

BLITZKRIEG BUELL



FRANK Butte from Kaulungen in Germany has always been a dirt bike man; his last mount was a Honda CRF450. After battling a long illness Frank decided that the road was to become his new heaven and he settled on the idea of a Buell as his choice of tackle. Perhaps it was the drugs... To the surprise of his mates, Frank found that the tube framed Lightning was the best medicine and he purchased a standard 1999 model in 2001. So taken is Frank with his machine that he no longer desires anything more. That is ultimate satisfaction, although Frank did help.

The X1 Lightning features a tubular chrome-moly space frame chassis coupled with a uniplanar powertrain vibration isolation system – the frame wraps over and around the tall cylinders and along the transmission like a serpent. The X1 has a reputation for being corner-wieldy and, for Frank, was sacrosanct to the validity of the project. The Lightning is a hybridisation of old world 1200cc pushrod V-twin Harley engine and the wild futurist vision of Erik Buell in the chassis, concept and styling. Frank's aim was to perfect what he saw as good in the Buell design and, being a precision machinist, set about making his own personalised tribute.

eBay is an excellent source for parts and Frank sought many components for his dream bike that way. As a result he befriended an ex-Buell employee who invited him to the Buell Riders Adventure Group (code named BRAG) 'Homecoming' where he met Erik Buell. Upon seeing pictures of Frank's Lightning, Buell was so excited he autographed a picture of the bike with the words 'This is art'. Perhaps not everyone's ideal in the form and function of a dream motorcycle but one that is still unique. Distinctive. The standard Lightning features a stubby wheelbase and sharp steering head angle with the now familiar shunted rear lock. Under the engine is an underslung rear shock absorber and exhaust mated to the tubular space frame and some spaced out styling. A production streetfighter for sure.

The fuel injected 95-horsepower 1200cc Buell-built HD V-twin is stock on the inside but has been tuned and built to rev faster, with bigger mid and top-end performance. On the outside are a number of bolt-on performance accessories to help the kick including a race-type ECU and Buell racing exhaust system (as Erik would have intended) that is basically two long, separate exhausts sharing one muffler. Up front a high flow air filter sits on the end of a carbon snorkel and below is a Hilbly Motors hydraulic clutch, a

X1 LIGHTNING

Erik Buell was born in Pittsburgh, USA in 1950. He took up motorcycling in his teens, trained as a motorcycle mechanic and went on to race motocross then AMA on Ducati and Yamaha. He also completed a degree in engineering before literally demanding a job at Harley-Davidson and landing one in 1979. Buell's first foray into manufacturing came in the early 1980s while racing a modified Barton 750cc, square-four, two-stroke racer. Due to poor quality of the original components, Buell re-engineered and manufactured many parts to eventually sell them as Formula One class racing "Buell's". Death of the American Formula One class in 1985 inflicted a crushing blow, however, Buell persevered and bought the last 48 XR1000 engines from HD (plus two from dealers!) to continue development of his chassis.

The first HD-powered production Buells appeared in 1987 and featured his trademark engineering. The ensuing years brought the RR and RS models, powered by HD's 1200cc Evolution Sportster. Harley-Davidson bought out the Buell Motorcycle Co in 2003 and since then the Buell marque has forged ahead with the Lightning and Firebolt series. Erik Buell remains as founder and technical guru of Buell Motorcycle Co.

For those who would like to read more on Erik Buell and the history of Buell Motorcycles, check out www.buell.com

The Germans invented blitzkrieg which was war waged by surprise, carried out swiftly and violently. Much like this BuellX1 Lightning. Words: Simon Harris Photography: Sabine Welte

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BUELL WAS SO EXCITED HE
AUTOGRAPHED A PICTURE OF
THE BIKE WITH THE WORDS
"THIS IS ART"



Setback of cooler helps maintain temperament and hangs out in the breeze with the number plate. The tall and long hulk of an engine is kept menacing by being jet black and highlighted by some extravagant polishing of components and the curvaceous frame. On the right side of the bike are perhaps more familiar Buell trademarks like the air intake and tensioned belt final-drive. Frank has opted to use lightweight RCC pulleys on his drive system to help reduce inertia. He has further lightened things with carbon-fibre engine covers for clutch and primary drive. The Lightning weighs in at around 200kg standard. With Frank's alterations he would have improved the power to weight ratio significantly.

