

**TESTS:** Harley-Davidson FLH Classic, Yamaha IT175, Honda FT500 Ascot, Suzuki GS550M, Honda Motocompo, MR30 Pocket Racer

**SPECIAL  
EDITION**

# CYCLE GUIDE

**SPECIAL EDITION:**  
Saddlebag Buyer's Guide

47457

AUGUST 1982 \$1.75 UK1.25p

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Harley FLH  
Classic and  
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VOL. 16 NO. 8 AUGUST 1982

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### QUOTE:

"Harley's FLH Classic is nothing less than tradition on wheels. It might have been born in a shower of sparks between some great hammer and anvil at the dawn of the Motorcycle Age."

—Pg. 18

### ON THE COVER:

Chris Eastman captured the All-American Tour Train challenging the notion that you can get away from it all by taking it all with you. It's turn-key touring, with one hitch. But don't underrate the rig; it's a real sleeper.

CYCLE  
GUIDE



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Start with the basics. There is simply no reason on earth to justify the existence of the Harley-Davidson Electra Glide Classic. But by the same token, it's a fundamental tenet of the two-wheel world that, in the choice of a motorcycle, reason seldom has been a determining factor.

Something beyond reason and hard logic propels the Classic. Like some interna-

tional symbol, the silhouette of the FLHC spells "touring" more eloquently than the best-couched phrases. It's a rounded, fully developed shape that has always nudged some mystic nerve in its viewers, whether they understood it or not. The shape speaks of permanence, of constancy, and it should. It was a given of American touring decades before other turn-key tourers ever

saw the incandescent light of a drawing board. It is nothing less than tradition with wheels, a tradition that might have been born in a shower of sparks between some great hammer and anvil at the dawn of the Motorcycle Age.

That recognizable shape, and other smaller ones, is vital to the Classic's attraction. From every angle you see pro-



## ROAD TEST:

# Harley-Davidson Electra Glide Classic

*You might call it the American Express, or a time machine. Most call it a classic.*



nounced, separate shapes, like the efforts of hundreds of individual sculptors combined. Every polished and chromed square inch of the FLHC yanks the eyes from one piece of fascinating bright-work to the next, each competing for at-

tention. And in perceived value, the myriad discrete forms of the Classic speak untold volumes.

Volume One, Chapter One deals with touring hardware, which hugs the FLHC on all sides. From the

chromed bumpers on its massive front fender to the equally shiny wraparound saddlebag guardrails, the Electra Glide Classic broadcasts *Stuff* as loudly as any other motorcycle ever made. In between the chrome lies more chrome, yards of it, as well as engine guards, saddlebags, a travel trunk with passenger backrest, handlebar-mount fairing, rocker gearshift and

*Continued*







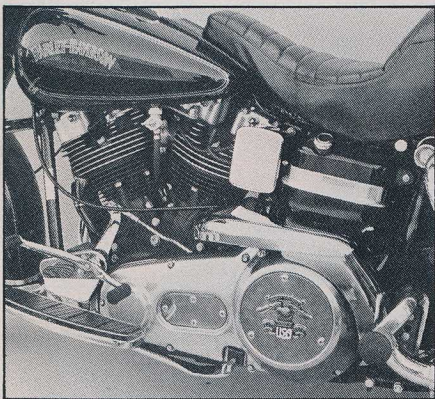
floorboards floating on rubber cushions. The look is classy as well as classic, all the way down to the twin spotlights flanking the headlamp and the dual-stripe white-walls at both ends. Lights and flashes seem to have gravitated to the FLHC from every parts bin in Milwaukee, and the effect is remarkable. When you roll up to someone on the street, he doesn't know whether to hand over his driver's license or to pull over and wait for the parade.

The parade clearly is the better of the two choices, since the Classic seems capable of generating its own following out of thin air. Gatherings form at will. This isn't just a motorcycle; it's an encitement to congregate. Park the FLHC anywhere even remotely public and it soon will be smudged with handprints, large and small—mute testimony to the Classic's attraction to would-be riders of any age. In light of that ability to empty out neighborhoods, the Classic ought to come standard with a gold rope to cordon off the gawkers.

