

Blackhawk Motor Works' Power Plus 110 Stroker - Road Test

by Jim "Iron Mule" Termini

As many of you know I had a little problem with my Blackhawk motor during the Indian Rally at Indian Point. While leading a ride through the winding roads of southern Missouri, my PP100 blew a gasket. I thought I was done for since my warranty ran out two weeks before. I met with Frank, from Blackhawk Motor Works at the rally and explained my dilemma. Frank was more than willing to go above and beyond his obligation to ensure my motor got repaired. So I scheduled my vacation in Palm Bay, Florida, the home of Blackhawk Motor Works.

Since Frank was going the extra mile for customer service, I wanted to save him some time and money. I was allowed to pull and disassemble my own motor. With experts no more than arms reach away, I was confident and learned a lot about my PP100. Hanging around the shop really showed me the care and professionalism Frank's team puts into all their work. No matter how busy things got in the shop, Mike and Frank always took time for their customers. This sometimes led to long hours and late nights to meet their deadlines.

I was planning to ride my Indian from Kansas City to Seattle for a business trip. Every year my company sends us to a week of training somewhere in the US and for the last 4 years I have made those trips by flying V-Twin airlines. This seemed to be the perfect opportunity to road test the new 110 Stroker and Frank agreed. This test would be a real world test, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, from Sea level to the Continental Divide with all the obstacles the road has to offer. So it was set, I was to return to Florida when the new motor was finished and begin my 10,000 mile journey.

The plan was to complete a round trip from Palm Bay, Florida to Seattle, Washington and back to Kansas City, then again back to Palm Bay, Florida. The trip from Palm Bay to Kansas City was to take two riding days. With a two day layover in Kansas City then take three days to get to Seattle from there. After a week of training, take the next week to return to Kansas City

via the Cascade Mountains, Glacier National Park, and Yellowstone with a stop in Sturgis on Day Twelve for a visit to bike week. The last leg of the journey, the return to Florida for analysis, was scheduled for Labor Day weekend. As a safety factor, I arranged for escorts along the trip. 'Cowboy' Will was to escort me from Palm Bay to Kansas City and my co-worker, Bill, was to ride with me for the remainder of the trip.

I can't possibly describe all the events in detail in this article but I will touch on all the major parts. With any new motor the break-in period is critical and since I had to depend on an unproven motor for 6,500 miles, oil changes were scheduled as part of the trip.

The power of membership in the IIRA, the information, relationships and experience of being on the website since the early CyberCorp days really paid off on this trip. Let me explain how all this ties together for my trip and made the difference between success and failure.

First off, without the IIRA and all the posts on the website regarding rebuilds of PP100, I would have never met Frank, who made this challenge possible.

When 'Cowboy' and I arrived at American Classic Cycles (former Indian Dealer) in Dothan, Alabama at closing time on Day One, they went out of their way to work us in for an oil change. After they heard what I was testing and discussing the IIRA, they made me feel right at home. Without their help, the motor may have never survived the extreme heat the following day had to offer. Great bunch of folks!

I knew 'Bear' from Bear's Hiway Classic's, when he was the mechanic for my local Indian dealer. Bear saw me through all my early troubles on my 2000 Chief and some of the issues with the Vintage. He opened his own shop and services a lot of the local IIRA members. I was able to track him down on our website with a single post since I lost track of him after the shutdown of IMC. This made it possible to

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call on him in a pinch when I needed my transmission replaced. It seems I cooked my RevTech on the run from Florida to Kansas City. Bear was able to obtain and install a new Baker 6 speed with only a one day notice. Bear was the first independent mechanic to test drive the new Stroker and to quote him directly, “damn, that thing really screams now...”

On Day Five, late in the afternoon, outside of Billings, Montana, the bike just dies going down a big hill in the middle of nowhere. It acted like someone just turned off the key. After 3 years of IIRA membership, I never needed to use the tow service and now I'm grateful it's available. After going over the motorcycle and not finding anything obvious, it was time to climb up a big hill to get a cell signal and call Frank at home and interrupt his dinner. After following his troubleshooting advice, it is determined that the coil shot craps and needed to be replaced. Thank goodness for Frank's after-market ignition. Bill, my friend and co-worker, was able to return to Billings Harley Davidson for replacement parts. With the repairs made, off we roared! All went well the rest of the day, the higher I got in the mountains, the better the engine performed. Fully loaded and running hard, the Stroker's performance exceeded my expectations.

