

BOBISBACKHARLEYBOBBER★BOBISBACKHARLEYBOBBER★BOBISBACKHARLEYBOBBER★BOBIS

# BOBISBACK

CONVERTYOURHARLEYTOABOBBER



story and photos by Dain Gingerelli

Who says that nobody builds *real* bobbers anymore? The formula followed by many shops today is to create the *look* of an old-time bobber, basing the build on a custom frame with old-style sheetmetal, and then calling the finished product a bobber because it resembles one of those early postwar stripped-down jobs. In truth, those neo-bobbers are special-construction customs. But bobbing a real Harley-Davidson is something you rarely see today.

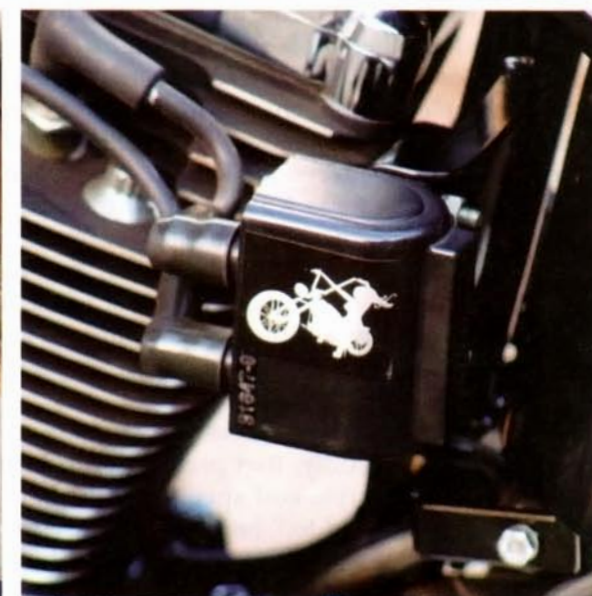
You'll find real bobbers at Bart Sengelmann's shop—aptly named the Bobber Shop. That's because Bart makes real bobbers the old-fashioned way, by converting stock Harleys into cool customs. "These bikes," says Bart about his bobbers, "you can ride all day, any day, anywhere."

Oddly enough, Bart developed his bobber line (if we may call it that) by modifying—nay, bobbing—a special-construction motorcycle. "My girlfriend bought this bike from the owner who built it to look like a stock Harley," said Bart, "and then I bobbed it." Bart says that practically all the components, including the 1999 Evo engine, were genuine Harley products. Essentially, only the Kraft/Tech frame was an aftermarket refugee. "But it was built to stock Harley specs," explained Bart, "so in effect, we had a stock bike to begin with." Bart also could have added that this bike, belonging to Michelle

*continued*



**"BART MAKES  
REAL BOBBER THE  
OLD-FASHIONED  
WAY"**



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Moroney, served as the prototype to his turnkey bobber conversions for stock Harleys.

The obvious changes from stock include the peanut gas tank, Black Bike wheels, Hawg Halter brakes, 12-inch apehanger handlebar and the hand-tooled Hide Core solo seat. Bart took it from there, concentrating especially on the rear fender to create the bike's hardtail look.

To make the bikes look as lightweight as possible, Bart machines off the bullhorn fender struts, then forms a steel plate ("either 1/8-inch or 3/16-inch thick, depending on the job") that fits the fender's outer radius. The plate serves as a gusset between the fender—either of his design or a modified Fat Katz—and the swingarm's upper section. He forms a similar section for the lower portion, too. Since this bike was bobbed, Bart has decided to include a fender brace at the rear of the fender to give the assembly a three-point mount. "I've been doing a lot of these lately," adds Bart, "especially to Twin Cams."

The tight-fitting fender gives the appearance of a hardtail frame, but oddly, Bart prefers not to include a pair of traditional-style coil springs to the solo seat. "There's really no need to," he says, "because the Softail's suspension does all the work. Sometimes by having

two sets of springs, the ride (for the rider) is just all over the place," meaning that while one set of springs might be compressing, the others are on the rebound, in essence working against each other. And just to cover his bets, Bart installs Progressive Suspension's soft-tail shocks underneath "because they work."

Soft ride or no, Michelle is no slouch when she rides her bike, so Bart dug into the Evo engine to give it some beans. "I put in a monster cam (S&S), and the heads were modified by West Coast Cylinder Heads," he reported. There's also a Crane ignition in the mix, and intake and exhaust are governed by a Goodson air cleaner and Thunder Header collector exhaust.

The net result is a bike that's fast on the throttle yet soft on the, uh, butt. But there's more to Michelle's bobber than just speed and comfort. It carries with it an element of style, and it does so at an affordable price. That's important, too, considering today's economic climate where money, as much as anything else, plays an integral role in the custom bike market. **iw**

**Resource**  
 Bobber Shop  
 Newberry Park, California  
 805-375-1520  
[www.bobbershop.net](http://www.bobbershop.net)



►► SPEC SHEET

Michelle Moroney  
 Thousand Oaks, CA  
 1999 Harley-Davidson Softail

**HUMAN FACTOR**

Fabrication	Bart Sengelmann/Bobber Shop
Assembly	Bobber Shop
Painter	Tom Prewitt
Engine Builder	H-D/Bobber Shop

**ENGINE**

Year/Model	1999 H-D
Displacement	80 cu. in.
Ignition	Crane
Cases	H-D
Heads	H-D/West Coast Cylinder Heads
Cylinders	H-D
Pistons	H-D
Cam	S & S
Carb	H-D
Air Cleaner	Goodson
Exhaust	Thunder Header
Transmission	H-D
Primary	Tech Cycle

**BODY WORK**

Gas Tank	Andrews
Front Fender	None
Rear Fender	Bobber Shop
Seat	Bobber Shop /Hide Core
Hand Controls	GMA
Foot Controls	Excel
Handlebar	12" apes
Headlight	Bates style
Taillight	Custom
Dash/Instruments	None

**FRAME**

Year/Model	Kraft/Tech
Rake	34 degrees
Backbone Stretch	Stock
Downtube Stretch	Stock
Fork	2" under
Type	Wide Glide
Trees	Billet
Rear Shocks	Progressive Suspension

**WHEELS, BRAKES & TIRES**

Front Wheel	Black Bike 21x3.5"
Rear Wheel	Black Bike 18x5.5"
Front Brake	Hawg Halter 6-piston
Rear Brake	Hawg Halter 4-piston
Front Tire	Metzeler 120/70-21
Rear Tire	Metzeler 160/60-18