

Selling your bike

For many, building a custom is a once in a lifetime experience and the sole intention in building it was to enjoy riding it afterwards. Circumstances change over time you may then need to sell your treasured creation. There are also custom bike building addicts whose only purpose in finishing one bike is motivated by the subsequent sale and the chance to move onto the next. Selling a custom is not as simple and straightforward as selling a stock HD. Your bike is a very individual bike built to your personal likes and dislikes and finding someone who has similar tastes as you is like hunting for needle in a haystack. The following tips may be obvious for some and hopefully useful

- A good quality picture is vital, preferably digital.
- A good quality picture and a good set of pictures, along with the specification, sent to the HD magazines will hopefully encourage one or more to print your picture or if you are lucky a full feature. A magazine will sometimes send their own photographer out to you. Magazines have their own deadlines to meet and you may have to wait some time before your bike appears in print. Beggars can't be choosers and the magazines timescales may or may not work with your need for the sale money.
- Advertise it a national or local publication and in the USA there are specialist sellers for quality custom bikes
- Advertise it on EBAY. This is a good and low cost way to sell your bike and you can advertise on Ebay in many different countries. Be careful if you have a buyer from another country when a wire transfer payment should be the only choice.
- Sell it through a dealer.
- Make sure there is some documentation indicating you are the owner and the commission charges on the sale.
- I had a friend who put his bike into a dealer for sale. Dealer subsequently became insolvent and my friend lost the bike without any recompense. Paperwork is vital to protect your money/bike.
- A safer bet is to put it in an Authorised HD dealer. Not all dealers will be prepared to handle it, so call more than one and be prepared to van it or ride it to them. You can expect a dealer to get a higher selling price for your bike than you can get through a private sale. Taking account of the sellers commission what you are left with after the sale may not be too different from selling it privately. Selling privately may mean storing your bike in far from ideal conditions that may affect the eventual sale price of your bike.
- Having it in a dealer's showroom will mean the bike is in a dry, centrally heated environment and insured against fire, theft etc. If the bike takes a long time to sell, these conditions will prevent any deterioration.
- Move it to another country. This can be a serious proposition if you are confident you have a good chance of achieving a quicker sale or higher sale value by doing this. You will also need to have a very trustworthy person/dealer to handle the sale on your behalf and for them to store your bike a fully insured with the correct environment. Take account of the specialist packaging and airfreight cost plus any import charges at the other end. Make sure the receiver collects or takes delivery as soon as possible or you will incur storage charges. These can be high...I know from painful experience. The seller will need to register the bike too as well as satisfy any motor vehicle regulations specific to that country. Currency fluctuations may alter the bike's value over time. I had a bike sent from the UK for sale in the USA and over the time it took to make the sale the US\$ weakened making the Sterling price worth 20% less. If you don't need to use the money immediately you can put the sale currency in a separate bank account and then convert it into your own currency when the exchange rate returns in your favour. However you may not be in that enviable position and may have to convert the money immediately and accept the loss.
- One interesting anecdote about the sale of the Silver Dream bike on page 2 of the bike gallery, happened after I had already sold it. I had a phone call from someone who said he was the current owner and he asked me how much I sold it for. When I told him it was £25000(US\$45000 or 36000 Euro) he was none too pleased as he had bought it for £30000 (US\$55000 or 44000 Euro) after he was told by the seller it was a special bike built for David Beckham (Millionaire football/soccer player) and it was worth £40000(US\$72000 or 58000Euro) There are lessons to be learnt from that story for both buyers and sellers. After reading this you may decide to buy a complete bike instead of building one.