

**J**eff Glasserow doesn't compromise: 'This is a one man's bike,' says the American enthusiast. 'I built it for myself. If you like it then fine — if you don't I don't care.'

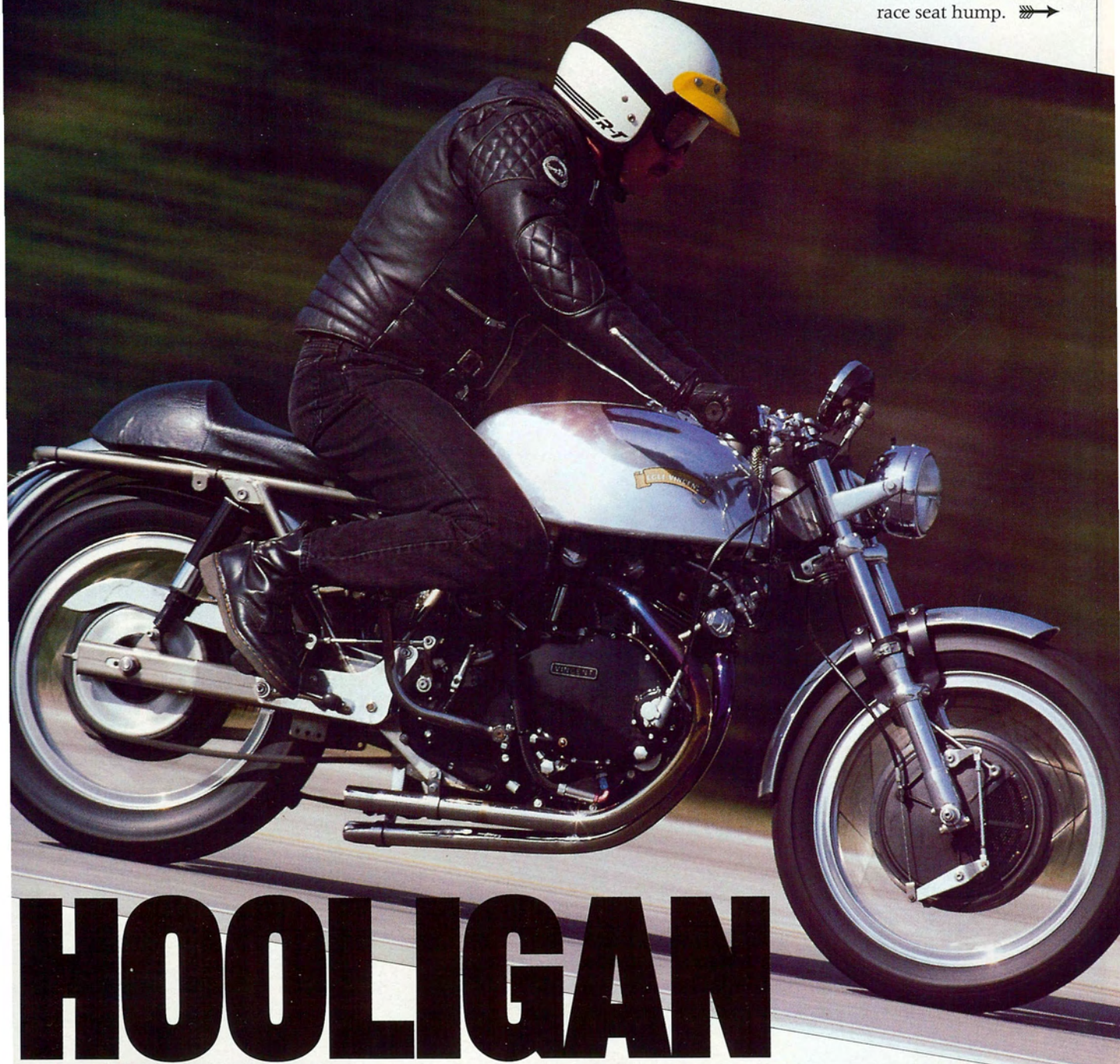
The Egli Vin-

cent provokes strong opinions. When introduced in the late sixties many Vincent enthusiasts claimed it was heresy to fit one of the Stevenage, Herts, built V-twins into anything other than its original frame. Yet others saw the lightweight Swiss-designed frame as a means of updating the highly regarded motorcycles.

Glasserow's machine is a hooligan

bike. An uncompromising street racer, it exudes aggression, even when parked. Ride it and you're exposed to its antisocial tendencies.

