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Scott Sjovall's X-Glide

More than the sum of its parts

Story and photos by Stephen Berner

Burying the speedo for the nth time that day crossing Iowa was getting boring, as was shifting at redline. Taking this machine to its limit was taking a toll on me... and forcing poor Holdsworth to watch me pull off into the distance. Rolling on at 100 wasn't as fun as it had been the day before.

The X-Wedge was debuted to the V-Twin press during 2007, heady times in the V-Twin industry indeed. It was a new engine designed for the blossoming OEMs who were looking for an EPA-compliant workhorse; a worry free high performance engine made in America from a name they could trust. That in and of

GENERAL

Year, Make & Model: 2009 X-Glide, Homebuilt
Assembly/Builder: Scott Sjovall
Timeline: 9 months

FORKS

Builder: 2005 Suzuki Hayabusa
Type: Hydraulic, inverted 43mm titanium-nitride coated tubes
Triple trees: 2005 Suzuki Hayabusa, aluminum
Extension: No

ENGINE

Year/Model: 2009 S&S X-Wedge
Rebuilder: Scott Sjovall
Displacement: 132"
Lower end: Stock S&S forged & nitrided one-piece X-Wedge, 4.375" stroke crank

Balancing: Yes, S&S

Pistons: Forged 4.375"

Heads: S&S CNC ports/chambers/0.650" conical springs/2.2" stainless intake valve/1.675" inconel exh valve/roller rocker arms. Decked 0.030" to give 10.5:1 CR



itself had value and leverageable brand equity. “It is powered by an S&S X-Wedge engine, you know.”

Well things being what they are and history being what it is, looking back we obviously are much wiser, smarter, and a hell of a lot more conservative in how we spend our hard earned cash now. But if it weren't for the boom the X-Wedge might not have been developed. And friends, I can report that it is indeed a well-developed engine.

Cycle Source had a review of sorts some time ago of a bike that at the time really intrigued me. The bike was a prototype mule owned and built by Scott Sjoval, VP and Product Development guru at S&S Cycle. Basically the machine was a pur-

pose built Road Glide derivative that had enough room to house the big X-Wedge engine and a 6-speed transmission. I'd seen pictures of the bike and thought that it looked like a platform for durability testing—big, black, and menacing, my kind of machine. I was interested and wanted to know more, but then things happened, more magazines came into the house, I had jobs to do, and things got in the way—and you know the deal, I forgot about it...kind of.

Fast-forward two years and boy how things have changed. Spending habits for one are one of the behaviors that certainly have been modified since those “spendy” days, yesiree. Ground up builds are increasingly rare. A whole slew of OEMs

have fallen by the wayside and so has the shiny future for the X-Wedge engine. It was designed and built for a customer that, for the most, part doesn't exist—aftermarket OEM's.

But let me tell you, this is a great engine; a responsive power plant that can go to a whole 'nother level of V-Twin riding. A 56-degree cylinder configuration, a wider configuration than a 45-degree engine layout. It is this characteristic that prevents us from simply sticking this beastly strong S&S engine in our stock framed machines. The front cylinder and exhaust pipe won't fit a stock configuration and the back cylinder would be crowded.

But Scott's X-Glide is not a stock framed machine. Rolling Thunder, (thanks

Cams: S&S 618 w/easy start compression releases
Lifters: S&S hydraulic
EFI/ Carb: S&S EFI/dual 58mm S&S throttle bodies/independent runner manifold/closed loop control

Air Cleaner: Tuned runner intakes and filters
Pipes: 2:1 system with SPO can
Ignition: S&S VFI

TRANSMISSION

Year/Modifications: 2009 S&S 6-speed in S&S X-Wedge XW-R rubber mount case
Engine sprocket: 25-tooth w/H-D compensator
Trans sprocket: S&S 34-tooth
Wheel sprocket: H-D 65-tooth w/custom pulley carrier

Primary Drive: Chain drive w/S&S 11-plate clutch
Secondary Drive: S&S Carbon cord 1.5" x 136 tooth belt



pension offers tons of braking power and visually looks like it belongs. With a little more in the way of spring preload this front end could be the absolutely perfect mate to the stump-pulling engine. Brawn (HP) and smarts (handling) and let's not forget storage capacity, this machine offers the touring rider a sweet deal.

You can see the spec sheet; this is an impressive engine that just kicks ass and is built like a tank. But what all the specs, numbers, and descriptive speak don't tell you is just what this engine is like to live with day in and day out.

