

RIDE REVIEW

Lucky Strike

Evolution of the Bobber

Soldiers returning home from WWII were dissatisfied with the motorcycles that were available at the time. The soldiers started to hang out with their motorcycle friends again to exchange ideas and soon decided that their motorcycles needed changes.

Who needs a windshield, front fenders, big headlights, crash bars, and big seats? Chop them off and make the bike lighter. First, they either removed or shortened (bobbed) the fenders on their bikes. These bikes began to be called bobbers. Changes kept occurring but it wasn't until the late 60s and early 70s that the Bobbers gave way to the Choppers. After release of the seminal movie *Easy Rider* in 1969, a whole new movement began. Riders wanted a bike like the one ridden by Peter Fonda in the movie. They wanted a Chopper.

Swift introduced their new Bobber this year; early 2006. The new Bobber is rigid and has a final chain drive. One thing that I did not know about Swift, was that all of their motorcycles support a chain for the final drive. Mark Stallings with Swift told me that they decided to go the chain route to make the motorcycles a little more compact. Example: on their choppers they have a 300 rear, then with a 2-inch frame a wide final drive belt, the motorcycle becomes too wide. By introducing a chain, the bike is much more compact.

Bobber Test Ride

First thing that I noticed when I mounted the new Bobber was how compact it was. The bike is a surprisingly light motorcycle. It weighs in at around 520 pounds wet. With a nice low seat of 24" you feel like you are sitting on a bike you can wear. Controls were similar to Harley. They did provide a very readable digital speedometer right in the center and on top of the handlebars. This was at all times very readable, even in the Arizona direct sunlight.

After I fired up the 80-inch EVO, I noticed it was relatively vibration free and quiet. After a few laps around the parking lot for Raymond, the photographer, I was headed out the gate to cruise western Phoenix on the exciting new Bobber. The 30/90-16 front tire was great and gave the ride a solid feel. Of course riding a rigid always lets you know how the road feels. At first I did not even notice that I was on a rigid, but after hitting one fairly big chuckhole, I was brought back to reality. All and all, this is about as forgiving a rigid that I have been on. One rigid that I rode, I spent a lot of time looking for smooth payment and avoiding the rough spots.





PHOTOGRAPHY BY PhotoGraphic Lee
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This was not the case with the Swift Bobber, after getting on the 101 and riding for a while I forgot I was on a rigid.

There was one very annoying hot spot about the bike. The oil tank filler was touching the bottom of my right leg. This is a very nice looking chrome oil filler cap that does not communicate a friendly touch. Maybe, because I am a little short, 5' 8", my legs were at a more direct angle to the forward controls and because of that the underside of my right leg rested on top of the filler cap. But just the same, after the engine heated up, I found that the filler cap was very hot! After returning to the barn, I was informed that they have a fix for this. The new oil tanks will have a center filler and it will be under the seat.

Heading over to the 101, I found an on-ramp where I was able to put the hammer down for a little bit. I found this little bobber to be very spunky in traffic. It responded well with a lot of good feedback. You could put this Bobber anywhere you want with ease. The accelera-



tion wasn't fast, but very responsive and refreshing. Please note, this is a factory stock, not broke in 80-inch EVO. By being an EVO, there are no limits to a gazillion after market upgrades that you can find. By the way, from what I could tell, this was faster than any of the stock Harleys, with the exception of the V-rod stock bikes that I have been on.

While on the 101, the little Bobber rode like a champ; very smooth. After grabbing 6th gear you feel like you can ride for hours. Now you have to remember, this is a Bobber.



I, as an old man, found the seat not very supportive and the reach for the handlebars not in a position that I would want to be in for a ride to Texas but the ride itself was very good. Yeah I know this is not a cruiser, but I did want to make sure that you realize this is not meant for 12 hour rides unless you have a little more youth than myself.

After riding for over an hour in the hot summer sun in Phoenix, I stopped at a convenience store and downed about 3 pounds of Coke. Everybody stopped to check out the bike. Several made comments and wanted to know more. I felt bad when people asked me if that was my bike. I have to admit, this is one of the best looking Bobbers that I have seen. Thanks, Swift.

After putting some time in the saddle with traffic and 101 riding, it was time to get back to the barn. Besides, I don't like riding in 100+ degree temps. The shame about the whole ride was I told Mark that there was a place in Prescott that I wanted to ride the Bobber. He said that would not be a problem. I should have gone for the hills.

Summary

A great looking Bobber it is. Solid riding rigid that is fun and spunky. There is no limits to what you can find for aftermarket engine upgrades with an EVO engine. That is a big plus for this Bobber. When you are looking at the new Bobbers, check out the new optional springer front-ends that are available. I don't like to nit pick, but the hot spot from the oil tank has to be fixed. The modification that's in the works will be welcomed. I found the forward controls to not be the best. I was informed that they have new billet controls ready to be bolted to the new Bobbers when they come off the line. I am sure the Lucky Strike will be a very popular motorcycle to the Swift line. **RUMBLE**

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