



WORDS: NIK PICS: ASA INFINITY STUDIOS MODEL: NAOMI

BANK ROBBER!



A tale of love over 30 years and thousands of miles, with a happy ending of course. Pass the tissues, would you, I seem to have something in me eye...

Pete Pearson from Rocket Bobs was just 14 years old when he saw his first Harley-Davidson. It was on a TV programme that he was watching during a summer holiday in Cornwall (raining as usual, huh?). He'd always been into bikes, riding off-road on Fantics and the like, but he'd never seen anything like the bike he saw on the telly.

A bit of research revealed that it was an FXS Low Rider with the 1340cc Shovelhead engine, and he decided he just had to have one.

The thing was, as I said, he was just 14, and not that many 14 year olds have the required wherewithal to purchase their own Harley-Davidson...

Fast forward 30-plus years and training as an engineer, he'd set up in business, Rocket Bobs Cycle Works, that specialised in parts for, and modifications to Harley's Dyna Glide, the spiritual descendant to that original four-speed Shovel he'd seen all

those years ago. His best selling design was the Voodoo mudguard kit for 2006-on Dynas; although he was continually asked for versions for the earlier five-speed Twin Cam and Evolution models, he turned them down until he received an email from a guy named Tony Kriz in Denver, USA, who wanted one for a '79 FXS. Almost instantly he was taken back in time to that day when he saw that first Harley, and he couldn't turn down the chance to do a one-off version for the bike that'd turned his head all those years ago.

Over the next year and a bit he did more and more for Tony's bike, and in turn, Tony sent him photographs of it as it progressed. Pete says he almost came to regard the bike as his own over that time,



BY THE TIME THE PAINT WAS FINALLY DELIVERED AT 2PM ON THE FRIDAY AFTERNOON OF ALLY PALLY, PETE WAS ALMOST READY TO KILL ANYONE WITHIN ARMS' REACH

even though he'd never actually laid eyes on it in the metal. He even hatched a somewhat convoluted plan to build a bike to win the Modified Harley-Davidson class of the UK round of the AMD World Championship of Custom Bike Building, just so he could get across to the States and see his... sorry, sorry... Tony's bike for the first time. (Okay, so there were other reasons for building it too, ones that involved promoting his business, but going to see the Shovel was a very large part of it.) He did warn Tony that if he took the Low Rider out for a blast, he might not bring it back, so realising that it probably meant more to Pete than it did to him, Tony worked out a deal with him where Pete would get the bike in exchange for building



moved to the opposite rail to act as the anchor for the under-slung banana caliper's torque arm. Both wheels are simple alloy rimmed 40 spokes with Rocket Bobs discs and repro old skool calipers, and the side-mount plate is of his manufacture too.

The motor that powers the bike is a 98-cubic-inch, big bore stroker motor with big cams that was built over in the States, which Pete hasn't really had much to do with other than adding the velocity stack and the stainless exhaust system. He's planning

THE PAINT SCHEME THAT IT WEARS ISN'T QUITE WHAT PETE HAD IN MIND... NO, THAT'S AN UNDERSTATEMENT, IT'S ABSOLUTELY NOTHING LIKE HE'D ENVISAGED AT ALL

an open primary drive at some point, but he says, there's no immediate rush. Even though he's more used to dealing with Dyna motors with their own internal oil reservoir, he can deal with conventional oil tanks too, and has de-seamed a horseshoe tank and put tubes through it from the battery tray to take the Taylor leads from a Crane single fire coil, which shares that space with a Rocket Pack (one of Rocket Bobs' new Lithium

Ion batteries). Above it sits a tiny seat, a Shovel 'kicker' seat, with a gel-foam pad covered in leather and Alcantara faux suede.

The tank is a modified and de-seamed Super Glide from 1976 which had already been fitted with a screw thread filler neck that's allowed Pete to use one of Rocket Bobs' CNC milled brass caps to match the brass fuel tap that Wade from Sickboyz gave him. The paint scheme that it wears

HE DID WARN TONY THAT IF HE TOOK THE LOW RIDER OUT FOR A BLAST HE MIGHT NOT BRING IT BACK

him a new machine to his own design. The bike landed on these shores on the January 9 this year and was immediately stripped. He wanted it to be on display at the LICCS (London International Classic & Custom Show) at the

end of February, wanting it to be everything he ever planned for that bike he saw all those years ago.

Starting with the frame, it's been stripped and de-cluttered with the rear of the engine loop notched to allow a clearer view of the rear rocker. It's also had its headstock cleverly modified, something Pete calls "a pain in the neck", by being hollowed out with a 10mm carbide burr. The rear section has been removed completely and one of their Voodoo mudguard kits fitted in its place. The bike's also been lowered so that it runs just 20mm of suspension travel, and so the shaved 35mm fork legs in their cleaned-up narrow glide yokes

have been lowered 65mm, stiffened up and fitted with billet caps. A set of Rocket Bobs Zombi 'bars are finished with Joker Machine hand controls and Rocket Bobs billet grips, and a Motogadget speedo nestles in the clamp behind a one-off billet headlight with a Joker Machine bezel.

