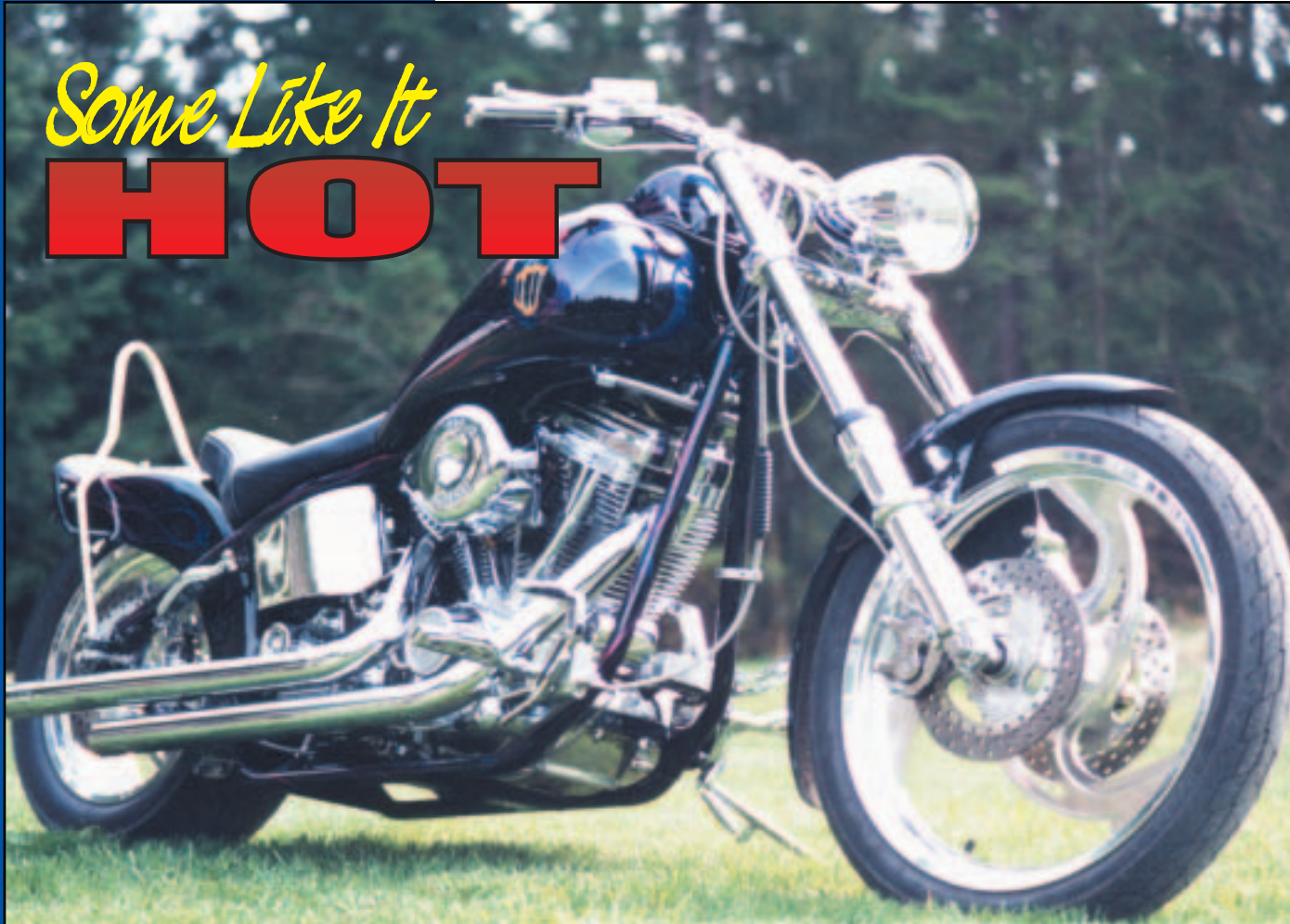


Some Like It

HOT



Story/photos by John Campbell

We left the Number One Hwy somewhere near Cobble Hill, BC, eased off the throttles and turned onto a leafy lane that took us past small acreages, painted barns and rusting hulks. We were out here to visit custom builder Marve Brimacombe, but I wasn't quite sure where he lived, so Len gunned his Intruder 1500 SE past my

BMW R1100S to lead the way.

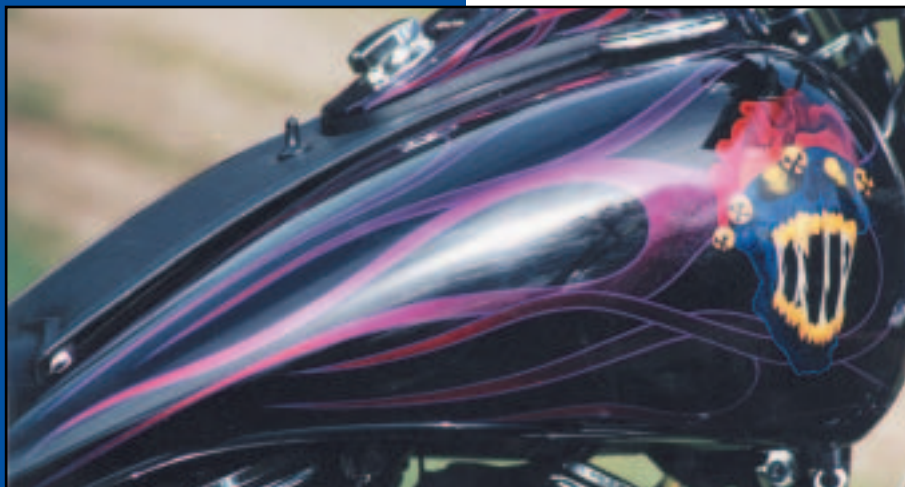
The road grew twistier and more tree-lined until we hung a lazy right onto Mile End Road and then a left up the long gravel driveway that led to Marve's country workshop. Marve's custom shop has been a Cobble Hill fixture for more than 25 years and only one of two businesses that can claim the distinction of having advertised in every single issue of

Canadian Biker magazine over the past 21 years. The man literally helped kickstart this publication.

