

TECH BY CHRIS MAIDA

# DUAL THUNDERHEADERS

Just the exhaust for a hot rod bagger

**Thunder  
Alley**  
HIGH  
PERFORMANCE  
HARLEYS

**A**S MANY A HOTSHOT SOFTAIL RIDER HAS discovered, not all baggers are Geezer Glides. Many a full dresser — definitely a term from back in the day — has a hopped-up mill resting inconspicuously between its frame rails. Usually, a 2-into-1 performance exhaust system gives it away, and sometimes not. Many Touring model owners prefer the balanced look of two mufflers hanging below their saddlebags. To that end, Rich Products, the makers of the solidly performing Thunderheader systems found on many hi-po Softails and customs, designed its True Dual Thunder exhaust system (#1030/\$895) for bagger owners that want one pipe and muffler system per cylinder.

But that's not the only cool feature of True Dual Thunders. This setup differs from many others in that you reuse some of the stock exhaust components. (So don't toss your old exhaust when you decide to install this setup.) In fact, you can't install this exhaust using only the parts supplied by Rich Products. You need the stock pipe clamps, front header pipe, and some of the stock heat shields and

hardware. The idea here is, since these are good parts to start with, reusing them helps keep the cost of the new system down. Just the thing for someone who is looking to increase engine power, but would rather put cash into the engine than the pipes.

Ready for a few tips and tricks



**2** After removing the stock retaining ring and exhaust clamp from the stock system, slip them over the end of the Thunderheader rear header as shown. No need for pliers here!



**3** Don't forget to change the rear exhaust gasket. You may also want to remove the front pipe to do the front gasket, even though you don't have to disturb the front pipe to do this installation.



**1** Our opening shot shows our 2000 Ultra Classic up on a Handy Air Lift with the exhaust system removed; that is, except for the front header pipe, which is one of the stock parts that gets reused.



**4** Ray now loosely attaches the short chrome rear header pipe, which Rich Products calls a rear pipe adapter, to the rear head using the two stock 1/2" nuts.



**5** The stock rear header pipe clamp is then reinstalled onto the stock bracket using the stock hardware and a 1/2" socket. Only loosely install it for now. Position it so it's against the header pipe.



**6** After reinstalling the stock clamp onto the stock left intermediate (or extension) pipe, the pipe is slipped over the rear header pipe and the pipe clamp goes onto the bracket clamp. Loosely tighten the 9/16" nut.



**7** After slipping the stock pipe clamp onto the end of the Rich Products-supplied front pipe extension, Ray installs the pipe onto the front header pipe and loosely tightens the 9/16" nut.



**8** After slipping a stock pipe clamp over the end of the new right-side muffler, Ray slips it onto the connector pipe and loosely installs the stock rear muffler clamp using the stock hardware.

that'll help the job go easier and keep you from doing some tasks twice? Before starting the installation, put a light coat of a nonflammable lubricant, such as WD-40, inside all slip-fit connections and then make sure all the pipes will fit together as planned. Definitely put some lubricant on all hardware threads, especially the head nuts.

When reinstalling the stock clamp onto the stock left intermediate connector pipe, make sure the flat side on this clamp, which is made so the tang of the bracket clamp can slip into it, is positioned so it aligns with the clamp's tang.

Once all the pipes and clamps are loosely installed onto the bike, you can tighten the whole system. However, as it is with all exhausts, you must start at the heads and work your way back along both sides of the bike. Do not force any parts together. For example, if you force the muffler to sit against its bracket, you put it in a preloaded condition. You must not preload parts or they will crack later. Instead of pulling them together, put some shims (washers) between the parts to close the gap.

Reinstall the saddlebags to check the mufflers' symmetry, meaning their height in relation to the bags and how far the pipes stick out from the back of the bike.

When assembling the Rich Products-supplied rear header heat shield/stock crossover heat shield combo, be sure to position the clamp nuts so you can get to them easily when the combo is on the rear header pipe.

One more thing: Don't have the pipes internally coated, since this will void your Rich Products warranty.

As for who did the installation you'll watch in these photos, we went to see our buddies at CT V-Twin Customs, where resident bike builder Ray Dziadyk, who is also building my 155" bike, did the wrench spinning.



**9** Ray does the same for the left Thunderheader muffler. He then loosely tightens down the stock rear muffler clamp hardware using two 1/2" wrenches, while the pipe clamp needs a 9/16".



**10** Ray can now tighten up the whole system, starting at the heads and working his way back along both sides of the bike. Do not force any parts together. A preloaded part will crack later.



**11** After wiping down the pipes to get all the fingerprints off, Ray preps the Rich Products rear header heat shield by installing the clamps and attaching it to the stock crossover shield.



**12** Ray then installs the Rich-supplied rear header heat shield/stock crossover shield combo onto the rear header using a screwdriver or 5/16" socket. Just snug the clamps down for now.



**13** After slipping the clamps into the inside of each heat shield, Ray installs the stock rear connector pipe's heat shield up tight against the header shield. Just snug the clamps for now.



**14** To finish off the rear cylinder's exhaust, the Rich-supplied muffler heat shield is loosely installed with the forward end just over the rear end of the rear connector pipe's heat shield.



**15** Ray can now reinstall the stock front header heat shield using a flat-bladed screwdriver or 5/16" socket. Be sure to just snug all the clamps down for now.



**16** The other stock heat shield for the front header pipe goes on next, just like the other shields: loosely, using a 5/16" socket.



**17** The Rich-supplied front pipe extension heat shield gets the same treatment, with the Rich right muffler shield following suit. Ray can now go back and tighten all the heat shield clamps.



**18** Here's the left side of the bike with the new Thunderheader system installed.



**19** Here's how the right side looks. And this exhaust system sounds as good as it shows.  
AIM

## SOURCES

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