

PIMP MY RIDE

IS THE SPORTSBIKE-SLAMMING STATESIDE SCENE ABOUT TO CROSS THE POND? THIS FLY R1 PROVES IT ALREADY HAS

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The special relationship between the US and the UK has never quite crossed over to two wheels. What's big in one country is niche in another. What, where and how we ride on either side of the Atlantic puts us poles apart. Never the twain shall meet? Well, not quite.

On the back of the explosion of the American stunt scene in the, ahem, noughties, custom builders turned their attention to sportsbikes. In a land where a 55mph speed limit reigns, there's not much else that you can do with your 180bhp homologated WSB replica, so ever more ornate and outrageous transformations of race replica machinery have been made to a whole host of sportsbikes. Flo-rida and So-Cal-based custom builders are really driving the performance custom scene. No more so than Roland Sands, former AMA 250 champ, designer for his family's custom parts supplier Performance Machines (PM) and founder of his eponymous firm, Roland Sands Design (RSD).

With his racing background and love for speed, Sands' apprenticeship at Performance Machines stood him in good stead for making the leap across to tricking up sportsbikes. From KTMs, to R1s, to the ultimate – the KRV5 Tracker, a fusion of a board tracker fitted with a 200bhp MotoGP 990cc V5 motor – Sands has captured the imagination of the American urban sportsbike scene.

Having seen what Sands did to an R1 in the US on a

trip to talk turkey in 2007, the East Sussex H-D dealer Shaw thought that they could do the same with a 2008 R1 that they'd acquired. Egged on by the young team in the dealership (that has won plenty of custom trophies over the years) and prompted by the Buell side of the operation going belly up, head honcho John Shaw and dealer principal Steve Willis decided to dip a toe into the water and see if the UK was ready for this almost sacrilegious sportsbike conversion.

The end result from Shaw's Speed and Custom Shop transformation is an R1, but not quite as we know it. A fusion of performance parts and the

Performance Machine catalogue thrown at it, as well as a paint job that Liberace could have been proud of, has turned this 'Yamashaw' R1 into something truly

unique and that is hoped will spark a minor revolution on the UK scene.

The big ticket items on the R1 are the PM wheels (they look heavier than stock, but weigh roughly the same – you can go for bigger sizes than the stock 17"), PM/Renthal sprocket, larger PM discs (hence the spacers on the radial calipers), RSD top yoke, bar ends, mirror covers and screen. Performance hasn't been forgotten, hence the Akrapovic end cans, and Y-piece, and Lighttech controls (levers and rearsets). It's not the kitchen sink, but then that's the point. This is Shaw's rolling showroom, but you could go down the slamming side of things, lowering and extending the

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A YAMAHA R1 - BUT NOT
AS WE KNOW IT



If it's attention to detail that you're after, then cop a load of this. Lovely stuff

*You've seen plenty of
R1s that go like this, but
none that look like this*



MODIFICATIONS

PERFORMANCE

Akrapovic exhausts and Y-piece

CHASSIS

Performance Machine wheels
Performance machine discs
Performance Machine Renthal sprocket
Lightech rearsets
Lightech brake and clutch levers
Roland Sands Design top yoke
Michelin Power Pures

OTHER

Roland Sands Design bar ends
Roland Sands Design mirror covers
Roland Sands Design screen
Image Design paint job using gold leaf



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► bike – with the obviously detrimental effect on handling. The UK may be ready for Stateside superbike conversions, but it's not ready for lo-riding just yet.

And that's the best thing, riding it. It still handles, it still brakes, it still goes like a Yamaha superbike, not a Harley-Davidson Sportster. Sure, you can spend £7,000 on pure performance mods and get a blistering machine, but to go faster these days seems to be a pretty futile pursuit.

The paintjob comes courtesy of Camberly's

want. From a few RSD parts from the catalogue through to a proper job, Shaw offer a professional and enthusiastic service from inception to handing over the keys – which, if you've commissioned a big job, you'll get a photobook or some framed studio pictures of your project.

Although we hope that the donor sportsbike will remain exactly that, and not slammed to suppress its original intentions. Over-specced, over-polished, and over here – it looks like those damned Yankees are here to stay! ☐

“THAT'S THE BEST THING. IT'S STILL AN R1. IT STILL GOES LIKE A SUPERBIKE”

Image Design Custom and incorporates the RSD logo, while the gold Yamaha livery is exactly that – gold leaf. It's subtle from afar, and stunning up close. The thinking behind it is that the product is unique, not a bland race clone that will be old hat come the new season; any bike is a blank canvas.

Shaw recognise that people go through phases in their lives, and many of its customers will have owned a sportsbike at some stage. Consequently, the reception of the bike in its pristine Holmes Hill showroom has been positive. But what's next on the horizon is anyone's guess. Roland Sands has worked on a lot of Japanese bikes and the PM catalogue is packed with parts for these bikes.

And the cost? Well, Shaw want around £16K for this R1, and for that you can be sure that you'll own an R1 like no other. For everyone else, you can take as much or as little of the Stateside scene as you

*Big pimping,
spending cheese!
This is one fly R1*