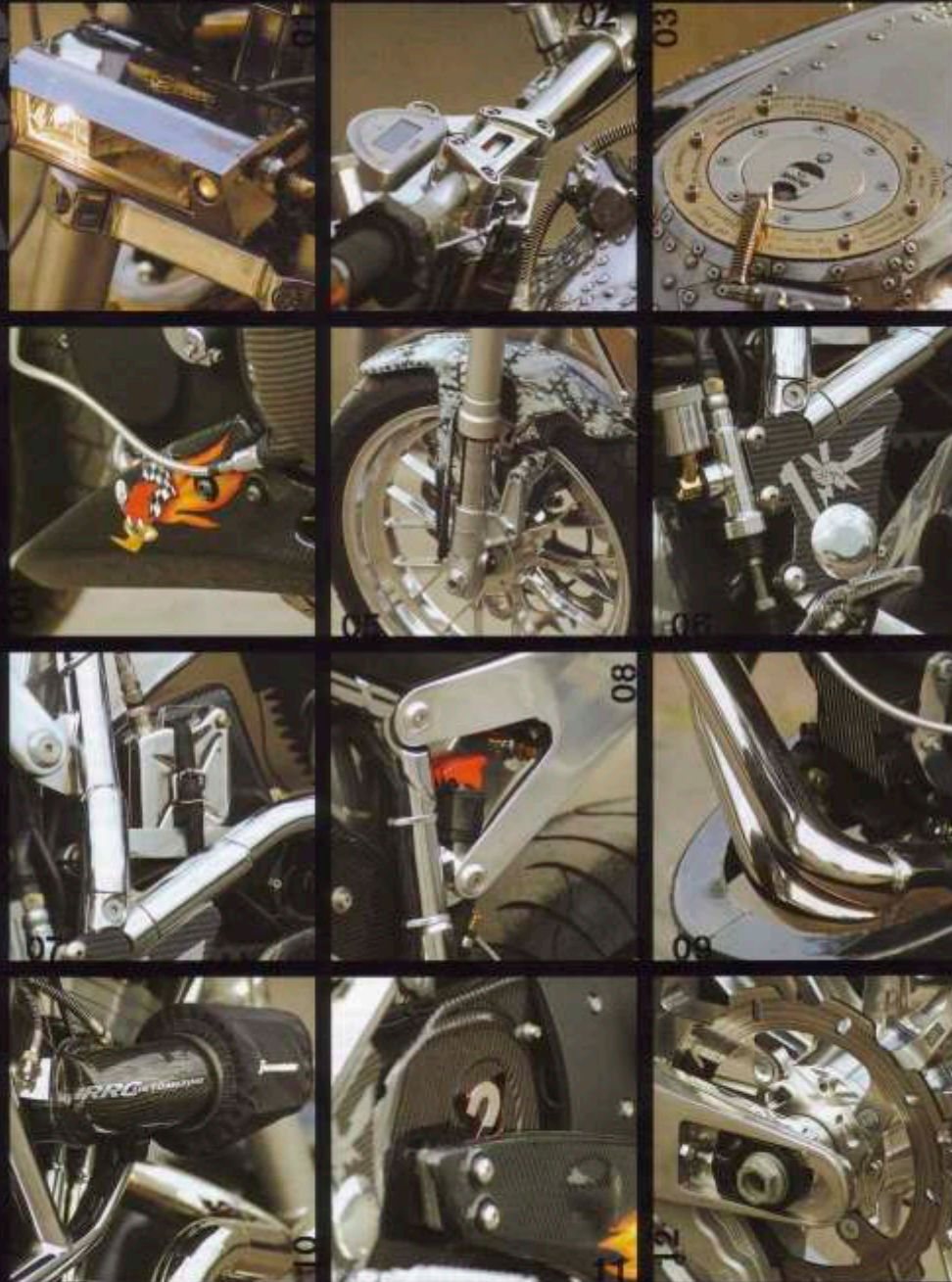
The frame is beautifully polished and is a real highlight against the engine, tank and bodywork. The swingarm is polished and holds a tubular axle and a carbon RCC belt guard. The wheels are PVM Y-spoke types, 6.5-inch wide on the back. The front suspension has Wilbers Suspension springs in silver anodised outer tubes and on the wheel end, a tubular axle. The single front disc has been upgraded to a massive braking wavy disc and is pinched by the Buell six-pot caliper. The dash has a small digital instrument panel in the centre, flanked by polished master cylinders, bar end mirrors and blinker incorporating end weights on the flat alloy handlebar. The headlight assembly is a billet creation that is simple and shows off a US Navy badge. Behind all this of course is the "big gun" feature of the bike - Frank's handcrafted fuel tank (cover). This marvelous creation is fabricated from umpteen pieces of sheet aluminium and 350 rivets and has been cut, shaped, folded, riveted and finished superbly. The tank houses an inscribed brass ring fuel cap (in memory of Pearl Harbour) and has an aluminium Buell logo on one side and a painted logo on the other. This has to be the crème brûlée of streetfighter tanks. The rivet theme is furthered in paint on the carbon belly pan and front guard. The whole bike is clean, proportioned, menacing, trick and tasty. That is something I may never have said of a Buell before. Yes Erik, that is art. ■