At the rear is a much nicer Duo Glide 'Arrowhead' swingarm in place of the box-section item that these frames normally come with, and a pair of specially spec'd Hagon Nitro shocks. Clever touches abound here – purpose-built brackets hold the brake hose in check, and the original chain guard bracket has been



SPECIFICATION SHEET

Original Year, Make & Model:

1979 Harley-Davidson FXS Low Rider

Engine:

Harley-Davidson Shovelhead, 98-inch bored & stroked, 10.5:1 comp ratio, flowed heads, Woods cam, S&S Super E carb, Rocket Bobs velocity stack, S&S crank, uprated clutch plates & springs, stock four speed gearbox, Crane Hi 4 single fire ignition with single fire coil, Rocket Bobs full stainless 2-1 race exhaust system, Taylor leads

Frame:

1979 Harley-Davidson FXS Low Rider, windowed neck, all brackets removed & re-welded, rear frame removed & Rocket Bobs Voodoo struts welded in place, Rocket Bobs forward controls

Sharp End:

40 spoke 19-inch ally rimmed narrow glide wheel, twin Rocket Bobs discs, Billet repro calipers, 1977 'Glide 35mm forks, lowered 60mm & redamped using Rocket Bobs rods, modified 1976 narrow glide yokes, stainless brake lines, Shovelhead Zombi 'bars, Joker Machine master-cylinders, Rocket Bobs switchgear

Rear End:

Rocket Bobs Voodoo mudguard kit, modified 1963 Duo-Glide arrowhead swingarm, Hagon heavy duty Nitro shocks, 16x4.5-inch ally rimmed 40 spoke wheel, stock disc, repro banana caliper, one-off stainless tie rod, DID gold race 530 chain

Tinware:

Modified 1976 Superglide fuel tank, Rocket Bobs leather & Alcantara seat with gel kick pad, Rocket Bobs Voodoo rear 'guard, modified horseshoe oil tank, Rocket Bobs Rocket Pack lithium iron battery & all electrics/fuse box/coil in OEM battery compartment, Rocket Bobs billet side-mount

Electrics:

Rocket Bobs Shovelhead loom, Rocket Bobs billet headlight with Joker Machine bezel, modified generic LED tail light, Moto Gadget speedo unit

Paint:

Burnished gold leaf & black & blue & red & cream & teal by 8 Ball Custom Paint (www.8ballcustompaintwork.com)

Powdercoating:

Clutch cover, inspection cover, shifter pedal & brake, top tree, fork lowers, swingarm, sidestand, velocity stack etc by Rocket Bobs

Polishing:

Rocket Bobs

Engineering:

All work by Rocket Bobs

Thanks To:

"Paul & Joe at 8 Ball Paint, not just custom painters, but THE custom painters; D Tony Kriz for giving me the Shovel; The Rocket Crew; Trevor; Stuart; & Flea..."

isn't quite what Pete had in mind... no, that's an understatement, it's absolutely nothing like he'd envisaged at all. He'd worked out a design that he thought would suit it and took it and all the panels that needed painting up to 8-Ball's workshop in Derbyshire where he explained what he wanted to Joe Black, the main man... who ignored everything he'd said completely! In fact, not only did he take about as much notice of his wishes as most of us take of the national speed limit, but he actually rang him to tell him so too. By the time the paint was finally delivered at 2pm on the Friday afternoon, Pete was almost ready to kill anyone within arms' reach; even his good friend, Paul, who was delivering it must've been slightly concerned that he wouldn't leave with all his limbs. Thankfully, Pete was struck dumb with appreciation when the tank and rear 'guard were revealed, which was probably a bit of a relief to both Paul and Joe as well, I'd imagine.

Six weeks after the build started, 'Bank Robber', as the bike'd been christened due to the fact that building it'd pretty much cleaned out his bank account (and because it's the title of his favourite Clash song too), was unveiled at Ally Pally, and would you Adam an' Eve it... it only went and won the show! That meant that, as well

SIX WEEKS AFTER THE BUILD STARTED, 'BANK ROBBER' WAS UNVEILED AT ALLY PALLY, AND, WOULD YOU ADAM AN' EVE IT, IT ONLY WENT AND WON THE SHOW

as taking home the top honours that day, he'd also won the AMD prize of a trip to Sturgis for this year's World Championship. So in a weird reversal of plans, he's no longer building a bike to get over to the States to see this one, he's taking it back there! Do you reckon he'll let Tony, the original owner, have a go on it when he gets there? I don't think I would if

I were him lest he decides he wants his bike back! ☘

AND...

Rocket Bobs have moved to new premises at Unit 20, Avro Gate, South Marston Park, Swindon, Wilts (SN3 4AG), but their phone number remains the same (07714 205576), as does their web address (www.rocketbobs.biz).



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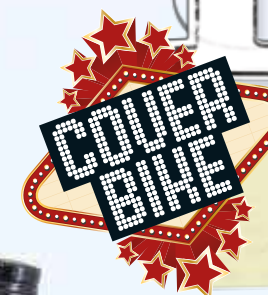
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