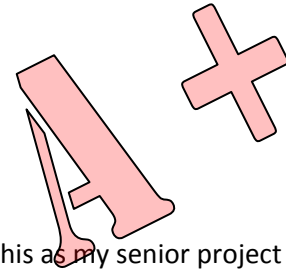


“Livin the life”

Senior project 2010

By: Karl Bartling



When I first started my second bike re-build this year I figured let me use this as my senior project but as time progressed I realized it's not all about my bike re-build its about the certain lifestyle I choose to live that is far and few in between with people. There's a lot more to this project than just building my bike again it's about what got me too this point in my life and who was involved and the culture I'm part of. I was always raised around the stereo typical biker (long hair , tattoos, loud Harleys, grungy guys) a lot of people to this day still see these true bikers as a menace to society . My whole family has always been very heavily involved in this culture and it's just part of my blood and now in days a lot of kids can't say that. It doesn't make me any better than anybody else but it, makes me different and unique.



My first memories of the start of this was going into the garage when I was very young and watching my dad kick starting his choppers. One day I asked him “dad if you had all the money in the world what kind of car would you buy?, he said I wouldn't buy a car I would buy another motorcycle and at that point in time I was about 5 years old and I realized motorcycles also known as “machines” or “scooters” will always be a part of my life.

When growing up I used to go to all the events and poker runs with my dad and his “bros” and to them I was like a second son to them because I've been around them since I was 3 yrs old. Also I've been hanging at the same bike shop for the past 12 years of my life with my dad and whenever he would go tattooed or anything like that I would be there with him, for example the tattoos I have now reflect what means a lot to me, I got my exact motor from my bike on my arm and I got my gear set also on my arm, both are pretty sentimental to me because the motor was given to me by my dad.

To this day I still go riding with my dad and all my friends and his friends except I'm on my own bike now that I personally built from the ground up. I first started the original build with my dad when I was fifteen, I had his original 1951 panhead motor from his first chopper and a lot of crazy ideas that most people told me it can't be done but I didn't take no for a answer and pushed on ahead for correct fittings of every single part in my bike, about 20 percent of the bike parts I personally handmade , for

example the frame was two frames and built into one for a 1951 engine to line up with a new 4 speed transmission, I built the rear fender mounts and sissy bar for packing stuff on for long trips, and plenty of small trick stuff.

I've ridden this bike over 25,000 miles to date so far and I've been to Daytona 3 times on it and my longest road trip was 1700 miles round trip to north Carolina and back for a huge chopper event. In 25,000 miles I've had generators blow up on me, primary belts snap, ignitions burn up and countless parts unbolt themselves due to vibration of the bike. A lot of people ask me if I enjoy working on my bike constantly and my honest answer is yes because I love working on motorcycles, its just the nature of the beast and I've so many great adventures and story's getting stuck on the side of the road. To me it's not about destination in my opinion it's all about the journey and the time you spend with your bros having great times.

In the past couple years I've had some great mentors help me along the way with everything I know now. If it wasn't for them I wouldn't be doing what I love every day of my life. Above all of them I have to thank my mother for letting me do what I do, I've rebuilt the garage into my own shop and most mothers wouldn't let their 16 year old son hit the road for a week on his bike to go to a bike event. That's just one of the great things about my mom she's been around this culture and lifestyle her whole life and understands how I feel about it all and lets me go and be myself.

Some of the great things I've learned from this project though is it's not about what you're doing on one specific day or one specific time in your life, it's about what got you to that point in your life and who was there to support you. I honestly feel like that's a message everybody can consider.

I know for a fact that I wouldn't be the person I am today without the parents and people I grew up around.