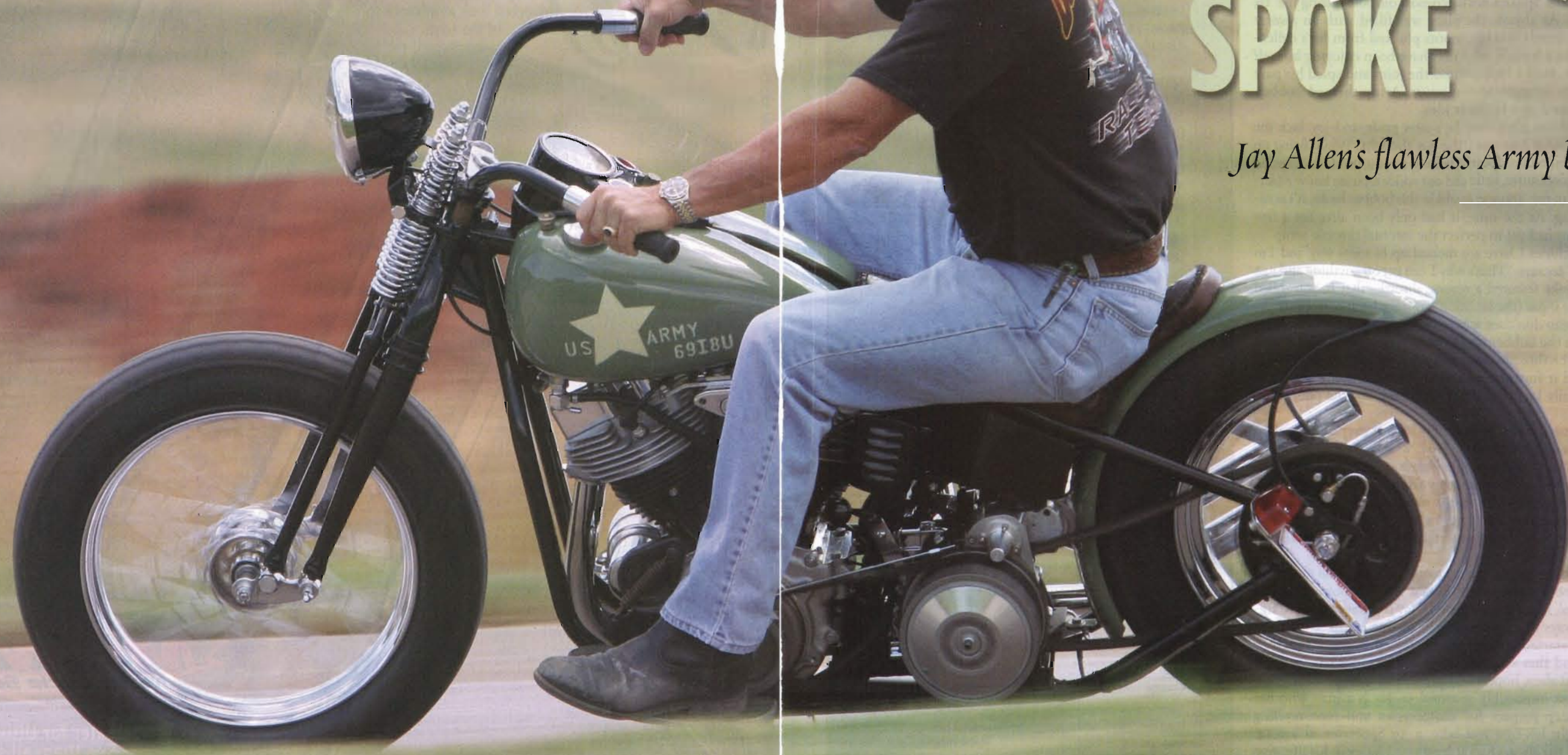


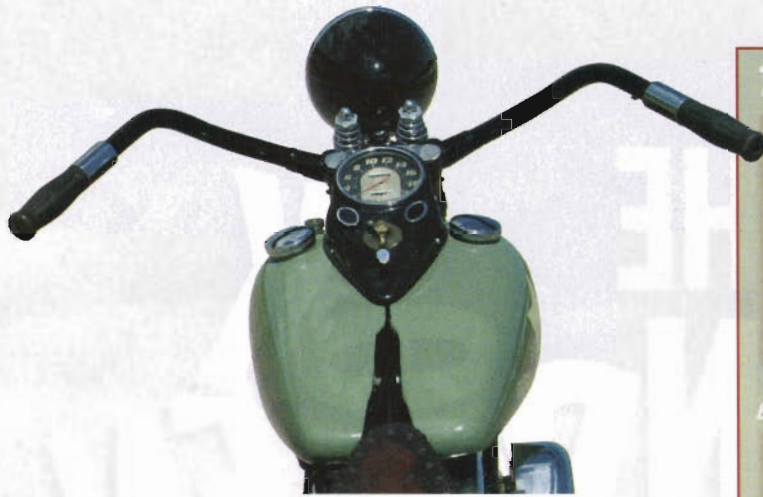
BY SAM WHITEHEAD • PHOTOS BY BOB FEATHER

