

90 years of doing it right... see page 66

Harley-Davidson and American Motorcycle News

DEC '04

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BIKEMENFEST 2004

## THE 'NEW' DAYTONA RALLY

You're back, we're glad, spend money

by Mike Savidge

DAYTONA BEACH, FLA., OCT. 21-24—

There's been much debate in recent years about whether the bike events in Daytona Beach are a benefit or detriment to the community. One side takes issue with the traffic congestion and noise and increased costs for police and garbage while the other side proudly points out the positive economic impact that the bikers bring. That economic impact was exactly what Daytona Beach was seeking when it launched a new campaign for the

See "Bikemenfest," page 24, column 1



AHDRA 2004 CHAMPIONSHIPS

## Adventure nation

The AHDRA family lights up Las Vegas

by Diana Futz

LAS VEGAS, OCTOBER 21-25—You've felt it. That first little squirt of the fight-or-flight hormone that your lizard brain short-circuits direct to your heart, the natural jolt that dilates your pupils and constricts your arteries, flares your nostrils and tightens your sphincters. For a moment, maybe two, it turns you into Superman. Men, adventure!

Every Jack Swigg capitol on Las Vegas Boulevard, every Cirque du Soleil spectacle, every gaudy jackpot is financed by the sensations of millions of

adrenal glands. The secret of Sin City is that an adrenaline rush dilates the wild-let-loose, and Vegas offers its guests more quick-kick opportunities per square foot than any other place on earth. Just plug into a slot machine, where the dink of random rewards makes a broadband connection to your synapses, opening the adrenaline tap just enough for a nice steady buzz.

See "AHDRA," page 102, column 1

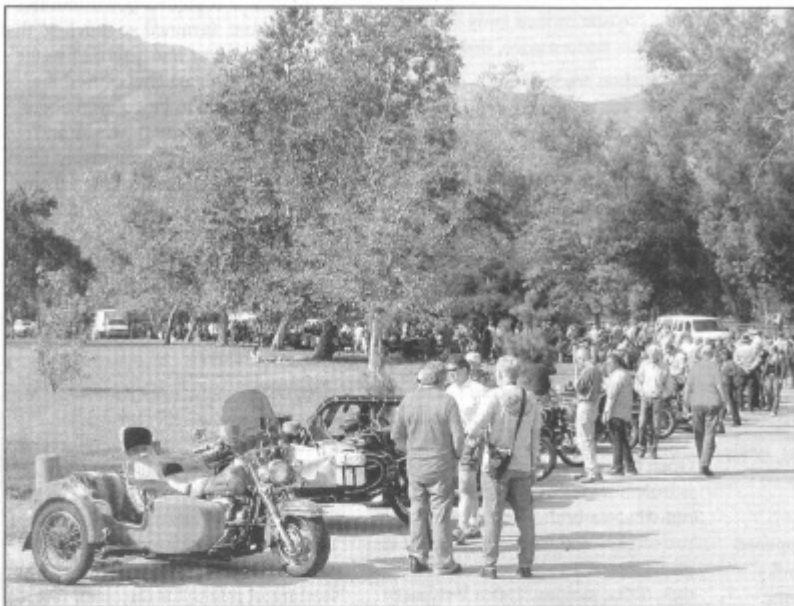
## Getting a handle on the Hammer

See page 60



# Flying chairs

Sidehack fans celebrate the third wheel



by Paul Garson

LOS ANGELES, CALIF., OCT. 24—Last year even Huell Howser, the host of KCET TV's popular "California's Gold," showed up for the annual Griffith Park Sidecar Rally and filmed a segment that

aired on his series. This year, another television film crew was there for the 33rd annual event. They were seen putting around the park on a variety of "flying chairs," including Scott Whitley's radical Harley-Davidson V-Rod-based rac-

ing sidecar that's heading for the biggest, toughest off-road race in the world—the infamous African desert crossing, Paris-Dakar. His will be the first Harley-Davidson to enter the grueling event and obviously the first V-Rod. More on that later.

