



THE WAY I SEE IT *by Genevieve Schmitt*

What Do You Really Want?

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MY HUSBAND, NORM, DECIDED HE WANTED TO SPICE UP HIS aging Road King Classic. It's a 2000 and stock bland red. Other than aftermarket pipes from Bassani, Kuryakyn grips, cruising pegs, and 16" apes he added when the

apehanger craze reignited a few years ago, he hasn't done anything by way of making a statement with his motorcycle. Norm, like most, is a weekend warrior content to ride his basically stock Road King Classic because he simply feels fortunate to own a motorcycle he can enjoy and is not interested in impressing people.

I'm not sure if it was me getting my Street Glide Custom painted three years ago, or boredom that set in after 10 years with the same motorcycle, but out of the blue, Norm decided he wanted his bike to make more of a statement. Well, that's not the way he said it actually. He simply declared to me one day, "Babe, I want to chrome out my bike."

"Chrome out your bike?" I replied. "What, so you can look like every other rider who's trying to stand out in the crowd?" I'm pretty blunt sometimes. I could see the excitement drain from Norm's face faster than home prices dropping in this last recession. "Why can't I be more tactful," I scolded myself silently.

"I'm sorry, honey," I quickly apologized. "What I mean is you can chrome out your bike, or we could look at other things that could really spruce it up, like a new paint job or new wheels. It might just cost about the same, too." Norm was under the impression, like a lot of riders, that an inexpensive way to spruce up a stock bike is to add a bunch of aftermarket accessories, *inexpensive* being the operative word here. "Show me your list," I said. We pro-

ceeded to add up all the parts he highlighted in the aftermarket catalog — chrome wind deflectors, chrome saddlebag guardrails, chrome front end kit, and chrome belt guard, just to name a few. And we then added in the cost of a few hours of labor to install all of them, and guess what? We were close to \$2,000! A call to Brett McGinley, a motorcycle painter near where we live in Bozeman, Montana, informed me the cost of painting a Road King Classic starts at \$1,800 for one color. Aha!

"Norm, honey, how about a new paint job," I asked. "Isn't that expensive?" he inquired. Paint jobs can be pricey the more elaborate you get, and the more parts that need paint. A Road King Classic is less expensive than a Road King because it has leather saddlebags instead of painted, hard-sided ones. As I probed more, I discovered the real reason Norm didn't initially opt for a new paint job was because he just could not decide on a color or a design. It was easier to sit down with a parts catalog and shop for the pieces he thought would look nice on his bike. Now, before you think I'm dismissing aftermarket parts for your bike, I'm not. There are plenty of beautiful accessories that, when put together, can create a theme for your motorcycle, or better yet, provide accents to a paint job, and that's what I suggested we do with Norm's bike. "If you really want to dress your motorcycle in some new clothes, then let's start with a paint job and find some parts that accentuate the

new color scheme. And since it's your birthday on Sunday, here's your birthday present," I said as I slipped him my card. He opened it to read my gift to him is a new paint job. "No excuses, now," I smiled with a quick peck to his lips.

He agonized over the color. "What's your favorite color?" I asked. "Green, I guess, but I don't want a green bike." I proceeded to pepper him with questions, hoping to spur an idea. "Do you want flames? Two-tone? A special image?" I told him to Google "custom motorcycle paint" and start browsing. I knew what he was going through. When I decided I deserved a custom paint job, I, too, had to figure out what color would represent me, because I don't care who you are, custom paint does say something about you. I homed in on brown, a color I love. I also prefer subtlety rather than showy so I opted for a matte finish.

I concluded that when it comes right down to deciding what we really want when presented with the opportunity, most of us have a hard time deciding. We're like kids in a candy store when offered the opportunity to have five candies instead of just one. Little Johnny takes a long time deciding what five candies he wants, taking one then putting it back for a better one. Gently picking another one off the shelf only to place it back because that one doesn't quite suit him. Most of us are content to buy into the status quo. I challenge you to think outside your personal box and figure out what you'd like to do to your bike; and then think again about what you'd *really* like to do to your bike. Have fun!

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