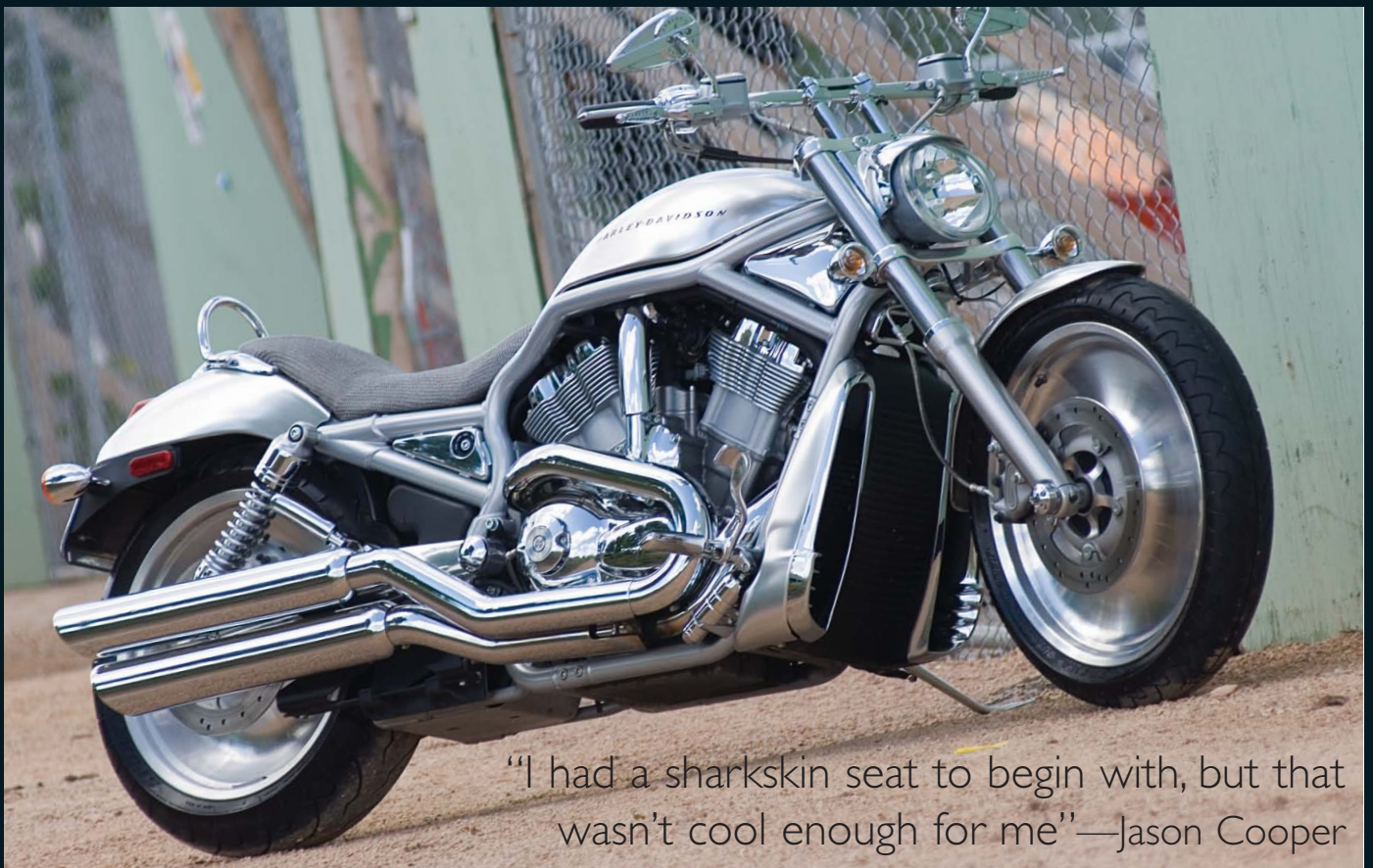




LOCATION: SKATEBOARD PARK CONSTRUCTION SITE, THE FORKS



“I had a sharkskin seat to begin with, but that wasn’t cool enough for me”—Jason Cooper



