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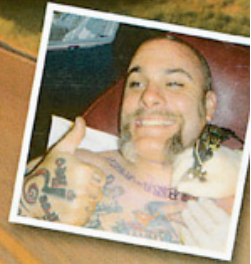
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The **Four Speed**

▶▶ **Walter Siegl's Creation**

BY COLLEEN SWARTZ
PHOTOGRAPHY: COLLEEN SWARTZ

Steve Jobs, the famous CEO of Microsoft once said, "Design is not just what it looks like and feels like. Design is how it works." This quote could just as easily be attributed to Walter Siegl and his bike designs. Walt does not have a 9-5 job building bikes; he has an every-waking-hour job because he loves what he does and it means that much to him.

You may have seen Walt's other creations, and if you haven't, this four-speed is a fine example of some of what you have been missing. Walt was commissioned to build this bike for a high-profile Eastern European client who wishes to remain anonymous. The owner of this bike is larger than life—although with a stance of 5'7", he is a former soldier, a hero, and a leader. Every aspect of this bike, from size, to stance, handling, and paint incorporated the physical, mental, and personal attributes of the owner.

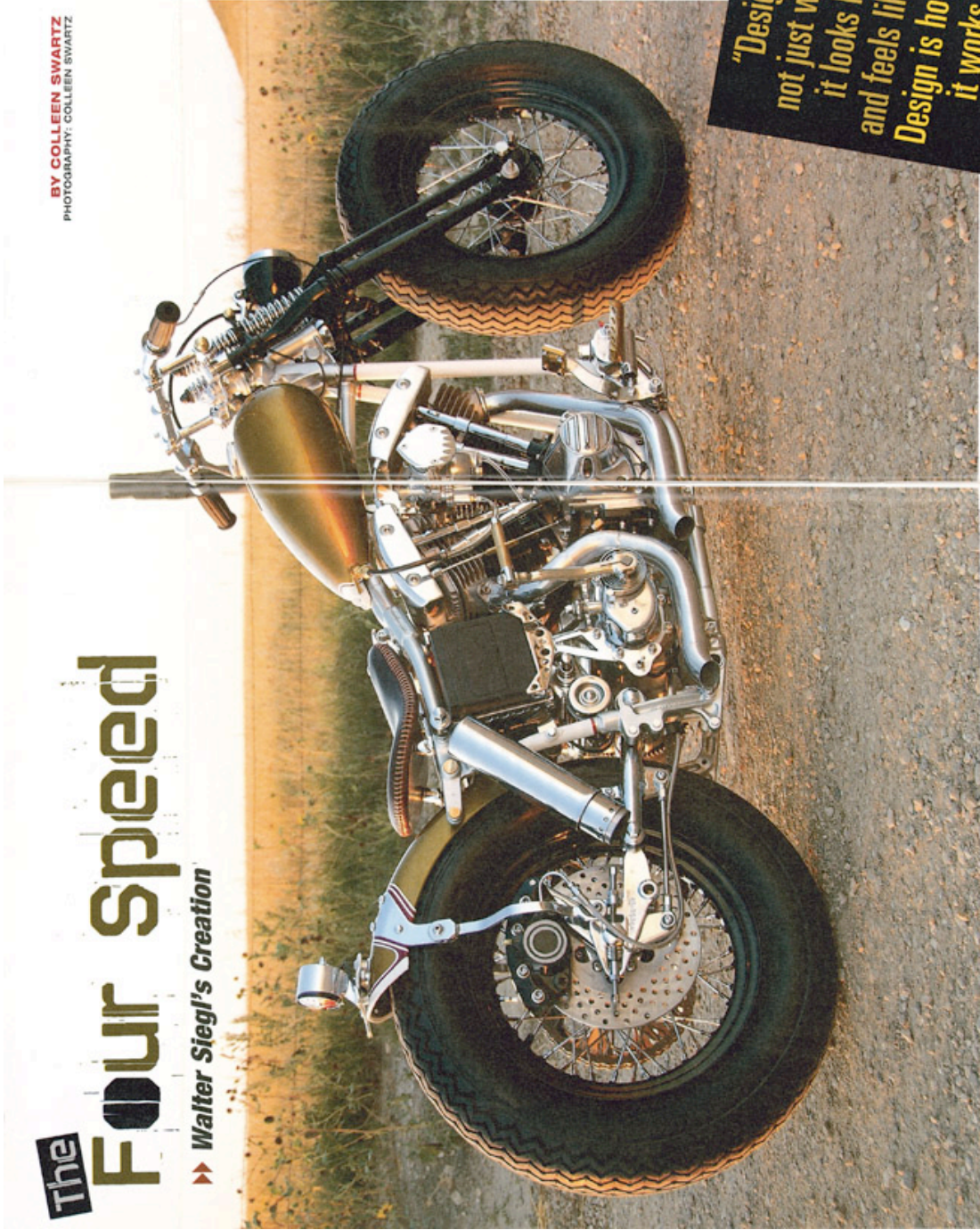
How does a New York City-based motorcycle builder garner such a commission? He lives a global life. Walt was born and raised in Austria, where he attended art school. Upon graduation he moved to Marseille, France, where he worked in the shipyards, and it was there that Walt started racing motorcycles. He raced for two years when a serious accident ended his professional racing career. Walt moved to Italy, where he worked as a toolmaker, and then to Germany as a welder and machinist. At the age of 24 Walt found himself in Russia working for an Austrian steel company. Twenty years ago Walt moved again when an opportunity to work in New York for the Austrian Foreign Service was offered.