For all of its classic good looks, though, the FLHC is not the same Electra Glide that's been racking up cross-country miles since the mid-Sixties. 1982 marks the biggest change in an FLH-series motorcycle since the displacement jump from 74 cubic inches to 80 cubes in 1980. The change was to the Classic's final drive, which is now, like that of the Harley FXB Sturgis, via a toothed rubber belt.

Even though the Classic stole a page out of the Sturgis' owner's manual, it didn't lift the entire book. Unlike the FXB, which has both primary and final belt drive, primary drive on the Classic still is by conventional double-row chain. The FLHC's drive system evolved because in testing, the extra weight of the Classic put too much strain on the FXB primary drive, resulting in some belt failures. Final drives on the two bikes are identical, however, and even though the Sturgis has taller first and second gears, ratios for third and fourth are the same as well. The belt final drive also is the major mechanical difference between the FLHC and the civilian-model Electra Glide. Internal gear ratios are the same between FLH and FLHC, but the Classic's 2.12:1 final-drive ratio nets it almost five-percent-taller overall gearing.

Harley might have gone only halfway in belting the Classic, but that it has a belt at all makes perfect sense, especially for a



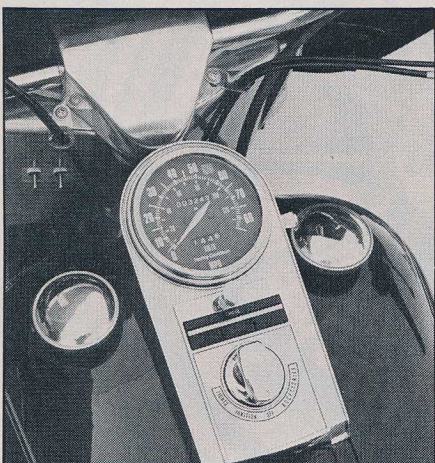
**Levers and covers as objets d'art**

*"It it sticks out, chrome it."*



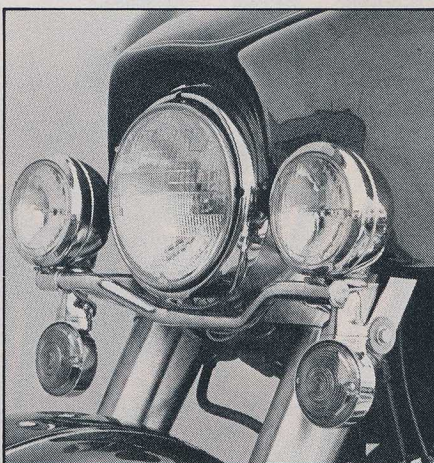
**Carrying capacity is FLHC standard**

*And so is rubber floormat.*



**Classic's dash has just one dial**

*But seat-of-pants tach is OEM.*



**Pseudo-cop hardware is part of the look**

*Spotlighting some of FLHC's charm.*



## COMPARATIVE TEST DATA:

Make	Quarter-Mile, sec/mph	Top Speed, mph	Weight, lbs	Stopping Distance From 60 mph, ft.
Harley-Davidson FLH Classic-'82	15.47/82.0	101	752	180
Harley-Davidson Tour Glide-'80	15.58/83.9	108	785	161
Honda GL1100A Aspencade-'82	13.23/98.8	139	724	145
Kawasaki KZ1100A-'81	11.62/117.6	142	559	NA
Kawasaki KZ1300A GT-'80	12.71/107.7	135	730	146
BMW R100RT-'82	13.86/95.1	122	523	148

tourer. The Gates Polychain, constructed of polyurethane and Dupont Kevlar, is rated to last up to 20,000 miles. And aside from surviving longer than a chain and running quieter as well, the Polychain requires no lubrication. After about 500 miles of use, a film on the belt's inner surface wears in, providing all the lubrication the Polychain will require throughout its service life. Since the belt is a one-piece construction, when it wears out it must be changed more or less as if it were an endless chain. If it breaks before regular replace-

ment, there's a fix in the form of Harley part 40101-80 (\$49.95). It's a slightly lighter accessory section of belt that splices onto a broken Polychain to keep it working for another 200 miles or so—or just long enough to get the Classic into the shop for a new belt. The Polychain has proven itself in more than two years of service on the Sturgis, but the repair kit is a wise investment, especially on tour, if for no other reason than peace of mind.

