

Diary of a Virgin Motorcycle Mechanic:

Cara Mae attempts to combine two incomplete Honda Rebel 250's to make herself one reliable ride. Absolutely no experience, just an itch to see if she can.

January 16, 2005:

At first thought, I view putting together a motorcycle as being a piece of art, or a puzzle because I love making things with my hands. I imagine making sure the pieces fit and getting to know how the tools feel. Some people ask, "Why would you want to work on a motorcycle?" So I answer, "It will help me on the road to know the ends and outs of the bike I am riding." But my second thought, (and what I don't tell them) is that it is a personal challenge to do it. I have this competition with myself and the world. My ego may be speaking for me, "I can build it and it will run!" It is always nice to put some of the macho-ness of the world in its place. "Can you feel me ladies?" You might think a Honda Rebel is not like building a rocket ship or putting together an almighty panhead, but hey- you got to start somewhere. So now with some time, effort and common sense, (also the great wisdom of my husband) I want to actually do it and be proud to ride it. I will be writing about the learning experiences of building a motorcycle, however it turns out--the good and the bad. Dig it.



January 30, 2005:

Decisions, decisions... Which Rebel do I want to use as my main squeeze? Let's see... hmm, should I go the easy route and put all the pretty painted pieces that match all together or make the Franken bike-style? Let's do the rugged look, just for kicks. You know, it adds character!



February 15, 2005:

Here I go! I jazz myself up for a full day of wrenching with my ever-patient husband at my side to guide me. He starts me off with simple things to ease me into the mechanical situation. Foot pegs and controls, exhaust brackets, fender struts and suspension, all cake- just place and fasten- love it! Wow, I can do this, I can walk in the steps of Christine Vaughn. (*I'm not worthy, I'm not worthy.*)



February 28, 2005:



Okay, so some people shudder at the mention of the “carburetor“. The little heart of my future motorcycle seemed so intimidating to me. Now armed with my trusty Honda manual, cleaner and a variety of tools, I set out to do what is revered notorious-- rebuild the carb. After it is all taken apart, I inspect each piece for clogs and damage. Then I clean all the little nooks and crannies to enable smooth gas flow. Once I completed the task, it was time to put it all back together. Thank goodness, the great biker spirits made manuals or my carb would end up like something out of battle bots. Now that wasn't so bad. It was actually relaxing, I can dig this.

Until next time, Diary... *Cara Mae*.

Diary photos courtesy of Cheryl Rawlings