

Parks Custom Springers

By Kirk Johnson

I met with Brian Parks at Parks Custom Springers the other day. Out of his little shop come some really great springer front ends for choppers. Brian manufactures several springer models. They include the standard, standard with narrow springs, narrow, wish-bone narrow and the new big boned springer models.

I was really impressed with his shop. He not only is the creator of all of the springer models; he also created the jigs to help with quality control for assembly and welding. He has this process down to an art. Brian is in his mid thirties and has over 23 years of welding experience. He started out working with his father who was a welder and built cages for jeeps and custom cars for fun before he was old enough to get a drivers license.

According to Brian, tube welding is not very easy to perfect. It is obvious that over the years, he has perfected this art. But the ability to weld is only a very small part of the presses. Design creation is an art. Even if you have a design in mind, you have to know what effect it will have on the ride as far as handling and performance and tracking. One common problem I have found on some of the choppers is the flop factor. Knowing the required trail on different degrees of frame rack is important. One, it appears, some people have not figured out.

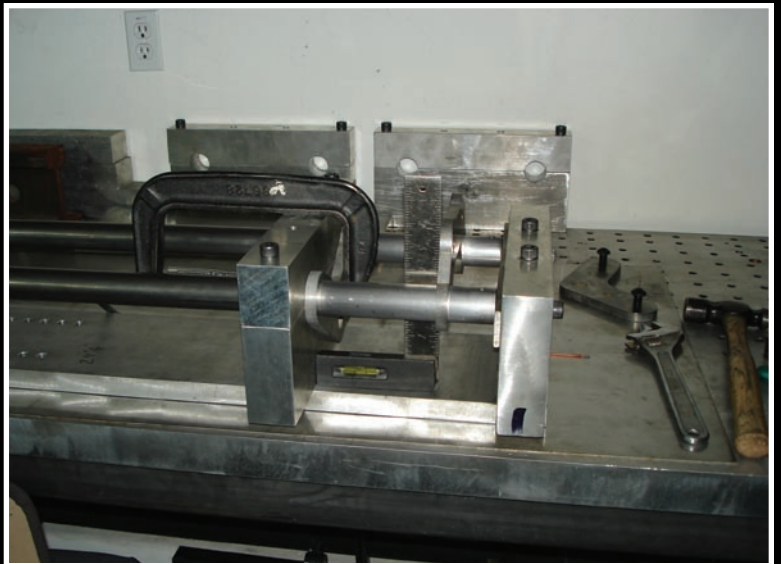
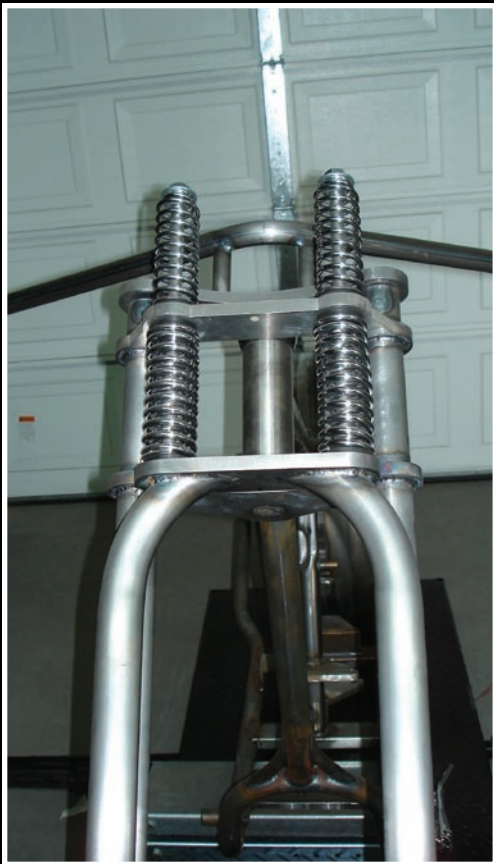
Brian spent several minutes going over the formula. I will not attempt to explain it here; not sure I really understand it. I am sure Brian would be happy to go over the numbers with you if you give him a call. Don't tell him I told you to call. Basically, the standard Harleys have about a 6-inch trail. Motorcycles with up to 40-degree frame rake this is OK. With more then 40 degrees of frame rake you need



3-4 or 5 inches of trail. If you do not get the trail right, you will have a ride that could end up with fork flop. Just in case you do not know what fork flop is, it goes something like this. When you are sitting on the bike in an upright position, not leaning to the right or left, and you move the handlebars to the right or left a little ways they will want to turn without your help and flop to the stop limit. This can be a pain to deal with as slow speed and could have a profound effect on the road at high speed.

Even after you successfully work your way through this matrix of designing, fabrication, assembly and testing and

**"It ain't a chopper
without a Springer"**



you are successful, you still have to be accepted in the marketplace. Already, Brian has had success in the area. He has sold some of his springer models to Cole Foster of Salinas Boys Customs and Johnny Goodson (formally of Excile Cycles) and John at Wicked Bros.

One of the newest models that Brian has created is the Big Boned Springer. The Big Boned's front and rear legs are constructed of 1.5" tubing to achieve a stout look that complements Bobbers as well as wide-tire bikes. Now a little secret that Brian showed me was the new all tubing springer. It is a revolutionary new design that no one has. He would not let me take a picture of it yet. It will be featured in the near future at a bike show to be announced.

Now for the good news. Parks Customs Springers was founded in 2000 to provide custom, quality motorcycle components at affordable prices and in a timely fashion. Originally offered only to builders of high-end custom motorcycles, Parks Customer Springers are now available to the public. They are the only springer manufacturer to deliver front ends in "builders form," enabling each individual to mock up the springer on their chassis and cut it to the exact length they need.

As Brian says "It ain't a chopper without a Springer."

If you checkout his Web site (www.parkcustomspringers.com), you will find a lot of information about his different springer models.

Ride safe
Kirk
Phoenixbikers.com

