

## Cover Story

Written to JP Persitza

Photo's by Digital Magic Bigshots [www.digitalmagicbigshots.com](http://www.digitalmagicbigshots.com)

When Dave Cook finished building the bike on these pages he was actually a bit disappointed. Not disappointed with the bike, but with when he finished it. From it's conception this was a bike that Dave had planned on entering in last year's AMD World Championship of Custom Bike building. Throughout the build he had planned on riding it to Sturgis before putting it in the show. However, things don't always go exactly as planned, especially with hand built custom motorcycles.

Delays on parts and decisions on design revisions all added up to turn the build into a last minute finish that could have been staged for TV footage. So, this black beauty's fresh paint was still getting smudged with drops of Lock-Tite less than 24 hours before the show's registration deadline, and Dave's dreams of a leisurely ride out west turned into hopes for a nap on the way to the show.

Last minute or not Dave did get the bike done in time to enter it into the show, and that turned out just about as far from a disappointment as he could imagine.

At the AMD World Championship the show judges are the competitors themselves. Regardless of the number of bikes they have entered in the show, each builder is given one ballot which allows them to rank their choices for the top twelve bikes in the competition. A point system, administered by the show promoters is then applied to determine the outcome of the show and select a World Champion.

Dave, having placed 12th in The AMD show last year and knowing the extremely high caliber of competition he would face this year, did not enter with expectations of anything except the satisfaction of knowing he had put forth his best effort. His fellow builders must have felt he did, as the peer review method of judging landed him a 4th place in the Freestyle class (the class from which the World Champion is selected) making him the highest placing American builder in 2007. 2007's 1st place winner was Stellan Egelan of Sweden followed in 2nd place by last years champion Chicara Nagata from Japan, with third place going to Keiji Kawakita also from Japan.

Wanting this bike as a rider for himself posed a challenge for Dave that he met with the help of S&S Cycle. Anyone attending any of the past AMD Championships or viewing their online gallery of competitor's bikes will note that the highest placing bikes are generally equipped with something exotic in the engine department. Trying to adhere to that formula as well as being able to rely on the bike as a rider needed a special solution. Dave's answer came in the form of an S&S 93" alt/gen Shovelhead crate motor. It provided him a solid, mechanically contemporary foundation with an underlying retro appearance that he was then able to massage into an even more vintage look.

Dave chopped off the unused generator mount portion of the engine case and reworked that side of the engine case with unique and simple lines that worked well with the overall lines of the bike. The stock rocker covers were also set aside in favor of aftermarket cast covers which were then cut and reshaped to provide an even more old school look.

Able to rely on the S&S Shovelhead's Evo style oiling through the push rod tubes that this engine has, Dave detailed the engine with non-functioning brass oil lines and fittings to further enhance the retro look while retaining contemporary functionality.

With the power plant taken care of Dave was free to concentrate on the balance of his design theme which, as always for him, was simplicity of form and function. About the only non-essential element on this bike is an item which Dave had in his possession prior to the beginning of the build and which is now worn proudly on the steering neck, an antique name plate from the Chicago Cycle Supply Co. bearing the likeness of a bearded gentleman and the model designation "Cadillac".

When it comes to paint on bikes there is nothing that Dave likes better than basic black. Not having built an all black bike for almost three years he didn't have to think twice about his choice for this one. In the case of this bike he decided to take his preference to the extreme with more than 95% of all the surfaces of the bike being finished in black paint, powder coat, or black leather. The balance of the finishes is either solid brass, plated brass or polished stainless steel or aluminum. Rather than arbitrarily picking finishes solely for aesthetics, for the most part Dave allowed the functionality of a part to dictate the logical finish.

When deciding on a frame, the desire to build a rider once again played a big role. The frame on this build is a further development of the hidden spring softail concept that Dave first experimented with on his raw finish Norton 750 Commando build of a couple of years ago. The swing arm articulates where what looks like rigid frame rails meet the rear portion of the loop frame. The suspension spring is hidden inside of what appears to be a frame tube which runs underneath the seat. The bottom of the frame loop is finished with a curved 5" wide section of steel plate instead of a continuation of the tube, to both provide a little extra ground clearance and to protect the engine more effectively when that clearance is not enough. The seat, the oil tank, and battery box are all integrated into the frame while the license plate and taillight mount are integrated into the swingarm.

Certain choices for the build were almost foregone conclusions. A kick only transmission seemed the only possible choice for a bike intended to evoke a feeling of days gone by. A five speed Harley Davidson gear set was selected to handle transferring power to the rear wheel.

Cook Customs has been experiencing increasing demand for their stainless steel perimeter rotor wheels and inverted hand lever/internal throttle set ups. There was no doubt that this bike needed to feature these components. To keep it interesting Dave scaled up from the more typical 21" wheels to 23" black powder coated stainless wheels front and rear which he laced with stainless spokes and his own hand made aluminum hubs.

The front end on this bike is not the one which Dave originally fabricated for it. He had intended to use one of his signature leaf spring front ends, however a front end design he had recently proven on a customer build offered the strength, reliability and simplicity to meet the "regular rider" qualities Dave was looking for, hence the "Cadillac" was fitted with the "banana girder" with a coil over spring you see in these photos.

Another configuration favorite of Dave's is a hand shift/foot clutch. An additional hand clutch lever makes this bike easier to deal with at stop lights on hills than is typical with this set up.

Mid controls, another choice made in anticipation of logging significant road time also provided an opportunity to fabricate some unusual mechanical linkages to actuate the rear brake and clutch. The control pedals actually attach and pivot on the outboard ends of the foot pegs. The linkages to brake and clutch are fabricated from brass and are internal to the pegs resulting in a very simple and direct actuation, particularly of the rear brake master cylinder.



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