



doesn't build bikes for other people unless they're (a) really, really persuasive, and (b) they let him have free rein, which basically means he doesn't build bikes for other people...). This has allowed him to experiment; after all, he might wait a long time for one customer, let alone three, with a desire to convert a V-twin engine into a blown single-cylinder lump. But that's the configuration that Roger has used for the 2005 World Champion, 'Trouble', the succeeding 'Nortorious', and now Goldmember.

While, at first glance, there is a world of difference between the board tracker-inspired Trouble and his latest machine, Goldmember is just the latest chapter in the story of Roger's love of both singles and racing, as he explains;

"The concept of Goldmember was to further merge the performance and custom worlds, to build a bike which could compete in both arenas. The challenge was to find a balance between a functional race bike, which should be powerful, durable, aerodynamic, with everything accessible and easily serviced, and a full custom bike which must be visually stimulating, unique, and possibly risky in design."



GOLD FEVER

On paper, there is no way that this motorcycle should be the world champion, a crown awarded at the World Championship of Custom Bike Building. Half a V-twin engine, stylised race bike looks, capable of working, and working hard ... no, it's never going to make the grade, is it? Except that, in reality, Roger Goldammer's 'Goldmember' is one of those rare things in the custom world, a genuinely revolutionary machine. It settled itself cheerfully between its glossy, flashy peers in Sturgis, its whole demeanour whispering, "Come on then, bring it on, you wanna run for pink slips?" Some motorcycles are just machines, while others have so much character that you wouldn't be entirely surprised to hear them murmur, "Hey, how you doing?" as you walk past. Goldmember is one such bike. You may have already guessed that I like it very much.

There is a tendency to assume that the winner of a prestigious competition like the WCOCBB will be what many of us Brits somewhat scornfully refer to as a 'show bike'. It's an impression that Roger Goldammer is singlehandedly turning on its head, having now won the big title three times. His bikes might be 'show', but they're also very much 'go', and none more so than Goldmember.

Roger Goldammer first came to the attention of the custom scene with his G-Force one-piece billet fork assembly that was voted Product of the Year at the V-Twin Expo in 2002. That front end – the yokes, top section and upper half of the fork tubes machined from a single piece of billet aluminium – along with subsequent parts, now gives Roger enough freedom to build his own bikes (he

But Roger Goldammer had a potentially even bigger goal for his new build. It was going to be more than simply functional; he wanted to take the bike to Bonneville Salt Flats and set a record. Just think about that for a second – a world class custom motorcycle not only running, but competing on the salt flats. It puts a whole new spin on that sniping term, 'show bike'. There are, without doubt, a number of builders who could do either/or. But to be able to successfully combine two different sets of criteria? Well, we're talking about a very small club, and Roger Goldammer is sitting right at the head of the table.



With Goldmember, Roger was determined to push his single cylinder concept – once again using a modified V-twin – to its limit, while, as he explains, still using the rather primitive air-cooled two valve pushrod design;

“Adequate cylinder filling is a major issue in producing substantial horsepower in single cylinders – trying to do more with less was definitely a big factor in the design of this bike.”

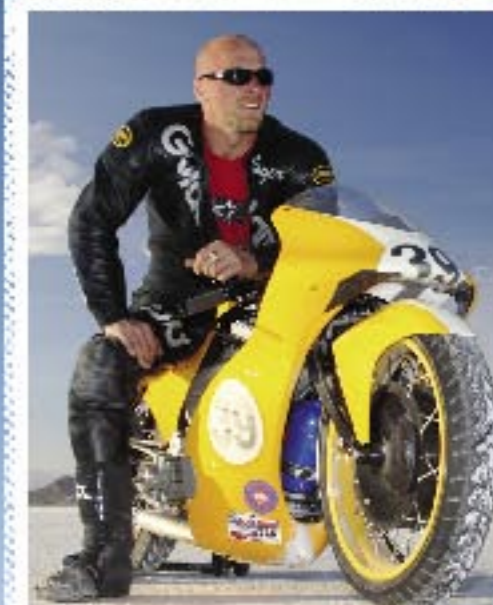
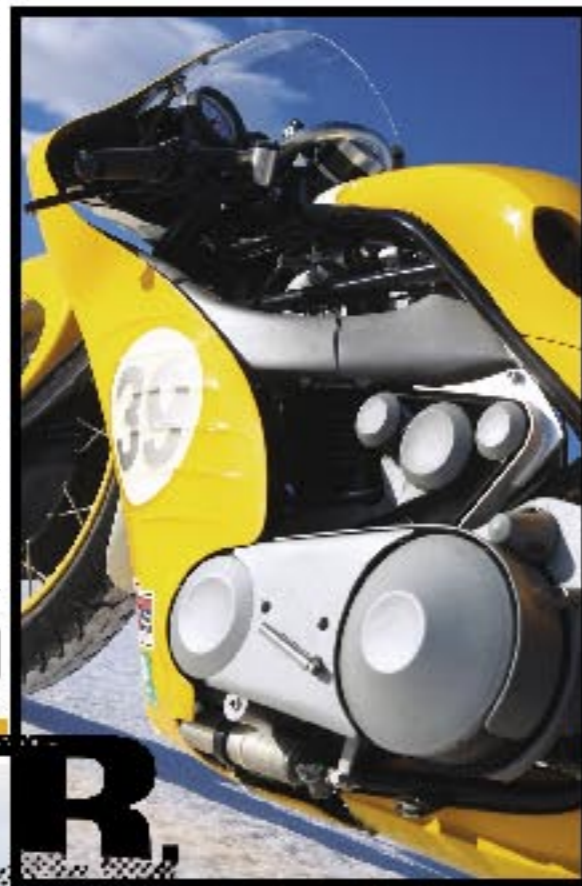
As with his previous ‘half-Harleys’, the engine in Goldmember uses an Evo bottom end and a Twin Cam top end, although the latter is barely recognisable. The rear cylinder was removed, the opening plated over and a Rotrex supercharger mounted, while a rear head was fitted to the front cylinder to allow adequate plenum chamber volume for the supercharger. To make it all work, the pushrod angles had to be changed and a special camshaft fitted – it’s actually two cams, one from V Thunder, the other by Woods, which Roger modified to make into a single entity. ‘Modified’ is a rather small term for the work that was involved, but what you really need to know is that it works. The induction system transfers air up and over to maintain maximum horsepower, while a duct collects air from the front of the bike and pushes it across the left side of the engine, maintaining a supply of fresh air to the intercooler. The belt-driven Rotrex supercharger feeds said intercooler before a 54mm throttle body, manifold and forward facing intake port, where the single high volume injector is located.

