

Introducing...

Wally Realini



My riding experience started during my stint in the Air Force while stationed in West Germany. I enjoyed the freedom of traveling throughout Western Europe with my buddies in my '61 VW bug, but when it wouldn't pass the annual safety inspection, I had to re-

tire it. That left me yearning for the freedom of the open road. Germany and the Autobahns, Western Europe from Denmark to Italy and Spain, with France only a short trip from our Air Base. All of it was an adventure.

In fear of not having the freedom of travel

any longer, my motorcycle buddies talked me into buying a Honda CL450 dual-sport that had a blown engine. “Don’t worry, we will help you get it going.” Well, at least it came with a slightly used helmet.

I sent for parts back in the US, and while I waited for my fate to hit me, I needed to learn how to ride. I started in the dirt on a friend’s Honda Elsinore 250. Everyone kept telling me that when I got my bike running not to try to ride it like the Elsinore, it just would not handle the same off road. I became part of a small group of bikers

that forgot the differences amongst people, as we all had motorcycles in common, and that was all we needed. There was always something going on, lots of bragging, stories to tell, or we would go on a ride together. I realized I had become part of something good.

This is where my motorcycling begins, touring Europe with a sleeping bag and gas stamps on a Honda twin. My riding gear consisted of a pair of Levis, combat boots, and a flight jacket. Oh, and that used helmet. Not much protection from road rash, freez-

ing weather, and black ice. I eventually collected a little of each.

My motorcycling continued when I returned to the States and moved up to a Kawasaki triple. I modified that 750 Mach IV to overcome its own design flaws, converting it to a café racer after I blew it up one night in the Nevada desert. Once I faced the fact of having to rebuild the engine after that fateful night, I decided to go all out and make the changes I wanted. Riding in Europe influenced me, and what I wanted was to make my Kawasaki into a Café racer.

Some of the ingredients I needed included a new crankshaft, new pistons and rings, swingarm bushing kit, clip-on handlebars, rear sets, and expansion chambers. The work included drilling the brake rotor for vent holes, welding the hole in my crankcase, and extending the swingarm to improve the handling. I topped it all off with a 1/4-fairing and a custom paint job of black with silver pin-stripes. When I moved to Southern California that Kawasaki was the only café racer in San Pedro, where I ended up going to school on the GI bill. For over ten

years, my only source of transportation was the two-wheeled kind.

Today, I commute to and from work daily on my BMW R1150RT. I work in the Port of Los Angeles as an engineer on the massive cranes that load container ships. The hi-tech world of electronics has always been one of my hobbies. I love to investigate the inner workings of anything technical, and that includes motorcycles. My roots in the motorcycle community were based on the resurrection of that Honda twin and the modifications to that Kawasaki triple. So it

will come as no surprise that I love to work on and customize my own equipment.

I want to thank Fred for putting together a great online magazine that is not based on advertising and therefore a perfect place to delve into the inner workings of the motorcycle products of today. I plan to investigate and report on the technology that has taken over our lives from an engineer's standpoint. Perhaps we can all benefit from taking a look inside the machines we love so much to ride.

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