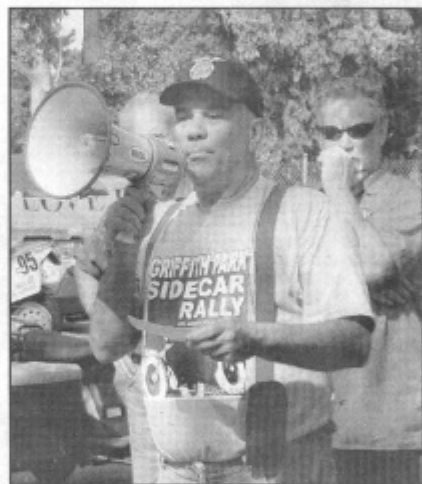
While some think sidecars occupy that twilight zone between motorcycles and cars, "sidehack" fans consider them the only way to go for a number of reasons, including family outings, cargo carrying capabilities, stability, nostalgia, and of course the grin factor. Sidecars had their heyday during the first 20 or so years of the 20th century with a wild assortment of cars manufactured both in England and the U.S. It was the advent of inexpensive four-wheeled transportation, thanks to Henry Ford, that pushed sidecars

into the background. Then in the 1960s they enjoyed a resurgence of interest, but then that waned as well. Now as we motor into the 21st century, they seem to be winning ground again thanks to a thriving sidecar industry in the U.S. and Europe. It is estimated that H-D manufactures and sells an estimated 20–25 percent of new sidecars in North America annually. They sell complete motorcycle/sidecar combinations as well as solo sidecars, but officially don't endorse installation of any kind of sidecar on any models other than their Road King and Electra Glide touring bikes. Of course that doesn't prevent people from happily attaching them and non-Harley sidecars to all kinds of Harleys, including Sportsters, Dynas and Softails.

This year's three-wheeled fun fest saw sidecars originating from Germany, Italy, Britain, the U.S., Russia, Holland, Belgium and even the Philippines. And making it all happen was Mr. Sidecar himself—Motorcycle Hall of Famer Doug Bingham, racer/designer/innovator of sidecars for cons. Back in 1969 Doug founded a company called Side Strider and began designing and building street sidecars. Besides production rigs from Harley-Davidson, Doug's "Bingham MK-1" when introduced was the first sidehack made available to the public for literally decades. Doug raced in both track and off-road events

including Ascot and Laguna Seca. He is the exclusive U.S. distributor for the British-based Watsonian-Squire, the world's oldest and best-known sidecar manufacturer. Doug is also the director of the Sidecar Industry Council which addresses standardized engineering, and promotes a focused strategy for marketing, a greater cooperation with government agencies and the dissemination of information. In other words, if Doug puts on a sidecar rally, they will come. And they came in droves.

The Southern California sunshine rained down in abundance this year. The event was staged in the Crystal Springs section of Griffith Park. Upon first entering the area we came upon a small herd of non-sidecar motorcycles as several clubs and organizations had marked the date on their ride schedules. Strolling along the curving pavement that encompassed a wide expanse of green grass, we were treated to a smorgasbord of sidecars of all makes, models and vintages and with their owners ready to regale you with their history. Many of the sidecar rigs were the Milwaukee



Mr. Sidecar himself, Doug Bingham

variety, cars fitted to Sportsters and Big Twins alike, and this year even a Buell.

The Sidecar Rally is truly a family affair, no better represented than by Tony from Riverside, California, and his three sons Dominique (13), Damian (16) and Demetri (9), all of whom travel aboard a 1979 H-D. Sidecars are popular with the ladies as well; case in point, Valli Vasquez from San Pedro, California, who rides a 2003 Dyna Low Rider Anniversary Edition with a Watsonian sidecar. Doug Bingham added the leading link front end and sidecar. Asked why she chose a sidecar, she replied, "I didn't want to have to deal with the balancing of a big

Continued on next page

Happy Holidays

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bike, and also I have a 7-year-old son who likes to ride with me. The best part is taking him with me, plus all my family has Harleys and we all go riding together." Lucky boy, he has a cool mom, and a cool sidecar.

