

# His Majesty The Hog

THE EVER-LOVIN' CHUG-A-LUGGIN' MONSTER MOTOR  
SPORTS A TRICK THRONE FOR '77 KING AND QUEEN

By Bob Greene

Photography: Pat Brollier

**W**hen a given model dedicates itself completely and without reservation to a single cause, it becomes a specialist. Motocrossers, trialers, road racers and a few enduro bikes are counted among this elite group. What they do, they do best, but unlike the compromised universal types, they are not expected to range beyond the vertical parameters of their design. Equally qualified in this strict delineation of purpose is Harley-Davidson's 1200cc FLH V-twin, the largest, longest, lowest, heaviest, toughest load-haulin' super cruiser of the tourers. The Electra-Glide, King of the Highway.

It wasn't always so. The predecessor of the FLH was the Kawasaki Z of its day—1936. Weighing in at little more than a present day 750 twin, the forerunner of the King was a raw-boned 110-mph stocker capable of drilling them all with ease. A free soul. Only years later did the escalating demands of the American Gypsy take control of its destiny and slowly but surely box it into the touring corner. The frame was beefed for sidecar work, road-eating 16-inch balloon tires were mustered in along with guttered rain-proof fenders, driving lights and an endless parade of concessions to the Arkansas Traveler paying the bills and calling the shots.

The 780-pound end result—full of gas and 100 pounds of standard accessories—is what we see today, almighty to the serious tourist, clown of the cafe set. Beauty was never more in the eye of the beholder. But as big and heavy as it is, no part of the "Hog"—as it has become affectionately tagged—is overstressed. The load carrying capacity of the FLH is legally nearly double that of its nearest competitor, 698 pounds compared to the 360-pound payload of the Gold Wing. While other touring machines are near or over their listed GVW rating the minute a passenger prances aboard (not to mention luggage), the ol' Milwaukee pack horse's near-700-pound limit borders on unachievable. And even this government spec is a laugh if you check

the Guinness Book of Records crediting the Harley with successfully maneuvering under the back-breaking load of 17 members of the Huntington Park Elks Stunt and Drill Team—3482 pounds! Wanna carry an extra sleeping bag? Hell, throw in a dozen or so.

Then isn't it a bear to wrestle? The first day, yes. Then a strange phenomenon occurs. The human capacity to acclimate manifests itself, each day the big bruiser becomes a little lighter and more maneuverable, shrinking with the passing of time until its heft is overwhelmed by familiarity. In extremely skilled hands its maneuverability can make grown men cry.

It was both my pleasure and embarrassment, along with a couple other journalist compadres who fancied themselves not too shabby with a set of handling tubes, to get blown in the weeds by a former road racer on a full dress Hog while transcending a tortuous mountain pass. That was with the former drum brake model, and we were riding Europe's finest! He was parked and waiting for us on the far side of the hill—G-r-r-r. That vaporous Mr. Murphy is still around and could probably be coaxed out for a repeat performance for those who've lost faith in the press. Bring money.

How can a big oaf of a motor like this, decked out in full Sunday-go-to-meetin' regalia, get away with such shenanigans? It's got a tire patch like a Mac, and the center of gravity has to be an underground movement. Torque... throw the gearbox away. Engine mass is extremely low, giving a pendulum-like feel without counterpart. This underslung chassis is a blessing in disguise; while it gets you into the floorboards earlier than most, this same limitation keeps the bike from being laid over to such an extreme that might cause it to go. You may run out of road but chances of sliding out are remote. To make the Hog hustle, put 'er down on the hardware and let the sparks fly as you hone the floorboards to a razor edge. But if you let it become a habit, sidecar fork springs and max-

imum rear shock preload are recommended, elevating the FLH to a tolerably swift mountain companion. Hey, I've fallen into that trap again, trying to make a Gurney Eagle out of a Fleetwood Caddy. No, if your racing blood has a low flash point, pass; the Electra-Glide is a sightseeing trip meant to be tempered through the chicanery, smoking it out across the big valleys at your pleasure and arriving relaxed.

It could well be an epochal year for the FLH 1200; last year's sales were up dramatically, and the 1977 version includes a motorcycle first that promises to be as dynamic a tourist attraction as Harley-Davidson's pioneering hydraulic valve lifters, front and rear discs, safety rims, electric starter and myriad of other innovations. The parallelogram saddle. Their unique sprung saddle of yore, though incorporating almost as much travel topside as many swing arm frames at their rear wheel, had the disconcerting characteristic of providing uneven amounts of vertical movement to rider and passenger, also being too short and too high. The rider, being nearest the pivot point, got too little action while his partner got too much. The solution, though belated, is still another industry first in that the new 4-inch-longer and 3-inch-lower seat does not now hinge at the nose, but rides on a non-linear parallelogram substructure of scissors-like arms that rise and fall in a perfectly level attitude ensuring equal comfort, travel and stability to rider and passenger alike. The saddle pan, suspended on the traditional seat post tube spring at its forward end and two fender-mounted coil springs at its rear, has up to 3 inches of flotation shielding human cargo from harshest road cruelties. Total suspension, including a couple inches from the 5.10x16 tires, an average of 4 inches fork and shock travel, 2-3 inches saddle and an inch or so saddle padding, gives 8-9 inches overall. The result has to be experienced to be believed, like overnight the Department of Highways sneaked out and rubber-plated all the roads. And yet, saddle action



Bearing down on Solvang, California, a quaint blend of Dutch and Spanish influence, with Managing Editor Patt Dietz—tricky way to get more pages in the book.





