

MADE-TO-MEASURE GSX-R

NOZEM MOTORCYCLES' HOOLIGAN TOOL

For some years, Dutchman Rene Looijmans had wanted to build a personal interpretation of a 'Japanese hooligan bike'. Disappointed, however, by the lack of readily available aftermarket parts suitable for such a project, he decided to develop his own components. In the process, Rene created this GSX-R 1100 custom, featuring a mix of hyper-modern and distinctly retro styles, under the banner of 'Nozem Motorcycle'.

In the Netherlands, 'Nozem' is a colloquial description for a rebellious rock 'n' roll-type of youth who draws inspiration from the popular culture of the Fifties and Sixties – replete with 'ducktail' hairstyle and leather jacket, he (and it's always a 'he') is often seen hanging around outside of local snack bars or messing about with his Kreidler moped, as Rene's brother, Henk, can confirm; "When we were about ten years old, the two of us decided to customise a Mobylette moped. We covered it with stickers from the town's funfair and had to tie the gearbox to the frame with string and fencing wire – no, we didn't own a welder in those

days – but the important thing was that it did actually work! A little later, in 1984, we finished second in a moped drag race that was being staged for a Dutch television show, even though Rene had a broken leg at the time! He wasn't going to let the small matter of a fractured bone prevent him from taking part, so he did his run and, once he'd passed the finishing line, was bundled into an ambulance and taken straight to hospital!" Rene takes up the story; "Those were our formative years, but once we'd reached the age of eighteen, we felt as though we were all grown up and ready to handle the real thing – proper motorcycles. We went on to modify a lot of Japanese bikes over the next few years, and had quite a few


adventures on our choppers along the way. We also participated in the Moto 73 Bike Show, ours being the only exotic Jap machine in amongst a whole bunch of expensive Harleys."

Rene then took a little time out from the bike scene, but it didn't take long for him to feel the draw of the customising urge again. He started looking around for a good quality, nicely-styled frame suitable for a four-cylinder motor, but he soon discovered that by far the biggest proportion of the aftermarket business was almost exclusively geared up to cater for Harley-Davidsons. Chop frames for Japanese engines were few and far between, and most of those that Rene did succeed in tracking down turned out to be pretty damned ugly, too. He became convinced that he could do a better job himself. After all, he had a very well-appointed workshop with all of the necessary tools and equipment, and he'd proved many times to be capable of tackling nearly every task involved



in building a bike. He decided to build his frame specifically for a GSX-R 1100 engine, and the design had to be such that Rene would subsequently be able to reproduce it without too much trouble. The finished bike should be as lightweight as possible, with clean, uncluttered lines; effectively, it would be little more than an engine, a pair of wheels and some handlebars, while in cosmetic terms, it would combine typical 'fighter looks with retro styling cues;

"This bike is a fusion of brutal power and nostalgic influences, built using contemporary technology. The new frame was made using steel tube, but, thanks to the minimal design,

is no heavier than 

the original aluminium GSX-R chassis, weighing in at just 17 kilograms. The fork legs were raked a little and the frame stretched by approximately six inches, while the standard Suzuki swinging arm fitted the new front loop like a glove.

"I love making parts that can be replicated, so I first made special moulds for some components and jigs for the frame and fuel tanks in order to produce perfectly straight and symmetrical results. In time, I will prove how easy it is to reproduce such parts from my original tooling by building an exact clone of the Nozem Project."

"The range of aftermarket mudguards available disappointed me almost as much as the lack of frames had. In real life, they looked nothing like the photos in the catalogues, and none of them seemed to exactly match the radius of the tyres I'd chosen. So I made my own. I took a pair of moped mudguards and cut, widened and shaped them until I was happy. I then took moulds of these and gave them to a friend of mine who happens to be into synthetics, and from those, he made me these polyester 'guards. Again, they're parts that can easily be duplicated. In effect, I'd begun to design a do-it-yourself kit for anyone with a Suzuki GSX-R 1100 who wants to radically modify their bike."

