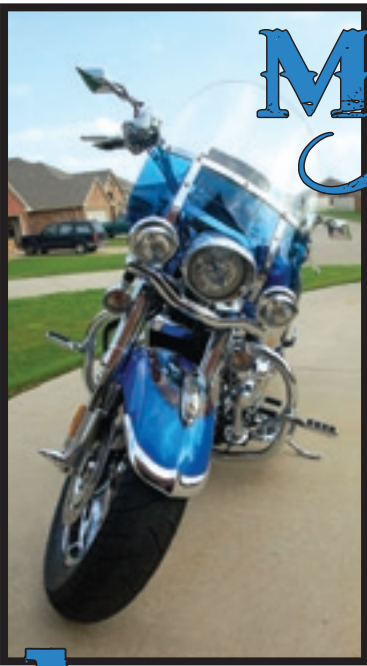


My New Hobby

By Mikel Gunn



In the spring of 2006 I bought a Honda Shadow 600 from a coworker, not long after my mother died from lung cancer on May 26, 2005. I always had motorcycles when I was young but mostly dirt bikes. So once I started riding again I got hooked all over. My grandfather passed away in December 2006. Then in May 2007 my father got worse with his blood disease. It was Memorial Day weekend and I just got back from Germany



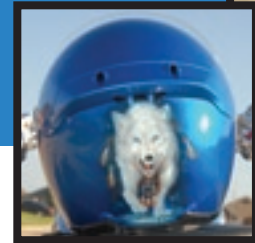
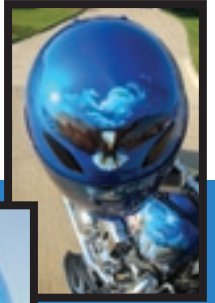
from two weeks' vacation. It was May 26th, exactly two years since my mother died. My dad had lost his wife, his father, and now he was dying. He passed away on June 6, 2007. So that Fall, I sold my Shadow 600

and went and test drove a VTX 1800. It was heaven. The power was unbelievable.

DFW Honda had a brand new 2005 Green VTX 1800s Retro Spec 3 sitting on the floor all updated with studded bags, seats, windshield, etc. I put the money down, but they sold that one because they found a newer one for me; that's the one I purchased. I decided I didn't like the spoke wheels and told them to swap them out with some other rims; I would pay for the chroming. I ended up getting a bigger rear tire going from a 16 to a 17. I also added heated grips and a light bar. I joined a few motorcycle clubs and started buying accessories for my bike. Soon I was looking on E-bay buying more chrome parts. Before the year was out I had spent over \$1,600 on extra chrome and accessories!

In 2008 I decided to upgrade the seats (to Ultimate X), the pipes (Hard Chrome), the horn, and added Cobra fatty bars, LED's, a power commander, and a hypercharger. So again, I didn't hold back and spent another five-grand before I knew it. I started receiving more and more compliments on my motorcycle and I was enjoying watching people's reaction to all the work I had done. So this year, I removed the heated grips and added flame grips with stiletto end caps to match the front tire. I liked the look of the bike even more, but I started wondering why I didn't pick a blue VTX since this was my favorite color and they had one on the showroom floor. Why didn't I take a stock bike and do all those upgrades like I did to my bike? It never crossed my mind that this would become a hobby for me, but I loved doing it. I always wanted to change my bike to blue, but everyone loved the green. In March 2009, I decided to add a back luggage rack but this model wasn't lining up with my brackets. I tried different things to make it work but I ended up scratching up the back fender. Now I had the excuse I needed to get my bike painted!

I inquired with a few local painters who did airbrush work, but they all wanted me to take the gas tank and fenders off and take them to their shop for painting. Then I found Colorworks through a Google search and they would do this for me at a small charge. Once I got there I started chatting and before I knew it, became good friends with Curt the owner. He hooked me up with airbrush artist, Denise Thurston-Newton (the Rose).



So... I finally had it painted Impact Blue (a standard Harley color). I worked with Denise on a Native American theme. She knew I liked wolves, so we put one everywhere we could and the bike turned out more amazing than expected. The airbrush cost a little more, but Denise said this one was special to her and she has done many bikes in the past. And, of course, a matching custom helmet!

Now I am adding more chrome flame-related items, changing the mirrors again, and the changing the lever grips to a flame accent. By June (my birthday), I will also have upgraded my LED's and once the chrome radiator cover is here I should be done. Not!!

This is my hobby :)

For pictures of Denise's work, visit her website at AERoseArtistry.com/Novels/Mikel_Wolf_Bike/Mikel_Wolf_Bike.html