While Harley was willing to modify the Electra Glide concept to include belt drive,

the change is a detail, not a major direction shift. The Glide stands inviolate. At its core is still the biggest vee-twin torquer in the business. Thumb the starter and you've got a direct link, through Duo Glide and Hydra Glide ancestors, to pre-WWII motorcycling America. The big vee clanks, clatters and roars, each noise the sound of a time machine at work. *Everything* vibrates at idle, from the pavement under the Good-year Speedgrips to the air around you. The shudder wells up from the mechanical heart of the bike, and works its way

*Continued*

American touring is a larger-than-life, take-it-all-with-you road adventure. And no motorcycle fits it better than Harley-Davidson's Electra Glide Classic.





**PRODUCT EVALUATION:****Cycle-Kamp Instant Motel**

*What better accessory for the King of the Road than a trailer for sale?*

• Most motorcycle tours end up following a roadmap from motel to motel. The conversations over breakfast tend more to how far you can ride that day without out-running the Nation's Innkeeper than to the pleasures of the ride itself. Fair enough, since motels have their place. But that place is stationary, while the motorcycle is not. So what happens is that you plot your course around the motels, which might or might not take you where you want to go.

One alternative to a Howard Johnson's tour is the traditional Roughing It. You've got your sleeping bag and flashlight in hand—and the rocks in your back all night and the mosquitos practicing touch-and-gos on any exposed skin until the dawn's early light. Or there's the tent tour, replete with tent, tent stakes, tent poles and tent ropes. Just one-half hour or so after you

start you've got the tent up . . . and an hour before you want to leave you can begin striking camp. Although the tent tour is worlds more civilized than Roughing It, all the packing and unpacking—not to mention making room on the motorcycle for the camping gear—tends to sap some of the spontaneity out of the ride.

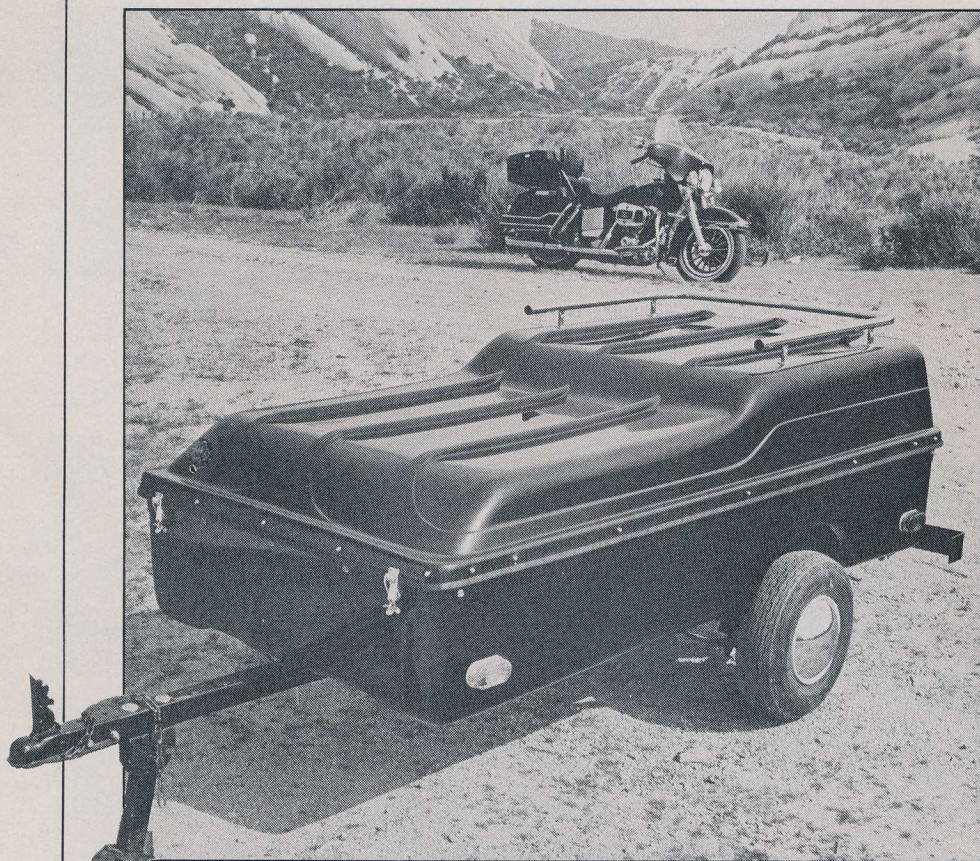
But there's a third alternative to the motel-to-motel tour. One more comfortable than Roughing It, but without the guy-wire aspects of the tent tour. If you don't want to let motel availability decide your route for you, take the motel along for the ride. An Instant Motel by Cycle-Kamp, that is.

