

The *Style* and Shape of Things to Come

by Steve Taylor

Custom bike styles or "trends" are similar to automobile designs, with each new style coming to the market brings new ideas. Each year, my business attends the Easyriders V-Twin Expo held in Cincinnati, Ohio. The event introduces all the latest and greatest product ideas that will hit the custom bike market. Many different creative products will put a twist on the way we build and ride our two-wheeled machines.

One of these new products to hit the market is an automatic clutch. I actually saw it at last year's show, but this year brought a stronger presence. We installed one and I have to tell you it's the greatest rider-friendly product I've ever worked with. As soon as the bike started and began to idle, I could shift into first without pulling in the clutch. Pulling up to a stop? Just lower the r.p.m. and hit the brakes. No need to pull in the clutch.

Speaking of clutches, a left twist-grip for clutch engagement/disengagement is making a more prominent showing in the custom bike market made by Exile.

Transmissions are still in the forefront of design with Baker Drivetrain leading the pack. Six-speeds are now expected, however new changes from Baker made the system a lot quieter and easier shifting. Helical-cut gears are the best for gear tooth engagement as well as decrease in gear noise. S&S Products have also jumped into the line of offering great transmissions.

Motor manufactures all seem to be pushing for more and more cubic inches. What used to be called a 100-inch "monster motor" is about standard in today's find. Motor sizes to me are like people trying to set the land speed record. When a record is set, it is only set to be broken. Motor sizes are "inching" towards the 150 cubic inch size. S&S Products introduced their new "X-Wedge" motor. It's a 56-degree V-twin (Harley's are a 45 degree), three-cam design. Two exhaust cams, one intake cam. It's a closed-loop fuel injected motor that is E.P.A. compliant through the year 2010. It is available from 110 to 139 cubic inches. Just like the fat-tire craze, what used to be a big rear tire (200 mm), is now small in comparison to the new 330 mm., that is about to hit the public market soon.

The Pegasus Company is offering a "plug-n-play" fuel injection unit for '91 and later Big Twins, which are easy to install and fully rider tunable. This product is offered in kit form, which doesn't get any easier than this to convert your carbureted bike over to fuel injection. Wood Performance debuted a new cam set-up for all the Twin Cam motors. It consists of cams that are either gear or chain driven (your choice), and a unique belt drive set-up. It allows the tuner (owner or mechanic), of the bike to advance or retard the cam timing 10 degrees for personalized placing of power and torque curves. Best of all, this only takes minutes. They also offer helical-cut inner drive gears for quiet and smooth operation. JIMS TOOLS came with their new 120 inch Twin Cam motor that will drop into a stock Evolution frame. Vance & Hines introduced their Big Radius 2-into-1 pipes, an awesome sight to behold.

Bike styles? Well let's say that choppers and bobbers are on the way out. What's in? A combination of both a bobber AND a chopper. Low and long with a big inch motor. A Pro-Street/Bobber/Chopper look. You'll see what I'm talking about in the coming months so stay-tuned.

Thank You and Ride Safe. Questions? Comments? Steve Taylor of Taylor Made V-Twins can be reached at 810-966-4900 or e-mail: taylormade@advnet.net.