

The Ultimate Streetbike Magazine


February '87 £1.00

PLUS

World's Quickest
Ducati?

300mph Jammer
Custom (eh?)

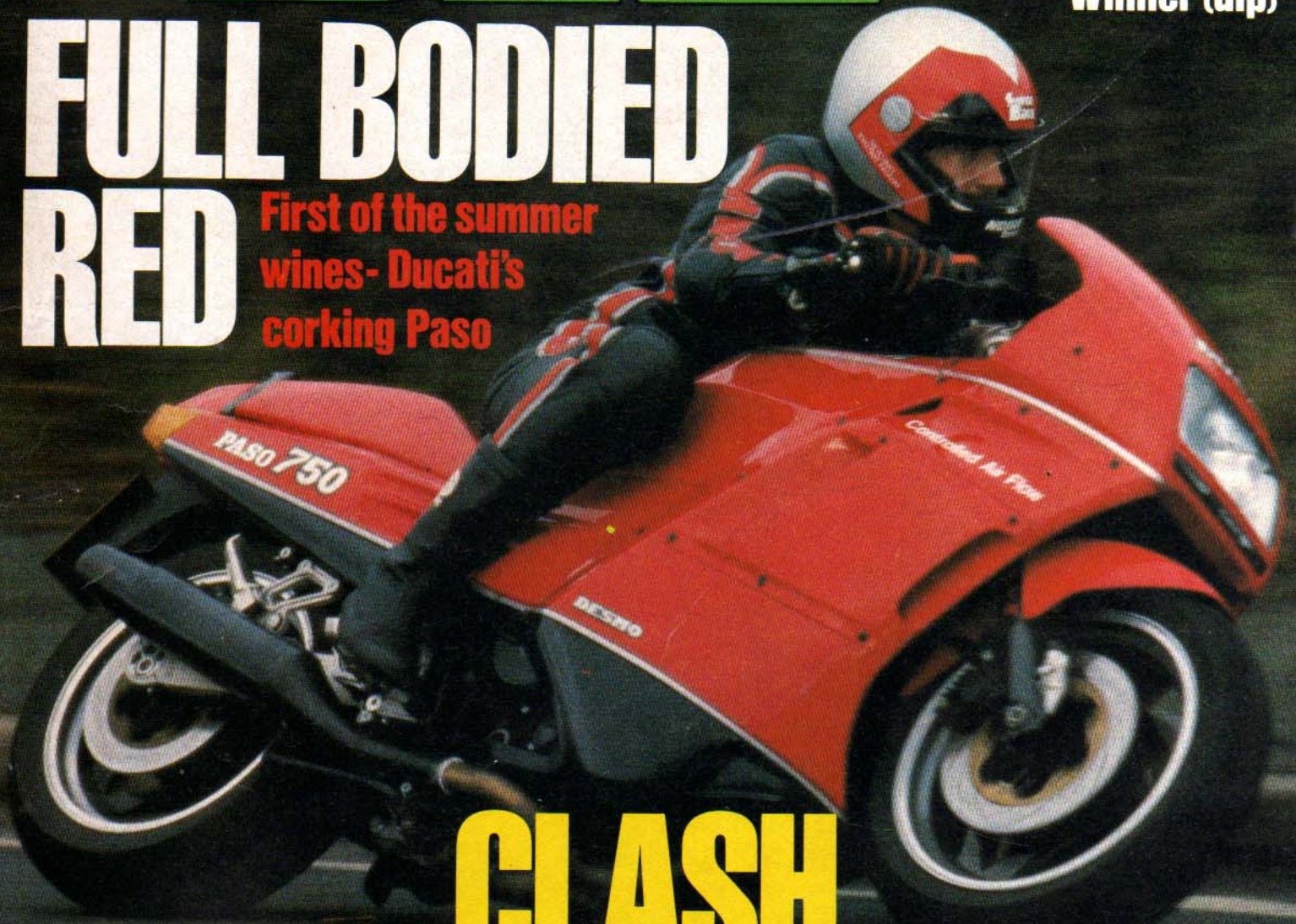
Triumph's Oriental
Winner (ulp)

 A Link House
Publication

SUPER BIKE

FULL BODIED RED

First of the summer
wines- Ducati's
corking Paso



CLASH OF THE HYPED ONES

Titanic Tests:
Honda CBR1000
v Yamaha FZR1000



PLUS Honda CBR600, Transalp, Yamaha FZX750, TZR250...we ride 'em all!



