

# Harley-Davidson XLCR

Lo, Though I Ride Through The Valley Of The Street Racers, I Fear No Challenge, 'Cause I Ride A Bike From Willie G. And Co.

**S**TYLING EXERCISES are often wishful and well-meaning approaches to various products, in our case motorcycles, but they can be terribly frustrating and evoke the gut reaction, "I wish I'd never seen it." That's because, quite often, what we peek at in the drawing or mock-up stages, never sees the light of day. We are tantalized, then handed a cold shower in the form of the old, "It'd be too expensive to build." So we would often greet these so-called plans for the future with mock interest. That is until Harley-Davidson's Willie G. sprung one on us just a little over a year ago.

Officially dubbed the 1977 XLCR, the new H-D cafe racer began as a project of the company's William G. Davidson, son of former H-D President, William H. Davidson, and present head of the styling department.

The cafe racer motif isn't what we're used to seeing from the AMF motorcycle division, but public and dealer reactions were strongly enthusiastic, hence the decision to go ahead and make the machine available to the people clamoring for such a design.

The cafe concept, born in England and popular in many European countries, embodies a desire for rider-only specialized equipment with emphasis on handling and performance. Riders and their pseudo road racers sprint from one cafe to another, arriving at their destinations with lots of stories and lies about their latest dash through the countryside.

The idea inevitably found its way to the United States. Once the spark of popularity was aroused, manufacturers wanted to get in the swim. Honda touched its toes in hesitantly with its 'F' models of the CB400, 550 and 750, retaining the influence of the "cafe set" with 4-into-1 exhausts and spicy styling; yet two-passenger comfort and convenience remained. Accessory parts builders dove right in, turning the whole concept into a small but viable segment of the marketplace.

Where H-D fits into all of this is somewhat confusing, because its past image and directive marketing is concentrated in other areas. Perhaps the XLCR can be put into a better perspective if we liken it to Kawasaki's LTD900 and the Honda Limited Edition GL1000. All are limited-production models with their own form of factory customizing, making them unique, attention-getting eye-pleasers.

The XLCR is certainly an eye-pleaser.

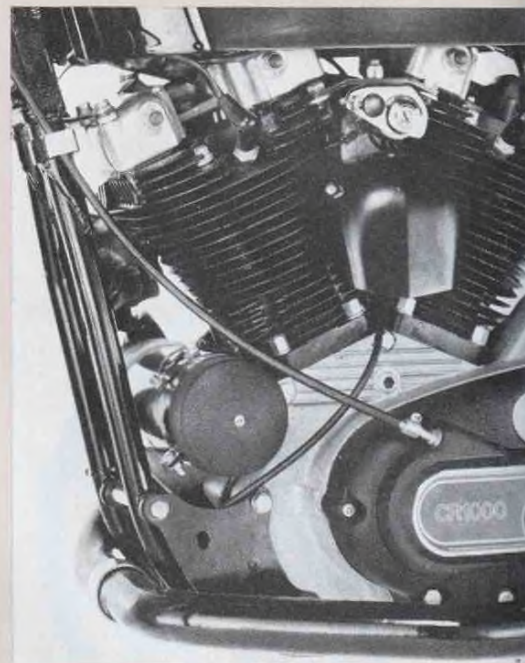
Resplendent in black on black, the 1000cc custom is a derivative of the Sportster and the famous XR750 racer models. The engine is a Sportster powerplant, except that many components are done up in matte black to complement the rest of the bike. The front portion of the chassis is straight Sportster, while the remainder measures out the same way as an XR750. This way, a modified XR750 seat and tail section, as well as the triangular oil tank, could be used.

Morris aluminum wheels with Goodyear AT tires lend a classy touch and are in keeping with the high quality of the total motorcycle. Kelsey-Hayes disc brakes are utilized front and rear, the front using dual components, the rear a single. Front calipers are mounted behind the fork legs. Forks are similar to those found on the XL1000, but at the rear H-D has turned away from the canted shock position and gone the more common route of mounting the XR750 shocks in a conventional, nearly straight-up-and-down mode. A boxed section swinging arm accommodates both the shocks and rears-type footpeg bracketry.