The engine was rotated backwards by 15 degrees and fitted as close as possible to the gearbox, a Baker six-speed transmission with a low first gear and close top gears. The mainshaft on the gearbox was shortened, and a Primo/Rivera 3-inch primary belt narrowed by an inch. You may, by now, be getting some idea of just how much work went into creating this sleek, minimal bike, but I’ve barely scratched the surface. Did I mention the nitrous oxide system? Thought not.

The handmade chromoly frame differs from those of the previous single-cylinder bikes in that, this time, it had to accommodate a lot more components that were

required to achieve Roger’s Salt Flats dream. The double top rails allow room for the induction system, while the neck houses a hidden shock absorber in its stem, Roger having chosen a girder front end to combat the surface of the salt (which is nowhere as mirror smooth as it looks in photographs). The forks were cut and machined from 1-inch steel plate, the top link rocking on a pivot and working the shock assembly.

Hand-made aluminium bodywork helps to conceal more items, and there is an amazing amount of, well, stuff hidden behind the comparatively small amount of panelling. The tail piece contains a two-gallon tank as well as the main fuel pump, while beneath the panels are the fuel pumps, nitrous bottle, various instruments, EFI controls and all of the wiring. Beneath the gearbox sits a belly tank which houses the engine oil and supercharger traction oil reservoirs.



GOLD MEMBER.



TRYING TO DO MORE WITH LESS WAS DEFINITELY A BIG FACTOR IN THE DESIGN OF THIS BIKE.”

Motorcycle Speed Trials. It wasn’t Roger’s first time on the salt flats; famously, he’d competed in a Biker Build Off against Matt Hotch to build a salt flats racer. The result was two very different machines – Hotch’s Vincent (which graced the cover of BSH 276) and, from Roger, ‘ExperiMental’, powered by a 250cc two-stroke go-kart engine with tandem cylinders and two crankshafts welded together and housed in a Honda CR250 dirt bike frame. That bike took a record for Roger with a 128mph pass, a far from shabby speed for a 250cc bike.

With Bonneville in mind, Roger chose narrow, tall wheels, having noted that land speed record bikes tend to favour a large diameter, skinny wheel, although he also admits it was partly because the

23-inch rear and 19-inch front wheels looked pretty good. As with the bodywork, the wheels themselves hide a few secrets. What appear to be drum brakes echo the hubs of early race bikes (which were, indeed, their inspiration), but, you may be thinking, would Roger really want to trust braking duties to old-fashioned technology? The answer is, unsurprisingly, that he hasn’t. The one-off ‘drum hubs’ each house a stainless disc with a four-piston brake caliper. The hubs and outer plates were manually machined while the rear hub itself was turned from 98lbs of 14-inch 6061-T6 aluminium down to a component weighing just 18lb.