Admittedly, the Instant Motel lacks some of the amenities you'd expect in, say, checking into the Hilton. But since when did any hotel follow you around, waiting

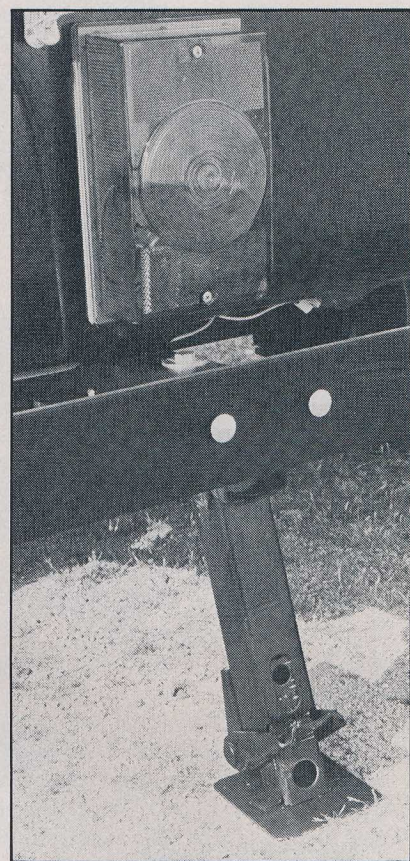
for you to pull over? You pay for the convenience of taking your room with you, of course, in the loss of some accommodations, but the Instant Motel still is far from Spartan. Aside from not having room service and bellhops, what the Instant Motel really lacks are a Jacuzzi and swimming pool—as well as any other plumbing, indoors or out. But most of the necessities still are there. The Instant Motel provides for its guests a table, seats, sleeping area, windows and even a view (depending on where you call it quits for the night).

Checking into the Instant Motel is a process of about 15 minutes for one person; less, if you've got help. To access what's underneath the fiberglass lid, you first adjust the three spring-loaded stabilizers (two on the rear bumper and one on the trailer's tongue), unlatch the lid and fold out the two side panels. Slip the four outriggers in place under the side panels and, with the safety straps snapped (to keep the roof from collapsing of its own volition), raise the two roof supports and slip them into their respective notches in the ceiling. Then snap the tent in place, top and bottom, and move in.

Life inside the Instant Motel is as easy to get used to as the set-up routine. With all the bedding in place, there's a padded



**Road-ready in under 10 minutes, Instant Motel becomes long-hauler's mobile home**  
*Instant touring—with one hitch.*



**Fold-down stabilizers adjust for height**  
*Foundation for the Instant Motel.*



vinyl sleeping area just shy of six-foot square. Underneath the bed is enough cargo space for an extended trip, even if the bike that's doing the hauling (550cc or larger is recommended) has neither saddlebags nor a travel trunk. And an optional luggage rack on the trailer's top section will hold up to 70 pounds more gear for traveling.

Stow the bedding and you can set up the table, which is flanked by padded benches on two sides. And with the stabilizers in place, the earth will have to move before the table—or the trailer—gets wobbly. Even wet weather is no problem, since the trailer roof is also the tent roof, and the tent itself is made of a waterproof, urethane-coated Cordura nylon. There's no reason to get stuffy about trailer life, either, since the Instant Motel has three windows and a door for ventilation—all shielded by rainflaps and mosquito netting. And when it's time to check out, the Instant Motel can be collapsed, locked and hitched onto the motorcycle in a little under eight minutes.