# His Majesty

"IT KNOCKED MY SOCKS OFF  
WITH A 100 MPH READING!"

is tight enough that it does not lose that necessary feeling of oneness between rider and mount; if anything this intimacy is enhanced over the former pivoted couch because of the more predictable and better controlled action. Strictly solo riders may, however, find that this sculptured saddle is too dictatorial in that it does not permit the driver to move aft and stretch out on a long trip since it is in reality two bucket saddles nose to tail. While the forward position is comfortable, this limitation may make their conventional saddle still the way to go for you lone rangers. Personally, I'd opt for the new setup because of its improved action and lower seating position.

Its real name is "Comfort-Flex" seat, conceived by stylist William G. Davidson and designed and built exclusively for Harley-Davidson by the Milsco Company which has been manufacturing Milwaukee's saddles for many years. With all due respect, it was perfected by "fanny" engineer Dick Swenson, becoming a product of function more than styling. The high grade molded vinyl saddle includes friction shock dampers with five positions plus an open position for elevation to gain access to the oil tank below. Further, saddle height may be adjusted down for folks built too low to the ground. Being body-contoured and sitting over three inches lower than before, the Comfort-Flex saddle nests the rider closer to the machine for superior control. And owners of pre-'77 Harleys will be glad to hear that a retrofit model is available.

As for our test machine, its moment of truth had come and gone before we received it; Fleet Test Manager Jack Malone had the honor of breaking it in on a blistering 750-mile weekend run to Arizona and back during the hottest weather we've had in years. Jack reported the temperature at a Blythe, California gas stop hit 115 in the shade, and he was pulling right at 45 miles per gallon on a showroom-tight engine. And no problems—what a way to christen a fresh motor! Jack added a quart of oil in Arizona and another back in L.A. upon return home, much of which was lavished on the rear chain since Harley is one of the few remaining marques which retain the chain oiler, and ours was set on the fat side in lieu of crowding circumstances. For the plugs read clean and the rollers went the route without adjustment, although they were deserving by the time Jack got back to the ranch.

Finally our big moment came.

Plans called for the usual city evaluation, mountain performance runs and mileage check, with a 1400-mile escape to Bonneville and back, non-stop each way. Since the AMA Speed Week in August would fall a month after this issue went to press, a brief follow-up report of this phase of the test would have to be tucked into the regular Bonneville report. But the Harley would be in our hands in the interim and would provide a lot of feed-back since total mileage would then be near 5000 miles.

