



CANDY-COATED FAT BOY

One man's trash ...

OTHER THAN THE FAT BOY YOU'RE STARING at, here's the short list: an immaculate 1920 Ford Model T; a '32 Model B truck;

a roadster, a sedan, and a pickup, all Model A; a '48 coupe; a '68 Camaro Z-28 convertible; an assortment of antique Model B Mack trucks, and no less than five late-model International Harvester big rigs.

To begin to understand Mike Marushak, you really need to hang with him and his dad, Mike "Butch" Marushak, at the family's compound, or ponderosa, or whatever you want to call it. The place is a true, living, breathing property, dominated by two marvelously rustic, barn-like structures (one a house, the other an immense workshop),

both of which were, more or less, hand-built by Butch with help from his son. When the Marushaks aren't slammed running their various trucking businesses, they're restoring vehicles and generally wrenching on anything they can get their hands on. They're jovial, unassuming, self-sufficient, salt-of-the-earth characters with seemingly infinite talents to create or repair just about anything. No problem is too great. In other words, at the dawn of the apocalypse you'd want them on your side.

At 34, Mike may have inherited a lifetime of knowledge from his old man, but he happens to make his living in the garbage business. In fact, he hauls the trash of one terribly influential and entirely anonymous gentleman who just

PHOTOS BY BOB FEATHER

may have helped Mike get his bike in this magazine. Mike's customers are powerful people indeed. "I was doing a pickup at this guy's house and I noticed he was wearing an American Iron shirt," Mike explains. "I thought I recognized him from the mag, but I couldn't quite put my finger on it. Anyway, at the time, I was thinking of selling my Fat Boy so I gave him a flyer and asked if he knew someone who might be interested. The next thing I know, I got a call from [AIM photog] Bob Feather. Apparently, you guys wanted to shoot my bike. I've got to say, it was very cool."

If anybody thinks he's seen this '93 flamed Fatty before, think again. You may have glimpsed it, but probably not in its current state. You see, Mike has a problem, one that you may be afflicted with yourself. After buying the Boy in '93 with 1,000 miles on it, Mike rode it around for a moment, then rolled it into his basement and accidentally tore it to shreds. "I didn't really mean to," Mike recalls. "When I bought it, I said I'd leave it alone and just ride it. Then I chromed the controls. Then I took it all apart. It just exploded."

Thankfully, it was winter in New England, so Mike wasn't exactly chomping at the bit to ride. By summer, the Fat one

was back on the street in the first of what would be six reincarnations. Like I said, Mike has a problem.

"Even though I haven't touched it since I painted the frame the same color as the bike five years ago, I used to tear it down every winter," Mike says. As you can see, while certainly striking, the Boy is in no way a radical custom. "I could have gone the route of a stretched tank and different fenders, but I felt you don't see a lot of customs with the original tin, which I liked anyway." The tin may be stock, but it's lavishly coated in House of Kolor's Candy Purple, a task handled by Chris Bayliss of Bayliss Restorations, located in Mims, Florida. For the record, Mike is a first-rate painter and might have been able to do the job himself, but he insisted on Chris' expertise. "Even Chris was a little



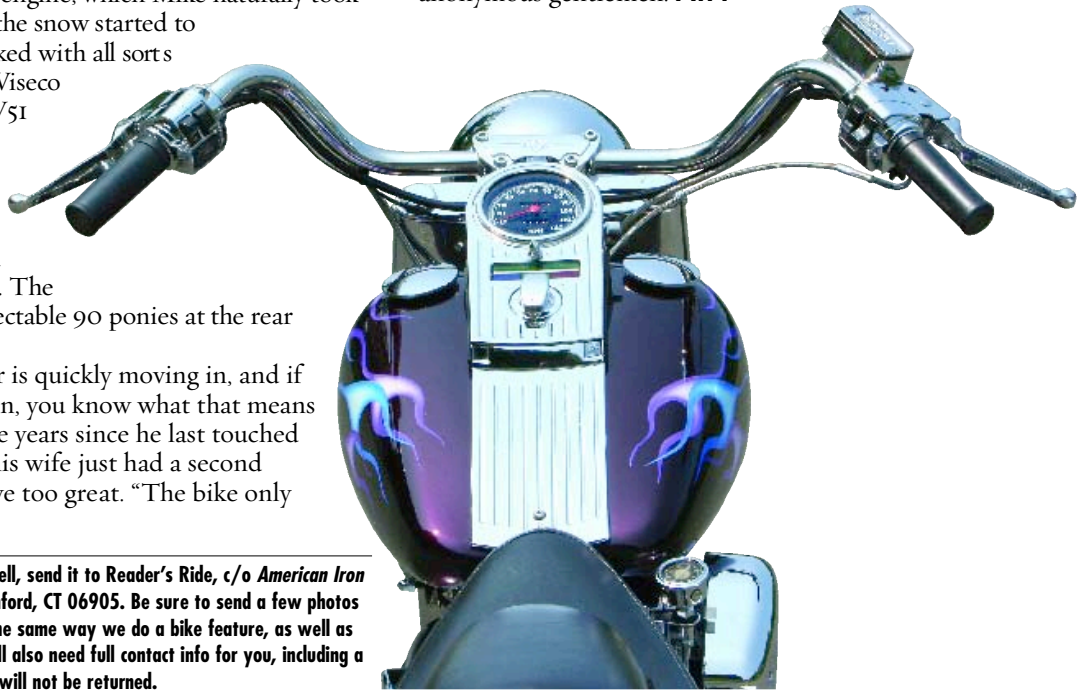
READER'S RIDE

stunned about that," laughs Mike.

Although Mike's sled is certainly fat and pretty, that doesn't mean it's a pig. In fact, most of the work Mike did to the old Boy is contained within the engine, which Mike naturally took apart completely whenever the snow started to fall. At the moment, it's packed with all sorts of hi-po delicacies such as Wiseco 10:1 pistons, an Andrews EV51 cam, Crane rockers, lifters, pushrods, bored cylinders, and so much more. Smartly, Mike turned to TP Engineering to help him with some of the machining. The end product puts out a respectable 90 ponies at the rear wheel. Not bad at all.

As of this writing, winter is quickly moving in, and if you've been paying attention, you know what that means for Mike. Sure, it's been five years since he last touched his scoot, and, yes, he and his wife just had a second child, but the lure may prove too great. "The bike only

has about 15,000 miles on it," Mike says with a tinge of embarrassment in his voice. "I don't really do too much riding. I'm way more into taking it apart and playing." That is, of course, when he's not ensconced in one of the many other projects that he and his dad have going on. Or just busy hauling the trash of terribly influential and entirely anonymous gentlemen. **AIM**



Got a bike you think belongs here? Well, send it to Reader's Ride, c/o *American Iron Magazine*, 1010 Summer Street, Stamford, CT 06905. Be sure to send a few photos showing both sides of the bike shot the same way we do a bike feature, as well as some shots of you with the bike. We'll also need full contact info for you, including a daytime phone number. Sorry, photos will not be returned.

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