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**WALT SIEGL'S
SORDILLO SALT FLAT**

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SPOTLIGHT: Walt Siegl Motorcycles

STORY AND PHOTOS BY STEPHEN BERNER

Walt Siegl Motorcycle

High style, no nonsense craftsmanship

NYC is known for a lot of things, some good, some not so good. But it has been blessed to have some talented folks live on its cold, hard granite. Some of the two-wheel influentials, such as Indian Larry, have been well covered in the press and conversely some have cruised under the radar of the populist media for the most part. These folks are busy doing great work, creating their own distinctive style, and applying their aesthetic philosophy based on living in a place that tests you at every corner.

Back in the early 90's *The Horse* did a pretty good job of covering this two-wheel ecosystem. They were, in fact, pretty much the only ones covering the NYC scene. Some of these urban bike-building talents, including Walt Siegl, survived the tests of the city and its "live-go fast" lifestyle. Some even developed rock solid reputations despite the flighty nature of the times and moved on from the immolating scene, creating businesses from their passions.

Walt is of the latter variety. He isn't a pursuer of all things media, although over time he's earned his fair share of press



But we are not here today to wax poetic on the wackiness of the 1990's NYC H-D scene, racing, or the merits of Ducati. We are here to take a look at some of the work to come out of Walt's shop hidden in rural (and beautiful) New Hampshire. He made the move with his wonderful family from NYC over two years ago and hasn't looked back. I'd describe Walt as a true craftsman of the European order. He does it all: designs, welds, bends tubing, paints, machines parts and tunes. There is not a system on a bike over which he doesn't have mastery. Walt isn't a blowhard, doesn't jump for the spotlight, and would most probably blush over my description of his

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(global, 1 might add,) and has been featured in most every major magazine title, either as a feature or a cover. He's also been recognized by folks outside the H-D community for his high level of craftsmanship and his road racing pursuits. Yes, Walt is a seasoned, competitive racer and he rides a V-Twin—a Ducati to be specific—and he rides the snot out of it.

Meeting Walt Siegl is a rare treat these days. Not being a scene-steer, busy doing all of his work himself and living in the woods of New England are lifestyle characteristics that don't exactly point to an action packed social schedule. Walt doesn't get out much, but he works relentlessly in his well-equipped shop, located in a rehabbed streamside mill. It's a cool workspace with great energy and it allows Walt to focus, something that's tough to do in an electrically charged environment, especially one such as Manhattan.

abilities. So be it.

Walt's machines are the kinds of bikes that builders and people in the know go nuts over. No screaming yellow honkers or shiny Easter eggs to attract the fanny pack crowd. All the love is in the details of Walt's machines. You have to look carefully and you need to have some knowledge to appreciate what is going on and what you are looking at. A lot of what makes these machines stand out are the small finessed details.

In Walt's H-D infused world, every part is open to scrutiny and improvement; there are no sacred cows. If he sees room for improvement, he makes it—and he makes it beautifully and respectfully. As an example, take a look at the clutch cable stand-offs on his machines; they're beautiful, graceful, useful, and simple. Through this lens, it is also clear that there are some things that

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Motobe

The Motobe came into my life through my friendship with Roger Miret (the lead singer of Agnostic Front; he is also the Rumlbers president, just in case you do not know the guy). I think it was 1989 or '90 when he dragged the Sporty in milk crates into my shop in Long Island City. He picked it up in Miami. Soon enough

he found himself a Shovel project and sold the Sporty to my friend, the artist Arthur Sordillo. His wife rode it around on, so he asked me to make it pretty.

It stayed a Sporty for many years until Art decided to get it loose on it again. Only this time he wanted a Sporty Sporty anymore. Those were his requirements. I came up with what you see now. —Walt Siegf



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Four Speed

I wanted to build a bike with the parts Harley-Davidson became so famous for; the springer fork, the four speed frame with its

low seat height, tall tires on black rims, knuckle and big primary hanging out. To exaggerate all the important components, I kept the tank and fender blue. —Walt Siegf



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Sordillo Salt Flat

Another Arthur bike. He picked up a set of 1950 Pan cases with papers for cheap. We were planning to build a bike around a small motor and run the bike in the 1200cc class at the Salt Flats. The original cases turned out to be cracked everywhere, so

Arthur opted for a small engine build. The entire project turned out to be quite expensive so Art threw out the plans. It turned out to be an interesting motor. One of the build turned out to be working with a square tank that Arthur made and we else about the bike had to answer the





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