Most builders of custom bikes are quick to emphasise which parts of their bikes are one-off, home-made components, but on Project Nozem, it was actually easier for Rene to point out those that are standard Suzuki;

"Japanese designers have worked countless hours to develop things like fork legs and wiring looms, and if I can't improve on them, why would I want to waste time changing them? With 155 horsepower on tap, the Suzuki is a true powerhouse, so safety was always an important consideration during the build. Twist the throttle and in a blink of an eye you're travelling at

twice the speed limit – that's why I didn't mess with stuff like the brakes. Mind you, I did make a few accessories myself that I didn't necessarily have to, and only the spotlight is an aftermarket part.



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SPEC:

ENGINE:

Suzuki GSX-R 1100W inline-4, 40mm Mikuni carburetors, dual oval K&N air filters, Nippon Denso CDI ignition unit, modified Yoshimura 4-into-1 exhaust system with carbon fibre silencer can, stock Suzuki radiator, stock 5-speed GSX-R gearbox.

FRAME:

2008 Nozem Motorbike/GSX-R 1100W, single downtube, single toptube, monoshock swinging arm.

FRONT END:

Suzuki GSX-R 1100W upside-down forks and yokes in satin black, 17" twin-disc 3-spoke GSX-R 1100 wheel, 110/70 x 17" Dunlop Sportmax Qualifier tyre, one-off polyester

mudguard and brackets by Nozem Motorbike, twin 360mm floating discs, dual 6-piston Tokico brake calipers, one-off handlebars and riser blocks by Nozem Motorbike, custom aftermarket headlight.

REAR END:

17" 3-spoke GSX-R 1100 wheel, 190/55 x 17" Dunlop Sportmax Qualifier tyre, 220mm brake disc, twin-piston GSX-R brake caliper, one-off polyester mudguard, mounting plate, mudguard studs, chainguard/sidemount number plate holder and taillight by Nozem Motorbike.

OTHER STUFF:

One-off single-filler linked fuel tanks by Nozem Motorbike, one-off solo seat and mounting frame, engine plates/swinging arm pivot points, battery mounts, foot controls, linkages and mounting plates by Nozem Motorbike, GSX-R 1100/Nozem Motorbike wiring loom and electrics.

PAINT AND FINISH:

Satin black and storm grey base paintwork, crystal silver pinstriping and logo by Nozem Motorbike.

www.nozemmotorbike.com

NOZEM GSX-R

"I designed the Nozem Project so that quite a lot of the standard Suzuki parts could be fitted straight on without modifications. If you started with one of these frames, fuel tank, mudguards and the foot controls, you could easily transplant the rest from any GSX-R 1100 donor bike, with the finish – along, of course, with the paint job – making each bike unique. Ideally, I'd like my bike to motivate owners into customising their own Suzukis using my GSX-R 1100 kit as a basis."

It'll come as no surprise that Rene dreams about turning his interest into a business one day, and who knows what the future will bring? If enthusiasm guaranteed success, Rene wouldn't have any problems, as he's one of the most dedicated bike-builders I've ever met. Every nut, bolt and screw was carefully considered during this build, and it becomes clear that custom bikes are less of a hobby for Rene and more of a deep passion (as if one look at these photos wasn't enough to have made that fact obvious);

"I learned a lot during the process of building Project Nozem, and now I want to go further. If you include the development, concept forming and design work, I spent at least 2500 hours on the bike over the course of a couple of years. I drew out every single hand-made piece on paper, and the sketches were then digitalised in CAD by a friend to form masters for laser-cutting the parts in steel. With these digital files, we'll always be able to make exact copies."

"Once I'd finished Project Nozem, I suddenly found myself twiddling my thumbs, without a clue about what to do with all of the spare time I now had. Well, it didn't take long for me to come up with an answer to that ... I could just make a second copy!"

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