

Custom News...

Pete and Lisa Pearson, owners of Swindon-based custom house Rocket Bobs, made their first trip to Las Vegas to compete in Vegas Bikefest's Artistry in Iron invitational show.

2016



WINNER

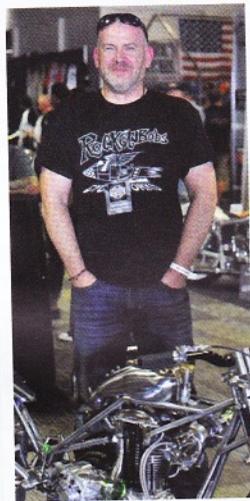
Bobs was presented with a cheque for \$10,000 as well as a custom-designed championship bracelet created by renowned designer and master artisan Steve Soffa.

"I am so excited that we won," said Rocket Bobs' Pete Pearson. "To be the first UK company to be invited was in itself an honour, so to come away with the top prize for our Triumph-based build was a humbling experience as this show is one of the top of the custom world. Our winning bike, Speed Weevil, is a salt flat racer, which we hope to run at Bonneville next year and features a number of unique design points."

Speed Weevil features a 1935 Triumph L2-1 engine which has raced in the UK for 70 years.

Second place went to Mark Schell of Bonneville Customs who received a rolling chassis set up and springer front end respectively, compliments of Paughco.

Held during the 16th annual BikeFest between 29 September and 2 October, it was the first time a British builder had taken part in the prestigious event - an invitation-only competition, which includes 20 award-winning builders that are deemed to have shaped the industry and who are establishing the latest trends in custom bikes and engineering. The bikes are judged solely by the master builders themselves, and Rocket



The Speed Weevil



2nd placed machine - another Triumph

Rocket Bobs Cycle Works opened its doors in 2009. Since then the company has won the prestigious CustomBike show in Germany, been placed third in the AMD World Championship of Custom Bike Building and has seen its parts sold in the Custom Chrome range.

Asked the following questions, here are Pete's answers.

Q Your pertinent experience as it is related to bike building.

A I have over 30 years' experience having grown up working in my father's garage modifying and fabricating parts and machinery, and have been racing and building motorcycles since the age of 16.

Q Details about your shop that you'd like to mention

A Because my main background is in racing, our approach to customising is more on the performance and handling side. Hence the name Rocket Bobs. We want to build custom bobbers with a fast modern spin on them.

Q What were your main concerns and inspiration while conceptualizing Speed Weevil?

A The opportunity of the engine was too great to pass by however I've never actually seen any custom singles that I've liked. I think it's a difficult engine format to build around so my concern was to keep it in the spirit of how we wanted it to be (race Bonneville) but also make a single cylinder that looks really cool. With a really small single cylinder like that scaling and detail were very difficult and important.

Q Did you have any special considerations regarding the design or components?

A Yeah I always tend to over engineer everything but at the same time I always want to make the engineering unobtrusive and svelte. For example, the frame looks spindly and is held together by pins however it's made of T45 steel and those pins are made of Inconel slotted through 316 stainless slugs with a 0.02mm tolerance which is all extremely strong.

Q What made you decide to use a Triumph engine?

A This is the first Triumph we've built because the engine was too cool not to buy. It was made in 1935, one of two factory race engines built for the 1936 race season. Since 1936 it has been through several racing owners and has 70+ years racing pedigree. It has been featured in a book and has been a star at Brooklands race circuit where it last raced in 2008. The engine is an absolute legend and we were extremely fortunate to come by it.

Q Can you please tell me about the RR supercharger?

A The Rolls Royce Merlin V12 engine as fitted to early Spitfires carried two of these units either side of the front bell housing. They were used as air pumps to run the ships systems as per modern jet liners where they use superchargers to pressurize the cabins. This one was shot down over the Mediterranean in 1942. We bought both units off that engine and, after some major refurb and re-manufacturing, we made one good one. It was pertinent to use this because it is from the same era as the engine and it's British, and the frame we made from T45 which is a British steel used in the manufacture of the Spitfire itself so it all tied in nicely.

Q What was the most challenging part of the build?

A There were two most challenging parts of the build. The first was the front girder fork which is made from streamline section aero tube 4130 (chrome moly). Because of the accuracy needed in relation to the suspension components, holding, machining and replicating these legs was a pain in the ass! And secondly the swingarm was extremely complicated because of the jack shaft, bearing housings and the need to keep it on point with the design of an inset.

Q Would you have done anything different if you could go back and rebuild it? Do you have any plans to change any components?

A No the bike came out exactly as I had it in my head. I don't like to change bikes once they've been built. You can help them with a few tweaks but you can't change them. They are their own entity.

Q What's next for Speed Weevil?

A Initially Speed Weevil is coming back to us for shakedown testing and getting ready to run at Bonneville, however since winning Artistry in Iron there are a lot of requests in for it to appear at shows which is somewhat hampering our race plans.

Q I read that Speed Weevil is going to/has attempted a land speed record. Can you please tell me about the record you're trying to/ have broken, the date and location of the event, and what class this bike is in?

A Speed Weevil will hopefully run at Bonneville in 2017, late summer. It is in the 250cc air cooled, pushrod, vintage, blown, unfaired class. The current record is 61.894 mph.

SPEED WEEVIL SPECS

Engine: 1935 Triumph L2-1 which has raced in the UK for 70 years

Frame: T45 with 316 stainless steel slugs and Inconel pins which hold it together

Transmission: 1965 Japanese grasstrack race box

Front fork: Internally sprung 4130 aero tube girder with 316 stainless steel support arms

Swing-arm: T45 grasshopper arm with 436 jack shaft running 12 high speed bearings

Supercharger: 1942 Rolls Royce Merlin compressor retrieved from a Spitfire

Turbo Charger: Extensively re-worked snowmobile unit

Fuel tank: Modified 1977 Iron head peanut with internal intercooler, plenum chambers and wastegate plus adjustable inlet tract

Carburettor: Yoshimura downdraft

Ignition: SEM magneto

Oil tanks: Also engine cradles, 316 stainless

Rear Brake: Fully custom with Hope caliper

Handlebars: Carbon

Wheels: Supermoto race with Dunlop full wets

...and a Question

What have you got in your Shed?

The motor-mad duo of Henry Cole and Sam Lovegrove are off once again on a search around the sheds of Great Britain. Buying, restoring and selling the items that they find. Over the 40 episodes that have already been filmed, Henry and Sam have come away with a large range of items from pond yachts to military jeeps, even a sixties drag bike. They never know what they will find!



Photo taken in 1980 courtesy of Dirk Thrust

This drag-bike in fact is powered by a Triumph 1955 T100 pre-unit engine with modifications such as larger valves, special pistons, a lightened valve train and it even runs on methanol. The bike was built in 1967 and is nicknamed 'the Quartermaster' due to it primarily being used in the standing quarter mile event. Henry and Sam have run it at Elvington, but do not feel it has reached its full potential so they are aiming to head to Dragstalgia at Santa Pod to run it again in 2017.

If you think you might have a shed full of automotive treasures that Henry and Sam may like to visit then please contact HCA Entertainment at: info@hcaentertainment.com or call 01367 850461.

Notice of the 68th Annual General Meeting of The Triumph Owners' Motorcycle Club

The meeting will be held on 2nd April 2017
at

The Old Grammarians Rugby Club
Sywell Road,
Wellingborough,
Northants
NN86BS

All nominations and propositions to be with
the General Secretary
by
14th January 2017