



CARLSBAD BOB



Poster boy for OCD, all-Britain donut-eating champion 2006-9 and recently described by The Guardian as a Cult, Pete Pearson is no stranger to these pages as he continues in his crusade to convert the world to twin shock Twin Cams.

This simple-looking Dyna is the latest to roll out of Rocket Bobs' Swindon workshop, but you'd be wrong to take it at face value because there's hardly a component that hasn't been trimmed, shaped, reworked or tweaked in its creation.

Commissioned by Carl, it has been reduced in reach and overall proportion, and its suspension tuned to take his weight, but is also an exercise in addressing the production-line economies of a factory build: never get Pete into a debate on the realities of mass production because while you might well win, he'll never acknowledge it (*"you don't win: you can't win because*





I say that compromise should not be in your motorcycle” Pete Pearson on checking the details. See what we’re up against?)

For all that, however, he’s a big fan of the Mk2 Dyna models and the TC96 motor, and Carl’s former 2010 Street Bob was a prime candidate for his attention.

Pete’s approach is simple: minimal, with every line feeding off the next. Not necessarily flowing, but each complimenting the other with a keen eye for the details that you’d swear only he can see. It’s a style that he’s made his own, and Rocket Bobs is really starting to achieve one of his key goals in establishing a range of products to spread the word further – to a generation of riders who don’t mind getting a wet back when riding in the rain, and whose only luggage requirement is somewhere to put a credit card ... although he does sometimes go mad and offer a concealed clip to hold an emergency wine gum ration.

This Dyna is running the original item in that parts range, the Pintail, topped with a Weeli seat, and is probably the last of this generation before a final item is produced to use as the former for a new carbon fibre replacement. It is also the most radical of Rocket Bobs’ bodywork, and the most distinctive, drawing the attention from a host of significant changes and overpowering the subtle ones completely.



Without the original rear mudguard to establish the context – or indeed anything more than a modest flipped up seat tail, which harks back to his skateboard days – it takes a second to spot the extra width in the rear tyre when you approach from the back. That’s because it is proportionally right, as much as anything: that 200-section Avon Cobra isn’t so fat that it defines the bike as a 240-plus would do, while the original 160/70 would look lost in the open space created behind the seat.

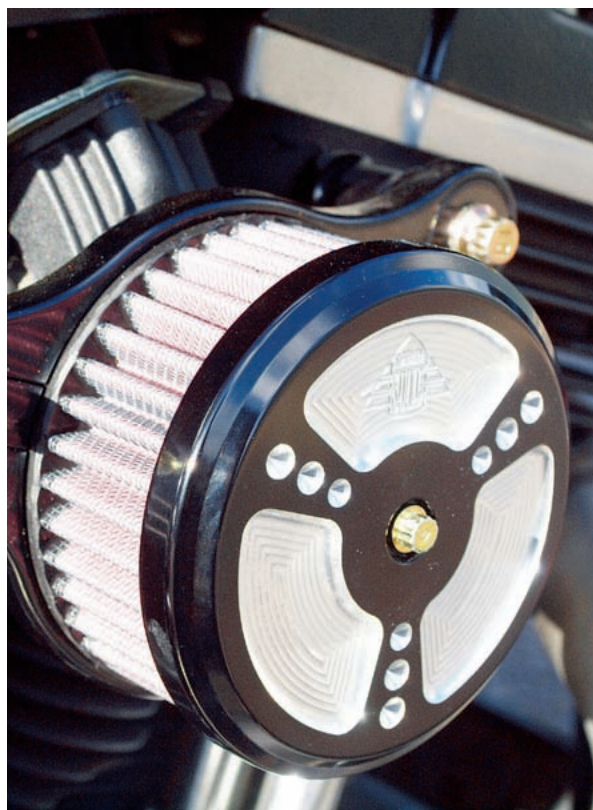
Approach from the side and there’s no such delay: that 17 x 6¼ -inch smooth, almost centre-less

Apollo SL rim laced to the oem hub is obviously something special, and is something that Pete uses whenever possible. The orange paint makes doubly sure that you don’t miss it, picking up the Harley Race Orange accent colour on the otherwise monochromatic paint scheme, all laid down by 8-Ball.

That wheel is held in a Rocket Bobs swingarm – chunkier than stock, matching the scale of the reused, forged clubfoot wheel adjuster – which he’ll explain is more proportional to the overall style of the bike, if given half a chance, and which moves the lower shock mounts forward by about an inch.

It’s matched to a 23 x 4.00-inch front wheel, again an Apollo SL rim on the original hub – and wrapped in an Avon Cobra, but this time a 130/60 – which shares its taste in colour, and disdain for mudguards.