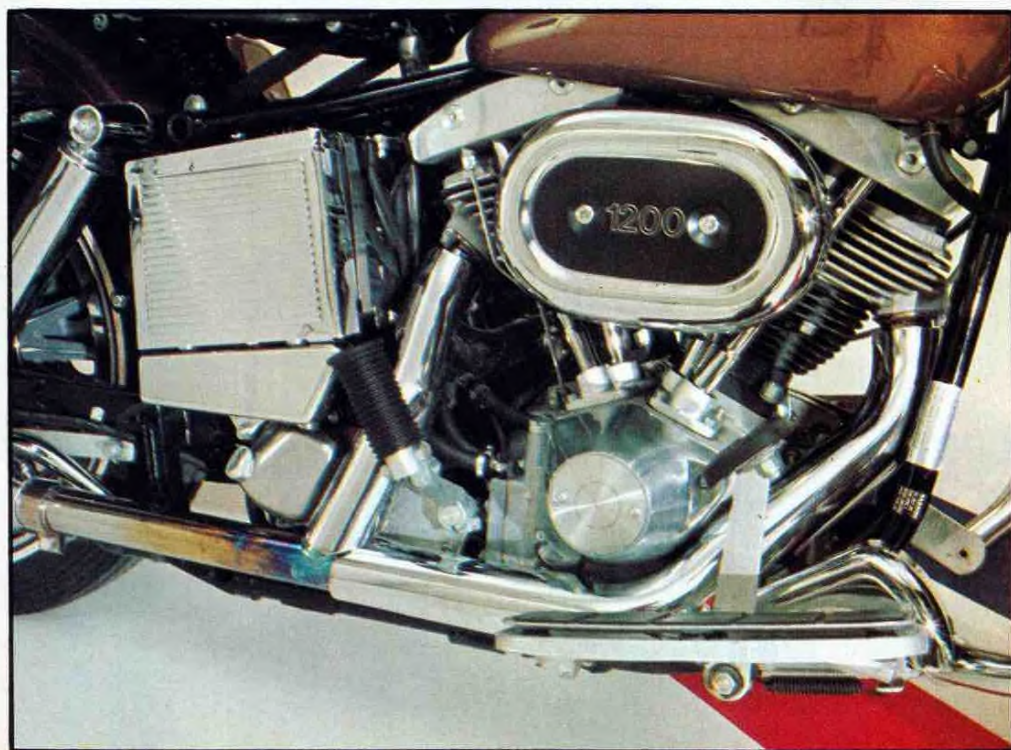
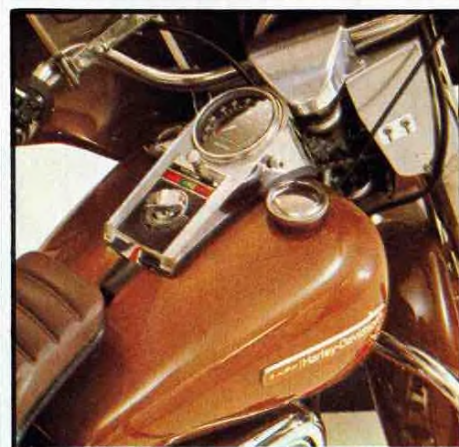
I couldn't wait to get the big dude up on the mountain. It had been a couple of years since I'd herded a Hog through the hills, and that meant starting virtually from scratch. Easing into it, first impressions were that the mountain timing ritual might be a little off the usual 60 mph or so pace, but as the miles piled on, that old feeling returned and the cadence picked up. Checking in on the far side, the stopwatch showed a still creditable 57 mph average, not bad for a Chicken on a Hog. Could have smoked it harder at the outset, but even so we had everything down but its drawers in the last 15 miles, dipping into third (it's only a four-speed, you know) several times to push that billboard of a shield through the uphill breeze. Packing a hundred pounds of accessories over the average naked scooter, the Harley hustles remarkably well. Most surprisingly, it got into the floorboards on only a few occasions, and then only lightly; this with the shocks set on full soft, making me wonder if the Seventy-sevens aren't coming through with tougher suspension. They say no. And they *didn't* jack it up. Know what those sneaky Scotsmen did? They just cocked the floorboards up at a slight angle to delay scraping! In any event, handling, though limited, was damned good, neutral when rolling through the esses and not the least whippy with 22 and 26 pounds of air front and rear. Only one aspect of performance was less than impressive—the single hydraulic disc brakes front and rear. They have ample swept area but the front caliper especially required excessive pressure to operate. Strange, too, because when Harley introduced their juice brakes several years ago, they were delightfully easy pulling and unusually progressive. But due to complaints of abnormal wear and loss of friction in the rain, harder and less sensitive pucks were substituted. But now so much pressure is required, even from my 40-year steel grip, that it is difficult to tell when you've got a handful until

the tire begins to chirp. My recommendation would be something in between the two puck consistencies, if not closer to the softer material, paying the price of more frequent changes, and to hell with the rain. Pushing hard over the 5000-foot mountain, gas mileage dropped to 30 mpg, still better than most big bikes covering the same piece of ground with identical verve. But this was due for a 50% improvement on the ensuing level highway coming up. Remember that this mountain-humping figure embraced a long speed shot that knocked my socks off with an even 100 miles per hour reading, pushing that fork-mounted fairing that in an earlier day could have propelled the Mayflower. In that same context, it was as steady as Plymouth Rock at full tilt. But an annoying aspect of the fairing is its acoustical characteristic that amplifies and reflects engine mechanical noises up around the rider's head like a swarm of angry bees. As a result of our findings, a possible fix has been passed along to the factory that could reduce this drumming to half its present level. Also, the separate clear upper window of the fairing, even in the lowest of its three positions, was too high for this tall rider and required trimming 1½ inches off the bottom of the plexiglass and moving it that same amount lower in the brackets before being able to see over the top of it—I can't stand to look through the things.

Did the King of the Highway live up to its legend? Taken in the context that it was given, affirmative. The unparalleled 61-inch wheelbase and total suspension program eat pot holes and road irregularities like the germ-seeking gremlins of a popular cleanser commercial, glopping them up in a remote fashion that makes it difficult to tell which part of the system got the last shot at the remaining residue of impact. The long chassis slows them down, then feeds them bits at a time through an imperial pecking order of springs and oil, usually netting only a gentle dip or jostle at most through the final rubber-mounted handlebars. Although each motorcycle deals with suspension in its own inimitable way, and some may term this one overkill, the fact remains that there's no ride relatable to that of the FLH.

Although the engine isn't rubber-mounted, vibrations from the nearly four-inch crank stroke are quite acceptably subdued by the machine's sheer mass and recently sophisticated factory balancing technique up through 75 mph. But as the needle







# His Majesty

## "RUN WHATCHA BRUNG TIME IN THE TOOL DEPARTMENT"

starts to crowd 80, the tingle begins to tango and only the distraction of maneuvering at higher speeds delays the sensation of discomfort until the throttle is rolled back to a more serene 70 or so. At sensible, and I might add legal, speeds, vibration is accurately described as a lazy plodding, even pleasurable to the senses. Extended riding provoked no tingling or numbness of hand sometimes experienced with the equally spaced and electric-like power impulses of higher turning motors. The V engine configuration is more akin to galloping horse than buzzsaw. Some of the vibes never get beyond the chassis, such as the ones that are cut off at the floorboards by means of an ingenious elastic cushion between boards and foot pads. The foot pad actually floats on a series of rubber balls that snap into the pad and plug into holes in the floorboard beneath. The principle works like magic, allowing the floating pad to move laterally and almost completely insulate rider's foot from chassis.