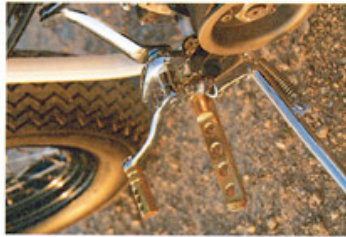
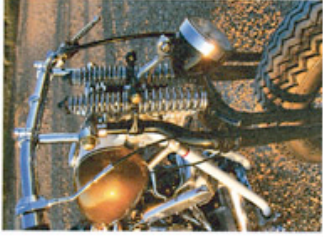
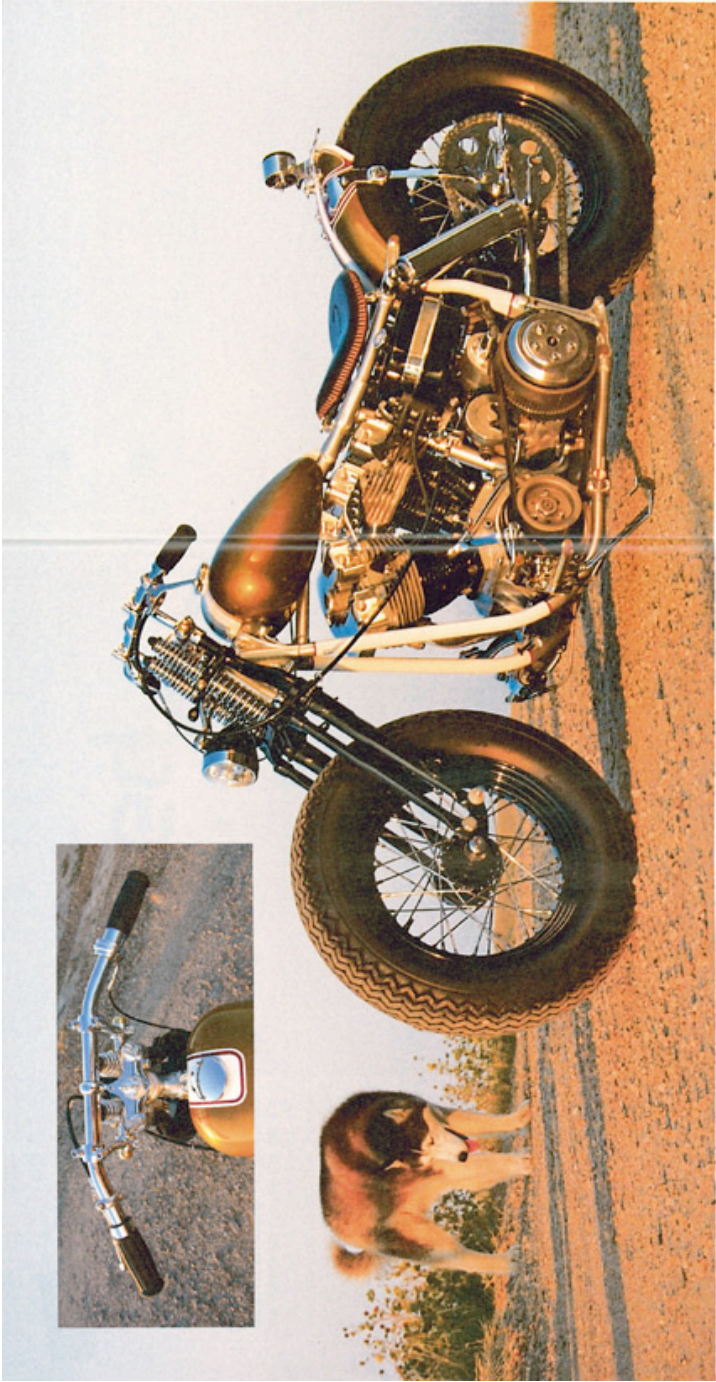
Since coming to the U.S., Walt has spent a good amount of time building bikes. His father and grandfather were both motorcycle enthusiasts and the apple didn't fall far from the tree, but this motorcycle enthusiast didn't stop with just owning and repairing motorcycles—he creates them.