About 60 miles before Missoula, at 11:00 pm, Bill and I pulled off in Drummond, Montana for fuel. As we were pulling up to the pumps the attendant just finished locking up for the night. With only two gas stations and a small hotel in town, our options were limited. Knowing our plight, the attendant reopened the gas station for us. After fueling up and some small talk, I went to start the Chief. A horrible noise started coming from the primary, it sounded like

metal grinding. The only thing we could do was see if we could get a room at the only hotel in town and use the IIRA tow service in the morning, the power of the card. As I lay in bed at the hotel thinking about missing my deadline for work, getting the bike towed to Missoula and trying to figure out what was wrong, it occurred to me that after learning so much about my bike from the Iron Indian website I might as well pull the primary and see what was wrong. In the middle of the night, in a gravel parking lot with a flashlight in my teeth I pulled the primary with basic hand tools. As the case came off some other parts fell on the ground. After close examination it turned out the keeper on the starter pinion bolt broke and the bolt backed all the way out. Equipped with Blue lock-tite I coated the bolt heavily and reassembled everything. I finished it up around sunrise and prepared to continue my journey.

The rest of the way to Seattle, the bike ran great! I continued adjusting my ignition curve and carburetor since the bike ran so good in high altitudes I knew I



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was running lean. I really discovered the true power of the 110 when I was coming out of the high desert in Eastern Washington and beginning the ascent into the Cascade Mountains. The road must have been the longest hill I ever climbed. It must have been a 20 mile steep grade and climbed 4000 feet. As we passed cars, trucks and RV's labored by the climb, Bill's Harley started showing signs of slowing about half way up. The Indian pulled without strain so I grabbed some throttle to see what she would do. I blew by the Road King and continued to pass everything on the road as the speedometer past 90 mph. As I reached the top of the pass, I had to stop and wait on Bill's Harley for what seemed like forever. Pumped up and excited about all the power at a twist of the wrist, we stopped for fuel and a little bragging.

Once in Seattle on Day Six, it was time to settle down and rest my little mule as well as my bones. It had been rough the last three days. While I was posting on the IIRA board, I got a PM from 'Tall Rider' offering to host me for dinner one night. I was able to meet up with another member of the IIRA, trade stories and make a new friend. Since I needed to get some work done on the Chief during my stay, 'Tall Rider' gave me plenty of recommendations for shops in the Seattle area. I called Frank and discussed my progress and some of my issues. He wanted to try a different ignition system for the return trip. I was running out of time and needed to get the work done by Friday to begin the return leg of the journey. Frank sent the parts to me over-night and Pro/Max Cycles in Tacoma was willing to work me in on short notice. The Iron Indians has a large network of people all across the country and everyone I dealt with and spoke to was more than willing to help. After Harry of Pro/Max Cycles replaced the battery, ignition, a cam seal, changed the oil and filter and replaced the starter pinion bolt keeper, he needed to take it for a test ride, of course. He returned all smiles and really liked the performance! He mentioned I might want to replace my exhaust because it seemed a little restrictive. Harry was a pleasure to work with and he took great care of me.

Packed up and ready to ride on my next adventure, I could feel the motor was really starting to come to life after 3,500 miles. There were no other mechanical problems on the return trip but tons of stories. The

ride through the Cascades, Glacier National Park and Yellowstone was fantastic and I can highly recommend that route to anyone. Since the run to Seattle had been all Interstate highways, my goal was to avoid all the Interstates I could and enjoy the US highways. After riding all day and all night, due to a lack of available hotel rooms (but that's another story), I arrived at Sturgis on Day Twelve. Meeting more Iron Indians over the next several days was great but time didn't allow tracking down others and with no internet access it was impossible to guess where they were. I am sometimes amazed at how dependant we can become on the internet.

Before heading out on the run home on Saturday, Day Fourteen, I made a couple of adjustments. It appeared that J&P Cycle was having a clearance sale of Indian parts and I couldn't resist picking up a few things. Even the people there knew of Frank and the Iron Indians. I replaced my driving light bracket as it was showing signs of wear after my 7 miles of off-roading in the rain coming out of Yellowstone, but that's yet another story. I also pulled the torque cones out of my exhaust to let it breathe better. Man, was Harry right, there was even more power there. I just regret I didn't do this earlier, much earlier. Besides running blind in the rain all day the trip home was a breeze with the added power of the 110 and the sixth gear.

After catching my breath and clearing my desk at work, I was able to start making preparations for the trip back to Florida. Frank wanted to disassemble the motor and see what damage I had done and what improvements could be made. I left on Labor Day Weekend, solo, to complete the run. I arrived at Palm Bay, Florida on Day Sixteen with over 8500 miles on the motor. After Frank examined the motor, he found nothing more than normal engine wear. Considering what I had just put it through, I was impressed. Frank was now confident the 110 Stroker kit was ready for production. With a few more modifications, I was able to complete the ride home in two more days of riding. That's a total of 10,000 miles in eighteen riding days and one tough motor. Take care and ride hard, maybe we will cross paths in this adventure called life.

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