Further reducing rider fatigue is the large knurled throttle drag on the right handlebar that can easily be dialed on or off using only the thumb, without relaxing throttle grip. Pulling on a new Keihin butterfly pumper carburetor this year, the spring-loaded single throttle cable can be quickly and effortlessly locked to hold a steady rpm on the road, or turned off to restore the self-closing feature now required by law. Locking the throttle reel down during straight ahead cruising hour after hour allows the right hand to rest as well as the left and is an absolute must for a touring machine, tantamount to automatic speed control on a car. Hand cramp and numbness are eliminated. Conversely, in that same area, I didn't care for the hand switches controlling starter, horn, turn signals, dimmer and kill button; most are pushbuttons of identical size and too easily confused. The individual left and right turn signal buttons are spring-loaded and automatically de-stiffen when thumb pressure is relaxed.

Getting deeper into the Good News-Bad News department, I still prefer Harley-Davidson's now unique method of mounting the instrument panel, including choke button, atop the gas tank rather than the forks in the interest of eliminating wire chafing around the frame neck and getting all weight possible, plus conduit drag, off the forks for easier and more sensitive steering. Also admired is their ignition switch which can be left unlocked, key in pocket, and still turned on or off if desired, saving

fumbling for the key during brief stops. Of course, only an unwise Hog rider would leave his animal untethered and out of sight, for like the Corvette, the FLH is also Number One on the rip-off parade. But in a paradox of inconvenience, they put the switches for the four-way flashers and auxiliary driving lights down on the right rear fork nacelle, making it necessary to turn loose of the throttle to flick them on, when they could easily have put them on the left. Harley has finally gone to the automatic-on headlight wiring setup to please the Feds, and what lights! A special high intensity bulb shoots a flat, penetrating 60-watt high beam and 50-watt low. But can you imagine a \$4324 motorbike without a tool box? Not even a monkey wrench? It's run whatcha brung time in the tool department, their out being that even a beginner can have the rear wheel out and on the ground in 12 minutes using only a crescent. And what rich turkey doesn't own a crescent wrench? With a machine of this weight, a centerstand borders on impractical. Seasoned Harley people know the answer. Merely pull two clips in each saddlebag by hand, removing the bags in a few seconds, wrench the axle nut off, roll the dude partially over on its crashbars and pull axle and wheel out the right side. And chain adjustment could be one of those 20-second jobs, ala Osa, since neither axle nor adjuster nuts are fettered by cotter pins or double locking nuts. But it takes several minutes to pull the cotter pin from the castellated nut holding the brake caliper anchor because of muffler interference, and it is necessary to loosen the anchor nut prior to moving the wheel back. Either the factory or the individual can remedy this by using one of the R-shaped spring clips in place of the regular cotter pin on the anchor arm, permitting instant removal of the pin and the aforementioned 20-second adjustment. Fortunately, the center to center distance between swing arm pivot and gearbox sprocket is a commendable, minimal 4 1/4 inches, greatly reducing chain tension fluctuation and lessening frequency of chain adjustment.

Accessories were invented by Harley-Davidson; they were first with stock "mag" wheels on their Liberty Edition Super-Glide and now they are optional fare on the FLH. But this is not your everyday five-spoke mag; each beautifully styled aluminum wheel contains 16 spokes and still weighs only 1 pound and 4 ounces more than their wire version (20 lbs.,

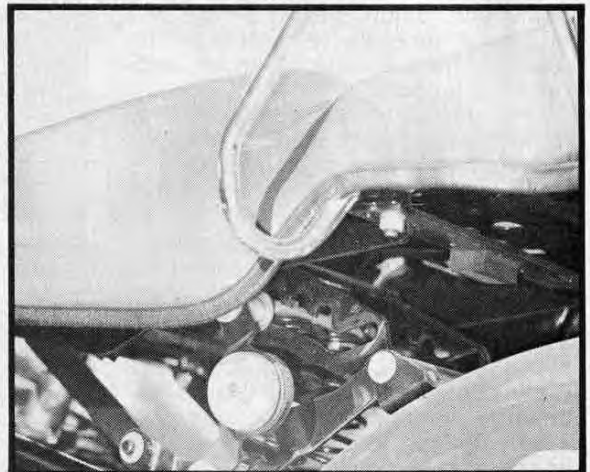
5 oz. vs. 19 lbs., 1 oz.). They incorporate Harley-Davidson's unique deep wall safety rim design that precludes the tire from coming off in a blowout, and could be fitted with the latest Goodyear tubeless skins if properly sealed, the absence of the tube restoring weight to the same or less than their wire wheel setup. Standard tires are double-ringed Goodyear whitewalls. But again on an austerity kick, no conventional fork lock is issued; they provide overlapping holes in fork bridge and headstock, but bring your own padlock. They contend that this seeming expediency on their behalf is actually stronger and therefore more practical than any keyed tumbler arrangement they might incorporate just to be in fashion. And they are probably right. Who should know more on the subject of bike theft?