SPECIFICATIONS

ENGINE: 1999 Buell Harley-Davidson, fuel injected, 1203cc, four-stroke, air cooled, 45° pushrod V-twin with two valves per cylinder, standard bore and stroke (88.8 x 96.8mm), 10:1 compression ratio, size ECU, Forcewinder air filter, RCC carbon snorkel, Buell race exhaust system, Hibilly Motors hydraulic clutch, carbon covers. **Transmission:** Standard Buell Harley-Davidson five-speed with Keizer belt final drive, carbon shift rod, RCC alloy belt tensioners. **CHASSIS:** Buell chrome-molybdenum steel tube space frame with uniplanar powertrain vibration isolation system, aluminium alloy swingarm, PVM front wheel (3.5 x 17"), PVM rear wheel (6.5 x 17"), 340mm braking wave front disc brake with six piston Buell caliper, standard 230mm single disc rear brake with Buell caliper, Nissin master cylinders, Buell multi adjustable 41mm inverted fork with Wilbers Suspension springs, standard rear suspension, tubular axles. **BODYWORK & MISCELLANEOUS:** Handcrafted riveted aluminium fuel tank cover, modified RCC tail unit, carbon-fibre guard and bellypan, Kellerman indicators, Rizoma reservoirs, LSL dragbar, HESA mirror, Honda Fireblade footpegs machined to accept LED indicators, Moto-Gadget instruments, warning lights embedded in fuel tank using oil bath float bowl. **PERFORMANCE:** Standard Buell - 95hp @ 6200rpm, 93lb-ft @ 5600rpm.

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1. Custom headlight, Kellerman indicators. 2. Rizoma reservoirs, L51 drag bar, Moto Gadget dash. 3. Hand crafted rivet tank cover.
4. Carbon-fibre bellypan. 5. PVM wheels, Wilbers fork internals, Braking wave rotor. 6. Modified Fireblade rearsets, Rizoma reservoirs.
7&8. Chromed frame. 9. Buell race kit system. 10. Forceminder airfilter. 11. Carbon-fibre belt cover. 12. Braking rear rotor