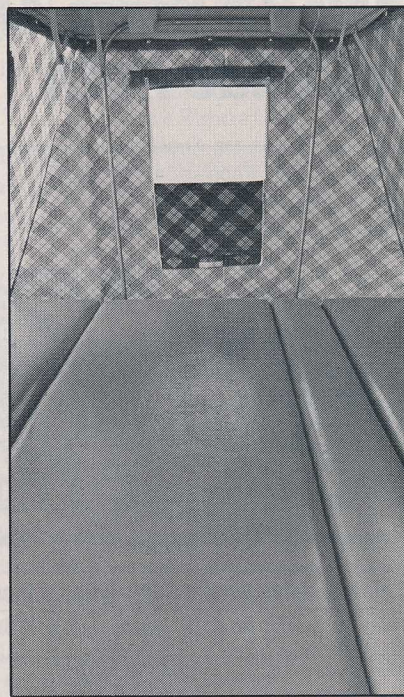
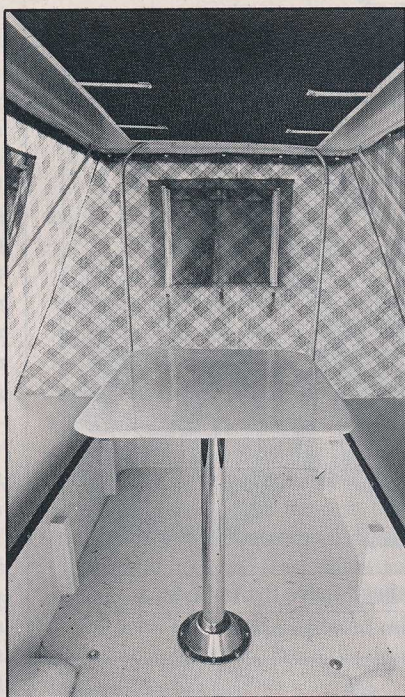
Despite the advantages the Instant Motel offers, there will be some for whom no amount of convenience is worth the cost. That cost includes an installed price of \$1649 (as tested), but the greater concern is that the Instant Motel—or any trailer for that matter—will extract some kind of awful payment in handling. And there is a cost in towing the 250-pound, 8.5-foot trailer, though it's not as high as you might imagine.

At parking-lot speeds the trailer is most noticeable, and the motorcycle requires a firm hand on the controls. The handlebar wants to waggle, and the only thing that keeps it in place is arm strength. Corners, too, require different skills. You brake long before the turn (stopping distances are longer with the trailer in tow), then roll on the throttle once you're past the apex. You stay off of the brakes while leaned, since anytime the trailer "catches up" to the bike, the cornering line is affected.

The techniques you have to acquire to haul the Instant Motel can be learned quickly, and at freeway speeds—where a camping trailer likely will see most of its use—the Instant Motel's effects on handling are minimal. You even might have to check your mirrors every so often to confirm that bike and trailer are still in company. When you do, you'll see what's riveted the attention of everyone in sight: a quick-hitch device that will turn virtually any street motorcycle into a tourer—in seconds.

To book your own room in the Instant Motel, or to find out about Cycle-Kamp's list of options and line of trailers, contact Cycle-Kamp, Dept. CG, 1341 Blue Gum Street, Anaheim, California 92806. Or call (714) 630-6292.

—Larry Works



**Instant Motel with table set up and bed turned down**

*No maid service unless you take it with you, but there's no tipping, either.*



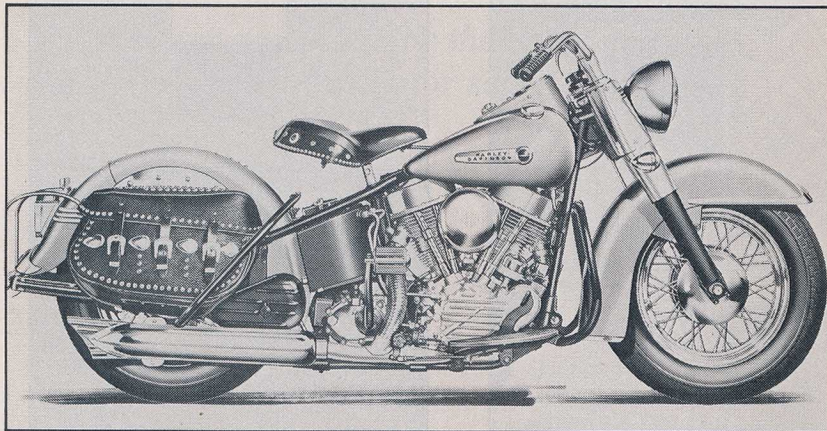
**Cycle-Kamp trailer at full extension is more than just a roof over your head**

