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CONCEIVED OUT OF
NIGHTMARES!



MORTONS
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FARMYARD PARTY BIG BIKE SUNDAY DIAMOND DAY NCC SUFFOLK ROCK & BIKE FEST BULLFROG BASH

IT RUBS THE LOTION ON ITS TANK...

SKINNED HUNTER

I DON'T KNOW IF YOU KNOW, BUT THE SERIAL KILLER BUFFALO BILL, (ARGUABLY) THE MAIN VILLAIN IN THE CLASSIC 1991 FILM STARRING ANTHONY HOPKINS AND JODIE FOSTER, THE SILENCE OF THE LAMBS, WAS ACTUALLY BASED ON A REAL PERSON?



CUSTOM  CHROME
EUROPE

WORDS: NIK
PHOTOS: HORST ROSLER

The inspiration for the character in Thomas Harris's famous book was a gentleman by the name of Edward Theodore Gein, or Ed for short, who between 1954 and 1957 killed two women and dug up countless others from local graveyards with the aim of making keepsakes for around his home from their bones and skin. He also planned to make what he called a 'woman suit' out of human skin after his mother died so that he could, in his head anyway, become her (which is where Thomas Harris got the idea for what Buffalo Bill wanted to do), but didn't finish it as he was reported to the police

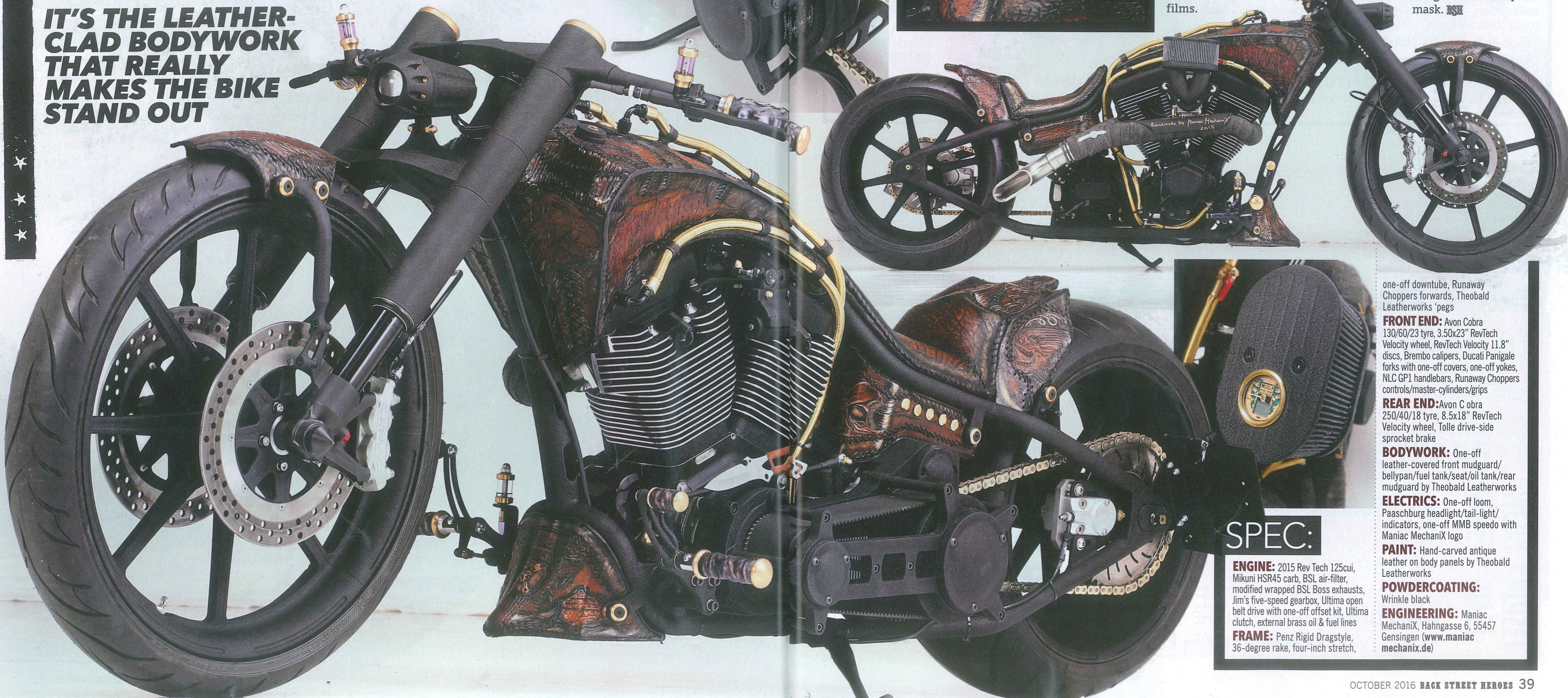
by a friend who was concerned about the shrunken heads he kept around his house. Gein claimed they'd been sent to him by a cousin who'd served in the Philippines during the Second World War, but they were later identified as being from local graves. Freakishly weird, eh? I mean, most bikers have something related to human skulls about their person in some way or another, be they tattoos, designs on clothing or paintwork, or home decorations, but it's a fairly harmless fascination, isn't it? Very few of us give it much more thought than that, and even fewer want the skull that sits on their mantelpiece with the candle on top of it to be from a real human being. If you know someone who does, may I offer you a little advice? Don't accept an invite round to theirs for a few beers after the pub shuts, will you?