At about this point the good news begins to overwhelm the bad. Although the saddlebags won't contain a helmet, the tote box will, and the bags are tucked in close and rigidly secured so they don't flap in the breeze. We had a little agony with the new Keihin pumper pot. Seems that some of the first ones encountered an air leak around a Welsh plug atop the unit and/or around the threads of the idle mixture screw. Also, insufficient heat insulation between carburetor and manifold lets engine heat, once up to full operating temperature, cause idle speed to increase a couple hundred revs, making quiet shifts impossible. The factory was aware of these deficiencies and their field fix follows: Use plumber's sealing tape around idle mixture screw and silicon seal atop Welsh plug. If idle speed-up persists, insert H-D heat block part #27412-57, sandwiched between two gaskets H-D #27410-57, between carb and manifold. We did, and it solved the problem. But it carburetors to perfection otherwise, through all transitional periods, and runs like a striped ape on the top end. The clutch, though virtually indestructible with its 206 lb/ft torque capacity—you can push cars or tow motor homes without fade—is a one-finger squeeze, as light as a Hodaka Ace. And yet, there's never a hint of slippage under the most trying circumstances. And the clutch plates don't stick or have to be freed when starting up from cold in the morning. Neutral is always positive from either direction at any rpm, in heaviest traffic, on hottest days. Converts of Oriental persuasion will be amazed to learn that the Americans have somehow found a way to circumvent

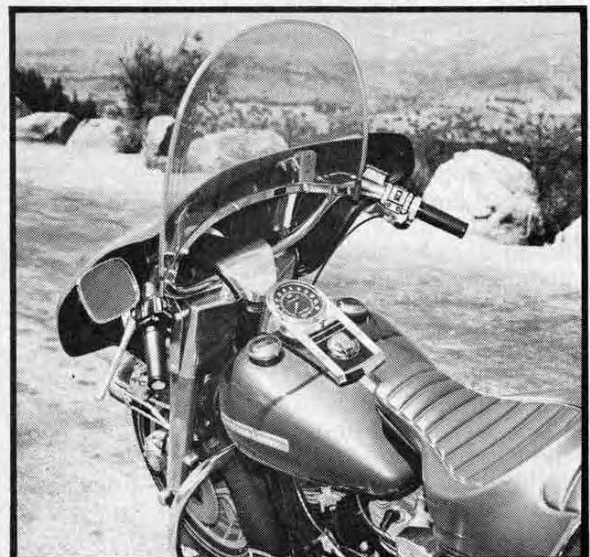




Are you ready for 3½ cubic feet of luggage space? Strength and weight of Harley gracefully tote an enormous luggage load without handling or performance loss. Lock-out sidestand defies car bumps.



Radically new Comfort-Flex saddle floats riders over hump-backed RR crossings without notice; it works! Mag wheels have 4 times fatigue strength of wire hoops but aren't sealed for tubeless tire use.



Never in my testing career have so many civilians of both sexes, all ages and walks of life been so turned on by a bike. Why? The Hog macho, Harley mystique? Sight-sound are unique, and it's hands off at any speed. Shift technique: at a stop just kiss low with clutch held in, then drop in gear. Pause between second and third, then crowd fourth gear.



# His Majesty

"THE MORE IT CHANGES, THE MORE IT STAYS THE SAME"

driveline snatch; H-D never had it any other way.

