

CLASSIC DRIVER

DP Customs: Motorsport-inspired bespoke motorcycles

Lead

It's commonplace for Works racing paint schemes to make their way onto privately owned cars, with the outcome spanning the spectrum of taste. But family-run DP Customs applies this practice to the world of custom motorcycles, with some fascinating results.

Harking from Arizona, the brothers Del Prado are now living their dream, having founded DP Customs Motorcycles in 2008. In four short years, they have built up both a solid reputation and a large fan base by sourcing classic motorcycles and turning them into one-off machines, often using inspiration from motorsport.

A favourite technique of theirs is to work with Ironhead Harley Davidsons, simply because "most people think Harleys can't be Café Racers – or painted in anything other than black with loads of skulls and daggers on them," says Jarrod, one half of the Del Prado dynasty. With such a refreshing approach to custom motorcycle building, it's no wonder the company is forging a name for itself.

The majority of retrospectively applied racing liveries you come across are traditional schemes applied to new machinery, whether it's of the two- or four-wheeled variety. But for the 'Naked Café', the brothers chose to reverse this concept; thus applying the paint job (and racing number 2) from the 2011 Le Mans-winning Audi R18 TDI to a 1980 Harley Ironhead. Of special note is the custom-built 'Quantum Port' exhaust and the charcoal-coloured wheels, mimicking the R18's with a full stint's-worth of brake dust.







Some think the legendary Gulf scheme has been 'done to death' in recent years, but you might notice that the DP Customs Gulf livery has been adjusted somewhat. According to Jarrod, the idea came about when he bought his brother a replica of Steve McQueen's race jacket from *Le Mans* as a Christmas present – and the pair decided to build a motorcycle to match. Taking a 1979 Ironhead, they used the main colour of the jacket (which was white with blue and red stripes, of course) to set the tone of their bike, ditching the traditional baby blue hue in the process. Since its completion, DP Customs has had numerous requests to duplicate 'The Gulf', but the brothers have so far shown the restraint to preserve its exclusivity.





With the duo being massive Ford fans and both having owned their own '66 Mustang in their younger days, it was a formality that Ford's 'Grabber Blue' tone would eventually find a place on a DP Customs bike – partnered by a set of Shelby-style racing stripes. The Grabber Blue Café's unique touches include a 'tuck-n-roll' seat for the vintage look and a 'crotch hump' for lateral support, though the brothers pick out the dual-exit custom exhaust as their favourite feature. Jarrod told *Classic Driver*, "It's not every day that one gets to hear the mean Ironhead pulses coming out of both sides of a Harley."







And, of course, all monkey-wrench swinging 'creative craftsmen' – as the brothers have christened themselves – need something to travel to work on, so what does Jarrod ride when he's not fashioning two-wheeled masterpieces? Why, an Ironhead of course. Drawing on his adoration of Ayrton Senna, and the fact that McLaren is the brothers' favoured F1 team, the Harley was bestowed with the livery of Senna's 1993 McLaren MP4/8 Ford. "I wanted to be reminded of Senna's greatness every time I rode," says Jarrod.

This suggested an obvious colour scheme: the one from the car in which Senna completed one of the most memorable laps in F1 history, scything from fifth to first at a rain-soaked Donington Park in a race which he went on to win. Named 'The3', Jarrod's daily rider also has a rear fin, as per the Jaguar D-type, a car for which the brothers hold a particular fondness.





So, what's next for DP Customs? The brothers are keeping tight-lipped, but have promised to keep *Classic Driver* and our readers informed. Perhaps it'll be our suggestion, a Café Racer in red and gold livery as a tribute to the late, great Alan Mann? We're sure we'll be able to provide some *Classic Driver* decals for it.

Photos: Strahm Photography/DP Customs
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Gallery

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