

# SLIM PICKINGS

UK's Shaw H-D Picks Apart an '04 FSXTI



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PHOTOS: DREW TOMMON

**T**he definition of custom is to modify something to match one's personal taste. Comparing them is a lot like comparing women because what is considered attractive is up for considerable debate. For some, there is nothing like thick curves and round shapes to get the blood boiling. For others lean and mean

is the only way to go. It's that ebb and flow of parts and chops that influenced this 2004 FSXTI into one attractive ride, no matter who's behind the bars.

When a custom needs to be ridden, most of the crazy trends go right out the window. The artistic part comes into play in making rideable parts flow together seamlessly. Shaw Harley-



Davidson out of the UK prides itself on not only building some of the most attractive bikes in the world, but also making them suitable for use on any road.

Roland Sands is known world wide for his futuristic builds and innovative products. To duplicate the feel of functional art, the team at Shaw Harley was quick to make use of many RSD parts including the rocker boxes, air cleaner, rotors, and Diesel wheels. When asked what inspired the clean look, Shaw stated, "The bike was built with an inspiration of a fast racing silhouette. This was taken a step further with





the integration of a XR1200 speedo on the top of the gas tank to give it a race-inspired cockpit."

But is this bike just another pretty face or glammed-up trailer queen? "No way," explains Shaw about the owner behind the build, "The owner has KTMs and other adventure bikes, so he's used to riding a lot. He wanted a bike for cruising and something that would inspire him to take it out for a ride, not just to look at it. It started as a bolt-on project but quickly grew into another level once it hit the bench. Stripping the bike to its essence enabled the Shaw Speed and Custom team time to hide and minimize wiring, reroute and relocate all the hard parts, and give it a high-end finish. The hardest part was fusing together the Sportster's speedo with the Dyna tank and Softail frame."

Adding and removing parts at random can go one of two ways in the end. But all can agree this bike seems to have the right amount trick parts added and with just enough extras taken away. The end result is a clean, modern looking bike that would look great no matter what side of the street, or pond, you might be riding. **HB**

## SPECIFICATIONS

**OWNER** Shaw Harley-Davidson United Kingdom  
**SHOP** Shaw Harley-Davidson United Kingdom  
**WEBSITE** shawspeedandcustom.co.uk  
**YEAR/MAKE/MODEL** 2004/Harley Davidson/FXSTI  
**FABRICATION** Shaw Speed and Custom

### ENGINE

**YEAR/TYPE/SIZE** 2004/Twin Cam/88 ci  
**BUILDER** Shaw H-D  
**CASES** H-D  
**CYLINDERS** Two  
**HEADS** H-D  
**ROCKER BOXES** Roland Sands Designs  
**CAMS** H-D  
**EFI** H-D  
**AIR CLEANER** Roland Sands Designs  
**EFI CONTROLLER** H-D  
**EXHAUST** Vance & Hines Competition Pipe

### TRANSMISSION

**YEAR/TYPE** H-D  
**GEARS** Stock  
**CLUTCH** H-D  
**PRIMARY DRIVE** Open Performance Machine

### FRAME

**YEAR/TYPE** 2004 H-D  
**RAKE/STRETCH** Stock

### SUSPENSION

**FRONTEND** H-D Lowered  
**LENGTH** Stock  
**TRIPLE TREES** H-D  
**SWINGARM** Performance Machine – Phatail Kit 240mm  
**REAR SHOCKS** H-D

### WHEELS, TIRES, AND BRAKES

**FRONT** Roland Sands Designs Diesel 21"  
**BUILDER/SIZE** H-D  
**TIRE/SIZE** Continental Attack Customs 120/70/21  
**CALIPERS** Performance Machine  
**ROTORS** Roland Sands Designs Diesel  
**REAR**  
**BUILDER/SIZE** Roland Sands Designs Diesel 18"  
**TIRE/SIZE** Continental Attack Customs 240/40/18  
**CALIPER** Performance Machine  
**ROTOR** Roland Sands Designs Diesel  
**SPROCKET** Roland Sands Designs Diesel  
**PULLEY** H-D

