

Wernimont Designs

RUSS WERNIMONT



H WERNIMONT DESIGNS
MURRIETA, CA

Headlights, taillights, triple-trees, fork lowers—Russ Wernimont, the guy whose name is just about synonymous with fenders and gas tanks, has been busy. All those custom parts, with more to come, are now in the Wernimont lineup. Making it happen — not to mention to keep up with that ever-growing sheet metal side of the business—Wernimont Designs is packing up and moving into a brand-new 22,000 square foot building just about a mile down the road from the present facility in Murrieta, California.

Now, coming from Wernimont all those new bits are pretty tricky. That license plate frame and taillight, for instance, is a high-quality aluminum casting, and the cateye LED light and the turn signals are built right in. There are a number of different mounts and adapters available, too, so the same basic frame and taillight can be used in any number of applications. There's a weld-in bucket for a custom flush mount, there are bolt-in buckets, and there are accessories available to mount that light in a stock-bike situation where it completely covers the OE mounting holes in the fender. There's also a weld-on bracket allowing the same light to be used on a rigid or custom softail. It's a great looking accessory, and with so many possibilities from just one part number the stocking is easy.

The new Wernimont headlight is unique in the market, too. It's a three-dimensional Iron Cross, also an aluminum casting, highly polished and chromed. It's wild and it comes complete, ready to bolt on (with a universal bottom mount) and plug in. And those new Wernimont triple-clamps and lower legs evolved from pieces Russ made for his own bike. As you'd expect they're extremely high quality. They're beautifully designed and beautifully finished. The trees are a four-degree raked assembly, angle-

cut for a really clean and flowing look. The trees complement the lines of the gas tank and the bike's frame, lending a nice transitional line. The Wernimont lower legs continue that same angle-cut theme. The top of the lower, the cap carrying the oil seal, is styled to match the look and line of the triple-tree. Completing the coordinated look the leg-bottoms are pointed to match the points on the top of the triple-trees. Cool stuff.

Russ Wernimont has more in the works, too. He's producing a line of stock-replacement gas tanks, custom tanks that'll bolt right onto OE Harleys. It makes perfect sense. Ride around and take a look. On any given day you might see a few aftermarket customs wearing swoopy sheet metal, but you'll see thousands of stock Harley-Davidsons just begging for it. Russ is developing prototype tanks for the Road Kings and Road Glides right now, so stay tuned.

"We're constantly developing new things," Russ says. "We're determined to make nice pieces, offer the best quality and keep the prices reasonable." That's sure true with Wernimont sheet metal. Russ Wernimont's been in the motorcycle business for 10 years now, but he's built race cars and worked with sheet metal for 25 years. Drawing on that automotive background Russ has all the blanks for his tanks and fenders stamped in Detroit, stored in a 10,000 square foot warehouse until he needs them. It works out great. "Those Michigan shops," he explains, "are used to supplying the 'Big Three,' and they have plenty to offer. They have all the new technology and employ all the newest manufacturing techniques. I'd never see any of it if I didn't have my foot in the door back there." The result is that when Wernimont's parts come out of those presses they're so smooth they're ready for paint. There's minimal body work required, if any at all. "What we look for," Russ says, "is what's called an 'automotive stamping finish.' That means a part that's ready to paint. That's what the auto manufacturers demand." That's what Wernimont gets, too. Most often all that's required with a Wernimont tank or fender set is just a prime coat and then color.

Working with those specialty shops in Detroit has more benefits. Russ Wernimont gets access to the test labs. He's able to do stress analysis on his tanks and fenders, and Wernimont Designs is the first motorcycle sheet metal company in the aftermarket to do real vibration tests. The results prove telling. In one test the vibration cycles actually cracked the motorcycle frame before they broke the gas tank, which speaks volumes for the quality of a Wernimont part. "We've even done crash tests with our tanks," Russ says. All that sheet metal is fashioned from hefty stuff, too, stamped from 14-and 16-gauge drawn steel and then hand-formed and finished into those signature Wernimont-custom shapes in California.

And that Wernimont "signature" has expanded. It isn't just sheet metal any more. Headlights, taillights, triple-trees and fork lowers are in the mix, too. Drag Specialties carries it all.