

AMERICAN
FLYERS



GHETTO BLASTER

Harley for the 'hood

LAST WINTER'S *CYCLE World International Motorcycle Show* in New York City was a bit different than the other 13 stops on the circuit. Definitely more urban, with an emphasis on streetfighter sportbikes, stunt-riding videos and hoochie mommas with an extra dose of jiggy in their short-shorts. All very entertaining, in a disturbing sort of way.

With that as a backdrop, you might imagine that a custom Harley-Davidson wouldn't garner much attention. And it probably wouldn't have, if it hadn't been the \$50,000 V-Rod streetfighter shown here.

The bike is the brainchild of Louis DeNapels, an emergency-room physician who owns a pair of Pennsylvania motorcycle shops, Horsepower Harley-Davidson and North American Warhorse (www.nawarhorse.com), the latter an Aprilia/Ducati/MV Agusta dealership where the

bike was built.

Explains Kevin Decker, marketing/operations manager, "We looked at the V-Rod and sales were down; people weren't accepting it. So we decided to change it, make it something to blow people's minds. We went for an urban streetfighter feel, a lean, mean fighting machine, sort of a cross between an American and European bike."

Two of the two shops' technicians handled the build—Joe Gambo, who Decker described as "an old-school Harley guy," and Skip Rittel, who's "more of a sportbike guy."

"Harley created an awesome motorcycle, but they hid the beautiful frame behind the silver paint and radiator covers," Decker continues. "The first thing we did was powdercoat the frame red."

V-Rods come stock with offset triple-clamps that turn the 34-degree steering-head angle into 38 degrees of fork

rake for that long-n-low look. The Warhorse troops reversed that formula by machining a custom set of billet-aluminum clamps that set the forks at a sportier 32.4 degrees, with a corresponding reduction in trail. A 17-inch O.Z. front wheel from an Aprilia Mille R replaced the stock solid-disc 19-incher for a further reduction in steering effort.

An Öhlins fork and steering damper join that wheel to the frame, while a fender from a Mille R hugs the Dunlop Sportmax tire. Atop the fork is a set of Aprilia Falco handlebars mounted on custom 3.5-inch risers, outfitted with Ducati hand controls and CRG Lanesplitter bar-end mirrors. A pair of PIAA oval headlights replace the stock elliptical lamp, and the stock gauges were stripped of their housing.

The rear end also got "Apriliafied" with a second O.Z. wheel and a *biposto* tailpiece, the suede rider's seat embroidered with the

Warhorse logo. Dual Öhlins shocks and Brembo brakes round out the rolling chassis.

Completing the streetfighter conversion are custom rearsets that make use of Ducati foot controls, giving the bike an upright seating position that is much more comfortable than the original feet-forward recline.

Last but not least, the stock silver-anodized finish got the ol' heave-ho, the bodywork now painted a sinister-looking black-cherry pearl.

Mods to the high-tech V-Twin engine were largely cosmetic, consisting of black powdercoating on the cases, a braided-steel crankcase breather hose and a custom 2-into-1 exhaust that gives the bike an appropriately exotic exhaust note.

"It has a really unique sound to it," exclaims Decker, "a deep growl, like a wild animal, a lion on the warpath."

Just the thing for the asphalt jungle. —Brian Catterson