



DONNY EFTA'S FREE BIRD TRIBUTE/MEMORIAL MOTORCYCLE

Remember dreaming of owning your own motorcycle? So many choices... so many makes, models, colors and accessories... And once that bike was sitting in your driveway I bet you started to think of how to customize it and change it into your dream bike.

How would you make your bike truly your own unique ride? Custom chrome or black accessories? Fancy wheels? Add a great stereo for music? The options seem almost endless these days whether you are riding metric or American accessories are everywhere—especially for bikes built in the past 15 years.

How about an airbrushed paint scheme to truly make that motorcycle unique? As a matter of fact, we think a new airbrushed paint scheme

might just be one of the best things you can do to truly make your bike your own—and gather some stares while you are at it.

When it comes to customizing paint work on a bike, airbrushing lets you dream big and gives you a huge amount of artistic range to create a truly customized motorcycle. It can make a bike a true one of a kind. This is how Donny Efta's journey with his all black 2005 Harley-Davidson Heritage Softail began.

Donny told us that it truly started when he had a little extra money in his pocket and wanted to customize that Heritage Softail and he wanted to do something that was different. That was when he met Monte Moore of Maverick Custom Paint at a bike show and that dream of something



different came alive with some great ideas.

Monte had a small bike in his booth with portraits of Marilyn Monroe, Mae West and other old time beauty queens on it that was catching the attention of the passersby. Donnie and Monte started discussing it, trading ideas and the dream of something really special was born.

Now Donny has always been a Lynyrd Skynyrd fan. So it did not take him long to decide that a Lynyrd Skynyrd theme would be perfect. After much thought and discussion, it became a memorial project to the members of the band that were touring during the time of the tragic plane crash.

Lynyrd Skynyrd is known for their iconic songs "Free Bird," and "Sweet Home Alabama." During the height of the band's success in 1977 a plane crash cost them three band members, lead singer Ronnie Van Zant, guitarist Steve Gaines and vocalist Cassie Gaines.

It was decided that the gas tank would be graced with three portraits of Ronnie Van Zant. This was done in 2009. About a year later some work on the front fender was done and four other members of the band Leon Wilkeson, Steven Gaynes Billy Powell, and Allen Collins were added. Then, guitarist Gary Rossington (who is still alive and still with the band), along with Artimis Pyle (the band's drummer) were added to the oil tank and the rear fender has the name Lynyrd Skynyrd airbrushed over a flag design.

The customizing does not stop there. Lyrics from the iconic song "Free Bird" with the date and location of the plane crash are part of the one-of-a-kind leatherwork of the seat. That leatherwork was completed by Dustin Bustos.

If you are a true Lynyrd Skynyrd fan you will recognize the outline on the primary chrome as coming from the "Street Survivors" album cover.

So what do you do with such a fantastic machine, once the work is done? Well if the rest of us are lucky you show it! Donnie rides this bike and has had it in several shows. Winning Best Paint, Best of Show and last year at the Black Hills Motorcycle Show in Rapid City, SD it was also voted best in show by the public.

But talking about the awards is not what puts that big smile on Donnie's face. That big smile comes out when he is talking about all of the people he has met who love motorcycles and are fellow fans of Lynyrd Skynyrd.

So when the current Lynyrd Skynyrd band members where in Laramie, WY at the same time Donnie and the 2005 Softail were there, and since he happened to meet



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one of the band roadies, they told Donnie where the band was staying.

Donnie went to the hotel and parked his bike, and waited and waited. Later, someone finally did come out to smoke a cigarette and they came over to see the bike. Once they saw it, they went in to get the members of the band to check it out. Unfortunately, they were already in bed. So they told Donnie come back at 7:00 a.m. in the morning.

When Donnie returned that morning, riding up on his Free Bird Bike the band members were waiting for him in the parking lot!! Lead singer Jonny Van Zant gave him a hug and everyone was very appreciative of the work on the bike. It isn't everyday you get to meet an iconic band and show them a motorcycle that was customized as a memorial to past and current members of that band.

So when you are thinking of making a few changes to your bike to make it special, you will need to decide just how special you want it to be. You also need to decide will it be a custom airbrushed paint for you are will you head in another direction altogether? RIDE ON!!