This project began in February of 2007 with contact from his client who found examples of Walt's other work and asked him to build this scooter. Walt started with an '84 four-speed frame. The original four-speed square swingarm frame sat very high, which was incongruous with Walt's vision for this bike.

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"Design is not just what it looks like and feels like. Design is how it works."





Walt didn't hold back on that, either. The frame came first, with Walt hand-standing the roughness from the H-D castings while leaving their character, including the numbers, intact. Walt loves the original H-D castings, stating that, "the castings that Harley-Davidson did from the '30s right through to the early '80s are very organic and beautiful. They are one of the only manufacturers who took such care with the castings that they used." All castings on the bike were given a coat of silver paint while the frame tubes were painted white and metal to the silver with a fine red pinstripe.

The peanut tank had set too high on the backbone, so Walt re-fabricated it to narrow it slightly and deepened the tunnel to have it sit lower on the frame. The olive oil color for the fender and

producing. In keeping with Walt's desire to honor the designs of the past but utilize more modern improvements, Walt did a lot of work with the front end. He rebuilt it and had it powder coated. The original configuration of that front end had rockers with 2 different axle diameter openings. The original axle hub sported a very thin axle that needed small inner diameter bearings. Walt wanted to keep the rockers original but use the later style bearings in the hub; therefore, he had to fabricate the appropriate axle fitting the original rockers but utilize the new bearings. The rear swingarm was originally set up for an early wheel configuration as well. Walt modified the rear swingarm to accommodate a modern axle and Timken bearings, which provide longer life and strength. Paint is an integral part of this build, and

The common method for working around this issue had always been to install shorter shocks. Walt wanted the stance of this bike to remain short and nimble through using a 1945 stock front end and maintaining the rake for stability and handling. He wanted to maintain the full suspension attributes of the original shocks, so he relocated the mounts so the shocks would have full travel. This way the chassis of the bike was lowered, sits level, and the full suspension was maintained for the best performance. This stance gave the bike a very stoody attitude. The compact front end and rear suspension make this bike an aggressive and nimble ride, which is always paramount in Walt's design scheme. Every bike out of Walt's shop is a true rider, and it is something that Walt puts a lot of effort into