### FINISH/PAINT

**MANUFACTURER**  
**COLORS** Porsche 911 Chocolate Brown  
**PAINT/GRAPHICS** Image Design Custom  
**PLATING/POLISHING** N/A  
**POWDERCOATING** N/A

### ACCESSORIES

**FRONT FENDER** N/A  
**REAR FENDER** Roland Sands Design Vintage  
**FENDER STRUTS** Roland Sands Design  
**GAS TANK** H-D Dyna  
**DASH** H-D  
**GAUGES** H-D  
**HANDLEBARS** Renthal Style  
**GRIPS** Performance Machine  
**MIRRORS** N/A  
**HAND CONTROLS** Performance Machine  
**FOOT CONTROLS** Performance Machine  
**FLOORBOARDS** N/A  
**HEADLIGHT** H-D  
**TAILLIGHT** Roland Sands Design Tracker Plate  
**TURN SIGNALS** N/A  
**SEAT** Roland Sands Design  
**STEREO** N/A  
**AMPLIFIER** N/A  
**SPEAKERS** N/A

**G**eorge Mayhew contemplates the low, lean and thoroughly pristine Harley-Davidson he recently had built to his own, exacting specifications (pictured below). “The great thing about motorcycling is that it’s a very individual pursuit – so it’s not really surprising that many motorcyclists want to own a truly individual bike,” he reasons.

Mayhew, who is the director of global corporate affairs for the National Grid, has been mad about motorcycles all his life and has ridden them since he was a teenager. But only now, at the age of 42, has he acquired the machine of his dreams after discovering the bespoke build department set up by a Harley-Davidson dealer in the sleepy, English hamlet of Holmes Hill, East Sussex.

The Shaw Harley-Davidson “Speed and Custom” workshop was only conceived by owner John Shaw in late 2009, yet a year later it took the world of high-end motorcycle art by storm when its Strike True II won first prize in the modified Harley section of the Sturgis AMD World Championship of Bike Building – the two-wheel equivalent of the Oscars.

For those who haven’t heard of it, the Sturgis Motorcycle Rally has taken place in Sturgis, South Dakota, almost every year since 1938

and has grown into the largest gathering of bikes and bikers in the world. It attracts more than 500,000 people and represents not a snapshot but a wide-format, high-resolution, technicolour portrait of US motorcycle culture. So the fact that one of its most coveted awards should be won by a Harley built in an English village (it’s the first time it has gone to a non-American builder) gives some idea of the abilities of Shaw’s workshop.

The publicity resulting from the win has attracted orders from around the world. These customers represent a new breed of affluent motorcycle fan, for whom a machine that has been hand-built to their personal specifications simultaneously represents a rolling work of art, the realisation of a dream, a practical form of transport and a statement-making accessory.

People have, of course, been creating custom and one-off motorcycles since the immediate postwar years. Discharged US servicemen adapted ex-war department Harley-Davidson WLA 45s to make stripped-down, minimalist “bobbers”, which were, in part, inspired by sportier European machines.

But, until relatively recently, custom-bike-building convention (which is probably an oxymoron) has decreed that the majority of machines are either home-grown specials

**Harley-Davidson 2004  
FXSTI Softail Standard  
customised at Shaw’s  
East Sussex workshop.**



# HARLEY AND ME

Building on the US trend for motorcycle customisation, a select band of workshops are turning dream machines into attention-grabbing realities. Simon de Burton reports.



painstakingly created by enthusiasts or radical creations made from the ground up by niche outfits such as Orange County Choppers, which shot to fame after becoming the subject of a Discovery Channel television documentary.

Shaw's Speed and Custom shop has, however, taken a different approach by offering modified Harley-Davidsons that are undoubtedly unique, but which retain the basic elements of the production bikes to ensure reliability and rideability. The firm will supply either a brand-new or pre-owned machine for modification, or work on a customer's existing bike. In any event, the end result will usually look startlingly different from the original machine, either because it has been given a superbly executed retro makeover or been turned into a futuristic road burner.

