

## Birth of a Street fighter

By Dion Dangzalan

Building a street fighter is about attitude: *your* attitude. Whether your hanging some bags for the daily commute, or you're blistering some soft rubber at a track day, your bike is a reflection of the spirit you put into that little engine. As bikers, we respond to the sharp revs and chassis capabilities of our machines. We are a different breed of human. Unlike car aficionados, the intricate machines that we mount everyday is connected to every little input we put into them. Our bikes become part of us, and with that, make each one of them *different*.

With the array of aftermarket goodies readily available to us, it's hard to resist making our rides better, cleaner... faster. Purchasing a race replica from the dealership is not enough. We want *our* style; *our* spirit. Like the old cliché of "dog owners who look like their dog", bikes tend to "look" like their respective owners. It's not uncommon to see a rider on a spray painted '86 Honda Hurricane to pull off his/her helmet revealing long, black dreadlocks. Or a rider on a late model shiny, green ZX6 with a polished frame to reveal a clean-shaven, spiked hair racer. We all put a little of ourselves into our rides, making them unique; and making our culture that much more interesting.

I stumbled upon the purchase of my SV650S out of a year of, what I call, *biker confusion*. After a bad high side with my old '99 GSX-R 750, I had to come to terms with whether or not I was going to stick with performance riding. I had recently gotten married, and I had a commitment to myself and to my wife to stay alive. So, with the money I had collected from my insurance money (my Gixxer was totaled) I decided it was time to hang my leathers and try a cruiser.

Bad idea.

Cruising was *not* for me. I've never been too much into the bad-boy-biker image. And that is what cruising is about: image. Which is, in my mind, *boring*. It was not enough for me to just ride to an event, park, sit around, and leave. After a bad case of jetting (my cruiser is *still* in the shop and waiting to be sold) I started scoping the market, and focused in on the mighty SV.

I've never really looked into buying a salvage title before. I have a decent backyard mechanic sensibility, and I'm pretty good with restoration. So when I went down to Fremont Cycle Salvage (Fremont, Ca.) and saw the cracked fairing, multi-colored SVS, I saw my next speed fix: "Project: Canyon Carver". Credit card in hand, I bought the tattered street thug for \$2990, rode it home, and started laying out my thoughts.

I had 10 days (of holiday vacation time) to complete my project with a limited budget. The only money I had was from returned Christmas gifts I had gotten from my wife (a Sony Playstation II and a Dremel Tool), and some petty cash I had for myself. So basically, I had to get my SV to look as good as I could for under \$300.

I wanted to create a street/track bike that wouldn't attract any extra attention. I also wanted to strip off and/or replace any extraneous stock parts that would add weight. With a time constraint and a limited budget, I jacked my new SV on a rear stand and started wrenching away.



Here's how my 2001 SVS looked when I first purchased it: three different colors, a 1" layer of mud and grease around the chain, cracked, dull fairings, and all the heavy, stock parts you can think of. It did, however have some perks to it.

Already installed was a 2wheeljunkie fender eliminator kit. Tires still looked good,

and the bike ran and steered perfect. There were minor scratches on the tank, but nothing I couldn't wet sand out.

I proceeded to strip the bike down to the bare minimum and give it a good scrubbin'. All the grease and mud stuck on the chain and rear sprocket came off with Engine Bright followed by some 409 All Purpose Cleaner. Levers, triple clamp, forks, exhaust can and other small metal parts got a good massage with Mother's Chrome Polish. 800 grit wet/dry sandpaper followed by rubbing compound, cleaner, paint polish, and wax restored the tank and rear fairing to its original shine. I re-checked all the moving parts and lubed as necessary, and swapped out the old oil and filter for some fresh stuff.



The front fender and nose fairing had scratches and imperfections, but nothing beyond a file and some sand paper wouldn't fix. The deeper scratches were smoothed out with a fine file and finished with some sanding. I used touch rather than sight to see if it was right or not. Once smoothed over, I did an overall sanding and applied 3 coats of white primer (white was used as an

undercoating to accommodate the yellow I had lined up for these parts).

...And here they are with the final yellow coat. Nothing fancy here, just some Krylon paint and patience. Later I decided to shorten the front fender and paint it flat black, as you will see in the final pics.



The side fairings were a little more work. Since the left side was so severely cracked, I had to go down and purchase plastic weld at the local Kragens. By working fast and clamping the two cracked sides together, I was able to successfully weld the pieces together. Once dried, the excess glue was filed, sanded to touch (some areas needed Bondo), and primed. 6 coats of Krylon Ultra-Flat Black were applied to



each side, and Lockhart Phillips side markers were installed as shown, using the stock quick-connect wiring.



While I waited for the paint to dry (wait 3 days to ensure hardness), it was time to install the other parts I had bought. This is a laser cut, gold anodized chain guard bought from Ken Visbeck via SVrider. Ken and I

live about 20 minutes away from each other, so it was a convenient purchase to brighten up the swingarm. As you can see in this picture, I also installed a fresh set of pegs to add a fresh look.



The tail was given new turn signals to match the front, and the *very heavy* rear passenger grab rail was removed. The passenger pegs were also tossed (I had to leave the right side on as an exhaust bracket).



**SV650 a: Before Carbon Tank Bra**



**SV650 b: After Carbon Tank Bra**

Lockhart Phillips makes a carbon-look sticker paper that you can buy for about \$15. Instead of getting a tank bra, I decided to design and apply my own. This was harder than it looks, as I had to apply this using a spray bottle method. This seems to be the best way to eliminate air bubbles and get a smooth application.



Here is the bike in its completed form with the chopped front fender. I've ridden it to Fremont Cycle Salvage a few times, and the owner still asks me how I was able to get it to look the way it does for so little money. A little patience, being creative with your budget, and some general restoration knowledge will get you a bike that is *you*. Since completion, I've purchased rearsset plates from [hardracing.com](http://hardracing.com) and an aluminum exhaust bracket from R&R Racing. I'm schedule to bring this bike to the track in February, and I am equally as excited to get my



little Street Fighter wailing in the turns as I have designed it to do. As motorcyclists, we are destined to add our personality to our rides. It is in our nature. Let this instinct get the best of you. Next time you are in the market for a new ride, step back and take an alternate approach to your purchase. You'd be surprised with what you can come up with.

**Budget Breakdown For "Project: Canyon Carver"**

1. Lockhart Phillips Carbon Fiber Look Sticker	\$ 13.50
2. Hi-Flo Oil Filter	5.99
3. LP Front Side Markers	18.50
4. Suzuki After Market Pegs	34.95
5. LP Rear Side Markers	18.50
6. Anodized Laser Cut Chain Guard	30.00
7. Hardracing Rearset Plates	50.00
8. R&R Aluminum Exhaust Bracket	30.00
9. Krylon Paint (approx. 6 cans)	30.00
10. Wet Dry Sandpaper	10.00

**TOTAL      \$241.44**