

Pistol Grip Schwinn

Idle hands are the devil's workshop, and you're looking at vivid green proof of that. Photographer extraordinaire, Tim Costello ends up spending a fair amount of time hanging around with longtime friend, MCACN promoter Bob Ashton, who might just happen to own half the odd vintage bicycles in the state of Michigan. Mr. Ashton has a special affinity for "Muscle Bikes;" you know, the chopper-looking bikes we all loved back in the late sixties and early seventies, which are still going strong today. Companies such as Ross, Raleigh, Iverson, Sears and especially Schwinn all built unique bikes for kids back in the day. Bob hooked Tim on to this passion, who now has a collection of his own, and you know it only takes a little nudge to get a snowball rolling. Earlier this year, Bob was over at Tim's place and saw the sad remains of a beat-up old Schwinn three-speed Stingray that Tim had rescued from a junk storage locker because it had some good parts on it. "What you gonna do with that frame?" was the simple question Bob asked that set everything into motion. They started talking about building a custom "never-made" Krate out of it, and the next thing you know, Tim was off at the local Painters Supply getting some Sublime Green paint mixed up. He painted the Schwinn's frame and chain guard green much earlier this year allowing it to cure, then just before MCACN the assembly began. He began digging through his parts piles to find a springer front end, the high-rise handlebars, and the ultra-rare original high-back "sissy bar" that was all the rage back then. The little front tire is a reproduction Raleigh red-line, but since they don't make repro 20" red-line rear slicks currently, Tim made his own by painting the redline into the groove in the repro slicks, and honestly, they look factory-made. The seat cover, as he's done before, was made using one of our lime green Covid MCG apocalypse face masks for the material, and those things do make fantastic vintage bicycle banana seat covers. Then, you get to the really

interesting part – it has a Pistol Grip shifter. Dan Brewer, of Brewers Performance, provided Tim with an original B-Body shifter, but as suspected, the heavily chromed steel shifter was too much for the lighter-weight bicycle shifter gear housing. So, taking his life in his own hands, Tim made a pattern off the original, got some 1/8" thick aluminum, and cut out a copy of it in aluminum. He polished that to a mirror like finish, and put on some repro plastic Pistol Grip handles from Brewers. Then he merged it with a yet to be unidentified aftermarket three-speed frame mount shifter and amazingly, the thing works really well! It may be a niche market, but Tim may be onto something by making Pistol Grip shifters for Krate bikes! As a final touch, he had a local sign company make up the graphics for the chain guard, and the white decal simply reads, "Schwinn Hurst Pistol Grip." So, it's the bicycle that Schwinn never built, but should have. When it debuted at MCACN, along with many of Bob's original bikes, Tim had a LOT of offers to buy it, and we were kinda surprised he didn't sell it, given some of the numbers thrown at him! Knowing Tim, we expect more of these customs in the coming years, so stay tuned. While he's usually got a camera in his hand, when he doesn't, as you can see, heaven only knows what's gonna happen next! Well done Tim! and thanks Bob Ashton for being a bad influence along with making life a lot more interesting! ✖