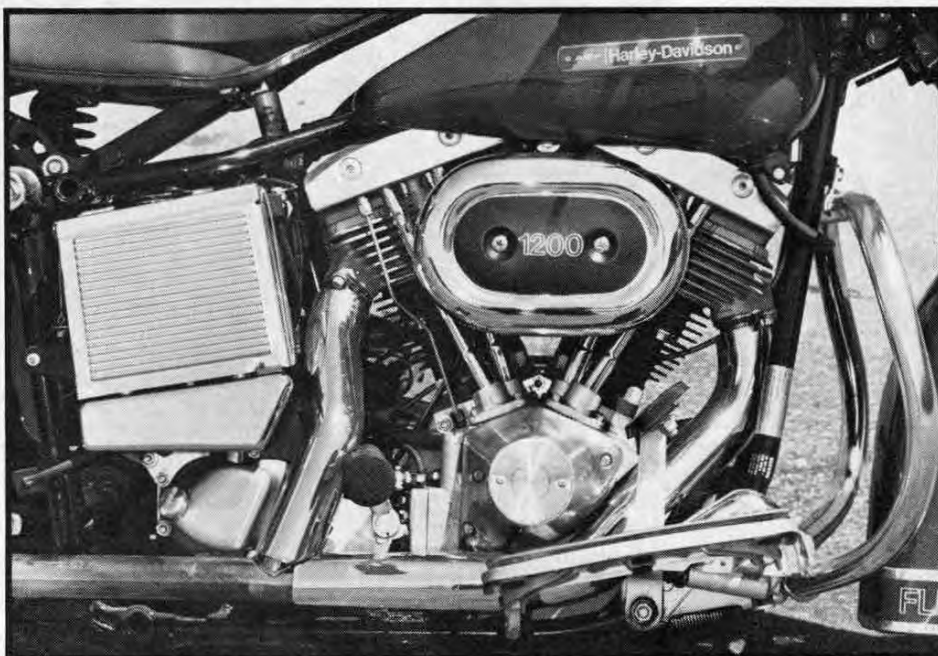
Shift characteristics are cause for raised eyebrow to the uninitiated FLH operator who, through unfamiliarity with the accentuated technique required, may think the engine fell out on the ground the first time he bangs a gear. Silent and near-silent gear changes even with proper idle speed require perfected control of throttle and clutch, holding momentarily between gears on some occasions and double-clutching on others. As the box loosens up with the miles, at around 1000 or so, shifts become smoother and quieter. In any event, gears and clutch are up to the task and seem to easily withstand the trials and errors of novice handler without hint of abuse.

One of only three popular V-type motorcycle engines sold in America, the Harley is largest by far with its 1200 cotton-pickin' cubits, unique among the three with 3-31/32-inch stroke that permits it to climb tall buildings at idle. With cylinders cocked 45°, firing impulses are alternately spaced 315° and 405° apart, as opposed to the even 360° separation of a parallel twin. Protagonists of the V configuration *prefer* this spread because its firing impulses are *not* evenly spaced, contending that even spacing in a twin is conducive to high frequency buzz that is less compatible to human tolerances. They've got a point, best demonstrated in smaller capacities having closer to square bore/stroke ratios.

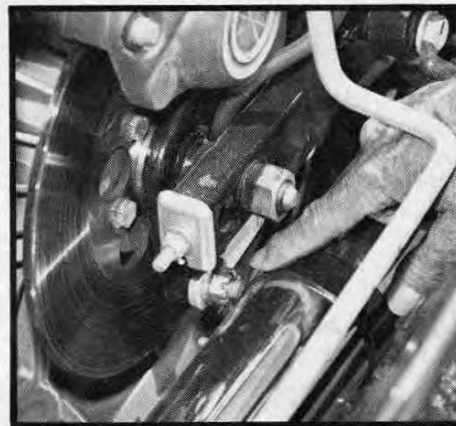
Also unique about the Harley is connecting rod disposition on the crank pin; by using a forked big end on their rear rod, they sandwich the single-blade front rod between its halves on the same roller bearing. This permits both cylinders to be directly in line fore and aft rather than offset such as Guzzi and Ducati. Other advantages of the V design are compactness and narrowness ideally suited to motorcycle application.

But unlike the Japanese, Harley retains pushrod overhead valve operation typical of American automotive construction, such as a Chrysler Hemi. Getting 62 horsepower at 5200 rpm, and working far below that most of the time, there is no need for exotic overhead cam drive. But even though the single camshaft is down in the case, gear driven directly off the right side crankshaft, it does represent the most advanced state of the pushrod art with expensive race-type roller tappets and temperature-compensating hydraulic valve lifters that seldom if ever require adjust-

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Harley V-1200 or just a couple of barrels off an old Pratt & Whitney war bird? Like the "Corncob" engine in Republic's P-47 Thunderbolt, the "Jug", the Hog is known for its bulletproof characteristics and its ability to bring 'em home under adversity.



Footpads float on neat rubber ball attachments, but not so neat is muffler-masked location of brake caliper locking nut cotter pin that slows the chain adjustment procedure. A simpler type of cotter pin would allow 20-second bogie. Twin tanks are interconnected and utilize a single shut-off valve. Only right tank cap is vented so that fuel will not siphon out when on side-stand. At this point ol' boogiemotor had logged nearly 2000 miles, hadn't been wiped off, a dry dude. Power? You know that if it's brewed in Milwaukee it's got to have a lot of suds. We now head for Bonneville Speed Trials. See ya there!

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low battery and a slow cranking speed—even if the engine barely turns over you're at least assured that you're getting a good spark. And at high rpm when input voltages usually rise, you're also assured of getting a good hot spark. Have you ever watched a plug fire at 30,000 rpm? It's just one solid wall of blue and it's enough to make you put your hands behind your back.

Gerex supplies everything necessary to install this ignition including all mounting plates, wires that are cut to length and complete instructions. Average installation time is around one hour and you don't need any special tools or equipment to do it—the only instrument you might not have is a timing light, which will be necessary when resetting the timing.

