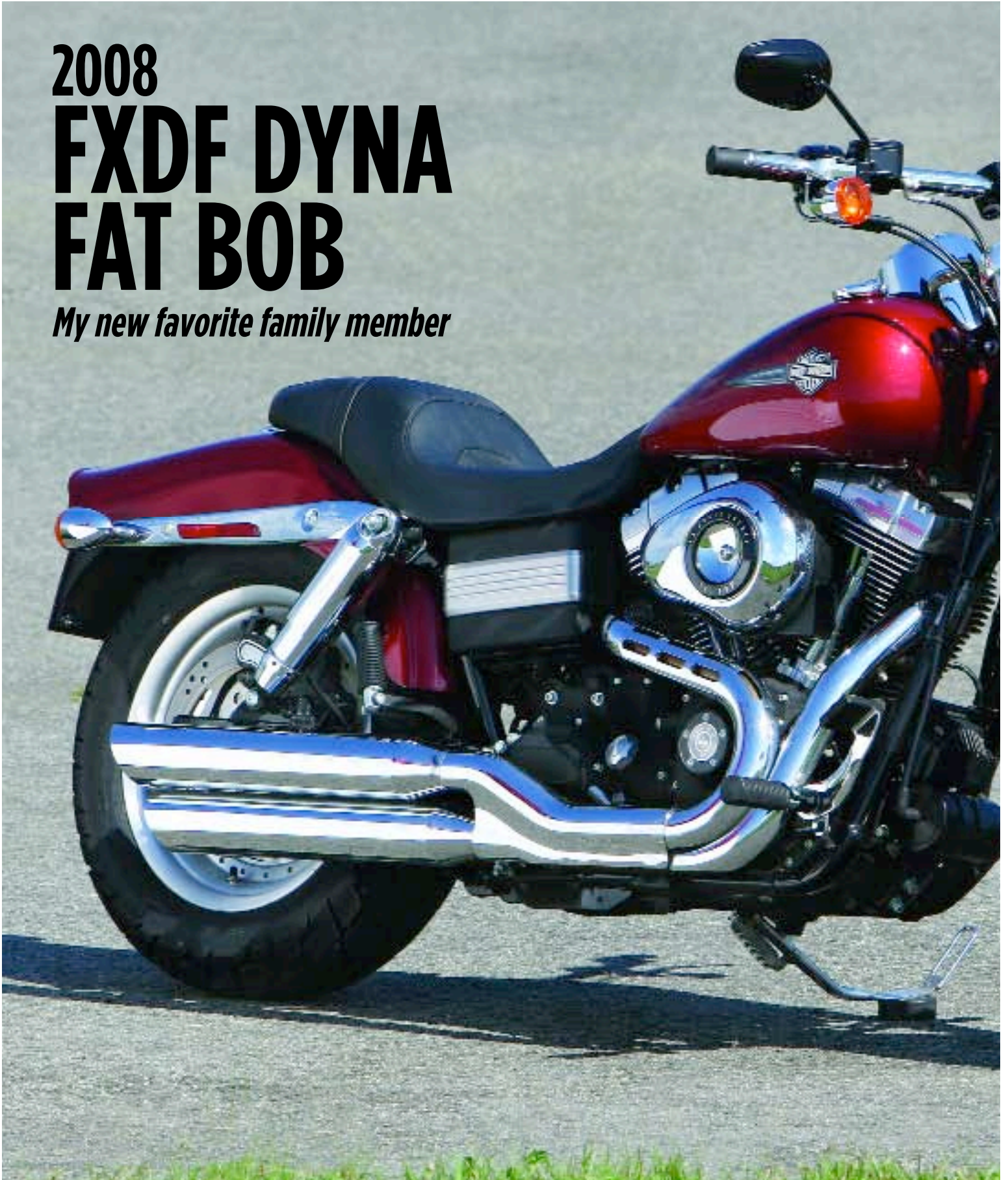


2008 FXDF DYNA FAT BOB

My new favorite family member





WHEN THE BIRTH ANNOUNCEMENT first crossed my desk, it made me curious. It read kind of like this: “Harley-Davidson is proud to announce the Fat Bob, the latest addition to the Dyna family. Born in 2008, coming into this world with an overall length of 91-3/4” and an operating weight of 703 pounds.” Truth told, besides piquing my curiosity and delivering some specs, none of the above is true. But when I got my hands on the bike’s complete spec sheet and finally saw it in person at the press launch, I must admit I felt as excited as a new father.

It has been some time since a new model has been introduced in the Dyna family. Sure, the whole Dyna line was redesigned and updated in 2006. And, in 2005, the Super Glide Custom was created, but I personally didn’t see that as new since it was just a factory-customized Super Glide. It’s no secret that I’m a fan of rubber-mounted Harleys, especially FXRs and Dynas. I mention this to simply repeat it for those readers who’ve written in saying that they already know (and are bored with) my adoration of rubber-mounted H-Ds. In my opinion, Dynas and FXRs are true riders’ bikes, and the Fat Bob takes this to the next level.

From a styling point of view, some critics say that the Fat

PHOTOS BY BOB FEATHER



Bob is nothing more than a Super Glide with a Fat Boy front end. I've even heard it's basically a Softail with twin shocks. I totally disagree with both of these statements. If anything, the Bob's styling is a nod to the original bobber days when FLHs were stripped down to show their stout 16" front wheels and rear shocks with covered springs. Mix in the new chunky tires (with their aggressive tread pattern) and this bike looks tough and ready to go wherever you want to take it.