If you've ever found yourself at any of the world-famous Broken Spoke Saloons choking on the action from a burnout pit, plugging your ears at the height of a loud pipe blastoff, or simply enjoying the sublime pleasures of, say, a Popsicle-licking contest, then you have one man to thank. You've probably seen (or at least heard) him holding court, microphone in hand, championing all the well-lubricated debauchery, and fueling the fun with his signature style of gospel preacher-meets-carny-barker repartee. He is, of course, Jay Allen, the owner, ringleader, and joyous promoter of the Broken Spoke, wherever it may be.



THE UNBROKEN SPOKE

Jay Allen's flawless Army bobber



“Welcome to the bar business, my friend,” Jay laughs, moments after recounting a tale of bikers behaving badly (imagine that). Though far from a catastrophe, the incident went down at the Spoke’s northernmost outpost during the ’05 Laconia Rally. As always, the place was filled with an assortment of cool, mostly vintage, scoots plucked from Jay’s collection. One of Jay’s friends, who may have been enjoying himself a bit too much, took a look around the joint and spied his pal’s latest ride, this straight-to-the-point, Army-themed bobber. He then conjured up a brilliant idea.

“Why not throw a leg over Jay’s new pride-and-joy, kick the thing, and see what happens,” the guy thought. While firing up an unfamiliar bike that doesn’t belong to you inside a crowded bar is never a good move, little did our sodden pirate know exactly what he was in for. You see, as old as this bobber looks, it’s actually quite young. At the time, it had only been alive for a few months, and Jay had yet to perfect the internal throttle setup.

“All the machines I have are messed up in some way, and I’m used to them,” Jay says. “That’s why I can get on anything and just ride it.” This bike featured a reverse throttle; that is, you rolled forward to give it gas (the situation has since been corrected).

For those who don’t see where this is going, here’s the skinny. The guy lit the bobber up (to cheers, no doubt), slid it into gear, twisted the throttle back, and got no response. In frustration, he rolled it forward, and the bike went flying as people scattered. Finally, he laid it down, crashing into the pool table. Very smooth.

In a supreme act of tolerance, Jay took it easy on his yahoo friend for a couple of reasons. First, when you run a saloon-cum-motorcycle museum, people violate your stuff all too often (“Welcome to the bar business, my friend”). And, second, the reason some people act like that is not generally out of malice, but rather because they don’t have a clue. To that end, Jay aims to do a lot more than simply entertain enthusiasts (God knows, he’s got that wired).

“I like teaching people when I can,” Jay says. “The more you know, the more you appreciate. When you turn someone onto something cool, it makes you proud.” Jay is always trying to figure out fun ways to educate people so they really know how motorcycling started, and where it evolved from. “Then they will understand that so many of these machines have a spirit and a soul, and then, hopefully, they will have respect.”

At an almost impossibly youthful 51, Jay is a man who has nurtured a deep respect for motorcycles and motorcycling since he bought his first real bike, a ’59 Sportster, at age 14. Since then, he has always had at least one Harley in his life, give

TECH SHEET

Owner:	Jay Allen
Builder:	Jeff Lange, Different Strokes, Sierra Vista, AZ
Year/model:	2005 Bobber
Time to build:	Four months
Chromer:	Royal Plating, Tucson, AZ
Polisher:	Jeff Lange
Powder coater:	Sierra Vista Powder Coating, Sierra Vista, AZ
Painter:	Steve Taggart, Dallas, TX
Color:	Army Tank Green

ENGINE/TRANSMISSION

Year/model:	2005 S&S Shovelhead
Builder:	S&S Cycle
Displacement:	93”
Horsepower:	100
Cases:	S&S
Flywheels:	S&S 4-1/2”
Connecting rods:	S&S
Cylinders:	S&S
Pistons:	S&S
Heads:	S&S
Cam:	S&S 600
Valves:	S&S
Rockers:	S&S
Pushrods:	S&S
Carb:	S&S
Air cleaner:	S&S
Exhaust:	Paughco
Ignition:	Mallory
Charging system:	Drag ALT
Transmission, year/model:	2005 BAKER 6-into-4
Case:	Four-speed
Gears:	BAKER back-cut
Clutch:	Tech-Cycle
Primary drive:	BDL-belt 1-1/2”
Final drive:	Chain
Kickstarter:	BAKER

