

bike

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**Art for
Art's sake**
**HAND CARVED HARLEY
2,000 HOUR TRIKE**



bike

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AMERICAN MURAL

Mike Key flew to the States this year to cover the auto world's Street Rod Nationals. But on his travels he also pointed his lenses at enough bike action to return with this contemporary record of the land that invented customs.

LOWRIDER styling, turbocharging, engraving, murals — this incredible Harley (top right — an engine detail of which is featured on the cover) runs the gamut of just about every trend that's hot in US customising today. Photographed in the Los Angeles home of publisher Tom McMullen, who was shooting it for one of his own magazines, this gem is a show bike only.

Meanwhile, back in the Midwest a guy named Dave Bell not only draws cartoons for McMullen's mags but also specialises in a pinstriping service for bike and car bodywork.

The creations in the main pic and bottom right shot show his work on a Harley 74 and a Z1 Kawasaki built by Smith Brothers and Fetrow, a custom house in St Paul, Minnesota, where Dave is based. When he's not busy crafting other people's bikes and cars, Dave chooses British for his personal two-wheeled transport — a '57 650 Triumph, painted by himself, of course (centre right).

With the lowrider cult holding firm for the moment, you might think that more traditional chops are about as welcome in the States as a Morris Minor on the Pennsylvania Turnpike. But it's just not so, as the '55 Harley panhead owned by Nick the Greek shows (bottom left). High pipes and peanut tank — where were you in '62? The bike was snapped outside Nick's workshop, where the stream of customers proves that he's no blinkered traditionalist when it comes to all-round custom work.

The black Honda-4 is typical of the classy products built in California custom shops. Rigid rear end and a mere teaplate for a front brake, yet somehow it doesn't seem impractical in the easy-rollin' Golden State.







AMERICAN MURAL

NIGHT scenes at Porky's Drive-In in St Paul (bottom pic and top right). Porky's is the city's hang-out for profiling (bottom) and street racing, and in among the lowrider Chevies and chopped Mercurys you find real working choppers like the Harleys in the top shot.

Apparently, business at Porky's was dwindling fast until an auto club named Cruising Customs adopted the place as their social centre and brought with them scenes straight out of *American Graffiti*. Mike Key heard that the night after he visited the place, the local fuzz even joined in the sanctioned street racing.

Pic on the right shows the interior of the Smith and Fetrov emporium. The sign reads, 'If you have the money in your hand to buy any of these bikes, please sit on any one you like. If not —

DON'T.' Quite so.

Chopper shop on Beech Boulevard, Los Angeles, has exquisite customs arrayed outside like any Five Star dealer in England (above). Just like rock 'n' roll, they've been saying for years that the chopper is about to die. Instead, the time-honoured chop has adapted an amoeba-like ability to perpetuate itself, mainly by using newer and more sophisticated power units as they appear over the years.