Back in the April 2007 issue of *American Iron Magazine*, I came clean about my ongoing love affair with the FXDWG, which, by the way, only comes in the 105th Anniversary paint scheme for 2008. I know it sounds wrong, and I don't intend to question my own sexuality, but I now think I am falling for the Wide Glide's younger brother, Fat Bob. Trying to justify this in my own mind, I realized that there are many similarities between these two bikes. Looking at them side by side, it's hard not to notice that they're comparable from the necks back. And except for minor details on the Bob (like a 16" slotted rear wheel, 180mm rear tire, covered shocks, and a 2-into-1-into-2 exhaust), the Wide Glide and Bob are virtually identical. Obvious parallels include the frame; black powdercoated, rubber-mounted TC 96; six-speed Cruise Drive transmission; 5.1-gallon Fat Bob gas tank with chrome center console; new air cleaner cover; Bobtail rear fender, and braided brake lines.

From the neck forward, however, the Bob takes the Dyna

family in a completely new direction. The 16" slotted, cast-aluminum front wheel is wrapped with a 130mm tire and actually looks like it belongs inside the massive 49mm forks and the wide, polished-aluminum triple trees. New dual 4" headlamps are mounted between the trees and give the Fat Bob a signature look. They work well at night, too. The neck has a rake of 29 degrees, a fork angle of 28 degrees, and a trail of 4.92". Since the trees actually derake the forks by one degree, the Bob has the smallest fork angle of any Dyna. Only the FXDWG has more trail. The steering geometry, combined with the fat front wheel, makes the bike feel a bit slow when initially leaning into a turn, but definitely adds to the overall stability. Another spec that sets this bike apart from other Dynas is a wheelbase of 63.77", the shortest of all Dyna models.

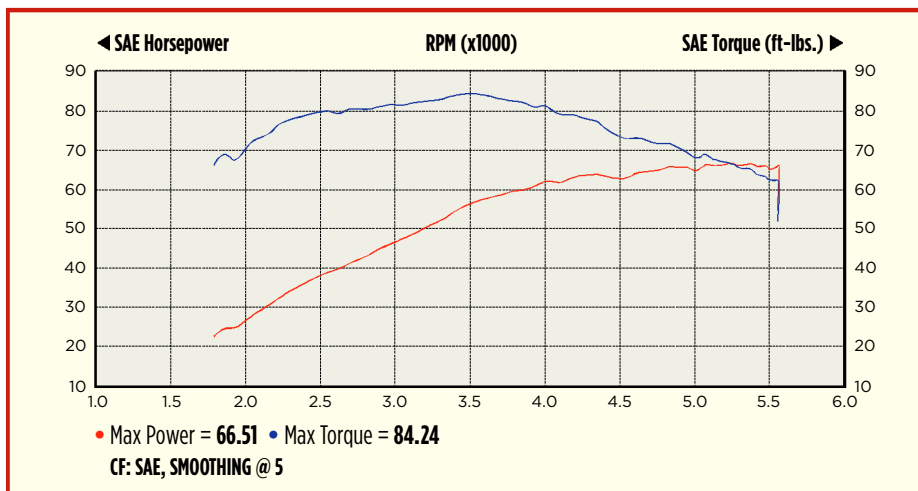
Both tires have an aggressive, almost adventure-touring, tread pattern, giving the Fat Bob a signature footprint. A first for a Dyna, the 180 rear and 130 front tires are well-matched, and allow the bike to track solidly and feel stable in all riding situations. On the road, I found this works well and provides ample traction on both wet and dry roads. The Bob even seemed to hold its own when I did some slight off-roading while looking for a lean-to at the Ward Pound Ridge Reservation, a Westchester County park.

The new airbox cover and new Tommy Gun exhaust system, allowed our test bike to produce just over 66 hp and

84 ft-lbs. of torque. I like the look, especially since the rear pipe snakes forward and around the timing cover before both pipes merge into a collector and then split into staggered dual mufflers, hence the 2-into-1-into-2 design. The slotted exhaust shield on the rear header pipe gives the system its name, but it does radiate considerable heat, which is quite noticeable in warm weather, but almost welcome when the weather's cool.

I can't remember the last time H-D offered a factory option besides paint, but with the Fat Bob you have a choice of forward foot controls or midmounts. Our test bike came with forwards, which, combined with the chrome V-shaped drag bars, made for all-day comfort. At times, however, I wished for mids since the forwards often made me back off on turns because they (or my boots) always seemed to be the first to scrape. Having mid-mounted controls would definitely allow for more aggressive riding, but would also make the bike feel cramped on long hauls given the Bob's low 26.1" seat height.

For aggressive styling, certain components on the Fat Bob are blacked out, including fork lowers, handlebar risers, and mirrors. I would have liked more blacked out components, but I guess there is always that big P&A catalog. A classy new bar-and-shield medallion is used on the gas tank, and the bike is available in seven solid-color paint options, including three low-gloss, Denim paint selections. MSRP



Thanks to Dyno Solutions (203/748-0741) for the use of its dyno facilities

starts at \$14,795 for black, and \$15,140 for other colors.

It's probably safe to say that the Fat Bob was named for the classic shape of its iconic fuel tank, which has appeared on many Harleys over the years. The bike you see here is an excellent tribute to that tank. I believe you can't go wrong with any Dyna, since, unlike Softails, they're riders' bikes. The Fat Bob not only stays true to that tradition, it actually takes it one step further. All I have left to figure out is how to justify ending my love affair with the Dyna Wide Glide, and to explain wanting to start a relationship with her younger brother. I guess at least I'm keeping it in the family. **AIM**