Pipes are black chrome and meet an 86-dBA noise limit, but are too loud for California's more stringent 83-dBA requirement. How AMF will handle that is not known at this point, but there is no doubt that H-D can sell all it produces without California's help. And according to the H-D people, the XLCR is the most powerful bike ever to roll off the assembly line at York, Pa., and they are probably not that anxious to put a lid on some of that performance by capping up the mufflers for California's sake.

Handlebars and snub-nose fairing fit the rest of the bike's image. Rider position will be somewhat crouched, but not too extreme, just enough to be racy and down out of the wind. The steel fuel tank can be gripped nicely between the rider's knees and the gloss black finish is highlighted perfectly by a gold-plated 1903-style Harley-Davidson nameplate on each side.

The new XLCR shares other 1977 H-D model changes, such as an externally adjustable primary chain and improved oil pump, just to name a couple. The new bike is the highlight of the 1977 H-D line and certainly deserves the attention it is getting. Look for the world's first complete road test of the XLCR in an upcoming issue of CYCLE WORLD. *(Continued on page 82)*

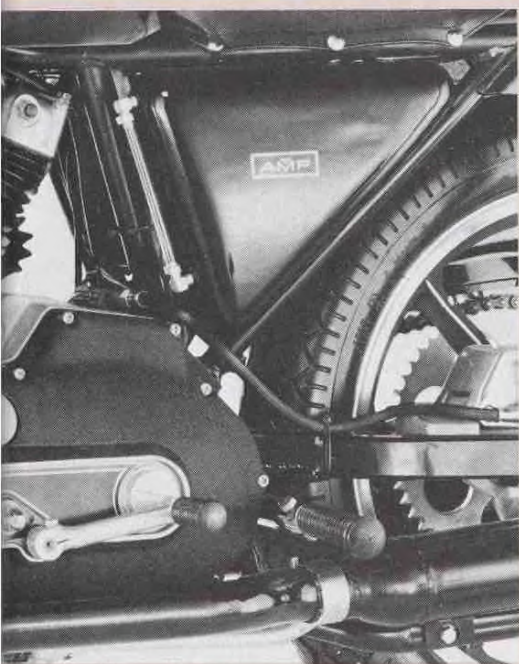


Engine is a 1000cc V-Twin. A four-speed transmission is used and that's really all you need.

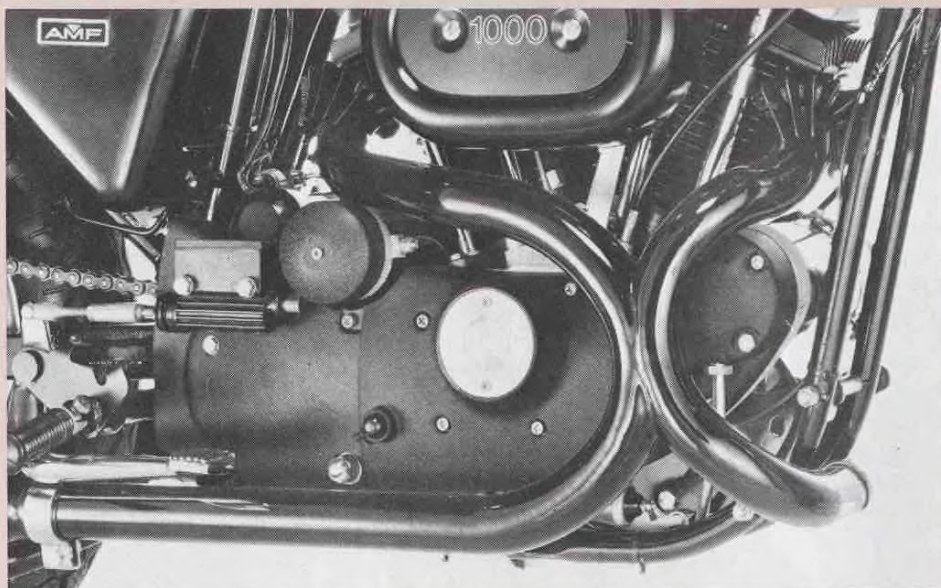
Perhaps the machine's best feature is its narrow profile.





