

Gilroy Shoot-Out 2002 Indian Roadmaster vs 2003 Indian Chief Vintage

To begin the comparison lets have a look at the specs on these bikes:

Chris Horner's Bike.

This machine is the Chief Vintage with a separate headlight. It was owned by a car dealer in Florida and maintained by the factory on a no expense spared basis. It has every option available at that time and is a solid dark red colour that is pretty much as the traditional "Indian Red" this is offset by the usual high quality leather work the factory fitted in a pleasant light tan. The bike is fitted with a screen and both solo and dual seats are available together with a matching leather top box. The machine has a lowering kit fitted together with handlebar risers and a shortened side stand. A "War Bonnet" air cleaner is fitted. The engine is derestricted but otherwise stock as are the brakes and transmission . When I first rode it the handling felt a little "squirrely" as the seppos say but the problem was traced to original tyres which were worn to suit a right hand road camber. a new set of skins sorted it out.

Phil Pilgrims bike.

This machine has the chrome nacelle . It is finished in Halloween colours of copper and black. The engine has been tweaked with a more aggressive advance curve on the ignition and a higher rev limit. The brakes have been upgraded with better pads and I seem seem to recall a larger M/cylinder? It too has a screen and bags . The biggest difference is that Phil did not like the original gear box which he said was extremely noisy. He replaced it with an aftermarket **Ultima** six speed of Korean manufacture, where the original Rev-Tec 5 speed came from .

It is worth mentioning at this point that there is still some confusion about how many Harley Davidson components are actually in the later Gilroy Chiefs. As far as I am aware there is only the oil filter & clutch, all other components such as engine, frame forks etc are strictly modern **Indian**. There is a family resemblance to an Evolution motor in the mill which of course makes it a relative of the design that Porsche did for Harley when they moved on from the Shovel Head.

As stated in the report on the recent run to Beaufort I started the day on Chris's bike, then I swapped with an M109 Suzuki Power Cruiser at morning tea and after lunch I took Phil,s Chief which I spent the rest of the day riding. All the opinions that follow reflect my personal taste only. Lets start with "Bling" I think the Chris-mobile wins this one. I like the l looks and the lower riding position and the The traditionally styled Vintage with its retro colour scheme seems to me to have a more cohesive appearance have .

Street Cred:

Chris,s bike again. Both these machines seem to have a huge and favorable impact on the general public with kids waving from car windows and every body from well dressed matrons to blokes that "used to have a bike" giving them the thumbs up. When ever we stopped people from all ages and backgrounds wanted to talk to us but I would have to say that It was the long, low Vintage that seemed to have the edge.

Profiling:

A tie here. Chris's bike, with its slammed into the weeds suspension is really maneuverable in town and allows one to polish the nonchalant cruiser profile but it is twitchier at speed and needs more concentration at anything over 100kph and therefore the profiling potential diminishes with speed. After riding the lowered bike, climbing up onto the Phil mobile made me feel like I needed an oxygen mask to cope with the altitude. However the standard suspension gave a much plusher ride and to be honest the bike held the road better especially at speed and therefore took less input on the part of the rider. I must say that I felt the high speed handling was very good for such a large and specialized machine. I have not ridden a 2009 and on Harley with their new frame design but the Gilroy seems much more "planted at around 120kmh then say, a 2008 and earlier Road King.

Mojo:

What can one say? love them or loath them these Gilroy Chiefs and their Charlottesville namesakes really make an impact on the road. With their size, unique traditional styling and famous name they are ,in my opinion at the top of the very competitive cruiser heap. I doubt if they will ever be very numerous on Aussie roads and in that's not necessarily a bad thin.

Off road capabilities:

Ha! a surprise category for the competitors.

After lunch at the Beafort pub we were led on a tour by Don McCrae, a local chap on a Kawasaki Z1000. Readers will recall that this area had suffered its share of torrential rain and associated local flooding. We came to a " road closed " sign on the road to Leamouth but of course this did not mean us. We pushed on and came to a large dip in the road . The road at the bottom was completely gone for about 30 yards. there was nothing but chunks of road bed and erosion gullies. Don powered down the hill on his long legged Kawa while the group looked on. Don bashed, crashed and slid across the wash out and scrambled up the opposite bank. I was next in line and I must say I felt quite apprehensive about subjecting my Gilroy to such severe conditions but then I remembered that it was,nt my bike I was on so Hi Ho and off we go! as I approached the bottom it was obviously worse than it looked from up top. The washout was a mass of little gullies a foot deep. There was no chance of pussyfooting through because there was no where to put my foot down, to stop was almost certainly to drop Phil,s bike something I am sure he would not have been too pleased about. As I approached the opposite bank there was quite a jump back up to the bitumen, I gave it the berries and the mighty Gilroy charged up and over back on to the road. There had been this dull twanging sound as the underside of the bike hit and the side stand flopping in the breeze suggested that that sound might have been the spring going bush.

I parked the bike and watched Phil make the same run on the lowered bike. there was a spray of gravel and dust and Bam! the bike ran aground. It took quite a bit of muscle power to get this barge refloated but fortunately a way was found around the edges of the washout and the Gilroys were reunited. We watched as

without a word, the rest of the group, perhaps wisely, decided to give it a miss and take a detour. A search turned up the spring which was refitted [no mean feat] after a stop at Leamouth we bade goodbye to Don and Phil and I headed down the freeway, only swapping bikes at the Bell St turn off.

So which bike wins the Shoot out? The Guernsey goes to the six speed bike because its stock suspension and taller gearing make it just so much more practical on the freeway. But this win is only by a narrowest of margins and here is why: The six speed Phil fitted is a cheapie \$900 and though it does the job it is a fairly average bit of kit. Also the bike develops a noticeable transmission hammer in third, this is easily fixed by changing gear but its right where you want to cruise and obviously the ratios are not well matched at this point. As well the engine has not got the puff to chug up to speed in sixth. Speaking of engines, the slightly warmed over mill on Phils bike does not feel as nice as the Red bikes engine. This used to happen on Evo Harleys, the more performance the engine gave the more "niceness" it lost The new new Indians are 105c.i. and that coupled with the excellent Baker six speed would make all the difference. I really preferred the look and feel Chris,s bike and if it had a quality six speed fitted and perhaps a suspension tweak it would be the bike for me.

Phillip White