"I think we are probably unique in what we do, in as much as we are creating machines that are not so far-out that they become impractical, but which are sufficiently unusual as to make a considerable statement," says Steven Willis, the operation's sales director.

"There are really only two or three different types of modern motorcycle that can be used for this sort of customisation, and they are Triumph, Ducati and Harley-Davidson. Harleys are probably the most suitable, because it is very easy to interchange components and fit modified parts made by after-market companies such as California's Roland Sands, which produces a huge array of different bits to change the look of the bikes. You just can't easily do this to the majority of contemporary Japanese or European machines because of the way they are designed," he adds.

Individuality is increasingly important among the buyers of high-end motorcycles, and the fact that Shaw is able to provide it means the firm has attracted an international clientele. Prices can start from as little as about £500 for a special paint job, but for a fully customised bike that figure moves up into the tens of thousands of pounds.

"The Sturgis win has brought us clients from around the world," explains Willis. "Right now, we have more than 30 bikes in build for customers living in places as diverse as Monaco, Italy, Sweden, Australia and the UAE, many of whom have budgets of up to £60,000.

"As an example, we are in the middle of creating a bike for a Monaco client who has asked us to design a V-Rod that looks like a combination of the Bat Bike and something James Bond might ride; another buyer owns the fastest Overfinch Range Rover in Europe and so we've made him a Harley called Mission Impossible, which complements it. We have even been



## The end result is a bike that Steve McQueen would surely have wanted to ride.

commissioned by an Australian who wants a bike that he can use to promote his business selling wristwatches. The watches are famous for being extraordinary looking, so he wants the bike to reflect that." Coincidentally, watchmaker Bell & Ross recently acquired a Harley-Davidson customised and branded by Shaw, and it is already proving adept at spicing up the brand's horological happenings around the world (detail pictured above).

But although many moneyed motorcyclists are confident they want to own a bike that stands out from the crowd, relatively few actually have a clear idea of

feel happy rather than jealous or resentful."

Shaw, however, is not the only firm to have tapped into the market for customised motorcycles. Australia's Deus Ex Machina began to offer a similar service in 2006, although it converts a range of marques alongside its Harley-Davidsons, and specialises in older, classic bikes (one of its customised Harleys, a Sportster 1200, "The Bald Terrier", is pictured below left).

The concept has proved so successful that Deus has now evolved into a complete lifestyle brand, with its own destination store in Sydney, called The House of Simple Pleasures (pictured top), two further stores in Bali and another in California.

Interestingly, the success of Deus has inspired celebrated round-the-world biker and television presenter Charley Boorman, property developer Nicholas Cowell (brother of music impresario, Simon) and entrepreneur Jon Teeman to set up a business called Dukes Emporium, which is due to launch in spring 2013 at a location in London.

"The whole culture of motorcycling has changed significantly in recent years – it is now far more widely accepted as an up-market pursuit," explains Teeman. "Dukes Emporium will provide for that, by offering a customisation and sales service, high-quality clothing and accessories, books and artwork, a café/restaurant and also a club element. We're leaning towards the fact that people of a certain age – either lapsed motorcyclists or wealthy newcomers – appear to be looking for something different and individual."

One place, methinks, where remarks about midlife crises will not be welcome. ♦

### ON THE ROAD AGAIN

**Deus Ex Machina**, The House of Simple Pleasures, 98-104 Parramatta Road, Camperdown, Sydney, NSW 2050 (+612-8594 2800; [www.deus.com.au](http://www.deus.com.au)). **Dukes Emporium**, [www.dukesemporium.com](http://www.dukesemporium.com). **Shaw Harley-Davidson**, Holmes Hill, East Sussex BN8 6JA (01825-872 003; [www.shawharley-davidson.com](http://www.shawharley-davidson.com)).



From top: Deus Ex Machina's Sydney store. Detail from Shaw's custom-made bike for Bell & Ross. Harley-Davidson Sportster 1200 customised by Deus Ex Machina.