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Matte Dragon: A Top Shelf Softtail

Jim Schloffel has a style he's working hard

*Story by Jim Schloffel and Stephen Berner
Photos by Stephen Berner*

Browsing the bike show at this year's Custom Chrome Dealers Show (held in Santa Clara, CA) before the event opened was the best way for me to get a sense of the machines that were on display.

Although the event is focused on dealers and manufacturers, the addition of a world-class bike show makes it even better for those attending the show. It is nice to have something to look at, which brings home the passion, even when you are knee deep in talking the business of V-Twins.

The first day of the two-day affair was a

"trade-only" day with dealers in attendance; on day two, the general public was invited. It was really cool to split the weekend and doing so added a level of energy that I enjoyed. Being an East coaster I got to see what was what in the Nor-Cal scene and I came away impressed.

Early on, a bike that stood out to me



Matte Dragon

Owner: Matt Skilton
Builder: Jim Schloffel, Metal Dragon
Hayward, CA 94541
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GENERAL

Fabrication: Metal Dragon
Year, Make & Model: 2011 H-D 240 Softtail
Assembly/Builder: Metal Dragon
Timeline: 6 months

FORKS

Builder: SJP Engineering
Type: Hydraulic
Triple trees: Billet, black anodized

ENGINE

Year/Model: 2003 H-D "B" Motor 106HP, 105TQ
Rebuilder & Lower End: Metal Dragon
Displacement: 95 c.i.
Balancing: No
Pistons: JE Forged 3-7/8" pop-ups



was this super sano Softail. I wasn't sure what it was exactly but the more I looked, the more I liked. It's burly without being cartoonish; the proportions are natural. So clean, so right, it is obvious that the frame is not a stock piece—the bike just sits more confidently. This is a machine so clean that it appears like an OEM build but it is, in fact, a ground up custom finished to a point where it looks—heavens forbid – completely done.

The bike is almost jewel like in its precision and restraint. I admit it; I am probably not the first character who asked Jim, "No front fender?" To which he responded, "No." Ha! I liked this man as well as his



Cases: Harley-Davidson
Heads: H-D castings
 Port & Polish, Hannan's Machine, Hayward CA
Cams: T-Man Performance, TR590C
Lifters: Feuling HP+
EFI/Carb: H-D OEM Delphi Inj., tuned w/TTS Mastertune

Air Cleaner: Performance Machine
Pipes: Vance and Hines, modified by Metal Dragon

TRANSMISSION

Year/Modifications: Machine Open Belt
Secondary Drive: Belt 132T

FRAME

Year: 2010
Designer/Builder: Rolling Thunder
Type: 240 Wide Tire Softail
Material/Diameter: 1.5" steel
Rake & Stretch: 32 degree, 3" backbone stretch

ACCESSORIES

Hand Controls: Performance Machine
Fenders: Big Dog rear & struts, modified by Metal Dragon
Headlight: Arlen Ness
Taillight: Badlands "Stogie"
Speedo: Dakota Digital



style and I asked him to explain himself:

"I have been wrenching and building bikes for 20-plus years as a hobby in the garage," he said. "Friends and clients constantly asked me why I didn't open a shop. In 2007 I got tired of the normal job and gave up a good salary, benefits, and a company vehicle to follow my dream and open up a shop. He we are almost four year later running strong."

With niceties out of the way, I asked Jim to talk to me a little about the bike and how it came together. Here's his explanation:

"In late 2007 I met Matt Skilton (bike owner and customer) through

CVOHarley.com, a website dedicated to the CVO models from Harley. He had us do some custom work to his new 2008 CVO Ultra. Matt Later sold that bike and always told me he'd be back. In September of 2010 Matt contacted me to build a bike for him out of a bike he purchased from a friend that lost his battle with cancer.

"The goal was a 'murdered out' 240 wide tire Softail with an attitude. What Matt wanted, compared to the bike he purchased, were too far apart so we decided to start from the ground up and use what we could from the donor bike. Basically, engine, tranny, and electrics were all that were retained from the donor.

"For the frame we chose Rolling Thunder in Canada. They were able to build the frame for us to our specs. The SJP front end was picked by Matt, as it had the blacked-out inverted fork look that he was going for. The wheels were next and after some time looking through the books we decided on Performance Machine Rivera Contrast Cut wheels with the platinum polish.

"We got the rotors and pulley to match along with the drive side brake system. Matt chose the Battastini foot controls with the holes so we carried the "hole" theme through the bike with Battastini grips, shift linkage, and horn cover. To take it further



ACCESSORIES (cont)

Electrics & Gas Tank: OEM H-D, modified by Metal Dragon
Oil Tank: Rolling Thunder
Seat: Custom made by Corbin Saddles
Foot Controls & Pegs: Battastini's forward controls +2" stretch

WHEELS

Tires: Metzeler ME 880
Front/Size: 18x3.5 **Rear/Size:** 18x5.5
Front & Rear Hubs: Performance Machine
Front Brakes: Performance Machine
Rear Brakes: Performance Machine drive side brake

PAINTING

Painter/Bodywork/Molding: Tim & Rory, Unforgotten Customs, Hayward, CA
Color: Hot Rod Black, gloss black pinstripping
Powdercoating: Gloss black powdercoating, Melrose Metal Finishing, Oakland, CA

we added holes in the heat shields and fender struts. When it came time to assemble I showed Matt the PM primary system as it was a perfect fit for the look we were going for, so on it went."

So friends and fans, here's another story of a talented shop and builder/designer/fabricator collaborating with a customer who had a good idea of what he wanted and wasn't afraid to make his wishes known. Sometimes buying parts for a ground up construction as the customer is a sure fire way to screw up your builder and throw them the unintended curve ball. But in this instance it worked beautifully. When a theme is followed throughout a bike as cleanly as in the case of the Matte Dragon, you can't help but step back and take notice that the team involved was laser focused on an idea and not chasing its tail. **iw**

*RESOURCE

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