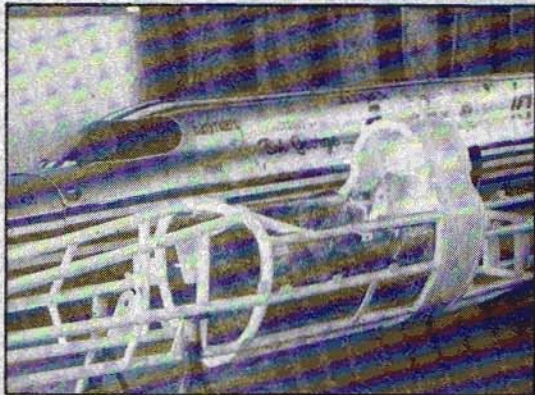
Jammin' at 276mph

The streamliner was poised at the zero mile marker, propped up on its side-mounted retractable skids and aimed at a hazy mountain 15 miles away on the horizon. The crew was working through a checklist at a relaxed but productive pace. The glaring Bonneville Salt Flats spread away from us in all directions, a barren reach so flat it seems to violate the Earth's curve, a vast saline arena where many men have risked their lives and fortunes. A few have won

On August 28, 1978, Don Vesco of Temecula, California, became the world's fastest man on two wheels, averaging 318.598 miles per hour in the twin Kawasaki KZ — 1000cc engined steamliner 'Lightning Bolt'. This is the story of a dedicated team of men determined to crack that record with the world's fastest Harley. By Peter Holthusen

fleeting fame here; others have died in the chase down the black line. Driver Dave Campos pulled on a helmet and folded himself down inside the cramped cockpit. The crew hovered around him—belting him in; attaching wrist restraints that would keep his arms inside the vehicle if it should happen to crash and roll; making sure he was carrying the small card that listed his whole medical history on microfilm; swinging the steering column down in place in front of him, and checking the clusters of instruments and levers. Because I was the only spectator invited by Mil Blair, President of Jammer Cycle Products, Inc, and felt obligated to do something, I gave Dave a thumbs-up sign, which he returned

SUPERBIKE



Main shot shows Jammer streamliner being unloaded at Bonneville's zero mile marker, speed-crazed driver Dave Campos looking pensive (colour pic). Chassis (left) is tube steel, similar to British "Penetrator"



with a smile. Then they buttoned the canopy down over him.

A crewman inserted the electric starter into the liner's flank. The two big Harley V-twins came alive with a roar that I could feel. We backed away. Dave twisted the throttle wide open and the liner slowly began its trip, held upright by the skids, toward the first timing light four miles down range. At 10mph Dave cranked the throttle wide open and the liner surged ahead. At 40mph he cut in one fuel pump. When his air speed indicator said 100mph he flipped on the second fuel pump, clicked the switch to retract the skids half way, took a new grip on the stubby handlebars and focused all his attention on guiding the liner.

He was accelerating alongside the black line — not directly on it because the oil residue that stained the salt could cause speed-stealing wheel-spin. He was only a speck on the horizon to us now, a delicate needle trailing a swirling vortex of

dust and salt in testament to the violence of his passage. When his tach was reading 5200rpm he shifted for the first and only time and retracted the skids all the way to get them out of the airstream. "There's nothing to do then but keep it cranked on and watch the mile markers go by," Dave had told me.

At well over 200mph the big yellow boards blur by quickly . . . two . . . three . . . four miles and the first timing light, still accelerating. He flashed through the photocell timing beam at the five mile marker.

Suddenly the cockpit was filled with the acrid fumes of nitromethane. Campos shut off at once and began the four mile deceleration phase, coughing and gagging and knowing what a single spark could do to him.

Through watery eyes he waited until the indicator was reading 200mph before yanking the lever that popped the Deist pyrotechnic high-speed braking chute, slamming him against his harness. He lowered the skids and began applying the

rear disc brake gingerly. He came to a stop just short of the nine mile marker, beyond which the salt gets soft and slippery with a considerable amount of surface brine. The chase truck skidded to a stop. Two crewmen leapt out and helped Campos climb out of the noxious cockpit, his eyes running and his throat constricting in tearing coughs. Within minutes the rest of the crew sped up in the team motor home.

While Campos regained his normal breathing, Jammer designer and builder Bob George examined his salt-encrusted creation. "Your speed was 239 over the kilo," he told the gasping driver.

