



Hot XL

BY TOM JOHNSON • PHOTOS BY MARKUS CUFF

Dubbed And Decked

*Storz named the XR1200
and then tricked it out*



I RODE A BSA DURING MY TEENS AND wanted nothing to do with Harley-Davidsons. I ridiculed them, as a matter of fact, along with the people who rode them. Then I saw Harley-mounted

George Roeder duke it out with BSA star Jody Nicholas for 20 dirt-slinging laps on a half-mile track in Montgomery, Alabama. Struck by his dogged determination on the outdated flathead, I was surprised to find myself rooting for Roeder. I still only half understand the attraction that has drawn so many of us to Harley-Davidsons, but I felt it in my bones, and it has never let go. The die had been cast, and George Roeder cast it.

Since then, purpose-built flat trackers, especially those wearing the orange and black, have been special to me. With their light-

good for one thing and one thing only: racing hell for leather against its own kind on hard-packed dirt ovals.

Converting a flat tracker for use on the street makes for a nice fantasy, but that's about it.

Fortunately for us flat track admirers, there's a reasonable alternative — Harley-Davidson's XR1200. It's basically a 1200cc Sportster with a passable flat tracker look achieved with a Showa inverted fork, XR750ish tank and seat/tail section, triple disc brakes on cast wheels, and a racy, if somewhat clunky, exhaust. But, as often the case with factory offerings, there's room for improvement.



TECH SHEET

Owner: Storz Performance
Builder: Storz Performance
Year/model: 2010 Harley-Davidson XR1200
Cost to build: About \$20,000
Time to build: Six months
Painter: Bill Key, Vintage Restoration, Oxnard, CA
Color: Black, white, and orange

ENGINE/TRANSMISSION

Engine: 2010 H-D XR1200
Builder: Stock
Displacement: 73.4"
Cases: Stock
Flywheels: Stock 3.812" stroke
Connecting rods: Stock
Cylinders: Stock 3.5"
Pistons: Stock 9.7:1
Heads: Stock
Cam: Stock
Valves: Stock
EFI: Stock
Air cleaner: Stock
Exhaust: Storz/BUB Enterprises
Ignition: Stock
Cam cover: Stock
Primary cover: Stock
Transmission: H-D five-speed
Case: Stock
Gears: Stock
Clutch: Stock
Primary drive: Stock chain

Final drive: Storz chain conversion

CHASSIS

Frame: 2010 H-D XR1200
Rake: 29.3 degrees
Front forks: Storz/Ceriani inverted
Swingarm: Stock
Front wheel: Storz 3.50-18"
Rear wheel: Storz 5.50-17"
Front brakes: H-D four-piston calipers, 320mm Break Tech rotors
Rear brake: H-D four-piston
Front tire: Metzeler 120/70 ZR18
Rear tire: Metzeler 180/55 ZR17
Front fender: Buell
Rear fender: Storz, integral w/seat
Fender struts: Stock

ACCESSORIES

Headlight: Stock
Taillight: Stock
Fuel tank: Storz
Oil tank: Stock
Handlebars: Storz clip-ons
Seat: Storz
Pegs: Storz
Chain guard: Stock
Speedo: Stock
License bracket: Storz
Mirrors: Stock
Hand controls: Stock
Foot controls: Storz

And here's where Steve Storz steps in. In 1974, Steve was a professional race mechanic looking for a job after his former employer, Norton/Triumph, discontinued its race program. Steve eventually found employment as a member of Harley-Davidson's XR750-based dirt track team. He left Harley in 1979 to return to the West Coast and establish Storz Performance, where he provided parts and tuning services for XR750 racers. As his business expanded, Steve found a new specialty: designing and manufacturing XR-style components for street Sportsters. Realizing he was onto something, specially for the potent 1200cc models, he trademarked the name XR1200. Sportster fans may

remember that Harley introduced an XR1200 of its own in Europe a few years back, seemingly ignoring potential buyers back home. The back story is that Steve owned stateside rights to the XR1200 moniker, so Harley's latest and greatest couldn't be sold here under that label. Eventually, a deal for the rights to XR1200 was struck, and the motorcycles are now available at your nearest dealership.

The first XR1200 component Steve took on was the exhaust, creating one that's not clunky and is downright beautiful in black ceramic. Co-developed with BUB, it presented several design challenges centered on the XR1200's moving-



target rubber-mount engine, the foot controls, and the passenger's portion of the seat. The development team addressed engine-mount issues with clever bracketry. Steve settled on a lemons-to-lemonade approach for the seat and foot control hang-ups by developing new items for his ever-expanding parts line. Almost as good as the power it adds, the high-flying 2-into-2 is nearly 15 pounds lighter than the original, a big step in lightening up the 580-pound factory bike. The only bad news is that the Storz/BUB exhaust isn't compatible with passenger pegs and, despite its provision for O2 sensors, is approved for closed-course competition only.



A suspension upgrade came next. Steve replaced the factory Showa with an inverted Storz-Ceriani cartridge front end because it has a handy built-in lowering kit, and he feels it provides better damping. The low handlebars capping it off are clip-ons, which might lead you to wonder how practical they would be for flat tracking (not very). Steve chose them to give the Storz-equipped XR1200 more of a café/roadracer look. Moving to the rear, he offers three different shock absorbers for his conversions, all manufactured by YSS Racing in Holland. This bike features the top-of-the-line, nitrogen-charged RG366 model. More sophisticated than their H-D counterparts, the RG366 features compression and rebound adjustments, along with a remote reservoir for the oil to isolate it from heat and prevent damping changes. I should emphasize that none of this is meant to sound critical of Harley-Davidson. The XR1200 faces stiff competition in its market, and super-premium parts would price it right out of existence no matter how well they performed.

Speaking of competition, although the wheels on a typical XR1200 may appear track ready, they're cast aluminum and heavy as sin. Steve addresses this with a pair of Excel alloy rims laced to billet aluminum hubs with polished stainless spokes. The rims are available in gold, black, and clear-finished aluminum. Putting the "Whoa, Nellie" on them is a set of 320mm Brake Tech floating rotors, which whittle a little more weight off the XR1200 despite having a larger diameter than stock. With Harley's calipers having come so far in recent years, Steve stuck with them for his 320mm conversion. The larger rotors require special brackets to move the calipers farther out, which plays a significant role in increasing their effectiveness. The rotors come in a choice of stainless steel and ductile iron, by the way, and for good reason. Stainless rules for low maintenance, ductile for grab and heat dissipation.



I'm running out of room here, and there's still a trunkload of trickeroo parts to cover. There's no place for a passenger on the snazzy Storz seat, but the rider pad is a clear upgrade from stock: its shape, thickness, and a gel insert make it more buttocks friendly. The footpegs and controls are from Storz Performance, too, and racy enough to be downright sexy. The vinyl-covered, braided stainless front brake hoses may or may not offer a functional advantage over stock but win hands down in terms of looks. Ditto on the chain final-drive conversion. It's also lighter than the stock belt assembly, not to mention that it simplifies changing final drive ratios to suit each owner's preference.

For more information on the Storz bike and the parts that went into it, click up www.StorzPerf.com. And if you're looking to make that XR750 fantasy a reality, Steve can probably help you there, too. **AIM**