



Building a Featherlastic Part II

"The Featherlastic Frame"

Finally I have reached the point where I'm ready to ship the featherbed frame, swingarm and rear hub assembly out to Arizona for the featherlastic modification. They also require an isolastic front motor mount which is shortened to fit the narrower featherbed downtube area. I have chosen to utilize a slightly modified Commando rear hub which retains the cush rubber drive versus the solid mountup of the Atlas and earlier versions. Since I am using the Commando clutch assembly (which has no cush rubbers) this is easier on the transmission especially when combined with a belt primary drive. Other options for the rear include the popular Triumph conical hub which can be made to look similar to the original Manx unit, or a modern reproduction of the Manx itself (mucho dinero). By sticking with the Commando (which for the most part is identical to the Atlas) I am keeping the bike in a style typical of one built back in the 70's. Plus I'm clearing out some good spares left over from my previous two Commando projects.

Also in keeping with the classic Norton featherbed cafe look will be an Atlas headlight shell (which I need to locate in case FYI) and Atlas lower fork yoke. The top fork yoke will be an alloy unit from England designed for clip-ons. I've also decided to use the stock Atlas oil tank and battery box as I like the way it works with the rear down curves of the frame, and again its a classic look versus the more traditional Triton cafe central oil tank. I was lucky enough to purchase a complete unit from a gentleman in England who is also building a Norton Cafe. Where I am beginning with a bare featherbed frame and keep adding on Atlas parts and tinware, he is stripping a complete Atlas motorcycle to get to the frame. Also of note is that he's building a Commando 850 with solid mounts and a 76 degree crankshaft (made from solid billet) which is supposed to create a smooth running Commando engine. I'll keep you posted on his project as we stay in touch.

While the frame is in Arizona being modified, I'll next begin building the engine. All components are complete and ready for assembly so stay tuned for Part III and the completion of the Combat 750.