The team had a long way to go to eclipse Vesco's 318mph record. Expenses for insurance, timing officials, parts and fuel were mounting and time was running out because Campos, a diesel mechanic for the city of Albuquerque, and several crewmen had to return home to their jobs soon. But they had all come a long way just to get this far, so they set to work readying the liner for another run.

For Bob George it all started as a dream that he'd carried around in his head for some time. Crewman Trav Goldsworth was working on his bike in Bob's Los Angeles garage

when that dream first took shape. "Bob drew a full-size profile of the liner on his garage wall," Trav recalls. "That was in October 1974. I just started hanging around to help put the thing together and here I am, two years later. It was fascinating to watch Bob work. He'd put some heavy classical music like Wagner on his stereo, turn up the volume and groove on it. He seemed to soak up power from it."

Bob tackled the tremendous project like a man obsessed. The complex tubular frame had to be designed and welded. The twin engines had to be entirely rebuilt — virtually redesigned — and souped up to deliver their utmost power.

To fashion the streamlined body shell, Bob, a patternmaker by trade, first put together a full-size wooden engineering mock-up, over which he laid up the fibreglass skin. He used a 33½ rpm record to lay out the shape of the nose. When a part couldn't be found, he simply made it. He built the wooden pattern, for example, for casting the water-cooled chromalloy cylinders. The project ate up thousands of dollars, of course, so when Bob exhausted his own savings, sponsorship had to be found. His single-minded devotion to building the world's fastest liner eventually



cost him his house and his job, but it also won him enough support from several companies to complete the project.

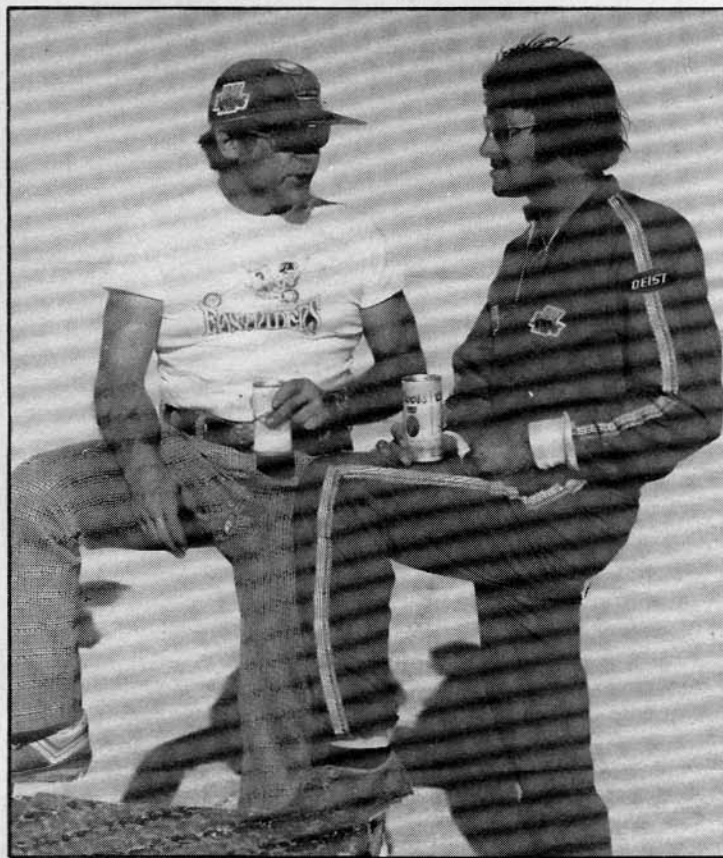
The major corporate sponsor was Jammer Cycle Products, of Valencia, California. The President of the company, Mil Blair, said, "Bob is one of those select few people in the world who could create almost anything, and he's a genius when it comes to motorcycles. He just needs a few people around him to help out and channel his energies."

The project slowly came together, and the *Jammer* ran for the first time in August 1976 at the Bonneville Speed Week. "It was a good handler from the start," Bob said.

But there were problems. At close to 150mph the skids folded, for one thing. Back in LA, Bob redesigned the system, but the team faced a long wait until the next Speed Week — or the vast expense of organising a solo attempt at Bonneville.

They got a break when Bill Fredrick of Chatsworth, California scheduled an October attempt on the World Land Speed Record with his 48,000 horsepower Success Motivation Institute-sponsored rocket car, the *SMI Motivator*, the prototype of the *Budweiser Rocket* car, the first land bound (ground effect) vehicle to surpass the speed of sound. Bill (for whose attempts I was acting as Project Manager) agreed to share his time on the salt with the *Jammer* crew.

