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VICTORY vs. HARLEY-DAVIDSON SHOOTOUT

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IronWorks

ON SALE UNTIL 08/17/09

★ KNUCKLE ★



Paul's regular rider is a reclaimed Panhead that's not perfect, but it's perfect enough.



Wideman's recently completed Hobo Steer bike with its hand-built aluminum tank and Duane Ballard leather trim.

AMERICAN HARDCORE CHOPPERS

★ BARE KNUCKLE ★

CHOPPERS

A few minimalist bikes and a lot of hardcore parts

photos by Marilyn Stemp

"We only build three or four bikes a year, and pretty much all of them have been featured in magazines," said Bare Knuckles' Paul Wideman. So just like Paul's business, we'll focus on Bare Knuckles' U.S.-made parts line of over 300 items, and that's fine with him. "The basis of our business is frame build-

ing and machine work. That's where our emphasis is," he said. Paul started out about six years ago essentially as a hobbyist builder with one frame jig. But before long, the state of Missouri pushed him into taking the next step. "You can only build one or two frames a year as a home-builder according to the state, so I had to open a business if I

wanted to do more," he explained. For a man who credits his interest in bikes to his father, plus encouragement from an uncle who rides, going into business was a good decision for Paul. Schooled in metal fabrication, welding, and engineering, Paul's BKC bikes are noted for their raw mechanical resonance—but don't think that means they're



This BKC retro bobber ran in the August 2007 issue of IronWorks. Photo by Greybeard.



Paul Wideman and Led Sleds' Pat Patterson with their customized Hard Rock Roadhouse guitars. It's all part of their rock 'n' roll fantasy.

unrefined. All that metalworking ability results in fastidious attention to fit and finish.

Bare Knuckle Choppers is a bare bones operation, too, especially considering their volume and variety of components offered. Rad Randy runs the CNC equipment and does paint. Joe is the frame guy, and Terry handles graphics and PR.

Added Paul, "I can't leave out James our welder, Chuck, an all-around helper guy, and my dad, Rob."

Paul, the idea guy, recently finished a bike based on a 1949 Panhead for his father, who also helps around the shop. And not long ago a Sportster that came in on consignment was put on the chopping block

as well—because his mother decided to buy that bike. "I was surprised," he said. The bike has since been given a custom exhaust and new paint.

As to BKC's styling attributes, minimalism is key here, too. Paul said, "I like for there to be as little crap on a bike as possible. I build them skinny and short, to handle