Shark attack

Putting on a show at every corner

STORY : SEBASTIAN MCKENZIE
PHOTOGRAPHY : DOUGLAS LITTLE

Since 1975, the shark has been regarded as a menace to coastal waters around the world. In that year, the movie *Jaws* showed the world just how vicious, cold-blooded, and merciless a shark can be. In reality, more people have died by the jaws of dogs in a single year than sharks have accounted for in two centuries. Still, anything with that much power has to be respected, and for safety’s sake, a little chain mail goes a long way.

“I had a sharkskin seat to begin with, but that wasn’t cool enough for me,” Jason Cooper, owner of the 2002 Harley-Davidson V-Rod said.

While admitting the robust metal seat requires a better than average tolerance for the hard ride, Cooper said at speed, nothing treats you better than the small interlocked loops of metal, that for centuries was the mainstay of any soldier in battle.

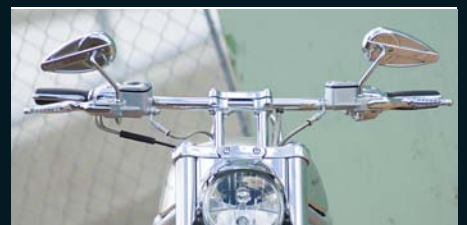
“You have to have a warrior’s butt to ride this thing,” he said. “On a hot day, there’s nothing better than this seat. The air rides underneath and right through it.”

Cooper recalled his initial infatuation with the powerful ride came as much through the looks and performance of the bike as it did through the price tag, in a story befitting any bargain hunter in the city.

“I went into the shop to get replacement mirrors and turn signals, and the price

was half off. So, being a Winnipegger, I couldn’t pass that up,” Cooper laughed, attributing his keen eye for a deal to his bloodline. “If I did pass it up, my mom wouldn’t have let me hear the end of it.”

Starting with a strictly stock bike gave Cooper the chance to do as he wished with the project, although some ideas have worked better than others.



“You have to have a warrior’s butt to ride this thing”

—Jason Cooper



“The whole front end is custom, but taking off the fuel gauge was a big mistake. Sometimes when you’re on a long run, you forget how long you’ve been going and it starts sputtering out,” he said

Dealing with sharks in the wild can be a dangerous affair for those who don’t know what they’re getting into, and Cooper said his landlocked shark is no different, especially when taking it to the limits of performance.

“Control is out the window at high speeds with the solid wheels. You definitely don’t want to be swerving above 160 (Km/H),” he explained. “When you’re going that fast, the air has nowhere to go through the bike.”

Still, even with the machine taking on the aerodynamic characteristics of an airplane’s tail fin at high speed, Cooper has never been one to shy away from exploring just how powerful his shark is.

“I’ve had it right up there,” he said. “It’s crotch-rocket fast, but definitely Harley-Davidson cool.”

According to Cooper, the coolness of the bike has had its interesting moments. From ladies jumping on the back end of the bike in the middle of traffic, to a school bus full of kids

gasping in awe, Cooper takes it all in stride.

“That’s actually a proud moment. People have enough respect now where they look, but they don’t touch.”

Moments of admiration will be frequent for Cooper’s creation in the future, with plans to alter the back wheel, finish more chroming, and to enter it into as many shows as possible. Until then, Cooper said the best show can be found when the shark is turning a sharp corner.

“Where the pegs are sitting right now, they grind and spark, but that’s okay. Every corner I take, I’ll put on a show.” WC

HARLEY-DAVIDSON
• WINNIPEG •
1377 NIAKWA RD. E.

Manitoba's largest authorized Harley-Davidson dealership.
Come see our large selections of new and used motorcycles
as well as genuine parts, accessories, clothing and collectables.

ARE YOU READY TO RIDE?

204.254.3974

WEEKDAYS 9 - 6
THURSDAYS 9 - 8
SATURDAYS 9 - 4

