



New York Knuckle

Bobbin' Big Apple style

story by Mike Seate

photos by Dain Gingerelli

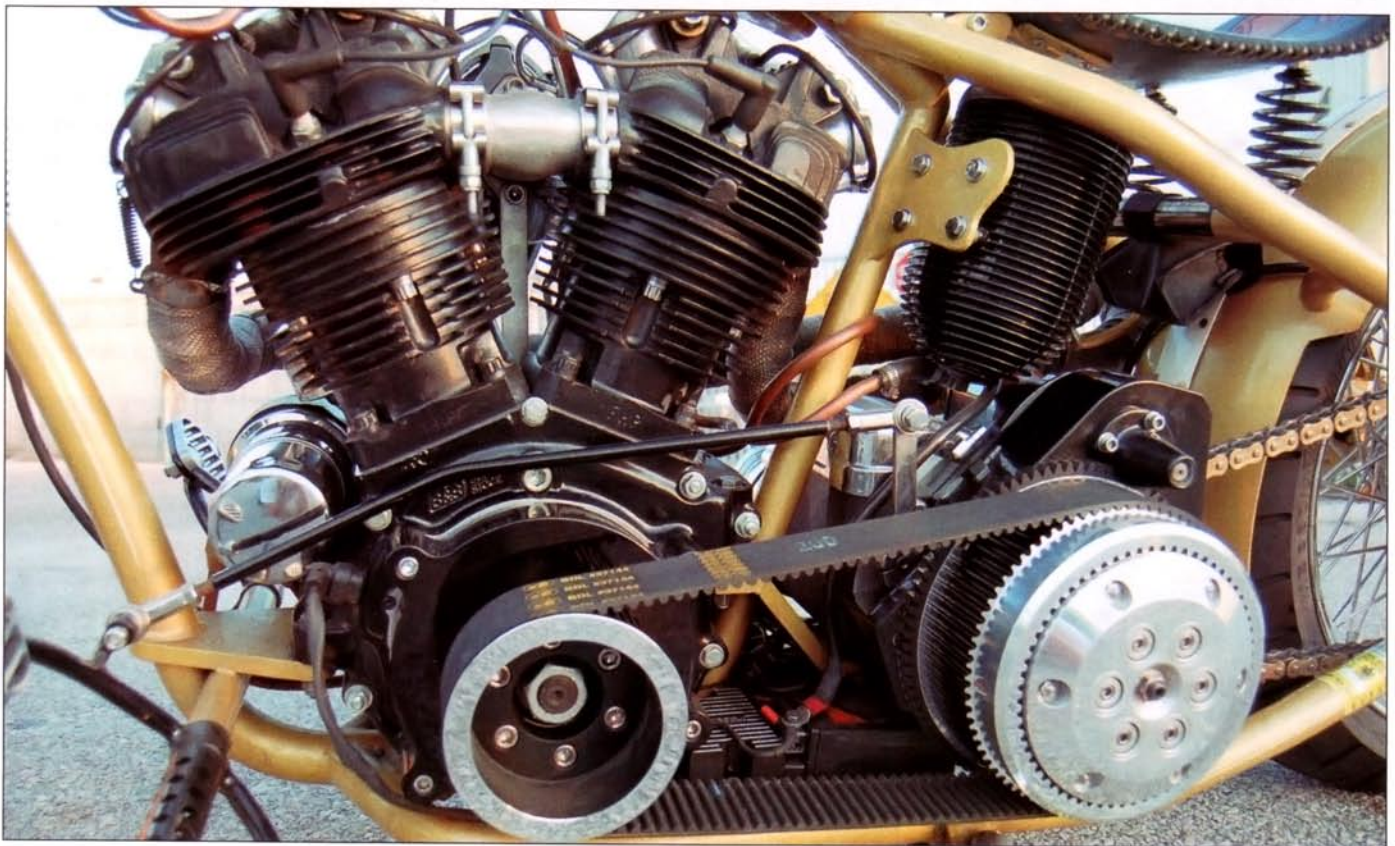
Nick Genender began fiddling with custom Harleys back in 1993, but he recalls precisely when his passion for hand-built Hogs reached fruition. It was 2003 and Nick had traveled to Daytona Beach, Florida, for Bike Week, his first full-blown custom bobber in tow. "All of a sudden, it was like everybody noticed my bike at once. I had stock Harley riders, I had the old people, young people, chopper people and even the

big builders coming over reacting to my bike. We ended up being in 12 magazines, from Japan, Europe and around the world, because nobody much was doing bobbers back then," he said. Nick returned to his shop in New York City inspired, and in the subsequent four years, he's turned out some more impressive rides. The classic, stripped-down lines of the current bobber style have evolved under Nick's watch to a point where he's considered one of the country's leading builders in the neo-vintage custom game.

Each year, NYC Custom Cycle designs, builds and then rides anywhere between 12 and 25 handcrafted motorcycles. The designs include everything from custom baggers to wide-tired stretch chops, but Nick says the bobber is a "style that never goes out of style," and is clearly his favorite type of project.