A really eye-catching Harley rig was R. Krieger's XR750 road racer-inspired rig with matching black and orange Bingham MK II sidecar. The high-performance combo is fresh off the workbench and still in the dialing-in phase. Word is the bike may be for sale or, as its owner/builder said, "We can build more." (Info at 805.643.3839.) Mr. Krieger also does Indian restorations for The Shop in Ventura, so he knows his vintage metal. Meanwhile Dana and Jeanette Smith of Shadow Hills, California, rolled up on their spiffy red '75 Sportster/'75 California sidecar combo.

As mentioned we spent time with Scott Whitley and his V-Rod Paris-Dakar sidecar racer. It's powered by a stock V-Rod motor that is housed in a custom frame designed by the Dutch EML sidecar company. Scott says, "I kept the engine stock because I have complete confidence that the V-Rod will prove what it can do. For reliability and ruggedness this motor is really overbuilt, hefty and tough. What better place to demonstrate it than at the 10,000 km Paris-Dakar?" Asked what his relationship was with the Harley-Davidson Company, he replies, "They helped me with the motor and said good luck." Meanwhile Bartels', the famous H-D dealership in Marina del Rey, California, is Scott's primary sponsor. Scott has the credentials for the Paris-Dakar race. He's raced off-road motocross sidecars for 30 years and has campaigned everywhere from Pikes Peak to the European circuit and has won about everything he could. "For me," he says, "the Paris-Dakar is the biggest challenge I can imagine on a motorcycle, particularly on a sidecar. I want to go because it is so difficult."

By the way, when asked what he did in real life, Scott pauses a moment, then says, "I'm an engineer. I design stuff for spy satellites." And no, he's not carrying any surveillance equipment. In fact, he can carry a GPS in the race, but it's

the official Dakar organization system and it is severely limited, as they don't want competitors using advanced navigation tools through the 5,000-6,000 miles of African desert. Asked if he likes heat, Scott says, "Ah, I'm going to get to like it." Scott is aiming for the race beginning January 1, 2006. He adds, "We've spent about a million hours building the bike and testing it in the desert and sand dunes, really torturing it. It's a constant evolution."