Everything looked perfect. The liner was ready. Leo Payne, the first man to travel at a speed in excess of 200mph over the flying mile on an open motorcycle (with a 201 mph one-way run on a fuel Harley Sportster in 1969), had joined the crew as the tuner. Trav Goldsworth, Dennis Weitzel and Paul Larquier, all seasoned motorcycle mechanics, joined up to twist wrenches. Driver Dave Campos had the necessary nerve and the experience to pilot the liner to record speeds. The 34-year-old Campos had already carved out a reputation as a leading fuel drag racing driver. In 1972 at the Erwindale, California strip, he'd smoked to a 9.14 ET to take the NHRA record away from Joe Smith. In 1973 he'd turned a 9.06 ET in Fremont to win the AHRA record and at the 1976 Speed Week he'd clocked 231mph over the flying mile in a partial streamliner. Because the budget was really tight, like the other crew members he had



Jammer boss Mil Blair checks out Bonneville breeze in novel new way while Campos ponders Deist parachute sponsorship

agreed to work for expenses. "I'd like to make something on it, and if we break the record, I will," he said, "but if it's all just for fun, then that's the way it is."

The *Jammer* crew arrived at Bonneville on Monday, 11 October, hauling the liner on a custom trailer behind a big motor home loaned by Mil Blair. The rocket car team began having its own problems, mostly because the nine-mile course was so rough. Bill Fredrick sent me off to seek an alternative venue for their rocket car to run, and within a week, I'd returned to Bonneville with the news of an immense dry lake on the Alvord Desert in Oregon. Without delay, the rocket car team closed down and made their way to Oregon, so there was plenty of time for the *Jammer* to make its bid for Vesco's record.

Earl Flanders, the International FIM-AMA referee, agreed to let the liner make its first qualifying run at 175mph because it had already

turned 147mph during Speed Week. But for safety he restricted the team to 25mph increments for subsequent runs.

On Tuesday Dave Campos blasted through the traps at 179mph. The crew turned the liner around, repacked the drag chute and changed the plugs, and Campos smoked back to set a 199mph mark, but a fuel tank fitting failed, putting the liner out of action for the day.

On Wednesday the rains came, but all was not lost, as there was still plenty of time for the waters to evaporate. They did. On Thursday the *Jammer* crew returned and changed the carbs from gas to fuel. Campos clocked a blistering 239mph but on that run his cockpit filled with nitro fumes. He also reported that the liner was snaking somewhat when he popped the high-speed chute. A conference with Jim Deist resulted in a decision to lengthen the drag chute line by 10 feet when time permitted.

Meanwhile, they set up for one more run, during which a chain failed, over-revving the rear engine dangerously.

The crew spent Friday and Saturday repairing the chain and pampering the tired rear engine. To lengthen the chute line, they taped four layers of parachute strapping together and spliced it to the existing line to produce a total length of 33 feet, which created a problem of trying to stuff all of that laundry into a very small packing tube. They sawed off the front end of the tube and fitted on an extension made from an orange juice can. The modified tube accepted the line, chute and spring-loaded pilot chute perfectly. The team was ready again, and Earl Flanders had authorised a try at 280mph. After that run they would be free to assault the 318mph record and project objective.

With the rocket car team now in Oregon, the *Jammer* crew had the salt to themselves. But Campos and other members were due back at their jobs on Monday.

Sunday dawned clear and cold and windy and stayed that way all day. The liner was set up and aimed but the treacherous crosswinds refused to abate. Campos and the other crewmen called their bosses and extended their vacations.

On Monday Mil Blair and Earl Flanders went out on the course at dawn to take wind readings. They were still high, but seemed to be dropping. The crew set up again. Leo Payne mixed a special nitro recipe and they strapped Campos in tight. Trav Goldsworth and Paul Larquier boarded the chase truck and rode over the length of the prepared course. They pulled up 100 yards off the course at the nine mile marker, reported that they were in position, stared at the horizon and listened to their walkie-talkies.

"He's leaving the zero marker now," Flanders reported, "accelerating well." The seconds dragged by. The salt was silent and the horizon was empty. Goldsworth and Larquier could make out the eight mile marker, the small seven mile one and, if they squinted hard enough, the dot-size six mile yellow board. The seconds stretched into a minute.