The open pipes produce sufficient decibels to terrify bystanders of a nervous disposition and bellow a considerably advanced warning of your arrival to traffic police. Also, the tuned engine's power delivery is so user-unfriendly that it would dump you off the back but for the race seat hump. ➡➡➡



# HOOOLIGAN BIKE

*This Egli Vincent cost a fortune to build, it's as antisocial as they come and the owner admits he's wary of its vicious power delivery. But he would never sell it/John Pearson*



**HOOGLIGAN BIKE** *continued*

Jeff started his Egli project about four and a half years ago. 'I purchased it from a fellow who had paid over \$3000 (£2050) for the supposedly reconditioned motor. But when he took one of the heads off to find out what kind of jewels were inside a valve dropped out. Then he lifted a cylinder and a liner dropped out. He lost interest in the project after that.'

The horror story continued under Jeff Glasserow's ownership. He commissioned Sid Bibberman and Bill Hoddinott of Big Sid's Classic Bikes in Norfolk, Virginia, USA (804 588 3001) to rebuild the bike. They stripped and examined the engine, discovering that it was a complete bitsa, apparently having been assembled from the contents of a Vincent engine builder's skip. Very little was reusable.

Even the crankcase — which the engine number identifies as 1950 Rapide — had mismatched inners and outers.

'But I'm a stubborn guy,' says Jeff Glasserow, 'and I asked them if they could fix it.' It took two years, but this time the engine really did contain a few jewels.

The cylinder heads were extensively reworked by Bibberman, the tuning package including porting, gas-flowing and polishing. He also fitted new valve guides

which were hand-made from Ampco 45 wrought bronze. The heads, barrels and cases were jig-machined to ensure an accurate fit when hot.

Late model high-silicon pistons came from Britain's Ron Kemp (0597 851542) and give an 8:1 compression ratio. The camshafts are MKII (Shadow) type.

Bibberman installed an Alpha big end with polished Carillo connecting rods. Oil supply was improved by fitting a double-start racing oil pump and the oil feed was modified by using an Aeroquip 'Easy-Flo' fitting in place of the original banjo.

A tachometer drive is fitted and the engine cases are painted black — both non-standard on a Rapide. The tacho is a five-inch chronometric speedometer converted some years ago by Joe Shaw and Son of Chatham, Kent.

This was a common alteration but they don't do it any more because the cost is prohibitive — it was £110 ten years ago.

Jeff insisted on using 36mm Amal MkII carburettors. 'I'd never used them on anything else and wanted to try them.' This proved to be a mistake. A lot of time and effort has been wasted on attempting to get the Egli running properly, to no avail. Jeff has now decided that he will switch to 32mm Concentrics.

Once the engine was assembled, work started on the cycle parts. Jeff claims his frame is one of only five or six built by Eric Cheney for the British Egli dealer, Slater Bros of Bromsgrove, Worcestershire. 'You can identify the Cheney frame by the characteristic scalloped welds,' he says.

Jeff's machine came with 38mm Italian Ceriani front forks, which were an original Egli option along with British MP units. Jeff is a big man, weighing over 400lb, so the forks along with the Girling rear units were beefed up with stiffer springs.

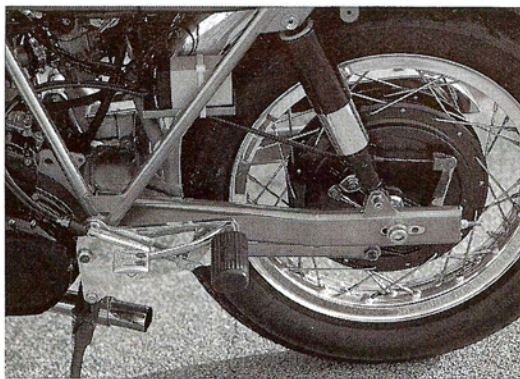
He reckons that the 280mm double-sided twin leading-shoe Fontana front brake — fitted with Ferodo green linings — is the best he's ever used. This and the rear wheel — from a 750cc Laverda — have been treated with Kal-Gard Guncote. This is a heat-cured protective coating originally developed for firearms which is corrosion-resistant and withstands high temperatures.