In September, 2007, Roger and Goldmember – at this point still in bare metal – headed down from his home in Kelowna, British Columbia, to Utah for the BUB

As it rolled onto the salt flats, Roger still didn’t know for certain whether Goldmember would work. Okay, with his experience and skill, he was more or less sure, but the bike had less than a mile on the clock; it was still a new build and just about to go through about as challenging a shakedown period as you could imagine. For days, Roger and his crew worked on setting up the clutch, electronic shifter and fuel injection system to get it all just right, but he ran it right up to the wire, as he explains;

“On the last day of the event, the bike made its best run. After hitting a false neutral about halfway into my two mile run and almost coasting to a stop, I got back on the pace and had to run through my timed mile while still accelerating – not really the idea for land speed racing, but it was my last chance. The bike averaged 154.8mph through the mile (and 10mph faster than that at the exit point), shooting ducks the whole way as the nitrous system was still running far richer than ideal. I have to say, it was fun running that fast with half of an old air-cooled pushrod engine, making something go fast that really isn’t supposed to...” »

It might have been left to the last moment, but that final run was quick enough to give Roger a record in the 1000 APS PBF class with a speed of 147.438mph.

Having achieved one of its goals, Goldmember now had its sights set firmly on the World Championship. Roger took it back home, washed all the salt off of it, and then enlisted local painter, Jerry Ashley, to transform the bodywork. Jerry has painted more than half a dozen of Roger's bikes and knows by now that paint schemes are not one of the Canadian builder's main interests. Of Goldmember, Roger told me;

"I don't particularly like yellow, but I figured it would work with this bike. I don't put a lot of thought into colour choice, but this just felt right..."

The man was spot on. It worked well enough to take the World Championship by a very respectable margin. In the time between the BUB Speed Trials and the show in Sturgis, Goldmember had been equipped with lights, indicators and a registration mark. As if taking a land speed record and the world champion's trophy (or, to be precise, very gaudy ring) weren't enough, Goldmember is a street legal motorcycle. This shouldn't be any great surprise, really; Roger Goldammer believes motorcycles are for riding, not displaying, and what, after all, is the point of building a performance bike if it's never allowed to perform? For example, the flawless shiny paintwork didn't deter Mr Goldammer from returning to Bonneville in 2008 – and breaking his own record by 3mph.



SPEC:



ENGINE:

V-twin based 965cc single cylinder, rotated back by 15 degrees, Merch bottom end modified by owner, Merch crankshaft, Ross recessed dome blower piston, AV&V 2.02 inle/1.72 exhaust valves, angled Rivera Taperlite pushrods, fuel injection closed loop carb, rear head on front cylinder, V-Thunder cam and Woods cam heavily modified into one by owner, Thunder Heart exhausts, Rotrex supercharger, intercooler, nitrous injection, Baker 6-speed hydraulic kicker gearbox with special ratios, Pingel electronic gearshift, narrowed Rivera clutch, Primo/Rivera primary drive belt narrowed by 1", engine and supercharger oil tanks under gearbox.

FRAME:

One-off in 1" chromoly with 36 degree rake and 1" stretch, front suspension shock absorber integral to frame neck, one-off chromoly swinging arm by owner.

FRONT END:

Goldammer Cycle Works girder forks with 19" Buchanan rim, Avon 120/70 x 19" tyre, GCW 'drum hub' with internal disc and 4-piston caliper, GCW handlebars, Performance Machine grips.

REAR END:

23" stainless rim with Avon V-rated 130/60 x 23" tyre, GCW 14" drum hub with internal disc and 4-piston caliper, B&T air-assisted shock absorbers, footpegs and seat by GCW, tailpiece with integral 2-gallon petrol tank and fuel pump and integrated taillight.

STUFF:

Lots of electrics, including wiring for onboard computers, progressive fuel systems, NoS timers, etc.

PAINT AND FINISH:

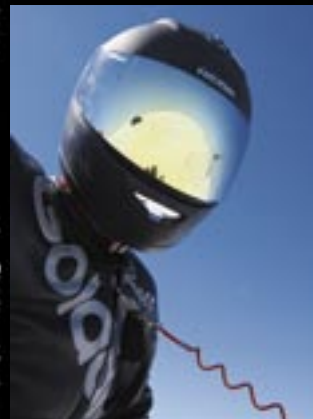
Yellow by Jerry Ashley, Kelowna, British Columbia. Hand-formed aluminium bodywork. Chroming by Southwest Forge.



Above all, Roger Goldammer is an excellent ambassador for our world. Not only prepared to experiment and push the boundaries of what many might consider 'custom' bikes, he has a quiet, fierce passion for all motorcycles. I watched him recently at the Las Vegas Bike Fest as he spent time with every member of the public who wanted to speak to him (and some who were wandering past and didn't wander away quickly enough...), explaining how Goldmember worked, why he'd done what he'd done, or simply just talking bikes. The custom motorcycle scene would be a much poorer – and duller – place without him.

words: **BLUE**
photos: **HORST ROSLER**

PS. The last time I wrote about one of Roger Goldammer's bikes, there was much mention of owls. Great horned owls, to be precise. He's never let me forget it. I promised that I wouldn't mention owls this time. I lied.



GOLD FEVER