This retro Knucklehead was a labor of love for the 55-year-old builder who relishes the peace of mind and creative freedom of building a motorcycle for himself and himself only. With no customer to answer to and

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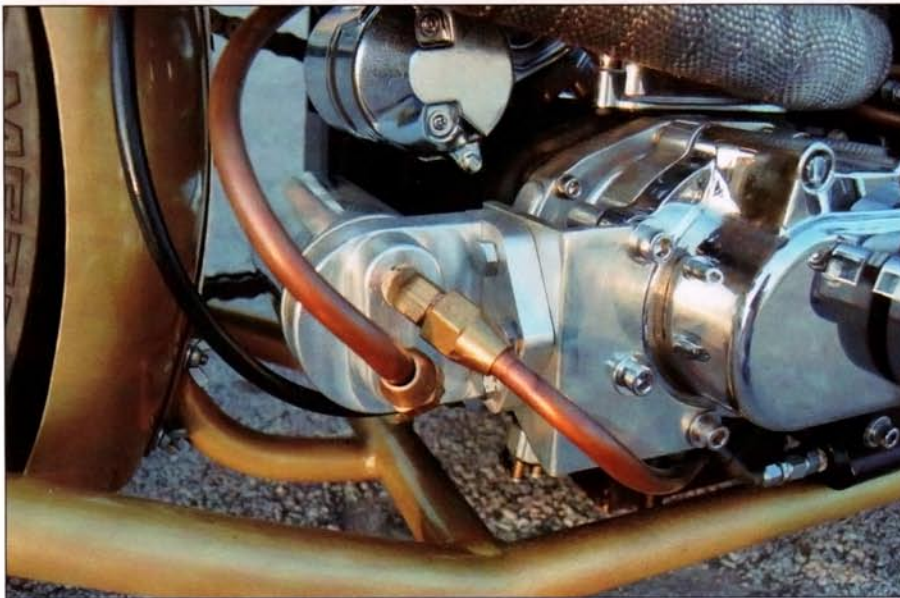




no corporate board of directors to deal with, Nick's Knuckle came together in just two months, despite the large number of one-off parts in the build. The rounded, one-piece gas tank was crafted with the intention, Nick said, of mimicking the curvy lines familiar to lovers of bobbers and vintage hot rod cars. Likewise, the aluminum oil tank, dropped handlebar and front fork are all NYC designs. Nick chose to create his own springer front ends instead of purchasing forks from an aftermarket supplier for two reasons: he enjoys building each fork to suit a particular machine, and he has only himself to blame if the part is backordered.

New York Nick defends the use of his shop's own rigid frame for a bike ridden along the mean streets of New York City, claiming that his experience riding Softails and twin-shock bikes proves that a good rigid can run with the best of them. "I've owned baggers and Softails, but the reality is, there really isn't any difference if you set the rigid up the right way. This one uses a set of seat springs from a Harley-Davidson Police Special and it's comfortable," said Nick who also says avoiding the Big Apple's notorious manhole covers and potholes helps.

And when the situation arises where Nick needs the horsepower to avoid cabbies or the odd tour bus, he calls on the 103-cubic-inch Knucklehead that originated from Flathead Power. (Note: S&S Cycle recently acquired Flathead Power, and has plans for a K-Series engine. -ed) He says the engine provides a





worthy combination of rich torque and solid top-end power, yet maintains the classic lines of a vintage Big Twin engine. The cases and carburetor are from S&S stock, and a modern Dyna 2000i ignition provides spark. NYC Custom Cycle fabricated the dual mid-rise exhausts from scratch and covered them in heat wrap. The shop also milled a set of special 7.5-inch front brake rotors for stopping power. Out back, Nick rigged a special rear hydraulic drum brake, similar to those used on mid-century Harleys. The Baker 6-speed gearbox is geared tall, making it useful for those rare backroad blasts, which Nick said he welcomes to relieve stress after battling the Big

Apple's stop-and-go traffic.

This Knuckle bobber is more than just a joy ride, though. Many of its custom parts are available to NYC Customs' customers. Which brings us full circle: Nick says he's recently received the greatest compliment any builder could hope for. "When I go to custom bike shows, I see people are copying my parts. I guess that means I'm doing a good job," he laughs. **iw**

Resource

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►► SPEC SHEET

NYC Customs

New York, New York

2005 Special Construction

HUMAN FACTOR

Fabrication Mike Sessa

Assembly Mike Sessa

Painter NYC

Plater None

Engine Builder Flathead Power

ENGINE

Year/Model 2005 Knucklehead

Displacement 103 cu. in.

Ignition Dyna 2000i

Cases S & S

Heads Flathead Power

Cylinders Flathead Power

Pistons Ross Racing

Cams S & S

Carb S & S

Air Cleaner Goodson

Exhaust NYC

Transmission Baker 6-in-5 Kicker

Primary Tech Cycle Products/NYC

BODY WORK

Gas Tank NYC/Twisted Choppers

Front Fender None

Rear Fender NYC

Seat Duane Ballard

Hand Controls Performance Controls

Foot Controls NYC

Handlebar CCI

Headlight Drag Specialties

Taillight NYC

Dash/Instruments None

FRAME

Year/Model NYC Flat Tracker

Rake 33

Backbone Stretch 2"

Downtube Stretch 2" under-stock

Fork NYC

Type Wide Glide Springer

Rear Shocks Rigid

WHEELS, BRAKES & TIRES

Front Wheel 21x2.15"

Rear Wheel 18x5.5"

Front Brake NYC

Rear Brake Kustom Club

Front Tire Metzeler 90/90-21

Rear Tire Metzeler 180/55ZR-18