They also share a suspension concept that is a cornerstone of the bikes that roll out of





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Rocket Bobs: minimal sag and short but well damped travel using decent springs. It's born of Pete's involvement in building race bikes in a former life, and he's a firm believer that about an inch of well-controlled wheel movement is not only good for handling, but also can be more comfortable than a soft four inches – especially in concert with a decent seat using a clever composite foam structure.

At the back, that equates to a pair of Hagon Nitros with Rocket Bobs' black springs: he's worked with Hagon for many years and has established a strong relationship with them. As a result, despite having been slammed by three inches, this particular combination gives 30mm of travel on the back end, which is reduced to 20mm by the time Carl is in place: it doesn't sound much but is about what

you'd get from a high quality, damped sprung seat.

Slammed by three-inches and still running a horizontal swing-arm? There's more to that swing-arm than meets the eye: no, it isn't just the lack of pressure in the rear tyre.

The original 49mm Showa forks, meanwhile, have been shortened by 3½-inches using his own damper rods, which leaves 25mm of wheel travel, with just a 5mm sag with the owner on board. They've also been shaved of their mudguard brackets, and their stanchions DLC coated: the ultimate finish for this bearing surface, reducing stiction and being both very hardwearing and colour-fast.

Sure, you will need to pick your line more carefully, but then you should be doing that anyway regardless of how much suspension travel you've got, because it's unsettling as

much as harsh, but the bike will be taut and will hold its line on good roads, in the right hands.

The suspension is bolted to a second-generation Dyna frame that has obviously been modified to lose the original seat pan and rear subframe – Pete attacking the rear struts with extreme prejudice – but less obvious is the reworked top spine and completely replaced lower spine, mainly to accommodate new wiring.

He's lost the Dyna's battery and electrics box completely, relocating a lot of the electronics to a larger area where the original lower spine used to sit, dropping the remainder into a dummy oil tank, including Rocket Bobs 'Rocket Pack' lithium battery, which fills one side. It's reminiscent of the custom treatment of the old 4-speed frames but still takes advantage



IT'S DESIGNED TO HUSTLE THROUGH THE BENDS WITHOUT RUNNING OUT OF CORNERING CLEARANCE





of the real oil tank hanging out in the breeze, wrapped round the gearbox case. It's something he's considering doing as a kit, but it's so involved with the remedial chassis work that it's likely to be a shop job only.

And of course, he then rebuilt the seat pan to take the one-off 'reduced-reach' Pintail and new shock mounts before refitting the tank, which sits about as low as it can without notching, thanks to mods to its underside.

Cradled in this rolling chassis is now a 103-inch big bore with S&S gear-driven cams and ported heads, which will combine with the more liberated Joker Machine air cleaner, reworked high-level exhaust, and the reduced weight, to test Pete's handling theories to the max.

Interestingly, while it might be low, it's not going to get any lower than the stock bike on full compression, and with the exhausts tucked-up out of the way and the ear cut off the sidestand by someone that Pete self-effacingly refers to as "some retard in the

shop" – which is going to test Carl's patience whenever he parks-up – it's designed to hustle through the bends without running out of cornering clearance; although with the lower centre of gravity it will need to be ridden.

The first things that are likely to touch the deck are the Rocket Bobs Fatpig billet footpegs, but there's plenty of meat to get through before they'll be whittled away, and they're made from 7075, so once Carls' ground through the anodising, they still won't tarnish. They're just the first of many parts that originated in Pete's tortured mind.

The ten-inch Zombi bars on the 2-inch risers are specific to the build as well, with a 4½-inch pullback rather than three, and are topped with Joker Machine JX Switchgear and hand controls sharing the space with a set of

Rocket Bobs knurled grips.

And the cleaned-out hole in the Zombi bars revealing bare, brushed stainless? All you need to know is that Pete excels at random.

Other choice pieces scattered across the build are the Rocket Bobs brass gas caps flanking the stock console with its ultra-clear Dakota Digital speedo/tacho, motor covers, a modified Harrison mini rear caliper and a DNA pulley ... for now: I'll be astonished if that oem front brake and headlamp remains in situ for too long, and I know he's got an eye on fitting his 'headbone' next time the bike's in ... always assuming it leaves.

It should actually have been returned to Carl the day before I rocked-up to check on the progress of the Project Victory but the logistics people messed-up, and having taken it round the block a few times for the moving shots, I got a sense that Pete wasn't keen to let it go: he was enjoying riding it far too much.

Words and pics: Andy Hornsby