*Furn. rm., air-cond., stor. sp., 3 wind., utl. not incl. Must move.*

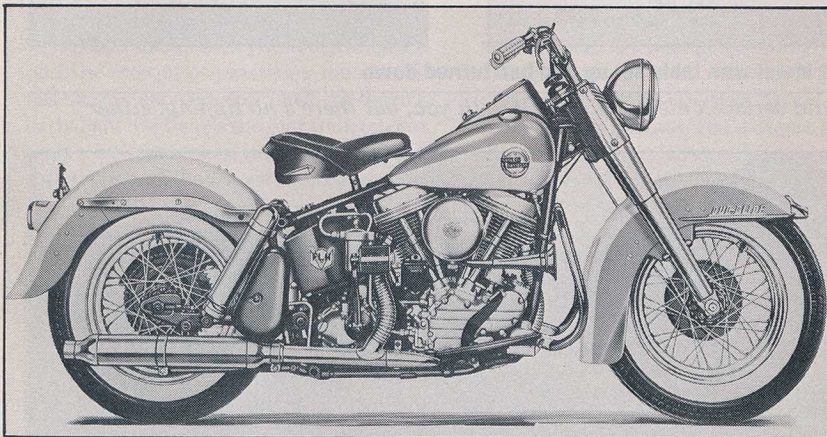
PHOTOGRAPHY © 1982 CHRIS EASTMAN



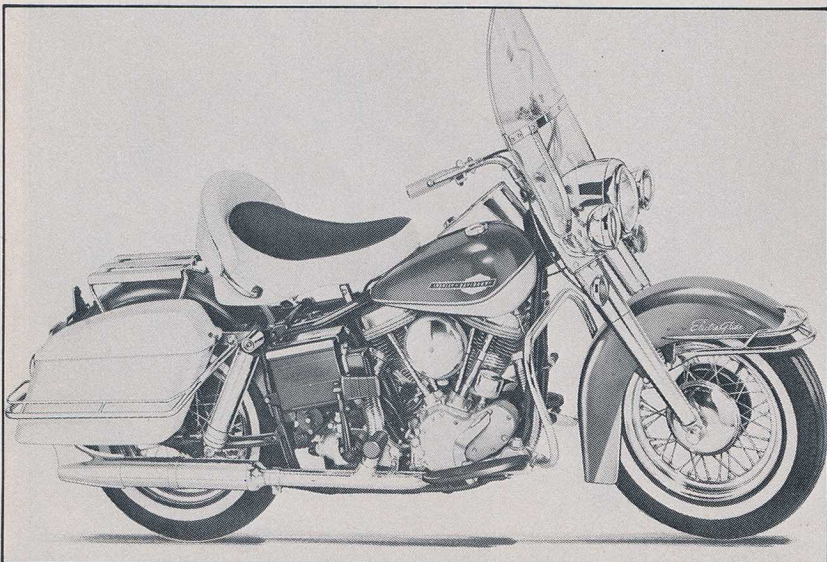
## FLH: 33 Years Along The Glide Path



**FLH history dates back to 1949, with 74-inch overhead-valve Hydra Glide**  
*Harley's hydraulic fork kept post-WWII riders in suspension.*



**Swingarm rear suspension turned Hydra Glide into Duo Glide in 1958**  
*After all, the rear end has to go over the same bumps as the front.*



**In 1965, Duo Glide traded in its tank badges to become Electra Glide**  
*Electric starting and a jump from 6 to 12 volts accompanied the change.*



through solid engine mounts to shake every extremity—yours and the bike's. Fiberglass quakes in its mounts, brightwork threatens to fly off in every direction and the scent of adventure is heavy in the air. Then, you mash the shifter into first. The FLHC drops into gear with the authority of a garage door slamming shut.

From the second that you let out the clutch, several things happen almost simultaneously. One, the strain on your left forearm is relieved (even though Harley did lessen the control effort with dogleg levers). Two, you're rolling forward, the giant-size power pulses pumping you down the road seemingly ten feet each time a cylinder fires. Three, the Classic's attitude changes from a 752-pound dead weight at a stop to one of surprising low-speed agility. Except for the need to splay your legs to avoid fouling the handlebar in extreme low-speed maneuvering, the FLHC is an easy around-town ride. And if hauling the Glide down from speed still takes a healthy handful of front brake, the effort is cut by a new 12-inch rear disc. Four, it's parade time again. Cars change lanes, sidling up next to you, as if to confirm whether or not you're part of some Presidential cavalcade.

