Traveled thru Taos and rode in snow over Eisenhower Pass in Colorado. We have been around some.

Last year I decided my pal Gary Tapp was right. Time to ditch the choppers and buy a grown-up's bike; so I ponied up and got a '99 Electra Glide Classic. I sure like having all that lockable space. But I'd be remiss if I led you to believe I've really grown up . There's still a Ninja ZX- 1100 in my garage - sensible only goes so far. Oh, yeah, I should fess up. I'm putting the finishing touches on a brand-new Softail custom as we speak. Santee wide-tail frame, dual-disc narrow glide front end, 200 mm rear ; just a nice, clean, steady-teddy bike show and party cruiser. I also just stopped at my old buddies' Tim and Tom Fruitiger's shop in Marion, MN -Wheels Unlimited. If you're ever in the Rochester area, ask for directions and stop in: I unmitigatedly promise you that you won't be disappointed! Cause if you ever long to be in a REAL bike shop - not one of the modern "boutique" beauty parlors that sell women's underwear, leather and jewelry, this is the place you've been told about for years by the old timers. There are actual motorcycle parts hanging on hooks and nails all over the shop. The reason I stopped by was to see if Tim would clean up a '65 Norton motor he and I collaborated on 30 yrs. ago. That's going together as a new-old café-style cruiser in the next couple years with Honda CB 900F dual-disc fork and rear cush-drive hub.

I guess that's a long-winded intro that covers a few bases. Good to meet you and I'll chime in now and again with a note or two. Oh yeah, I forgot to tell you, I still have ol' Betsy - she survived a bad garage fire and as soon as my good buddy Kyle finishes welding up the melted fins and reassembling the motor she's goin' back together as a rigid-frame TT blaster with a ZX 11 front fork and some other stylin' mods. Old Hogleys never die they just get better and better! As my departed and beloved buddy Kevin (K-Womp) used to say whenever we parted company," ...drive fast - take chances!"

Winona Bob

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