CHASSIS

Frame:	2005 Paughco
Front forks:	1941 Knuckle
Front wheel:	18” V-twin
Rear wheel:	16” V-twin
Rear brake:	Hydraulic 1958 H-D drum
Front tire:	4.00-18” Avon
Rear tire:	4.00-16” Avon
Rear fender:	Chica
Fender struts:	1964 Chevy trunk stock

ACCESSORIES

Headlight:	H-D
Taillight:	Unknown British vehicle (junkyard donor)
Fuel tank:	Vintage H-D
Oil tank:	H-D Softail
Handlebars:	H-D
Seat:	Hidecore Leather, Llano, CA
Pegs:	1948 H-D floorboards
Speedo:	Old Mexican H-D kilometer speedo
Dash:	H-D cat’s eye
Hand controls:	Ratchet top shifter H-D
Foot controls:	Rocker clutch and rear brake H-D





or take a few long-ago years spent hustling the scene in L.A., honing his restaurateur skills in Hawaii, or toiling on the Alaska pipeline.

As it stands now, Jay's collection of bikes (and, for that matter, cars, trucks, and assorted memorabilia) is vast. And try as you might, you won't find a fancy, blinged-out, modern-style, chopped, slammed, or raked motorcycle anywhere in Jay's midst. "I'll never have that kind of bike," Jay claims. "That's just not me."

As if to prove his point (though he certainly doesn't need to), Jay reveals the moment that sparked the building of this bobber. "One night, [Indian] Larry and Big Chris came ripping into the Spoke. I just couldn't take my eyes off their bikes. And I was surrounded by the Centerfold Tour with all of its fancy builders and their sparkling high-end customs. But it was as if they weren't even there." Inspired by Larry and Big Chris, Jay went home and immediately ordered a Paughco frame. The bobber project was underway.

A few days later, when Jay tried to get a front end, the folks at Paughco told him they were backed up 13 weeks, so he'd have to wait. Anxious beyond belief, Jay dug into his own parts stash and found the legs off a '41 Knuck. All he needed were rockers and springs and his Knuckle front end would be complete, save for some plating and powder coating.

While rummaging through his stash, Jay also grabbed an old oil bag that proved too tall when he put the starter in his bike. The solution was found when a buddy suggested they try a short Softail tank. It fit perfectly.

When visualizing his rear fender, Jay knew Chica was the man. A blank was ordered, cut, molded, and secured with some struts fashioned from the metal trunk supports of a '64 Chevy convertible. "The whole look is so sexy and stout," Jay beams. "When Chica saw it, he said, 'Very good, very good.' He was proud that it was his fender. How cool is that?"

With many of the bobber's parts together, Jay turned the affair over to his great friend and old-time engine master Jeff Lange of Different Strokes in Sierra Vista, Arizona. Over the years, Jeff has built a lot of bulletproof motors for Jay. This time, however, his task was a bit easier, as S&S provided one of its new

93" high-compression Shovelhead mills for the bobber.

"S&S sponsors me," Jay explains. "I'm one of their biggest fans and best spokespeople, so they give me a few motors every year. Without them, this wouldn't have been possible." For the record, equal words of gratitude were expressed to the crew at BAKER, which also hooks Jay up on a regular basis, this time with a 6-in-4 tranny packed with hi-po back-cut gears.

As the bobber neared completion, Jay realized he might need a seat. For many, a saddle would seem an obvious necessity. Not for Jay, hard guy that he is. "I pretty much never had a front brake or a seat," Jay growls. "I always believed in sitting as low as possible, so I'd just tape a towel on the battery box and ride." Arrghh. Clearly, that was then. For this bike, he asked the Hidecore masters to make him a beautiful little leather cushion. Here's hoping that Jay ain't actually getting soft as the years go on.

Finally, when the time came for paint (a task expertly tackled by Steve Taggart from Dallas), Jay knew exactly what he wanted. "I've just been dealing with so many vets lately," Jay says. "Every night when I had Jimmy Van Zant at the Spoke, just before we'd launch into 'Free Bird', I'd give a little message to the vets. I can't tell you how it felt to look out into the crowd and see the vets with tears in their eyes. This bike is for them." (Attention all vets: Jay and his bobber will be at Rolling Thunder in 2006. No word yet as to whether he'll be wailing "Free Bird" with Van Zant.)

If anyone thinks Jay views his bobber as yet another not-to-be-touched, two-wheeled feather in his cap, think again. Jay rides the snot out of this thing, just like he does his other bikes. Sure, he revels in showing the thing off, but he's not really doing it to beat his chest. He digs seeing people acknowledge the simplicity of his ride, and showing them the inherent history of its style. "Simplicity is coming back," Jay says. "I love that. There's really nothing new about this bike at all."

So, if you ever find yourself at any of the world-famous Broken Spoke Saloons enjoying the many sublime pleasures, thank Jay. And show some respect — the man's about a lot more than cold beverages and bikini contests. **AIM**