"There he is," Trav yelled into the walkie-talkie. "We see him and he's moving like a bat outta hell." The



liner was a speck on the horizon, growing larger by the second and lifting a mile-long rooster tail of salt dust behind it. It was obviously a solid high-speed run. When Campos drew abreast of the eight mile marker he dumped the violet high-speed chute and hauled to a stop well before the nine mile marker. The entire *Jammer* entourage sped up ready to congratulate him, but the look on his face spelled more trouble. "We broke another chain," he said.

The weakened rear engine had also snapped its pushrods. Bob George set to work. A biker named Teach, leader of the Salt Lake City Barons MC, had joined the crew as a spectator. His chopper was parked not too far from the liner. "Ah, shit, go ahead," he told the liner crew. They quickly stripped the pushrods out of the chop and repaired the liner's ailing engine. But by the time that problem and several others had been resolved and the *Jammer* was once again ready, it was late in the day. They were cleared for the first real go at the record, but the Utah sun had slid behind the sharp mountains that rim the prehistoric lake. There wouldn't be time for the required two runs necessary to sew up the record officially.

It was Mil Blair's decision, since he was footing the bill for the insurance and the salt rental and the timers — a bill that totals a tad over \$1000 per day. "Let's make another run," he said. "We've got something to find out here."

As an observer, I thought it was a bad decision, because even if Campos were to make a record-breaking run, he would have to do it twice more the next day, once each way, in order to make it official. I should have known Mil better, because I'd seen him win \$450 at dice in Wendover the night before. He had studied a table, placed his bets and cashed in his chips. The whole thing had taken maybe 10 minutes at the most. He knew that there wouldn't be time for two runs that evening, but he was gambling that if the *Jammer* had two runs left in it, it should have three. If not, any defects would show up on the first run. The sky was tinged with shades of deep violet when Campos was belted in. "We should have put a headlight on this thing," he said. Leo filled the tank with an 88 per cent nitro mix and the liner took off on the all-out assault.

The liner was just too tired from all the qualifying runs. Sprockets were worn and chains were stretched and the valves in the rear engine were probably scorched from over-revving. Campos never even made the first timing light before another chain cut loose and the rear engine wound up tight. A sprocket shaft was sheared clean in two. The liner would need a tedious rebuild before it could run again.

Over supper that night in the Hideaway Club in Wendover, the crew tallied the score. In that next-to-last run, Campos had clocked 276mph through the kilometre — only 42mph shy of Vesco's record. It was a tremendous achievement for what had been, comparatively, a shoestring operation. Honda had spent over two million dollars on Jon S. McKibben's *Honda Hawk*, and their liner had gone airborne. In 1970 Harley had invested all of their expertise in another liner and had gone only 10mph faster. The *Jammer* had handled well. One hundred system components — skids, chutes, brakes, tyres, steering and so on — had performed flawlessly. The worn drive line was the big problem and Bob George was already deep in thought about that.

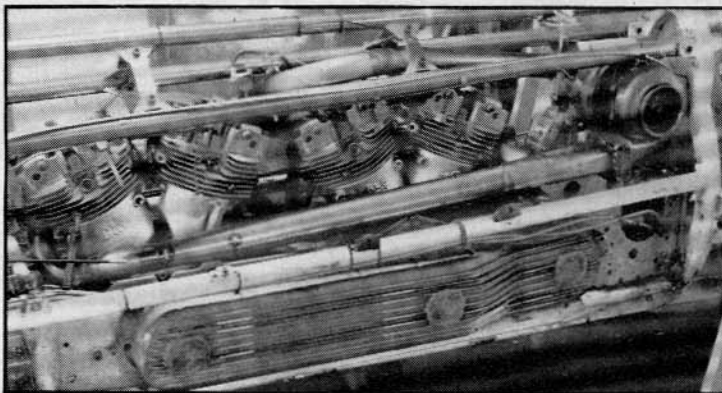
The very next morning Dave Campos headed back to his job in Albuquerque. "Guess I'll go home and rebuild my drag bike," he said. Mil Blair flew back to LA; Leo Payne climbed into his rust-frayed pickup and headed east. Bob George was the last to leave the little motel in Wendover. He slid behind the wheel of the big borrowed motor home with the stricken *Jammer* cradled and lashed on its trailer.

The *Jammer* had not fulfilled her objective, but then it is the nature of champions to make light of supernormal feats, not out of false modesty or guile, but out of an experience of ease in doing something beyond the ability of most people.