The converter box mounts up front in the cool air stream and all wiring is simply a plug-in procedure. The original breaker plate is replaced by the magnetic sensor plate and and re-timing is done the same way as if they were points. To get the most advantage from the system, the plugs should be pulled out and gapped at 60 thousandths, which the system is quite capable of handling; Jerry has had occasion to run them as wide as 100 thousandths with great success. The wider the gap, the more power you're going to get, but they won't last as long. If you want to get the maximum usage from a plug in city driving, it's best to gap them at about 50 thousandths.

Jerry finished the installation in about half the average time and as a last measure to ensure total perfection, I spliced in a set of Thundervolt Firewire from Thundervolt Corporation. If you've got wire problems on a Z-1, this is the only cure without replacing the entire coil, since the lead wire is permanently attached to the ignition coil. For installation procedure of the Thundervolt wire, check out the April '76 issue of *Motorcyclist*.

Okay, after you install one of these babies, what effect will it actually have on the engine? On our bike, the advantages of the Gerex ignition became apparent the moment I hit the starter button—the engine instantly came to life before the starter even had a chance to turn it over. I also noticed that it now idled at a higher rpm than before, apparently due to better combustion inside. Wicking it mildly down the street, I noticed another strange occurrence—the mellow tone of the 4-into-1 pipe had actually changed, becoming a lot louder at the higher revs and producing almost an ear piercing tone. Heading out onto a ¼-mile stretch of deserted road, I took her to the limits in all five gears and let me tell you that I definitely noticed the performance increase . . . right in the seat of the

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ment, maintaining proper lash hot or cold. With its direct-drive ignition circuit breaker off the end of the camshaft, and alternator attached to the left crankshaft, the engine is remarkably void of power-robbing chains and gear trains and their attendant noise. I would guess it to be one of the most gear-free, chain-free engines of them all. Bearings consist of rollers on the rods and right side crank, with double tapered Timken bearings on the drive side. Lubrication is full pressure fed to and from the remote one-gallon tank by double gear pump with adjustable feed to the rear chain, and replaceable filter incorporated in the tank top. The electrical system consists of a 225-watt alternator and 32 ampere hour



battery with a bear of an electric starter that cranks strongly even after sitting overnight in the snow. For simplicity, a single set of ignition points is used, meaning that each plug is fired whenever either piston is in the ascension, be it on compression or exhaust stroke. The engine is a brute in all dimensions, capable of withstanding adversity beyond comprehension.

Again the question, did the King live up to its legend? Personal opinions and physical proportions and financial circumstances and riding habits being as diversified as they are, only you have the pieces to put the other half of that puzzle together. The FLH's weight is a product of popular demand; you asked for it.

Personally, I'd do without some of the shine-it-on hardware such as crashbars and spotlights, and this opinion is only now being revived by more frequent requests for stripped or partially stripped versions of the Hog, a more lean and less costly set-up dealers can deliver if they so desire. For not well known is the fact that an Electra-Glide shorn of its tinsel, equipped only as other roadsters are normally offered, slims to practically the same weight as the Honda Gold Wing at around 650 pounds.

Realizing 45 miles per gallon, contributing to its wide 225-mile cruising range, the FLH makes an exceptionally qualified touring mount. According to the hyper-conservative factory, oil consumption with the chain oiler operating varies between 300-500 miles per quart, depending upon the pace, and usually requiring topping off at least every couple of days on tour with its four-quart capacity. We got over 900 miles per quart. In the first 2000-mile installment of our test, engine and chassis ran spotless and undaunted. With its steel barrels and hydraulic valve lifters, the engine requires very little attention and runs unusually quiet, especially for its size, although the sound-amplifying fairing makes it seem otherwise at times. If you are spoiled rotten by Detroit, Harley-Davidson assumes special importance since only they among the crotch car manufacturers offer a full line of factory accessories integrated and styled exclusively for a given model, now color-coordinated.

There are those who say the big twin's days are numbered, that concept has outlived ability to keep pace. The perpetual notion machine. The more it changes, the more it stays the same. And yet, last year, the year of introduction of the panacea Gold Wing, Electra-Glide sales defiantly soared ten percent. No motorcycle in the world continues to maintain such an abnormally high resale value relative to original purchase price. In many instances owners have sold their two-year-old twins for little or no loss, sometimes at a profit, making the admittedly high original purchase price a moot point if not an investment.

Most succinctly it might be concluded that if comfort is your bag, if



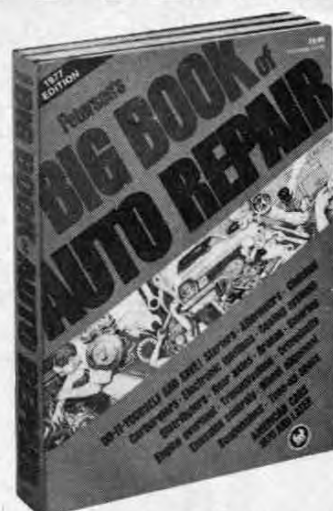


you think that big is beautiful, and you want to get better acquainted with the girls—half a dozen hit me up for a ride—you may be a potential Hog rooter. I am thoroughly enjoying the visit, finding this megamotor dependable, more economical to operate than many smaller touring roadsters, and rock-steady from a walk to the century mark. With trick saddle and mags, it has never been more appealing to those who have an af-

finity for the majestic motorcycle only Milwaukee has the guts to build.

