

DAMMTRAX



A funny bunch, the Japanese. On the one hand they are masters of engineering and all things modern, and on the other they have an intrinsic timeless spirituality. We've seen one aspect of that spirituality, through the inspirations behind the Zero school of motorcycle engineering which is finding as many fans here and in America as it does at home, and riding high on the back of the Japanese motorcycle sub-culture is a range of kit that takes you straight back to the late sixties and early seventies ... and that's where you collide head on with their ability to mix and match alien cultures and absorb them into their own lives tempered with a weird and wonderful sense of humour.

We were introduced to a the Dammtrax range by Clint Jack, the man behind the Bikers Line operation selling last year's Triumph clothing at knock down prices, who we first met when he stuck our heads into Momo helmets. A larger than life, natural enthusiast with a weakness for overusing the word 'Funky', Clint spends his spare time looking at what is out there in the world and seeing whether there is any merit in bringing it to the UK, and he's absolutely sure that the current Japanese market has much to offer the UK. And I think he might be right.

Certainly anyone who has been deeply affected by Choppertown will fall into his natural market, if only because nowhere else on the planet accepts jet helmets that size as legal any more, and the Rocketeer Vintage which now forms part of my regular riding gear is the smallest shelled helmet I've worn since my ancient and beloved Everoak fell to pieces. You can forget your DoT approved pudding-basin helmets or those massive modern open-face lids: sixties Jet helmets are where it's at, Dude ... if you can find one to fit - and you would be well advised to try before you buy because they don't seem to work to any consistent sizing.

It's hard to get your head round how they can make so many different styles - so many they could be perceived as one offs - and if you can't find something that grabs you you're not really trying, and to give an indication of just how bizarre they can go,

how about a pink metallflake helmet with leopard-print lining?

The 64-page colour catalogue is a nice thing to have around, partly to freak your friends but also to be inspired by styles and colour schemes, designs and motifs - and that's before you start looking through the bewildering selection of accessories from normal to Manga style visors, through the peaks from peaked caps that Velcro to the lining inside your helmet - no I don't know why either - to more conventional pre-stud affixed plastic peaks, hinges that allow you to flip-up your otherwise fixed visor; there are loads of sunglasses and under- and over-helmet goggles in a variety of tints (yellow makes the duller days seem glorious) and a range of clip-on masks and wrap-round bandanas in styles that you'll dismiss on sight but keep going back to. My favourites are covers for the three press-studs at the front of the helmets, in one of five designs and one of five colours ... except the Maltese Cross ones, which are in one of three metal finishes.

If that was all that Dammtrax did it would be enough but there's also a range of other unique clothing - including some excellent summer riding gloves - and more than a smattering of daft stickers that conjure up the sixties era, complete with recreational drug messages, and keyrings, lighters, helmet belt clips etc etc. And, there's ladies range too, DammFlapper, which is nowhere near as condescending as it sounds, and which celebrates the difference with softer shades and graphics, and more tailored cuts.

Dammtrax catalogues are £2 plus P&P which is refundable on your first order over £20 from **Harry Nash Scooters, Hogarth Garage, 391 King Street, Hammersmith, London W6 9NJ**, tel. **020 8748 2837**