The trouble with Marve is that he's an unrepentant country boy and a stone-cold traditionalist where motorcycles are concerned—he seems skeptical looking at the metric cruiser and the sport Boxer. As he extends one hand—scarred and muscular from a lifetime of turning wrenches—he points the other hand at our bikes and asks with a laugh, "What the hell are those things?"

We were quite proud of the Suzuki and BMW 'til then, but Marve thinks they're funny. Once he's done teasing us for our mounts, he welcomes us in and takes us through the shop and toward the back where he's putting the finishing touches on a nitrous-assisted rigid with an S&S powerplant.

I'm trying to imagine the load on the unsprung frame when the nitrous kicks in. How will the Hard Body rigid with a 34-degree rake and a





two-inch stretch handle the sudden input of an equivalent 30 extra horses? Nitrous is a specialty of Marve's and he assures me that handling isn't an issue. The bike has been designed for straight line stability and nitrous is meant to be used only at the top end and with the throttle whacked open—preferably on a straight stretch of highway free of traffic, wildlife and the damnable radar traps that are now everywhere.

It seems the owner wanted the extra punch because he has been in a bit of a horsepower shoot-out with his friend. They're both running big block customs with few differences to separate their bikes' roll-on power. The owner of this custom decided that nitrous was a relatively benign way of briefly adding a mess of horses to the engine's output.

I wonder aloud about the "benign" aspect of adding a nitrous system; whether or not the quick, hot burn harms vital valve train components. While Marve doesn't say as much I can tell that he thinks that I'm yet another victim of nitrous myths. Patiently he explains how nitrous oxide is made of two parts nitrogen and one part oxygen, and that during the combustion process in an engine, nitrous breaks down and releases oxygen. This extra oxygen creates additional power by allowing more fuel to be burned. Yes, pressures and temperatures do rise in the cylinders

but the S&S components of the 96 cu. in. engine can easily handle the brief bursts of power (15 seconds or less). And, no, there's no re-jetting required for the NOS hook-up; the system runs independent of the carburetion.

The NOS bottle sits neatly tucked behind the primary case and directly under the seat. Its presence there doesn't detract from the tapered line that begins at the front wheel and ends at the tip of Marve's custom flared fender. Also fabricated by Marve is the titanium sissy bar, the rectangular tail light and the stretched tanks.

At first I didn't even notice the tanks were stretched because of the sinister graphics. Painting is by Little Valley and although the flavour of the black layers and the subtleties of the violet flames are engaging, I'm still not sure what the central figure on the tank is all about. It seems like some kind of demented court jester with a seriously bad attitude, and whether you like the salivating, lantern-eyed bastard staring at you or not, you still have to concede the richness of colour and compelling imagery. The graphics extend to the engraved primary cover, but they're difficult to see until you're in close.

Once I got past the nitrous and the graphics I began to zero in on some of the other aspects. The front end, for example, has been kicked out to a 34-degree rake with six-inch over forks. The uncluttered front end also features a

very functional four-piston, two-disc Performance Machine brake setup, drag bars and an Arlen Ness headlight. The forks have been plated by Victoria Chrome Plating and the shiny real estate continues throughout the bike including the good ol' horseshoe tank and booming Hooker straight pipes. To anchor the shine, steel braid control lines, and primary and secondary belt drives have been added for reliability.

The bolt-on hardware such as the pegs, the switch gear and controls are standard aftermarket bits. It's when they're all assembled that the bike comes out of the box and takes on its own personality. This is a motorcycle that, even standing still, reeks of horsepower.

Marve is one of the most respected engine builders around and with this custom he has taken the S&S mill, balanced and assembled it, then tuned it for a bass-heavy line of midrange power. This custom has been given the Marve treatment and now all that remains is for the owner to decide whether or not he wants to add a pillion seat.

After a few hours of admiring his latest creation we decide to saddle up and push on from Marve's—however, not before he fills Len's ear about his latest advertising bill—that's Marve for you. But, he's always there for you, he's been a supporter of *Canadian Biker* for more than two decades, a rider for the more than a quarter century, and a close personal friend of the publisher. I guess Len can afford to take a bit of abuse from Mr. Brimacombe once in a while.



The forks have been plated by Victoria Chrome Plating and raked out to 34 degrees. The front end has also been lengthened by six inches and fitted with Performance Machine brakes.

The bolt-on hardware such as the switch gear and controls are standard aftermarket bits. But, put them all together and you've got a custom in the finest stroked and chromed tradition.

Hooker pipes churn out the spent gasses and crank out the big S&S notes. This is the business end of a big block motorcycle that's been boosted with a nitrous system.

Marve Brimacombe took the S&S mill out of the box, balanced and assembled it, and dialed it in for a bass-heavy line of midrange power.

