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SVENMEISTER'S B-72

*An Ironhead custom
by the spin master*



story by Ken Conte • photos by Curt Lout

There are many theories about how we, through time, transform into the same sort of people that our parents turned out to be. It's as if our youthful rebelliousness gets thrown out the window, and we subtly become clones of the people we said we'd never be like. Svenmeister, owner of Svenmeister Hardcore Kustoms, is proof of that theory, even though he always leaned toward the road less traveled.

Svenmeister grew up around motorcycles in Switzerland and was riding a modified moped by the time he was 13 years old. He worked at his father's Harley-Davidson dealership, lending a hand cleaning bikes and doing whatever work he could handle. When it was time to get his license and a vehicle, though, he opted for the comfort and warmth of a car. It was his way of rebelling. He also harbored a passion for creating, so he specialized in customizing cars because the canvas was so much bigger than that offered by mo-

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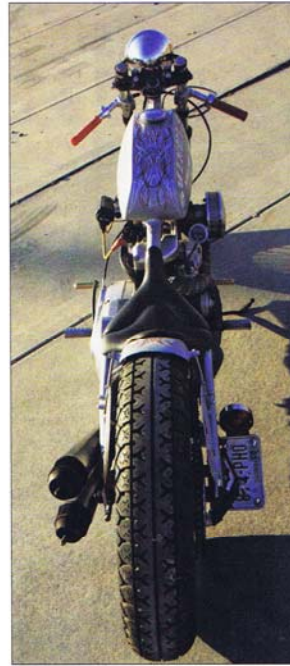
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motorcycles. He later opened a body shop in Switzerland, modifying VWs, with the goal of making enough money to move to the United States.

Many VWs later, Svenmeister moved to the customizer's promised land of Southern California where he applied his creativity to help customize homes, working on VWs in his spare time. He hadn't really considered working on motorcycles until he saw Jesse James' *Motorcycle Mania* on cable TV's Discovery Channel. That's when he finally saw the light, as it were, realizing the freedom of the open road that his father had chased as a biker. In pursuit of that same freedom, Svenmeister bought a frame and motor so he could focus his spare time on building his first custom bike. About that time he moved to the east coast where he formed Svenmeister Hardcore Kustoms, but he eventually ended up in the Mile High City of Denver, Colorado, where he carried on with SHK, mainly building Japanese and European motorcycles because everyone else was building American V-Twins. Plus, there were several junkyards in and around Denver full of Japanese and European bikes just waiting to be resurrected and rebuilt as SHK customs.

The B-72, based on a 1972 Sport-

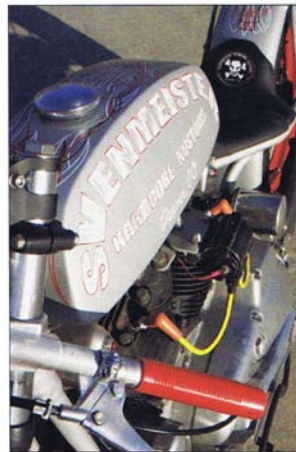


ster, was one of Svenmeister's first forays into American V-Twins, but he wanted it to be different from his foreign-based customs. Svenmeister saw the Ironhead Sporty as an opportunity to meld the styles he had

become so fond of during the past few years, but with its own look. So he took ideas and parts from Japanese and European bikes he had experience with, intermixing them with the Ironhead to get a truly unique look.

The keystone of SHK is Svenmeister's idea that all bikes should be low and sleek, so he grafted a weld-on hardtail kit to the Sportster frame to get the desired drop-seat, low look. Compared to modern Big Twins, there are few aftermarket parts available for Ironheads, so Svenmeister fabricated or adapted a lot of its parts, favoring abandoned pieces that were scattered in his garage when he could. After he dropped the seat there wasn't much room for an oil bag, so he moved the oil supply up front and used the top of a Honda fork tube for the filler cap. The gas tank was taken from an Italian moped, and after some hacking, it fit perfectly onto the modified frame. He then modified a Japanese fork, mounting a brakeless 19-inch laced spoke wheel to complete the front end. The Honda rear fender was chopped and bolted to fender struts made by Svenmeister.

The bike got its name by happenstance. Since he was going for a vintage drag racing look, Svenmeister gave a nod to bikes of that bygone





era by adding a number plate. "B is for bike class and 72 is the year of the bike," he explained. And in the end the name stuck.

After Svenmeister mocked up the



project, he tack welded what he could before sending the bike to Cadillac Bob from Atomic Age Kustoms for final TIG welding. Specific attention was given to each part because Svenmeister wanted the finished bike, which now belongs to Mitch Britten, to look more like a restoration than a specially built custom bike. Parts were polished and everything was in exactly the right order before the reborn Ironhead rolled out of SHK's modest garage.

In the end Svenmeister ended up with a unique bike that boasts his flair for combining what otherwise appear to be unwanted parts. As Svenmeister might tell you, it's all part of being the spin master. ■

Resource

Svenmeister Hardcore Kustoms
Westminster, Colorado
svenmeisterhardcorekustoms.com

>> SPEC SHEET

Mitch Britten
Denver, Colorado
1972 H-D Sportster

HUMAN FACTOR

Fabrication Svenmeister/ Cadillac Bob
Assembly Svenmeister
Painter Svenmeister
Pinstriping Kustomixt REV
Engine Builder H-D

ENGINE

Year/Model 1972 Sportster
Displacement 1200cc
Ignition Stock
Cases Stock
Heads H-D
Cylinders H-D
Pistons H-D
Cams H-D
Carb Bendix Zenith
Air Cleaner Aftermarket
Exhaust SHK/Supertrapp mufflers)
Transmission H-D
Primary H-D

BODY WORK

Gas Tank Modified Morini Moped
Front Fender None
Rear Fender Modified Honda
Seat Bitchn' 'Stichn'
Hand Controls Custom
Foot Controls Modified Stock
Handlebar Vintage Magura 7/8" clip-ons
Headlight Aftermarket
Taillight Aftermarket
Dash/Instruments Oil pressure

FRAME

Year/Model 1972 Sportster
Rake Stock
Backbone Stretch 1"
Downtube Stretch None

FORK

Type Glide
Trees Modified vintage Yamaha
Rear Shock None

WHEELS, BRAKES & TIRES

Front Wheel 19x3"
Rear Wheel 16x5.25"
Front Brake None
Rear Brake H-D
Front Tire Avon 2.75-19
Rear Tire Continental MT90-16
Special Features: Easy dime-adjustable idle speed, modified Honda right-side kickstand