What is it like to road trip with and jam with? I didn't get the sense from anything I'd read about this engine what it would be like to spend time with it in a chassis I could relate to and was familiar with. Well, the bike Scott generously loaned me for a week was in a chassis I was familiar with (Road

Glide) albeit a bit different in terms of geometry to accommodate the engine, and so I got my chance: trying the X-Wedge in a chassis I, for the most part, knew.

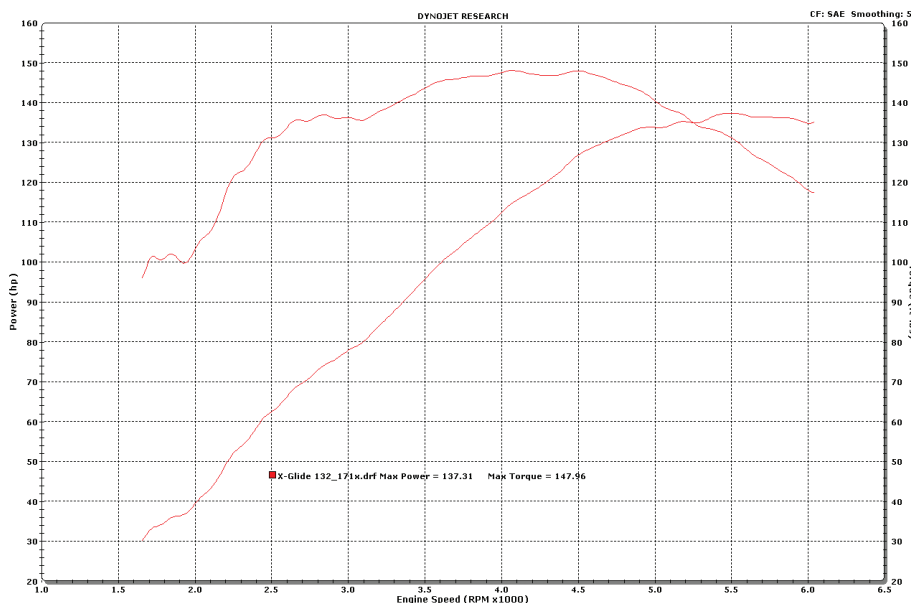
So how did I come to spend a week living with Scott's X-

Glide, road tripping across Wisconsin and Iowa with Meddling Editor Holdsworth? Well, I just asked, to tell the truth.

J&P was having their 32nd open house in Anamosa, Iowa, and as I was scoping the map, getting a sense of distances, the locations of friends and folks I knew, of opportunities and such, a scheme came to mind seeing and understanding the location of S&S in Wisconsin versus Anamosa.

I'd ask Scott to borrow his bike and would use it for a week: back and forth from Viola to Anamosa, a visit to S&S HQ, and a bit of sight seeing in Wisconsin. The goal of this activity would be to spend time with the bike, participate and work with J&P on their ride-in bike show held during the open house festivities, and get some riding time with my esteemed associate, Paul Holdsworth, who was piloting his ever faithful 1985 FXRT. Well lo and behold, Scott said yes to this kooky scheme and the next thing I knew I was in Viola, WI, packing my junk on Scott's kooky bike. Far out, let's roll!

Now this is an unusual pairing of ma-



to our good friend Sam) in Canada supplied Scott with the chassis he was to hang a variety of hardware upon, namely all of the "appearance parts" of a stock H-D Road Glide. All of the OEM bodywork is

accommodated with this frame. Brilliant.

A singularly nice touch, and it is one that calls attention to this "ultra-sleeper," is the Hayabusa front suspension and fender. This well tuned (and tunable) sus-

FRAME

Year: 2008

Designer/Builder: Rolling Thunder

Rake & Stretch: Stock 28° rake, no stretch

ACCESSORIES

Bars: Heritage bars from H-D, re-bent

Risers: Stock FL risers attached to Hayabusa top plate

Fenders: Front: stock Hayabusa,

Rear: Klock Werks 2" stretched

Gas tank: 2008 H-D 6-gallon tank w/H-D fuel pump

Oil tank: Rolling Thunder steel, extended to hold 5 quarts

Oil system: No oil cooler, just extra capacity

Headlight: H-D FLT

Taillight: Six Custom Dynamics LEDs,

custom aluminum frames

Speedo: 2008 H-D white-faced gauges

Pegs: H-D FLT floorboards

Seat: Le Pera Villain for '07 FLT w/1" added

Oil and brake lines: Goodrich

Electrics: H-D

chines, the Stealth Black X-Glide bomber and Holdsworth's happy-go-lucky red and cream, happy as a clam FXRT. When we'd pull in for gas, it'd become obvious who knew something about bikes. They'd come right over, look at the X-Glide in all its matte/flat black unwashed glory, not understand it, and go right over to Paul's bike and smile like they'd found home. It was when they'd come over, stare at the X-Glide and ask, "What the hell is this?" that I knew a fish was on the line. School is in, pay attention.

