

GUILTY CUSTOMS: DURFEE GIRDERS

Many years ago, when God's dog was a puppy and gay meant happy, before the advent of telescopic forks, front suspension took many forms, and while Harley messed around with Springers most of the rest of the planet – including Indian on their lighter and their later models – used the altogether simpler Girders. They were easier to make, they were lighter for the same strength and they were easier to service. Whether they were as pretty is purely subjective, probably not as elegant though.

When the custom scene erupted, rear suspension was binned for the simplicity and clean lines of rigid frames, and it wasn't unknown to bin the telescopic forks for a set of old-style forks, lavished with chrome and cleaned up. Girders were often the weapon of choice back then, because they were a lot easier for home mechanics to cobble together than Springers were, and were a lot stronger when massively extended. You can also do a lot more with them by way of tuning rake and trail through the linkages, but we didn't know as much about that back then. They're also easier to mount brakes and mudguards to than Springers, but potentially have a higher unsprung weight – unless you use lightweight materials which, as they take their strength from triangulation, you can.

Weird thing is, while Springers are now commonplace, barring a pair by Donnie Smith in the Custom Chrome catalogue, girders forks were all but forgotten ... until now.

Durfée is a company that was well known in the '60s and '70s for their girder forks and they're back in production, and have teamed up with Guilty Customs as an outlet. And they haven't just trotted out the old design, but modernised it using TIG-welded seamless 4130 aircraft alloy tubing for the 'blades', and modern bearings on the four linkages at the top.

Expect to see a few more pairs around over the next few years, or get in early and fit some now.

Durfée are selling a classic powder coated girder for \$1,795 and a triple plated chrome for \$1,995: talk to them about your specific length and geometry requirements.

www.durfeegirders.com: 001 503 472 9670
www.guiltycustoms.com: 001 407 886 5796



FOREST BUELLER'S DAY OFF

There's a world of difference between buying a Buell Ulysses and actually using it in its intended role – not least because most of us having got access to the sort of terrain to put it through its paces, or would even know where to start. But that's just changed.

Buell Motorcycles UK in association with Rider's Edge have put together a package – the Buell Ulysses Adventure Trek – where you can take to the hills of mid-Wales round Rider's Edge's Builth Wells base.

If you'll forgive the digression, because it's a good 'un, Builth is apparently taken from Buellit (or Buallt), the name of the surrounding area, and is reckoned to be an amalgamation of two Welsh words, Bu and Allt, and can be translated as "The wild ox of the wooded slope". How appropriate is that? There a logo, an exclusive club with a t-shirt and a badge, a byline and a special edition Ulysses just waiting there for the taking. I'm wasted here! But back to the plot.

It is a great idea, speaking as someone who desperately wanted to take our test bike off-road but didn't because while I have got every confidence in my abilities to put it through its paces on tarmac, I reckoned that a mile into the middle of nowhere on my own isn't the place to discover that I should, after all, have coveted my mate's trials bike: open countryside offers stunning vistas but it can be a hostile environment if you're on your own and don't know what you're doing, or don't have the guidance.

Don't worry, it's not going to be a proper assault on mother nature's wilderness, but is, according to Buell UK and Eire managing director, Paul Stroud, "a two-day experience designed to ensure our visitors ride the pick of the best back roads and mountain routes this beautiful location has to offer. Buell's team of local guides have selected some remote forest trails, and even a few mountain streams to cross, just to make sure our guests enjoy some new challenges as well."

"We're delighted to be working with Jon Halliday and his team at Rider's Edge," he added. "Jon and his guides offer first-class local knowledge and because of their professional rider training background they can inspire and help anyone trying this type of adventure for the first time, as well encouraging riders simply seeking to further improve their skills."

The 'Buellit' (see, it has a real ring to it even if it does look like a spelling mistake – perhaps I should copyright it?) costs £395 per person and includes the loan of a Buell Ulysses XB12X adventure sport bike and fuel, hotel accommodation and meals for two nights. Small groups of up to six riders will be guided by two qualified motorcycle instructors.

For further information and booking availability, please contact the Rider's Edge Team on **0870 411 3541**.



BIG ASS BUNT!

Birmingham-based prototype shop, Wellings Engineering, have sent us through this picture of their latest contribution to motorcycling, and yes that does say 400/30R18. Should ruffle a few feathers in Thailand ... if the recent coup wasn't enough.

Sadly (sadly?) the 400mm wide tyre will never see the street: it's a dummy that looks and feels like a real tyre but is purely destined for a Bunt concept bike that Syd Wellings is currently working on, and will be wrapped round a three piece carbon and cast aluminium wheel. Makes you think though, doesn't it?



www.wellings-eng.demon.co.uk