



Flying Under The Radar: Joe's V Cycle

Story & Photos: PAUL GARSON

While the thermometer outside chattered away at 17 degrees and snowdrifts four feet high built a temporary white wall outside his Minnesota shop, Joe Anania could take some comfort remembering sunnier days down South in W. Palm Beach, Florida where, during the 1980s, he wrenched on jet fighter engines at the

famous Pratt & Whitney aircraft company. Now's he the solo pilot of Joe's V Cycle located in St. Paul, but his decades in the exacting world of the aerospace industry have left an indelible mark on the bikes he restores and builds.

Says Joe, "Sure, I enjoyed working on aircraft and it was cool driving 727s and 747s around on the runway tarmac, but in 2005 I went back to my first passion, working on motorcycles, so it's come full circle, or you could say full cycle. Plus you can get more motorcycles than jumbo jets into a garage. After working on aircraft for some 40 years, I'd also like to think I'm doing some things the smarter way."

That smarter way has brought a wide range of customers to Joe's one-man shop,

from the President of the AMCA (Antique Motorcycle Club of America) who needed his personal bike brought up to snuff, to the Mid-America Auction people who needed an entire vintage bike collection brought to tip-top auction-ready condition.

For our interview, we momentarily took Joe away from his work bench where he was administering to the needs of a rare factory hybrid, a 1967 N15CS, basically a factory Norton/Matchless hybrid. Says Joe, "A guy bought it 14 years ago and now he wants it resurrected. He also stated he'd liked to go a little café with it." Other current projects include rebuilding a pre-unit Triumph 650 transmission as well as delving into the inner windings of British Lucas/BTH magnetos and generators, the current patients including one Brough-Superior SS80, two Vincent

Rapides, and a Norton Manx. Full-on project bikes in the works include an ABSAF 500cc BSA getting the V Cycle café treatment, destined to be Joe's own personal ride, although he also motors around on a 2002 FZ-1.

As it turns out Joe invests a major share of his time tending to vintage 1960 and 1970s Japanese machines, and at the moment he's finishing up a Honda 750 café, a follow-up to the 1972 CB he did last year, along with a pair of very nice Ducati 250s. Joe does work on Desmo and 2-valve Ducks, and "select" American and German machines as well as modern Triumphs. V Cycle also completes minor to major overhauls, cylinder boring, valve grinding/cutting, machine shop, welding, and sheetmetal fabrication. During the spring-summer season he's also swamped with new sportbikes of all kinds, some 250 such bikes annually passing

through his shop and leaving the better for it. Last year he also cured the problems of a 1912 Douglas Twin, a '57 Ariel Square Four, a Norton International, and a 1949 Moto Guzzi Falcone. By now you get the picture that Joe's talents and expertise spread across a wide spectrum of time and brands.

Says Joe, "What I like most is designing and building bikes. It's time consuming and not really a money making proposition, but I really enjoying experimenting with the possibilities found in the café concept."

Keep in mind that Joe's operating as a one-man band, orchestrating everything from hunting down parts to designing a better Triumph choke knob. His parts menu includes mufflers, clip-ons, throttle assemblies, levers, bars grips, pegs, damper knobs, vintage Japanese rear drum brake adjusters

and special tools for Triumphs.

Joe does occupy a special niche, with his level of quality control a product of his aircraft standards, his motorcycles standing their own against the bigger guns out there. Word of mouth endorsements bring him knowledgeable customers seeking a cut above. While he's been flying under the radar, he says he's getting as much work as he can handle. And, he tells us, it's time he got back to the BSA café project up on the workstand ... **CR**

More Info :
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[OPPOSITE PAGE] Joe Anania with shop pooch [THIS PAGE] Detailing & precision restoration work evident on Joe V's Cycle BSA Goldie Single—Ducati singles are also a specialty.

