

22 YEARS HONKY TONK MOB - Year 2006

Here we go with the roots of a still ongoing story which will give you an inside view direct to the HONKY TONK MOB history. So align your mind to the time machine and turn back the page.

Way back in the late 70th's to the early 80th's, the custom bike scene in Germany and the rest of Europe was not such a big deal. Due to the lack of fabricated parts and custom shops, the interested people had to dig deep into the mechanical and vintage scene to get the needed parts for their ideas.

The style of most German custom bikes from this era was definite not to our liking, because we always preferred long, clean, low lines, in combination with less chrome, instead of high and tasseled Christmas trees. In England there were people like John Reed, Chris Ireland, Stu Garland, Maz Harris, Mick Watts and of course the well known Anthill Mob with Odgie, Smax and Scott which influenced us during that time. The Swedish people like the Bryds, Sofia Hogs and Gjutjaern, with their impressive Scandinavian long lines, also added style and ideas to the think-tanks of our Bavarian friends from the C.E.-Scene. In the USA, Arlen Ness, Ron Finch and Dave Perewitz with their low creations had been the big names in those days.

Also in Germany, people like Monza, Horst Heiler, Steve and Mimi Schneiderbanger, Rolf Schietinger, Uli Treiber, Duese, Ralflinger, Jogi and Rainer "Max" Ruider, Nobby Neumueller, Bernd Crossberger, Hansi Meier, Mat Lillich, Kurt Goller, Aritsch, Rob Phelps to name only a few, started to stick loosely together, and began sharing their ideas about cool customs from all the before-mentioned sources, and blending it with their own ideas and visions.

It was still possible to get fairly cheap hands on good solid vintage bikes with cool frames and styles. For those early custom projects we had the choice of the low plunger-framed models from BMW, NSU, HOREX and BSA, the rigid and swingarm-framed TRIUMPH or HARLEY, and some other even more exotics setups like INDIAN or PANTHER.

Of course you had to look for those deals, but the vintage scene was not the same kind of money-driven madness as it is today. And after you had found yourself a decent basis for a new custom project, you still had to collect and make all the bits and pieces to get the wanted bike together.

The need for parts and ideas faced you with the situation where you had to comb the scene, looking for connections and peoples who shared the same sort of interest in building cool decent custom bikes.

Keep in mind that in those days customizing was a fairly small affair, and you had to travel all over Germany and the rest of Europe to find the right people and parts. This situation was more or less the initial spark when a couple of the previously mentioned German custom maniacs got together and shared the idea of what would happen if we got all those people tied more together. Imagine what could be done together without the boundaries of borders or different languages. And beside the

love of bikes, our need for well-made music, parties, bike shows, drag races and cool people brought us in contact with similar minded people from all over the globe.

With a loose bunch of about 50 people from that inner circle, we showed up at the HOT WHEELS CUSTOM Show in Mannheim, and displayed a few of our bikes to a bigger audience. We collected the given entrance fee, and during a bonfire session with groovy moods and thoughts, we came up with the idea and do something special with this money bash in the near future.

The following months went by and finally we ran across a big wooden log cabin in the deepest of the blackest Black Forest, and believe it or not the Mob could arrange a weekend rent of the place in January 1985.

The idea behind the whole thing was to create a melting pot for people who love and share the same kind of interest, without any boundaries on different languages, bike brands or food tastes (except Odgie and his British HP sauce!!!!). To keep the people informed and excited about the upcoming happening, we searched for a name which suited the whole thing.

During a long and high psycadelic night session at Ralf's place one of us came up with the splendid idea of the now familiar and well-known name:

THE HONKY TONK MOB

The money from the Mannheim show was used to pay for food and drinks in the first year. So our first HONKY TONK WINTER PARTY happened in 1985, with about 100 personally-invited people. It was an instant hit, and it became the classy start of the HONKY TONK calendar for a whole 22 years now.

After the first HONKY TONK WINTER PARTY the MOB organized two big BIKE SHOWS in

1985 and 1986 in Schoenaich near Stuttgart. Those SHOWS were carried out together with the local Youth House and received an amazing press response all over Europe in various magazines.

In addition to the HONKY TONK SHOWS, the C.E. (Customizers East) People from HOF in Oberfranken, the NECKARTENZLINGER Connection, and Horst Heiler from ST. LEON-ROT with the Custom & Classic, all started to do similar public shows of their own. If you are interested in these stories you can read more about the details within the LINKS on this page.

After the second HONKY TONK in Schoenaich was finished, we decided to give the 1987 show another venue and moved it up to the ZECHE CARL in Essen.

This particular show was maybe the first time where we had to deal with too many people from the German Patch Club scene. A few of these visitors acted in absolutely dangerous and violent ways, with the final result that the responsible HONKY TONKERS made the decision that it will be the best to close the HONKY TONK SHOW for the next upcoming years. To understand that reaction you have to bear in mind that the HONKY TONKERS are more a bunch of motorized freaks

and custom hippies and therefore enjoy the freedom of a non-violent easy-going, laid-back scene much more, rather than the being the best and the biggest whatsoever attitude. Even though I have to admit that our fastest HONKY TONKER Sir Smax from Canada has taken the crown of the 2003 FIA TOP FUEL EUROPEAN DRAGRACING Championships with his 6000hp TOP FUEL dragster.

Although we have now continued with the HONKY TONK MOB SCENE up to the present, it is still unbelievable for us that after more than 22 years, HONKY TONKERS from all over the globe still join together in various events, gigs and situations. You still can spot the active HONKY TONKERS around in their own custom circles, but to get all of them together at one time and in one place is something else. They are so widespread all over the world, and the roughly estimated figure of about 150 people will normally never ever be seen on one place - but as mentioned before it is not the bigger the better intention it is always the appearance of the beloved individual character.

The HONKY TONK influence on the actual bike scene in Germany is maybe not as big as it was in the past, due to the fact that we are more interested in doing our own different thing instead of following the main stream with the big money-driven attitude.

For us the ultimate kick is still to have the right cool bunch of people in the right place, with decent bikes, good music, good food, good drinks combined with the outstanding talents of crooners like Schweino, Platschek and Smax; that suits us fine. And when in addition to that a long time not seen HONKY TONKER turns up out of the middle of nowhere, you can be sure that that is the icing on the cake and will keep our hearts and things going for the next upcoming 20 years.

The answer to all is there, blows in the wind, and peace of mind comes free - see you all somewhere round the Universe