

# Trials Tales

## Gadgets

By Greg Cramond

Blokes and their gadgets. We acquire gadgets regardless of the hobby or pastime concerned. Take fishing for example. We all know that a handline is all that is required to catch a feed of fish.... But of course, just catching fish is not enough. In very short order a bloke taking up fishing will have a room full of graphite composite fishing rods and a tacklebox the size of a pantech.



Yeh, baby.

fellow with the balance of a drunken sailor a brand new bike and he's thinking of "improving" it before it hits the trailer.

Now I am aware of the dearth of after-market hot up parts specifically for trials bikes, but that does not stop us adding what's available and making a few up for ourselves. "Bling" is popular, as it's relatively inexpensive and can make the bike look even smarter than it already is. But why some fellows feel the need to pile on the bling ending up with a bike which looks like it's styling cues come from the decor of a Venetian bordello (*whatever that looks like*) says something about their latent personalities. Us normal owners keep our decisions simple like whether or not a silver clutch lever gives better Feng Shui than a black one.

Some bling is actually useful. I recently rode a bike that had retro-fitted space-age footpegs, which really helped my riding. I know this because I fell three times instead of the usual six. Too bad that these particular space-age footpegs are priced comparable to an average down payment on a 5 bedroom/ 3 bathroom bungalow in a leafy Eastern suburb.

Well I guess I haven't answered the question about blokes, tinkering and gadgets. Why must we take a perfectly good marvel of modern engineering and tinker with it? Perhaps we're never satisfied that someone other than ourselves could possibly know more about the intricate workings of the internal combustion engine or even the style inspired by Paris's best? Do we need to show our superiority by tweaking, "improving" and imparting the depth of our own hard fought knowledge? Little matter that most of that knowledge comes from three decades ago, when we built the best lawnmower-engined, primer-red go-kart on the street.

In short, we know best and I have a shed full of improvements to prove that fact.

Now pass the screwdriver...

Why do guys collect gadgets like a dog collects fleas at a doggy boarding house?

For a start I think we just like to collect stuff.

Further, it is because as men we're never quite satisfied to "just catch a fish", we need to tinker or at least apply a bit of our own engineering "skill" to something that may in fact had the best mechanical minds of Spain or Japan applied to it for some considerable time. These mechanical marvels that are modern trials bikes, are, as we are told at the peak of their development, with svelte styling from the best Europe has to offer.

We all well know that to get the best performance from a modern box-stock trials bike, one needs to be whippet-thin, have the reflexes of a cat and the mindless bravery of a rhino. But give a middle-aged, over-weight



Trash heap or treasure trove?