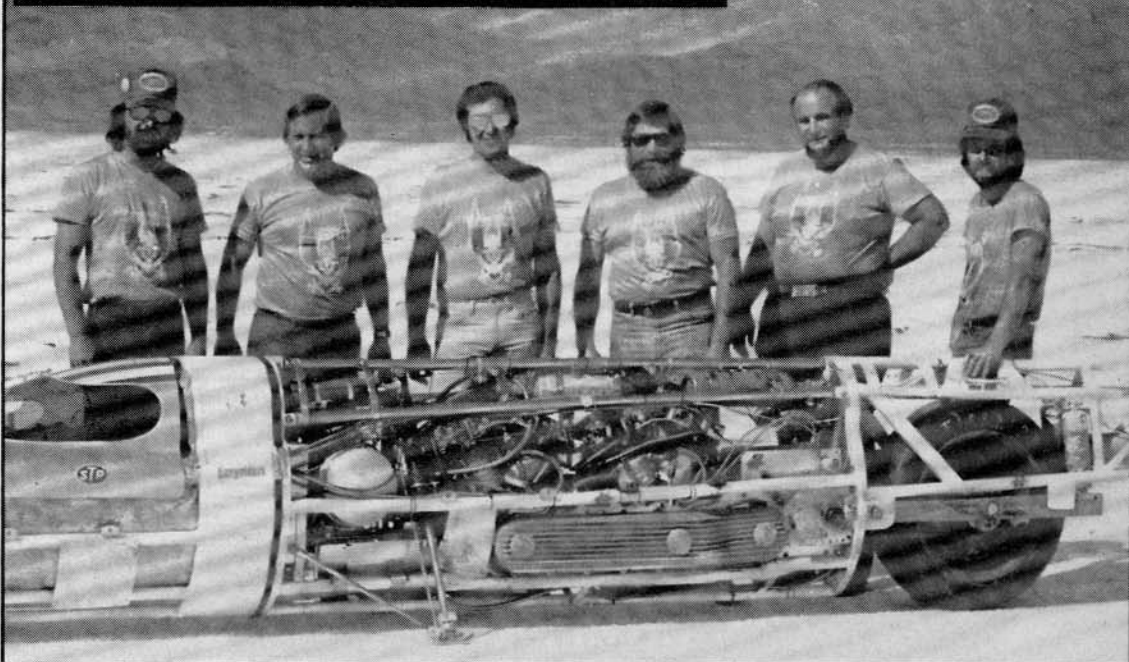
Five-time World Land Speed Record holder, Craig Breedlove, summed it up. "It is great to achieve a goal, but I think sometimes it's better to keep reaching for one. What people fail to see is that most of the fun of catching a dream is in getting there. Once you have your dream, you are back to square one."

Thus, for Mil Blair and his team, we may rest assured they will keep reaching for their goal . . . It may take time, but then it takes nature much longer to produce a diamond.

Peter Holthusen



Is this what they mean by Evolution? Each Harley motor displaces 1475cc, and zillions of chains (which kept snapping under the 450bhp strain). Engineering wouldn't win beauty prizes



JAMMER LSR STREAMLINER

\$100,000 (estimated)

PERFORMANCE

Top Speed — 276mph (so far)
Fuel Consumption — Hard Riding — less than 30mpg
— Cruising — not applicable

POWERTRAIN

Two Harley-Davidson shovelhead motors in tandem, liquid-cooled and running nitromethane/fuel mix. Capacity 2950cc (120mm S&S stroker cranks). Heavily modified by *Jammer Cycle Products*, California; spec includes experimental tapered pushrods, specially cast chromalloy cylinders by Bob George, S&S pistons, GME heads, Leinewebber 540 cams. Approx power output 450bhp. Induction by modified S&S carbs (extra large float bowls!) Oil capacity two gallons

TRANSMISSION

Crowerglide centrifugal mini-clutch, B&J Underdrive two speed gearbox. Max speeds at 6200rpm; 220mph (first), 330mph (second). Oil pressurised gearchange. Drivetrain by four double-row chains (between motors, motors to clutch, clutch to gearbox to rear wheel)

CHASSIS

Tubular frame in custom glass fibre skin, vee-bottomed to reduce ground effect turbulence. Retractable side-mounted hydraulic skids. Ground clearance: one inch. Weight 1800lbs. Frontal area 420 square inches. Fuel capacity: 5 gal main tank, 1 gal reserve. Tyres: Firestone slicks, 15in front, 18in rear (rear wheel on loan from Summers Brothers' 1965 LSR vehicle *Goldenrod*). Braking: one high-speed and two low-speed Deist parachutes, single rear disc brake