Similarly, if you get offered an after-hours session with Robert Konrath of Global Custom Shark Tattoo in Germany, you might want to make sure that someone knows where you are, what time you went in, and at what time you're expected home. Robert, you see, is the owner of this rather macabre 125 cubic inch RevTech-

based custom bike and he commissioned Christian, one of the guys who works for Custom Chrome Europe, who has a little side business building bikes under the name Maniac MechaniX, to build it for him. The idea behind it was to have a bike that related to his business, but not in a conventional way. He didn't want a bike that had anything as traditional as a paint scheme, no matter how intricate or involved, to advertise his tattoo shop; no, he wanted something a lot, lot more ground-breaking. He and Christian bandied a few ideas about and, eventually, came up with a plan to use bodywork made from beautiful, and slightly sinister-looking, hand-carved antique leather that does have, as I suspect they knew, more than a little of Ed Gein about it.

The basis bike then uses a terrifyingly powerful (146hp/192Nm) 125 cubic inch (2049cc) RevTech motor with a 45mm Mikuni carb with a BSL air-filter, wrapped BSL Boss exhausts, a Jim's five-speed 'box, and an Ultima open belt primary and clutch. It's housed in a Penz drag-style rigid frame with 36 degrees of rake, and a four-inch stretch, and a new 'holey' downtube. Frighteningly expensive Ducati

IT'S THE LEATHER-CLAD BODYWORK THAT REALLY MAKES THE BIKE STAND OUT



Panigale upside-down forks with external covers are held in one-off yokes and are topped by NLC GP1 'n' glass reservoirs, and Runaway Choppers supplied the forward controls and the handlebars master-cylinders with their brass 'n' glass reservoirs. A 23" RevTech Velocity front wheel matches the 18" rear. Front brakes are a RevTech and Brembo ensemble, and the rear is a Tolle sprocket item.

It's the leather-clad bodywork that really makes the bike stand out though. Designed and made by Theobald Leatherworks it is



amazingly intricate. The minimal front mudguard, the bellypan, the split oil and petrol tanks, the seat (with its vaguely obscene tear that we won't mention any further for risk of offending those who still think it's 1973), the battery/electrics boxes, and the rear mudguard have been styled, and they spent almost an eternity working, carving and sewing the agreed designs into the various panels, and the result is most definitely reminiscent, to me anyway, of horror motifs like the infamous Book of the Dead in the Evil Dead films.



Brass braided lines add to the bike's steampunk weirdness, but do look right, and brass fittings both hold them on and add to the overall strangeness.

The finished bike is a striking advert for the tattoo shop and has been wowing the crowds at custom events across Germany. Whether it's got him many invites to late night dinner parties though isn't reported... especially now that he's got that hockey mask. **BSH**



one-off downtube, Runaway Choppers forwards, Theobald Leatherworks pegs

FRONT END: Avon Cobra 130/60/23 tyre, 3.50x23" RevTech Velocity wheel, RevTech Velocity 11.8" discs, Brembo callipers, Ducati Panigale forks with one-off covers, one-off yokes, NLC GP1 handlebars, Runaway Choppers controls/master-cylinders/grips

REAR END: Avon C obra 250/40/18 tyre, 8.5x18" RevTech Velocity wheel, Tolle drive-side sprocket brake

BODYWORK: One-off leather-covered front mudguard/bellypan/fuel tank/seat/oil tank/rear mudguard by Theobald Leatherworks

ELECTRICS: One-off loom, Paaschburg headlight/tail-light/indicators, one-off MMB speedo with Maniac MechaniX logo

PAINT: Hand-carved antique leather on body panels by Theobald Leatherworks

POWDERCOATING: Wrinkle black

ENGINEERING: Maniac MechaniX, Hahngasse 6, 55457 Gensingen (www.maniacmechanix.de)

SPEC:

ENGINE: 2015 Rev Tech 125cui, Mikuni HSR45 carb, BSL air-filter, modified wrapped BSL Boss exhausts, Jim's five-speed gearbox, Ultima open belt drive with one-off offset kit, Ultima clutch, external brass oil & fuel lines

FRAME: Penz Rigid Dragstyle, 36-degree rake, four-inch stretch,