

CUSTOMIZERS EAST



Killer Shovel with sidecar attached. Very creative, well engineered and looked the bollocks.

Sixties style Shovel showed incredible craftsmanship - check out the exhaust pipe going from round to twisted square and back again for starters.



Another Shovel combination, in survival mode. Look closely at the detailed workmanship.



Cute kiddie-sickle next to stonking street/strip powerhouse



Well smart big-inch Evo was in red primer and flat silver. Ran strong and started first kick all weekend.

Captain America is alive and well and living in Bavaria. I didn't see Elvis though.



Intruders don't rate much over here, but I've always thought they were quite cool. Tidy job on a 1400 model makes a practical mile-muncher.



Funky Suzuki had swarf from different coloured metals set in resin to create graphics and a YinYang on the tank. Far out man.



Totally groovy bobber. The way bikes should be built.

Bavaria - hotbed of customising. You wouldn't think so, would you, but I went over there in the summer to look up some old mates I hadn't seen for 15 years (and, rather craftily, coincided my visit with a custom show) and, let me tell you, there's some seriously good minds at work in Eastern Germany. WORDS & PIX: ODGIE

The show is put on by a cool group of like-minded folks known as the Customizers-East. They're into both cars and bikes and, once every two years, they hire the little local airstrip and put on their Drag/Custom Show. Their philosophy is simple: They don't want a big show that gets out of hand; they don't allow dealers or trade stands; they tend only to invite people they know - contacts usually made over many many years (although newcomers with their heads in the right spaces are always welcome) - and then they have a great time.

The 1/8th mile strip is open Friday night and all day Saturday, the hangar is used to accommodate the bike show (which spills out onto the hard-standing and right around the site) and, on Saturday night, they move the bikes to one side, crank up the flashing lights, dry ice and tunes, and have a party. Sunday morning everyone makes their way home, and

the C-E crew clean up, by dinnertime it's back to being a working airfield again. Cool.

Apart from catching up with very old friends, what really made the trip for me was the bikes. You'll get a feel for them here, but the real cool stuff I shot for features, and you'll be seeing them over the next few months. Let me tell you, with no exaggeration, I've been fuckin' about with bikes for nigh-on 40 years now and I've built them, ridden them, photographed them, won trophies with them and judged them in shows, but this was one of the best collections of bikes in one place I've ever seen. Okay, they were nearly all Harleys, but they were Proper Bikes, not tarted-up monstrosities, but hardcore, grass-roots motorcycles, obviously built by people with passion and experience, not a fat cheque book and a bunch of Yankee catalogues and no bloody idea. Honestly, there were so many nice bikes, it felt like biking heaven. At one point, just after another three simply groovy

motorcycles had just rolled in, me and me mate Harry-From-Near-Germania had to go and sit down. I wrote in my notes; 'I feel like my brain has just been slapped, like I've warped into some cosmic place where the best bikes exist!' (Apparently the German word for it sounds something like 'kerblattered' and translates fairly accurately as 'dumbstruck'.)

So what you see here will give you a feel for the show and a few general bikes but, believe me, there's a lot more good stuff yet to come, so keep watching this space for some solid honest motorcycles. And in 2007, around the end of July, if you're doing nothing take a trip to Bavaria. I did 900 miles each way on me own in a 50 year old American pick-up for a one-day show and it was well worth it. If you're a bike builder (as opposed to a bolt-together merchant), go and check out their bikes; you'll be impressed.



Yet another funky side-hack outfit. Very early Shovel motor, striking matt paint, and a small posy of wild flowers through the springers. The guy rode it in, lit a jossie and stuck it on the forks, then wandered off. Cosmic.