Perhaps the most prophetic clue to the Hog's future was innocently voiced by my next door neighbor's 15-year-old son Hughie. Previously unmoved by the ever-changing parade of sparkling two-wheeled exotica I bring home, he was finally overwhelmed upon sighting the formidable Harley: "Hey, I'm ready for that!"

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Please send me \_\_\_\_\_ copies of Petersen's **BIG BOOK OF AUTO REPAIR** @ \$9.95 each (plus 95¢ shipping & handling). Calif. residents please add 6% sales tax.

My check or M.O. for \$ \_\_\_\_\_ is enclosed.

To avoid delay—print clearly

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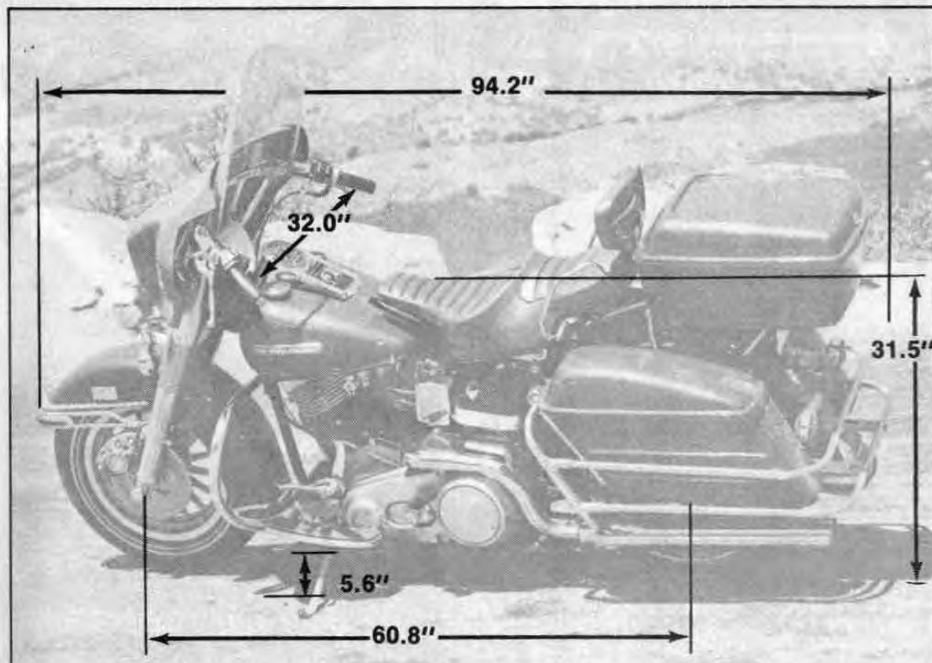
Street \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

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Allow 4-6 weeks for delivery.



# Harley-Davidson FLH 1200

## TEST: HARLEY-DAVIDSON FLH

Base Price.....\$4324  
Serial Number.....2A47706H6  
Warranty.....90 days or 4000 miles

## ENGINE

Type.....V-twin, 45°  
Bore x stroke.....87.3x100.8mm  
(3-7/16x3-11/32 in.)  
Displacement.....1207cc  
(73.66 cu. in.)  
Compression ratio.....8:1  
Carburetion.....Keihin 38mm  
w/accelerator pump  
Air filter.....Oil-wet foam  
Ignition.....Circuit breaker,  
single coil  
Electrical system.....12-volt,  
225-watt battery, alternator,  
rectifier-regulator  
Lubrication.....Full pressure  
double gear pump  
Starting.....Electric only  
Claimed bhp @ rpm.....62 @ 5200  
@ crankshaft  
Claimed torque @ rpm.....70 lb/ft @  
4000  
@ crankshaft

## DRIVETRAIN

Primary drive.....Two-row roller  
chain, 1.54:1 ratio

Clutch.....Multi-plate, dry,  
206 lb/ft capacity  
Final drive.....Single-row #50  
chain, 2.32:1 ratio  
Overall ratios.....1st 3.0; 2nd 1.82;  
3rd 1.23; 4th 1.0

## CHASSIS & SUSPENSION

Suspension, front.....Telescopic,  
5-inch travel  
Suspension, rear.....3-way adjustable  
shock, 3-inch travel  
Frame type.....Double-loop tube  
Wheelbase.....60.8 inch  
Rake/trail.....30.7°/5.36 inches  
Brakes, front & rear.....Hydraulic,  
10-inch disc  
Tires, front & rear.....5.10x16  
Goodyear whitewall  
Instruments.....Speedo w/odo and  
reset trip, plus high beam,  
neutral, signal lights,  
oil pressure

## WEIGHTS & CAPACITIES

Curb weight.....780 lb. full gas  
w/KOH accessories  
Fuel capacity.....5 gallons  
(including 1.2 Reserve)  
Engine oil.....4 quarts  
Transmission oil.....1½ pints  
Fuel consumption.....40-45 miles  
per gallon