And so every once in a while a knowledgeable enthusiast would typically ask three questions: the first was "What am I looking at?" The second, "What's it like to ride?" And the third, after hearing my answers, was "Where can I get one?"

So, this is how I answered those queries.

What is this? This is a 132-inch, S&S X-Wedge-powered, Rolling Thunder frame'd Road Glide derivative owned by Scott Sjoval, VP of Product Development at S&S Cycle. The front end is off a Hayabusa. All the running gear/bodywork is a blend of S&S and H-D for the most part.

What's it like to ride? It's a lot like a Harley but it spools up faster, goes longer, is stronger, has more torque and doesn't run out of breath. The engine seems unflappable and doesn't mind redline/rev limiter shifts through all the gears, all the time. It never complains. At slow parking lot speeds, you can feel the longer frame but in every other situation the bike is like a locomotive; strong, straight in terms of handling, and has seemingly boundless enthusiasm for the task at hand. Sixth speed is ridiculous—a total "you're gonna collect autographs" gear. Put it this way: you are doing 75 MPH at 2900 RPM in 5th and the engine is barely breathing. What are you planning on doing in 6th gear? Getting tickets, uh huh.

Where can I get one?: Unfortunately you can't get one. Well, let me rephrase that: you can't buy one "baked." You will need to connect with a builder who can put the bike together or you can do it yourself if you are a crafty hands-on type that has done work like this before. Working with a frame manufacturer like Rolling Thunder insures you'll have what you'll

need in terms of tabs and mounts, and S&S has some real patient tech support folks that can work with you to answer fitment questions and make recommendations. The bodywork and accessories are available most anywhere. Put it this way: S&S wants you to succeed.

In closing, as you can tell I really liked this machine. It went like stink, did every single thing I asked it to do in a totally unflappable manner, and I like the fact it wasn't a bauble or showpiece and could live in a parking lot full of bikes and not draw undue attention. I could use junky pump gas (what passes for premium, ha!) and the bike didn't bitch once. And it's a 132". I ran it up to redline repeatedly (never a whimper), buried the speedo a half dozen times (blame this behavior on James Simonelli challenging my manhood with a, "What, you didn't shut it down in every gear? Ya puss."), and still had plenty more left. Totally stable and well mannered at walking speeds as well as mach one. What more could you ask for?

One last note. When I picked up the bike Scott was busy plugging a flat tire on this machine, the rear of course. (Auspicious start, thought I.) Looking around his shop I spied a Tourpak under plastic, up on a rack. I looked at the rear of the X-Glide and realized there were quick release brackets installed. Like a snake I struck and asked Scott, "Does an H-D Tourpak fit on the bike? (Duh.)"

Being an honest Wisconsin kind of guy, Scott answered honestly. "Of course it



does." So I begged that he put it on so I could carry my camera junk, protected and such, alleviating me having a crippling week of wearing a backpack filled with electronica and fancy glass, and he acquiesced. Honestly, I promised that I'd take the beastly burrito maker off before I shot the bike for this feature. Ha! Oops. The specter of being miles from anywhere and not being able to wrestle the damn thing back on was simply too much to bear so I shot the bike with the Tourpak on.

As Scott said when he saw the images, "What? The bike isn't ugly enough? You had to leave the Tourpak on?"

Ah, yeah, sorry 'bout that pal. **iw**

WHEELS/TIRES

Tires: Continental Road Attack
Front/Size: 120/70 x 17 **Rear/Size:** 180/55 x 17
Wheels: Stock Hayabusa, cast aluminum
Front/Size: 17" x 3.5" **Rear/Size:** 17" x 6"
Brakes/Calipers/Rotors: Stock Hayabusa

PAINT

Painter: Yours truly, cheap and fast!
Color: Flat black
Plating/Powdercoating: By S&S Crew