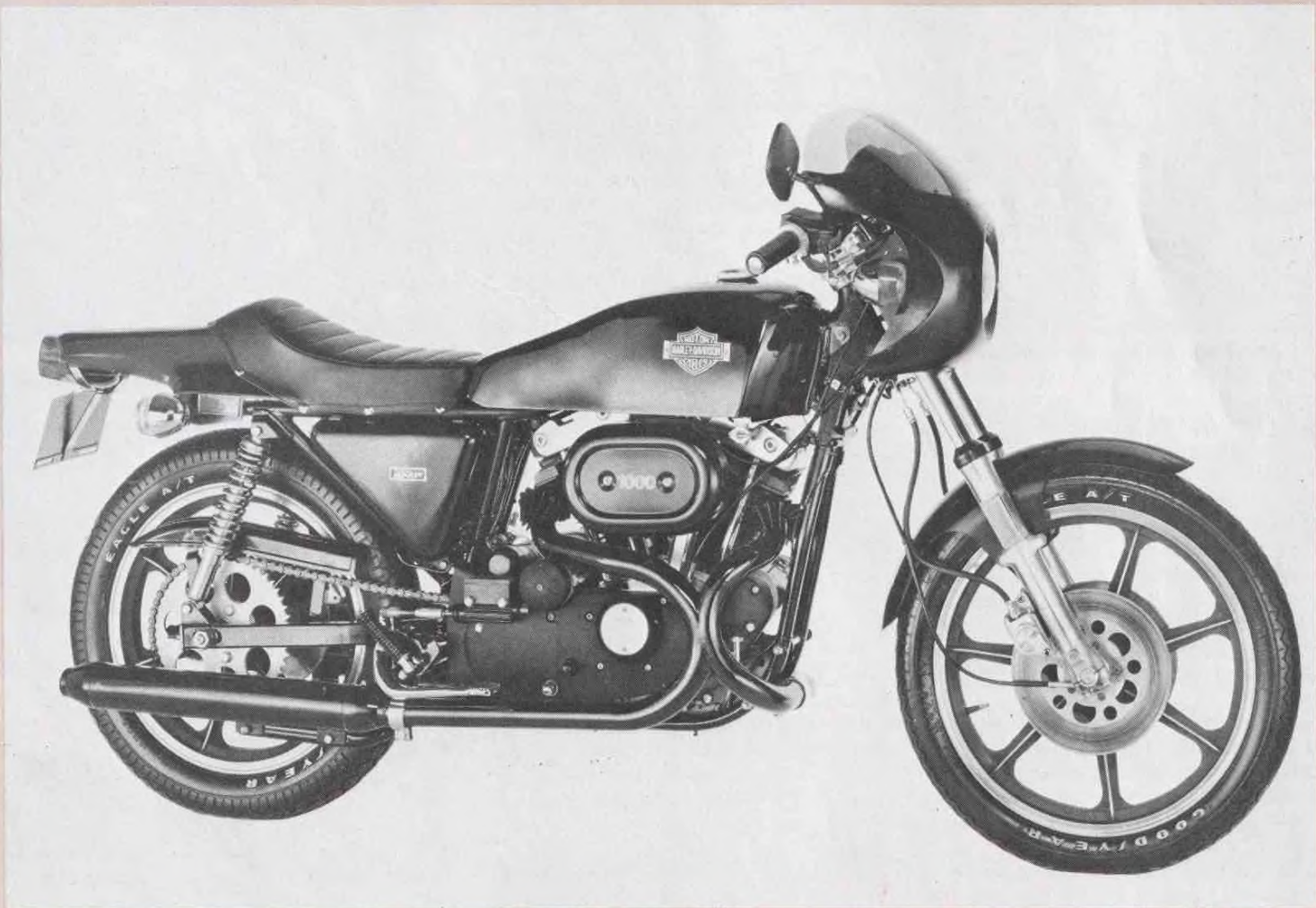


Photography: AMF/Harley-Davidson



Unusual exhaust system is finished in black chrome.

Radical is the best way to describe H-D's new cafe racer.



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