

Custom Shops Everywhere!

Article by: Dave Johnston

It would seem to me that over the past four years and with the advent of lame bike shows on TV, that every one now is a professional bike builder. Here in Mass I can remember having to drive hours from my home to get the smallest parts. Now its a simple matter of walking or driving twenty minutes to find a local shop. About a week ago I spent a day traveling to several bike shops in the area.

These shops claimed to be custom fab and paint shops but all carried pre assembled bikes. At one shop I noticed a sign that charged ninety dollars per hour for sheet metal work yet they had no equipment what so ever to bend or shape the smallest piece. After talking to the owner he had mentioned to me that he could build me a gas tank for 2,800 but would take 6 to 8 weeks for delivery from their "out source tank builder". I don't know about everyone else but I am what you would call a neat freak. and I couldn't believe the disrepair and general "messiness" of these so called professional shops.

There was only one shop I could find that actually built every part of the bike and sold the whole package for 24,000. this was the least expensive bike I could find that was 100% hand made. Not to mention the absolute perfection of the owner and attention to detail. also the shop was very clean, i suppose because some people watch TV and take a few welding classes it would qualify them as custom builders. I feel that it is a true shame the "older" guys out there who have been building bikes for 20 years are suffering because these (what i would call) "TV BUILDERS" are just buying pre assembled bikes, and charging 50,000 for a rolling piece of crap. so i say if you want custom and want to be different and stand apart build it yourself or find a great 100% custom shop. I know that the bike i ride is all hand made and doesn't look like something that just rolled out of rock tavern new York.