That situation doesn't change as you hit the highway, and neither does the Classic's rugged individualist routine. The Good-years dance over pavement irregularities, the big vee hammers on and the jiggling visions in the mirrors might reflect any decade in the past few. By most standards, the Classic's touring manners are a little rough. Despite the expansive floorboards, the positioning of the foot controls limits where you can put your feet to one spot. You sit squarely upright in a coplike posture, and the jolts that work their way past the rear suspension provide thumps straight to the tailbone. Mechanical noise and vibration—those vibes that aren't damped out by the rubber balls supporting the floorboards—are simply along for the ride. Seat, tank, air-cleaner cover and handlebar all resonate to the Harley's inner thumpings, and the higher the revs, the greater the shake.

In cold description it sounds awful, and yet the sensations are somehow not wholly unpleasant. The Classic steers easily, and the mountains of torque make for an easy lope down the road, hour after hour. Shifting becomes a task that other, lesser people must attend to. The Classic's throttle re-



sponse is anything but crisp, but at the same time, the throttle requires little monitoring. You can tighten the throttle set screw and just watch the miles roll by. Not as high-tech as a Honda Aspencade, certainly, but rewarding for the long haul nonetheless. You're served a full course of road sensations, but they don't intrude; they're only graphic reminders of a time when motorcycles weren't designed to conceal their mechanical origins.

You still might count the FLHC as anachronistic, though, since there are other motorcycles—even those of much less displacement—that seem to make more sense for our time. Yet sense—and reason—are vastly overrated in choosing a motorcycle. Wanting is enough. And apparently a substantial number of Harley buyers want the Electra Glide; it's been one of Harley's best sellers for years. Those years have seen some powerful inducements away from the Electra Glide. Not only in the Gold Wing/KZ1300 connection, but in Harley's own Tour Glide. That the Electra Glide still

sells in the face of another Harley with one more speed, more shock adjustments and a rubber-mounted engine is a tale of survival. And in Touring America, land of more is better, that kind of loyalty should carry over to the Classic as well.

The \$7870 that Harley-Davidson will charge you to sample that survival might seem too steep when viewed through the eye of pure function. From that slightly jaundiced perspective, any number of bikes—some of them Harleys—will outrun the Classic. But not one of them can match it. The FLHC has capabilities beyond merely turning, stopping and accelerating. They might not show up on a specifications page, but they're as real as if they did. The Classic carries with it the romance of the open road, an aura that for most bikes dries up in the spotlight of pure performance.

But if you think that because other motorcycles boast better performance, the FLHC is an overrated, outdated collection of pig iron, look again. From the right angle it's unalloyed U.S. Steel. ●

## Ride Review

• Frankly, it's puzzling to me why the FLH—either this Classic version or the chain-drive Electra Glide—is still alive and kicking. Don't get me wrong; I honestly appreciate Harley's unique approach to over-the-road motorcycling, but another H-D, the FLT Tour Glide, does it so much better. The FLT is manifestly smoother, handles better, has much better tires, brakes, suspension, steering and instrumentation, offers over 50 pounds more load capacity and has a slicker-shifting five-speed gearbox—all for about the same price. Granted, there's a slightly stronger sense of nostalgia in the FLH's traditional lines, but not enough—in my mind's eye, at least—to compensate for its inability to actually *do* anything better than the FLT. And since I'm a big fan of bikes that do things well, I don't find the FLH appealing in the least.

—Paul Dean

• The 1982 FLH Classic gives its riders, or most of them anyway, a chance to take part in history. After all, when this bike, or the basis of it at any rate, was first introduced, most of us riding now were more interested in push scooters and little red wagons than we were in motorcycles. Hell, when it comes right down to it, many of today's riders weren't even *born* when the Hydra Glide first hit the streets.

So today's FLH Classic offers a unique opportunity—it allows a modern-day rider to experience a museum piece. Oh sure, there have been refinements; in 30-odd years of production there had to be. But the basic Hydra Glide, Duo Glide and Electra Glide still are there, not so deeply hidden under the surface. And for me, that's the problem. While it's fun to once in a while take a spin on a museum piece, it's not as much fun to own one.

