

World's best custom on

► Brit-built bike wins Custom Bike World Championship
► MCN rides priceless V-twin on road ► Verdict: ★★★★★



Adam Child
Road Tester

SPECIAL TEST

adam.child@motorcyclenews.com

The day this award-winning bike arrived back in the UK, MCN was lucky enough to take the priceless V-twin for a spin on the road.

Sussex-based Shaw Harley-Davidson recently won the prestigious Modified Harley class at the Official World Championship of Custom Bike Building, held at the world's biggest bike rally - Sturgis in America. It was a world first for a UK bike builder.

With the bike uncrated, I get my first chance to see it in the flesh - and the pictures really don't do it justice. It's one of those bikes you end up gazing at in silence for a while, mouth slightly open, taking it all in.

Glass, brass and class

It's a heavily modified 2010 Harley-Davidson Softail Crossbones. This is a popular Harley to modify, because of the stylish springer front end. But loads of the

mods are subtle and, as with every good special, the more you look the more you discover the finer detail touches.

The small digital speedo, for example, fits flush inside the petrol tank and, believe it or not, the bellmouth is made out of glass and brass - a total one off (see main pic, right).



Chugging along with that rich exhaust booming in my ears, I'm in custom bike heaven

MCN'S ADAM CHILD

Shaw have also used brass for the footpegs and handlebar grips. The bars are old-school 1940 flat-track bars and the little headlight sits to the left of the front wheel, as the hand-made number board is where a conventional headlight would be mounted.

Obviously most parts have come from the good ol' US of A, specifically from legendary bike builder Roland Sands and his father's company Performance Machine Wheels. The seat pad and engine timing cover are Sands items, while the controls and switchgear, master cylinder, starter motor and transmission covers come from PFM. Exhaust-wise they turned to another American Harley specialist - Vance and Hines.

But a lot of parts have been built in-house or by British firms - the whole rear mudguard, for example, is a Brit made one-off. The battery cover is hand-made, along with most brackets and the number board. The 21-inch front wheel is a modified Harley-Davidson item and the rear has been modified to take the brake disc and sprocket all on the left side. This small alteration is typical of the fine detail that cleans up the lines of the right-hand side of the bike.

