

JESSE JAMES
The Man and His Machines

A book review
 By Harry Mergard

I'll assume that you are familiar with Jesse James. That is, of course, unless you have been living on another planet for the past three years. Jesse Gregory James, bike builder, customizer and metal worker extraordinaire has been presented in two television documentaries shown on The Discovery Channel. The success of these shows lead to the popular weekly series Monster Garage which features Jesse and a revolving cast of supporting characters.

The book Jesse James, The Man and His Machines authored by writer and motor-journalist Mike Seate was released in late October of 2003. Mike and Jesse have been good friends for over a decade. Mike profiles Jesse James' life in copy and through the prolific use of Jesse's personal photos. From his early days as a rebellious dreamer to his present digs at West Coast Choppers, in Long Beach, California, Jesse's story is chronicled in 192 pages of enjoyable reading and photography. This book is presented to an audience of "Chopper-nuts" in a hardbound 9.5w 11h color format.

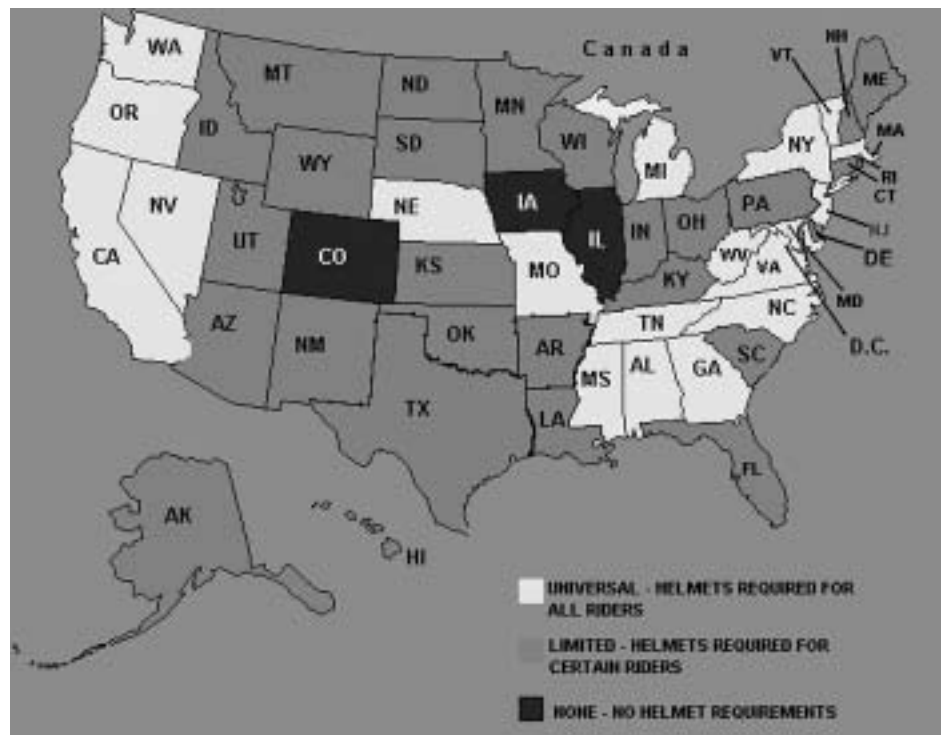
The book is full of anecdotes from Jesse's past and chronicles the life and times of the world's most successful chopper designer/builder. Larry James, Jesse's father, tells how when his son was a little boy he would take things apart to see how they worked. Then, young Jesse would try to rebuild whatever he was messing with to better than new standards.

In the early 1990's Jesse started his first shop in his mom's garage. Back then most custom bikes looked like low, fat, land-barges that were covered with pastel colors and chrome bolt-on parts. Mike Seate states that "Jesse's choppers, by contrast were always a polar opposites of what everyone else was building." His bikes were the ultimate bare-bones style. If it doesn't need it to get down the road, it ain't got it.

Except for the driveline Jesse does not use any store bought components on his rolling masterpieces. Every one of West Coast Choppers bikes is hand-built. From my own personal point of view I can truly say that I admire this man's creative ability and I really like the look and attitude of most of the machines he builds.

Jesse James has been referred to as the most powerful force in chopper style today. You can be assured that this guy is not copying anyone else's design blueprints. I give this book an Iron Cross rating of: ++++

Jesse James: The Man and His Machines, \$24.95, MBI Publishing Company. Available in bookstores everywhere, through classic Motorbooks at (800) 826-6600 or on www.motorbooks.com



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