



BETH M. HOWARD

Robb Report MOTORCYCLING

Flash Back
The Goldammer BTR3



SPRING 2005



\$5.99 U.S. \$7.99 CDN

www.motorcyclingmag.com

A CurtCo Media Publication

51> Historical Brough Superior

Monument Valley by Harley-Davidson

Italian Stallions: Ducati 999R & MV Agusta Ago

Historic Harleys

David Uhl is the name by which we might have known Norman Rockwell, if Rockwell had painted motorcycles. Based in Colorado, Uhl is one of only three painters licensed by Harley-Davidson. He started off creating T-shirt art for the company, but six years ago he created an oil painting that blew away H-D officials and thus, found his new niche. Specializing in vintage scenes, Uhl combs through H-D's archives of old photographs and recreates them in oil on linen canvas (sold as limited edition canvas giclée prints). "I'm drawn to the older stuff, it has more character," Uhl says. "In the '20s and '30s, people wore beautiful outfits and hats; there were more trees and dirt roads. This creates a prettier piece and I like creating a window of time for people to crawl into."

Uhl is particularly inspired by the rare photographs of women found in the archives, and searches to find especially candid images. "*Ruby* started everything," he says. "The photo is from 1926. She's ahead of her time, lighting up a smoke in a dress [on her Harley]."

After numerous trips to the Milwaukee archives, Uhl began staging vintage scenes of his own, as in the painting *Rose* where a woman is sitting on a 1936 Knucklehead at a service station, leaving the attendant with nothing to do but polish her taillight. The painting sold out in three months. "Women are the most popular by far. They offer a combination you can't beat: strong, sexy and understated." Significant, he says, with so much overstated sexuality in the Harley world.

Equally important in Uhl's composition scheme is the bike. "The '36 Knucklehead was the beginning of the big twin era, a new chapter in the evolution of the company. It's important in history," he explains. "Because of the way the light hits the engine, the chrome . . ." Uhl muses. "Besides, in the massive motorcycle movement, a Harley is like a blank canvas for people to render their own expression by customizing, and that's parallel to what I do."

Uhl's work will be displayed at the Windblown Show at Atlanta's Marietta/Cobb Museum of Art beginning May 21.

www.daviduhl.com

David Uhl's vintage paintings hark back to a simpler time.

By Beth Howard



Uhl's Ruby