

1952 K-model gas tank

I wanted another tank to hack on.

I already bought a 1954 tank for my rolling chassis, but having one to experiment on is better.

This tank came up cheap. It is missing the badge mounts, so no way to tell if it is 1952 or 1954.

At first I thought about cutting the tank in half right across it, so I can pound out the dents. I considered grinding the bottom flange off, but that runs into problems when you get to the front and rear brackets.

So now I am thinking to cut it open about three inches above the bottom. This will remove the whole top of the tank.



Then I can pound out the dents, but better yet, tin the whole bottom of the tank with lead. That will keep it from leaking for the next 50 years.

Don't even start on me about Kreem and that POR stuff. Painting the inside of the tank with epoxy paint is as hopeless as slathering Bondo on the dents outside. You want your fuel tank to be metal, not plastic. Henry Ford was onto something when he said "Plastic is for combs and toothbrushes".



This is a K-model tank. If it was a Sportster tank the bottom would have a big recess to clear the heads.





Here is a genuine authentic 1952-1953 K-model tank that sold on eBay for \$976. The 1952-53 K-model tank has trim strips that mount on either side of the badge. In 1954-56 they took them off and just used the badge for ornamentation.



Here is the left side of the K-model tank that went for 1000 dollars. Pretty nice and it has the strip mounts. A lot of guy ground these off. like in the red tank I bought.



Best of all, the 1000 dollar eBay tank came with the badges. These are all available aftermarket Harley themselves have re-issued the name badge. So maybe you think a grand is an OK price.



But look at this hack job. Some one has cut the bottom of the tank and recessed it so it fits on a Sportster. Now maybe this is just me, but I would rather just weld back the tabs on the red tank I bought. Heck, you can use double-face foam tape to hold the badges and trim on. V-Twin makes a repop of the great tank now, and that is my plan-C, if I can't get one of my two tanks working. With this tank you will be in constant worry that the crappy welds will spring a leak.



Oh, in case you want to see how a real Sportster tank is made, here is a picture of the bottom of a 1957 Sportster tank.

Here is the table as I buy parts for this project.

| Date | Descript | Cost | Shipping | Total |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|-------------|-----------------|--------------|
| Thursday, March 15, 2012 | Sprocket cover | \$189.49 | \$11.35 | \$200.84 |
| Wed, March 21, 2012 | Engine, uncrating | \$2,500.00 | \$464.56 | \$2,964.56 |
| Friday, March 23, 2012 | Rolling chassis, uncrating | \$3,500.00 | \$669.00 | \$4,169.00 |
| Sunday, March 25, 2012 | Parts manual | \$30.00 | \$0.00 | \$30.00 |
| Sunday, March 25, 2012 | Gas tank | \$500.00 | \$25.00 | \$525.00 |
| Tuesday, March 27, 2012 | Top motor mount | \$56.00 | \$12.00 | \$68.00 |
| Thursday, March 29, 2012 | Shock covers, top | \$102.50 | \$6.50 | \$109.00 |
| Sunday, April 01, 2012 | Battery carrier | \$39.99 | \$5.30 | \$45.29 |
| Wed, April 04, 2012 | Air filter backing plate | \$77.55 | \$15.00 | \$92.55 |
| Saturday, April 07, 2012 | Gas tank #2 | \$168.50 | \$28.00 | \$196.50 |
| | | \$7,164.03 | \$1,236.71 | \$8,400.74 |