

Left Coast Lightweight

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Story by Linda Wilshire
Photos by Yve Assad

Based in Glendale, CA, and owned by Charlie O'Hanlon, Charlie's Place is a well-known vintage Honda shop, specialising in the repair, restoration, customisation and upgrade of classic street bikes from the '60s and '70s – Dreams, Superhawks, Scramblers and Supersports – as well as building cafe racers, like the neat Honda CB160 showcased on these pages. Their knowledgeable staff are highly trained in the specifics of keeping your bike running at its best. Charlie has been in the business since 1993, and his passion for old Hondas knows no bounds.

Motorcycles and Charlie go way back to the early '90s in San Francisco, but his first 'gig' was actually before that. During a spring and summer in East Berlin, he worked on '60s to mid-1970s MZ's, an East German motorcycle that (though he did not know this at the time) influenced early '60s Japanese motorcycles both aesthetically and mechanically. He also tinkered with very old Jawas which had similarities in their design.

Upon returning to SF, Charlie opened his first official business with his brother, working on all marques, but primarily 1970s and '80s Japanese bikes. It was during this time

that he worked on a 305cc Honda Superhawk for the first time. He recalled, "I was immediately blown away by the design and look. I also decided that there was something very special about older Hondas, and began reading up on Soichiro Honda, the history of the man and his company. It was a fascinating story. Not only did Honda revolutionise his own industry, but it could be argued that he revolutionised international business as a whole. He was an unprecedented success in terms of taking his product abroad and creating a global market and enthusiasm for a relatively non-mainstream commodity. In my opinion, he also made the best overall product in that marketplace. Much has been speculated and written about that, and there are contentious arguments on both sides. Suffice to say that what I took from it was that the man had a serious integrity and belief in his motorcycles, and was determined to build bikes that would last for many years. And he did. I also personally developed a serious respect for the bikes, with a few exceptions of course."

Built for a customer back in 2013-14, the CB160 featured was bone stock, severely neglected and rusted with a seized motor. The customer originally asked Charlie to recreate a bike from a picture of one that had been recently modified. Up for the chal-