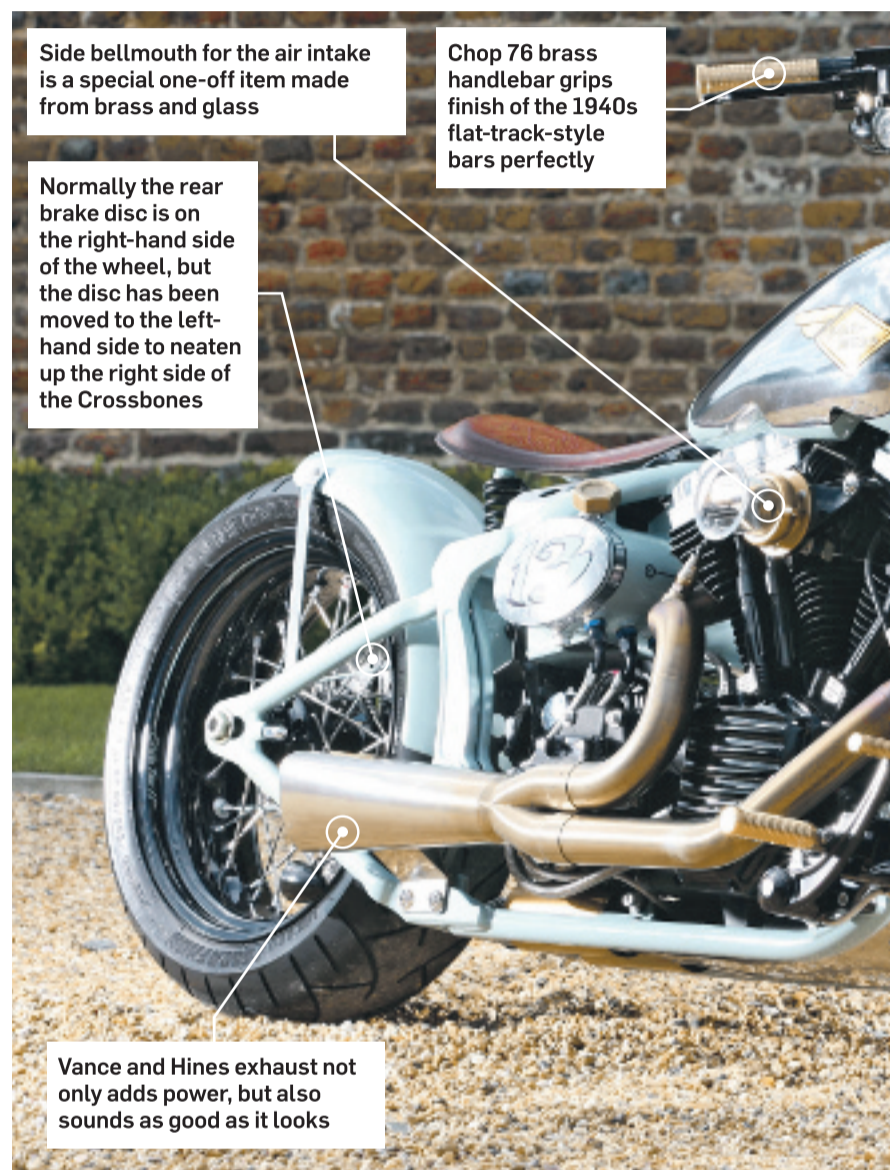
Riding the bike

Luckily Steve Willis, dealer principle and sales director at Shaw, granted us the first ever ride of the championship-winning bike, and as his staff look on with fear clearly etched on their faces, I fire up the 1584cc V-twin. Or I try. First job is finding the ignition switch, which is now hidden beneath the NY Chopper oil tank, for neatness.

The PFW starter button takes a little finding, too, as the three buttons on the right bar are identical. But this is a show bike, so these niggles can be forgiven - most show bikes I've seen have been unrideable, so it's impressive that this championship-winning machine is actually road legal.

Thankfully, it sounds almost as good as it looks. It's not ear-bleedingly loud, but sounds superb - even at the gentle pace I maintain for the first few miles.

What's really shocking is the fact that it rides so well. Considering the bike has



Side bellmouth for the air intake is a special one-off item made from brass and glass

Chop 76 brass handlebar grips finish of the 1940s flat-track-style bars perfectly

Normally the rear brake disc is on the right-hand side of the wheel, but the disc has been moved to the left-hand side to neaten up the right side of the Crossbones

Vance and Hines exhaust not only adds power, but also sounds as good as it looks



Exhaust has a degree of muffling



Speedo set into left side of tank

been designed to win shows, it's a pleasant, civilised, low-stress ride.

Smooth, safe ride

The underslung softail suspension works well and, combined with the Roland Sands seat, it makes for a comfortable ride. The bars mean even the riding

position is so relaxed I'd happily head off on a 100-mile road trip.

Steering is fine, too. It's not over-heavy like some custom bikes, and the only unusual aspect is the odd feeling of the brass grips. Brakes aren't amazing, as they are relatively standard, but manage to do their job. Besides, if you're speed-

hondapromo.com



WITH COMPLIMENTS

Buy a new VFR1200F in September 2010 and get **£1,675.00 worth of free accessories*** with your bike.

*Including Pannier kit, Top box kit, Main stand and Grip heater kit.

For details and other offers go to hondapromo.com

Extended test rides available!



OFFICIAL HONDA DEALERS:

- **Ist Line Motorcycles London**
020 83615151 Istlinemotorcycles.co.uk
- **Bransons Gloucester & Yeovil**
01452 313131 & 01935 474998 bransonsmotorcycles.co.uk
- **CJ Ball Honda Norwich**
01603 307500 cjbhall.com
- **Ecosse Motorcycles Aberdeen**
01224 638 894 ecossemotorcycles.co.uk
- **HGB Motorcycles London**
01895 676451 hgbmotorcycles.co.uk
- **Kent Motorcycles Canterbury**
01227 832601 kent-motorcycles.co.uk
- **Pidcock Motorcycles Nottingham**
01227 832601 pidcock.com
- **Sutton Motorcycles Bromsgrove & Tamworth**
0121 447 7722 & 01827 280905 suttonmotorcycles.com
- **Thunder Road Bridgend & Newport**
01656 661131 & 01633 868888 thunderroad.co.uk
- **Tippetts Honda Surrey**
020 83992417 honda-tippetts.co.uk
- **Victor Devine Motorcycles Glasgow**
0141 2258100 victordevine.com