—Joe Kress

• I'm not sure whether it was when the old guy in the pickup looked over and nodded his approval, or when the wide-eyed kid in the back of the station wagon flashed a thumbs-up, but somewhere on Interstate 5 I suddenly understood the Harley. I had thought of the FLH Classic as nothing more than an oil-dripping, rattly old relic. Its handling, brakes and bulk were just evil enough to allow me to dismiss its popularity as an unsolvable modern mystery. But out on 5, suddenly I realized I was on a piece of machinery with personality, not any plastic-dipped moto-clone. I was on something heavy, big and beefy, something with mechanical charisma—a *Harley*.

That moment passed, but the understanding remained. Understanding the FLH and liking it, though, are two different things. And for me, it's still a relic.

—Ron Lawson



**Classic's bike/rider silhouette is forthright, purposeful—and decidedly coplike**

*Sending onlookers to the side of the road to search for their licenses.*



## CYCLE GUIDE SPECIFICATIONS

## H-D Electra Glide Classic

# touring

**MANUFACTURER:** Harley-Davidson Motor Company, 3700 West Juneau Avenue, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53208

**SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE: \$7870**

## ENGINE

Type	four-stroke tandem vee-twin
Valve arrangement	pushrod-operated overhead valves
Bore and stroke	3.498 in. x 4.250 in. (88.8mm x 108.0mm)
Displacement	81.69 cu. in. (1338.6cc)
Compression ratio	7.4:1
Carburetion	one 38mm Keihin butterfly-type with accelerator pump
Air filter	disposable paper element
Lubrication	dry sump
Starting system	electric only
Ignition	transistorized breakerless
Charging system	12-volt; alternator, voltage regulator, rectifier

## DRIVETRAIN

Primary drive .....	double-row chain; 1.542:1 ratio
Clutch .....	wet, multi-plate
Final drive .....	Gates Polychain belt, (14mm pitch, 1.5-in. width); 2.121:1 (70/33) ratio

Gear	Internal gear ratio	Overall gear ratio	MPH per 1000 RPM
I	3.004	9.824	7.5
II	1.820	5.952	12.3
III	1.278	4.179	17.6
IV	1.000	3.270	22.4

## SUSPENSION/WHEEL TRAVEL

Front ..... 41mm stanchion tube diameter/  
4.3 in. (110mm)  
Rear ..... 3-way adjustable spring preload/  
2.9 in. (73mm)

## BRAKES

Front ..... single-action hydraulic caliper,  
10.0-in. (254mm) disc

Rear ..... single-action hydraulic caliper,  
12.0-in. (305mm) disc

## TIRES

Front	MT90-16T Goodyear Speedgrip
Rear	MT90-16T Goodyear Speedgrip

## DIMENSIONS AND CAPACITIES

Weight	752 lbs. (341kg)
Weight distribution	41.6% front, 58.4% rear
Gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR)	1180 lbs. (535kg)
Wheelbase	60.0 to 62.0 in. (1524 to 1575mm)
Seat height	28.3 in. (719mm)
Handlebar width	33.0 in. (839mm)
Footpeg height	10.5 in. (267mm)
Ground clearance	4.8 in. (122mm), at engine cradle
Steering head angle	30.1 degrees from vertical
Front wheel trail	5.75 in. (146mm)
Frame	cast-iron lugs on tubular mild steel, double front downtubes

Oil capacity	4.0 qt. (3.8l)
Fuel tank	steel, 4.8 gal. (18.2l), including 0.5 gal. (1.9l) reserve
Instrumentation	speedometer, odometer, tripmeter resettable to zero

## PERFORMANCE

Fuel consumption	32 to 42 mpg (14 to 18km/l)
Average fuel consumption	36 mpg (15km/l)
Range, maximum	154 to 202 miles (248 to 325km)
Range, reserve only	16 to 21 miles (26 to 34km)
Speedometer error, 30 mph indicated	30 mph actual
Speedometer error, 55 mph indicated	57 mph actual
Best 1/4-mile acceleration	15.467 sec., 82.04 mph (132 kph)
Top speed (calculated)	101 mph (163 kph)
Stopping distance from 30 mph	48 ft (15m)
Stopping distance from 60 mph	180 ft (55m)

**WARRANTY:** 6 months, 6000 miles

**AVAILABLE COLOR:** brown with black only

All weights and measurements are taken with machine unladen and fuel tank empty

