

FLAMED DUCK Changing the meaning of "maintenance"

THERE ARE CERTAIN high-energy madmen put on this Earth to make the rest of us feel guilty for not getting more done.

Kenny Dreer is one of them. It's not enough for him to fight years of legal battles to win the Norton trademarks, to design from the ground up a new Commando 952, and then hit the streets and boardrooms of America looking to finance the building of said motorbike. No, Dreer has to build insane project bikes, too. In his "spare" time.

We are such losers...

One such project is this fly-yellow Ducati 748. But wait, you say, this isn't a fly-yellow 748, this is some horrible blasphemy, a sickeningly mad combination of whacko American hot-rod ethic and Italo fire-breathing Ducati repli-racer.

Yes, you are right. Dreer bought the bike, in yellow,

over the Internet, and what started out as basic "maintenance" in the form of checking valve clearances ended up as something else entirely.

"The holiday season was upon us, and the next thing I know I'm here at Norton and no one else is," says Dreer. "Talk about boring! All our vendors were shut down—nothing was happening. One thing led to another, and after the second day of 'maintenance' the engine was out of the frame and the entire motor assembly was spread out over two workbenches!"

The bike's previous owner had installed an 853cc big-bore kit, but there is no such thing as a finished project to Dreer until it is finished his way.

So the heads were sent to Bruce and Suzie Meyers at BCM Ducati in New Hampshire for port work.

Larger 916 throttle bodies were fitted and the whole assembly was flowed as one. They carefully set the combustion-chamber volume, while Dreer spec'd squish and timed the cams perfectly, then had the fuel-injection programmed to suit by Doug Lofgren, who Dreer describes as a "master tuner and EFI guru."

All of Dreer's bikes have a certain, shall we say, visual signature. But even this flat-black-with-flames is a bit of a departure for him.

"I just love the looks of all the racing-inspired Ducatis," admits Dreer, "but knowing that a paint job was going to be part of this 'maintenance' I really wanted something more unique. So I decided to go a totally different direction. I think the bike speaks for itself."

And loudly, we might add. Finishing touches include 8-ball and R-rated pinup-

girl graphics, not to mention Öhlins suspension and those gorgeous-in-woven-black BST carbon-fiber wheels.

"If anything on this planet is worthy of moto-praise, it has to be these carbon-fiber wheels," enthuses Dreer. "They are so beautiful and light that you're speechless when you take them out of the box. They're beyond incredible, both in looks and riding. The 'wow factor' is off the charts."

He's right. We took a spin on the bike, and the combination of what has to be one of the sweetest-running Ducati motors ever with those fantastically light wheels makes for an unforgettable riding experience.

"In the end it was worth it," Dreer says. "This thing hauls ass!"

If we all had the energy for such maintenance projects... —Mark Hoyer