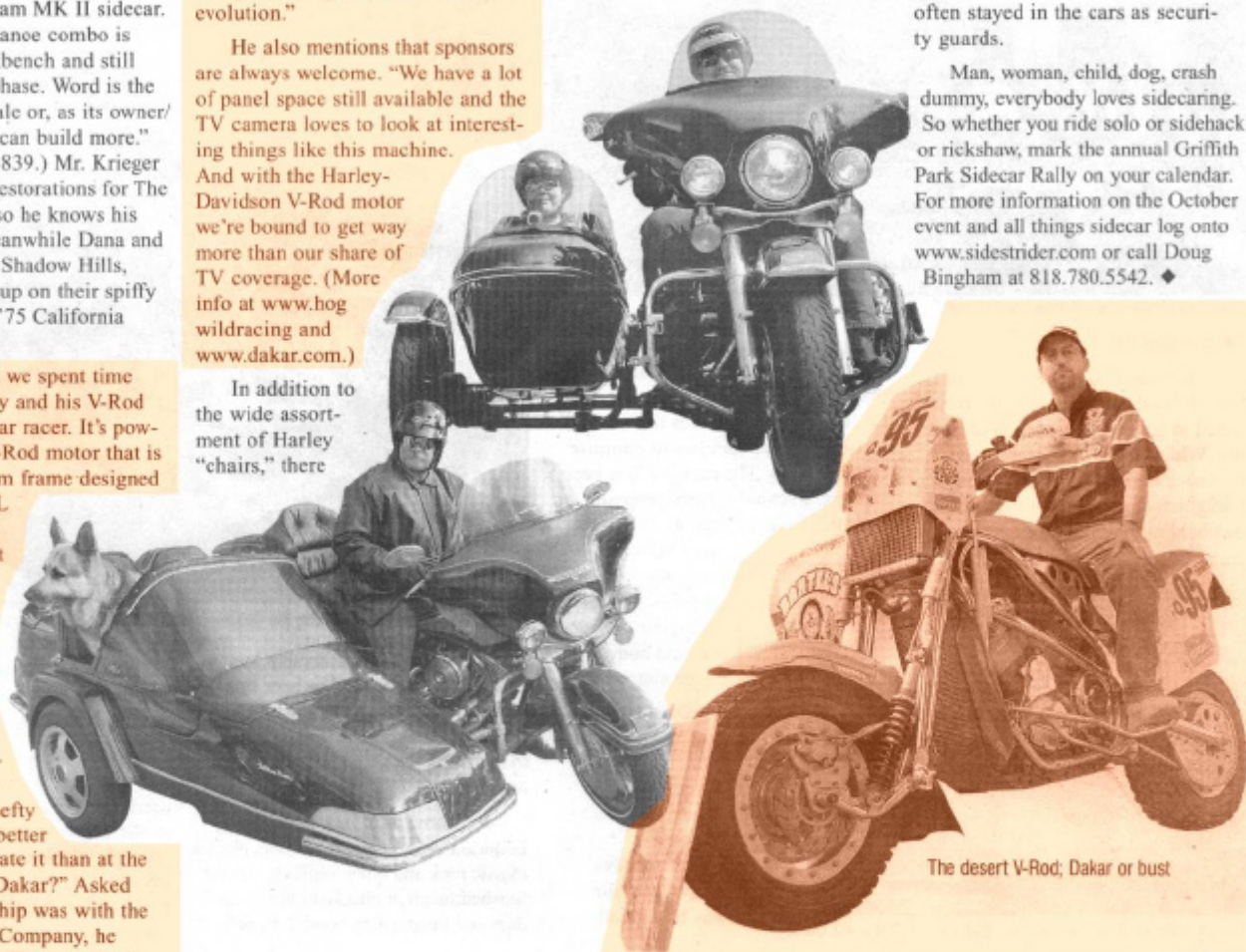
He also mentions that sponsors are always welcome. "We have a lot of panel space still available and the TV camera loves to look at interesting things like this machine. And with the Harley-Davidson V-Rod motor we're bound to get way more than our share of TV coverage. (More info at [www.hogwildracing.com](http://www.hogwildracing.com) and [www.dakar.com](http://www.dakar.com).)

In addition to the wide assortment of Harley "chairs," there

were all brands represented including sidecar-running BMWs, Gold Wings, Moto Guzzis, Kawasakis, Yamahas, Triumphs, AJS, even a vintage Vespa scooter as well as a sidecar shipped all the way from the Philippines. Making an appearance was Phoenix resident and ace sidecar designer Tom Ridyard, well known for his radical "Flying Red Chair" Kawasaki street-legal "kneeler" sidecars. He came in costume as

the Crash Test Dummy—his way of celebrating Halloween and raising public consciousness about motorcycle safety. Karen Briefer brought her "Barkersfield" Fire Department sidecar custom-made by Doug Bingham. Yes, she's from Bakersfield, but she often carries three dogs in her firetruck-red sidecar and thus the name written on its side. Speaking of dogs, sidecars are obviously their best friends. Many dogs arrived with their owners and often stayed in the cars as security guards.

Man, woman, child, dog, crash dummy, everybody loves sidecaring. So whether you ride solo or sidehack or rickshaw, mark the annual Griffith Park Sidecar Rally on your calendar. For more information on the October event and all things sidecar log onto [www.sidestrider.com](http://www.sidestrider.com) or call Doug Bingham at 818.780.5542. ♦



The desert V-Rod; Dakar or bust

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