

# Gotta Have That Bike!



By John Campbell  
Mike Laing photos

In Jay Burnham's mind, it was getting to be that time again. The pipefitter from Vancouver Island had ritually built a new custom or made significant changes to the one he was riding for the past eight years. A succession of projects had come and gone, the deck seemed clear and it was time to get at it once more. But the question floated like

a big balloon: what to build this time?

Then, while thumbing through a motorcycle magazine that was not *Canadian Biker* (and therefore inferior), he came across an ad for Walz Hardcore Cycles out of Hockenheim, Germany. Inspiration struck! "That's what I'm building," he said aloud to no one in particular.

The bike moving Jay's world was built around one of Marcus Walz's drag-style frames with a 40-degree rake, a six-inch stretch in the single downtube and two-inch stretch in the backbone, while the swingarm was built to accept a 250-section tire. He had "a pocket full of cash" so he ordered a modified Softail version with a single downtube that would

eventually be suspended with a Progressive Suspension Airtail shock combo. The Airtail has a conventional steel spring in one shock, and a double air chamber in the other. So, a rider can add air pressure to support the weight of the load. Jay had a vacation planned to the Dominican Republic and was scheduled to leave Christmas Day 2002. The frame



year, 60,000-mile warranty.

And while ordering parts is always a lesson in shopping smart, it's always the many intangibles that decide the success or failure of a custom project. Things like brake-stays not working or a stretched tank not fitting quite the way it says in the brochure. "We had to shorten the tank by an inch and half to make it work," recalls Jay.

Whole brackets and mounts had to be meticulously fabricated—a successful process at the end of the day, but only because of the skill of the builders, Dave and Marve, says the owner.

Then there was the "paint fiasco." Jay wanted tribal markings and ghost flames as graphic elements but both he and the artist were in for a shock when the acrylic

mask was removed—the body paint simply peeled away. The guy who had originally sprayed the bike botched the job. The project's arrival on the streets would have to wait until Little Valley custom painters could get at it. Marve says Little Valley is the only paint shop he recommends to customers because "It's going to be done right every time."

Almost everyone on Vancouver Island turns to Barry Dale for a custom seat and Jay Burnham was no different. The beautiful hand-stitching and flowing lines are Barry Dale trademarks.

Vic Scott polished the shiny bits to a mirror finish and the boys at Marve's fine-tuned the engine. Jay's bike was finally ready to roll. Now, given its European pedigree, the parts shipped from overseas and the currency exchange you'd think the final bill would have come to more than \$46,000. But, it didn't. A full-blown pro-built custom for under 50 large. That's doing it right.

arrived by Fed-Ex on Christmas Eve. "It was like having two Christmases that year," he says.

The pieces came together quickly after the frame's arrival. For the next six months ace builders Marve Brimacombe and Dave Currie—working out of Marve's Speed Shop in Cobble Hill—would map-out the design and mold the parts. They were fleshing out the bike that so far existed only in the mind of the owner.

Jay envisioned a very low seat height (18 inches) a monster rear tire and a raked front end that wasn't dictated by extended forks. In fact, the SJP Fat Glide 300 retains stock length, an absolute necessity where Marve was concerned because he wanted his customer to ride away on a bike that was functional as well as stylish. The stock fork length is all about functionality. "It just handles better," says Marve.

Set over top of a 21-inch Avon tire, the Dutch-built front end is crowned with Climax bars that offer some very interesting features. Nearly all the controls and instruments are internal to the bars, including the front brake reservoir. About all that's visible on the super-clean billet system are a series of control buttons. Complementing the elegant sparsity of the handlebars are Custom Chrome mirrors with integrated signal lights and miniature Rick Doss rear turn indicators.

For steam, Jay turned to the RevTech catalogue and took shipment of a 100 cu.in. motor that breathes in through dual Webber 45mm carbs and vents via Samson Ripsaw pipes. The power plant is coupled to a RevTech six-speed transmission through a BDL open primary. He says the engine and driveline components were easy picks because of the two-