That superbly crafted alloy fuel



Looking a million dollars and costing nearly as much, Jeff Glasserow's Egli Vincent is a match for most machines

**'It cost me \$30,000,' admits Jeff**

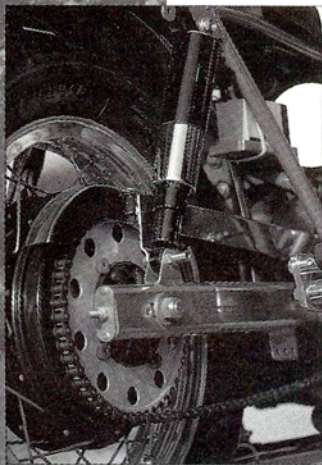


Small batteries tucked inside the subframe either side of the rear mudguard are used for starting only



Tacho is a converted 5in chronometric speedometer





**Jeff ordered Girling shocks with stronger springs than standard**

this thing comes on the cam,' warned Ken, 'because it will want to spit you off the back-end.'

But like a smoker ignoring the health warning on a cigarette pack, I heard their words of caution but decided nothing was going to prevent me experiencing the raw power for myself.

Starting was a lot easier than I imagined. The exhaust note is subdued at low revs, but the bellow increases in magnitude as the throttle is turned. Rev it and the ground shakes in time with the characteristic off-beat Vincent engine pulses. Jeff's neighbours must be more tolerant than mine.

Power delivery is restrained at low revs, feeling quite tractable. Then at a little over 4500rpm hell breaks loose and the machine surges forward dramatically. Jeff hasn't measured the top speed, but claims that in an illicit test he had just snicked into top gear when a modern Suzuki running alongside was indicating 130mph.


Jeff is happy to rev the Vincent to 6200rpm. 'It'll go up to 6800rpm, but the engine noise is a bit scary so I don't do it,' he says.

He has weighed the bike at 370lb with fuel and oil on board — Egli claimed 350lb dry. Compare that to the 455lb dry weight of a Vincent Rapide roadster!

This lightness makes it nimble through bends, the firm suspension and crouched riding position giving more of a racer than a road bike feel. The special turns in well, sticks to its line and — with a judicious hand on the throttle — exits precisely. I wasn't prepared to discover the consequences of the engine suddenly hitting peak power halfway through a turn.

I agree with Jeff's sentiments about the Fontana front brake; it's certainly one of the best I've experienced, combining the necessarily excellent stopping power with superb feel.

In fact the whole machine exudes high quality craftsmanship. It may look like a hooligan, but underneath is a thoroughbred motorcycle.

The cost of assembling this collection of high quality engineering far outweighs the Egli's value. 'It cost me every penny of \$30,000 (£20,000), but is probably worth only \$12,000-\$15,000 (£7800-£9700),' Jeff admits. 'However, I didn't build it for sale, I certainly didn't build it as an investment,' he says. 'I built it to ride' 

cated from alloy to give a better riding position. Also, the front engine mounting bracket was modified to accommodate an eccentric mount which allows for engine growth at operating temperature. The Egli frame does not allow for this.

Jeff Glasserow and Ken Bell — who is Chairman of the organising committee for the British Motorcycle Day at Olney, the biggest British-only event in the United States — were both on hand for my all-too-brief test ride on the powerful Egli.

'You had better be hanging on when

## Sweet Swiss Vincent

Introduced in 1967 — a dozen years after Vincent's Stevenage factory stopped producing the thunderous V-twins — the Egli frame gave enthusiasts the opportunity to build a modern roadburner around a classic engine.

Weighing just 25lb complete with swinging arm, the Egli frame is a simple but effective design based around a 3½in top tube that doubles up as an oil tank. Behind this is a triangu-



**Terry Prince reveals his Egli frame in 1968**

lated rear subframe with box-section steel swinging arm.

Designed by Swiss engineer Fritz Egli, but sold in England by Roger Slater, the Egli was available as an infinitely variable package. You could purchase anything from a bare frame and swinging arm to a complete machine sporting a reconditioned engine. There were roadster and racer versions, plus a choice of brakes and suspension, depending upon your budget.

**Fritz Egli shows off his new design**



## Jeff Glasserow

The Egli Vincent is just one of Jeff Glasserow's many machines. A 43-year-old advertising consultant who makes TV commercials, Jeff has British, American and European motorcycles in his 42-bike collection.

His wife and seven-year-old daughter are also great motorcycle enthusiasts and the family machine is a K100 BMW with EML side-car.

Jeff is a great fan of classic racing and he sponsors — amongst others — reigning AHRMA pre-1940 class champion Rusty Lowry on a hand-shift Indian Scout.

