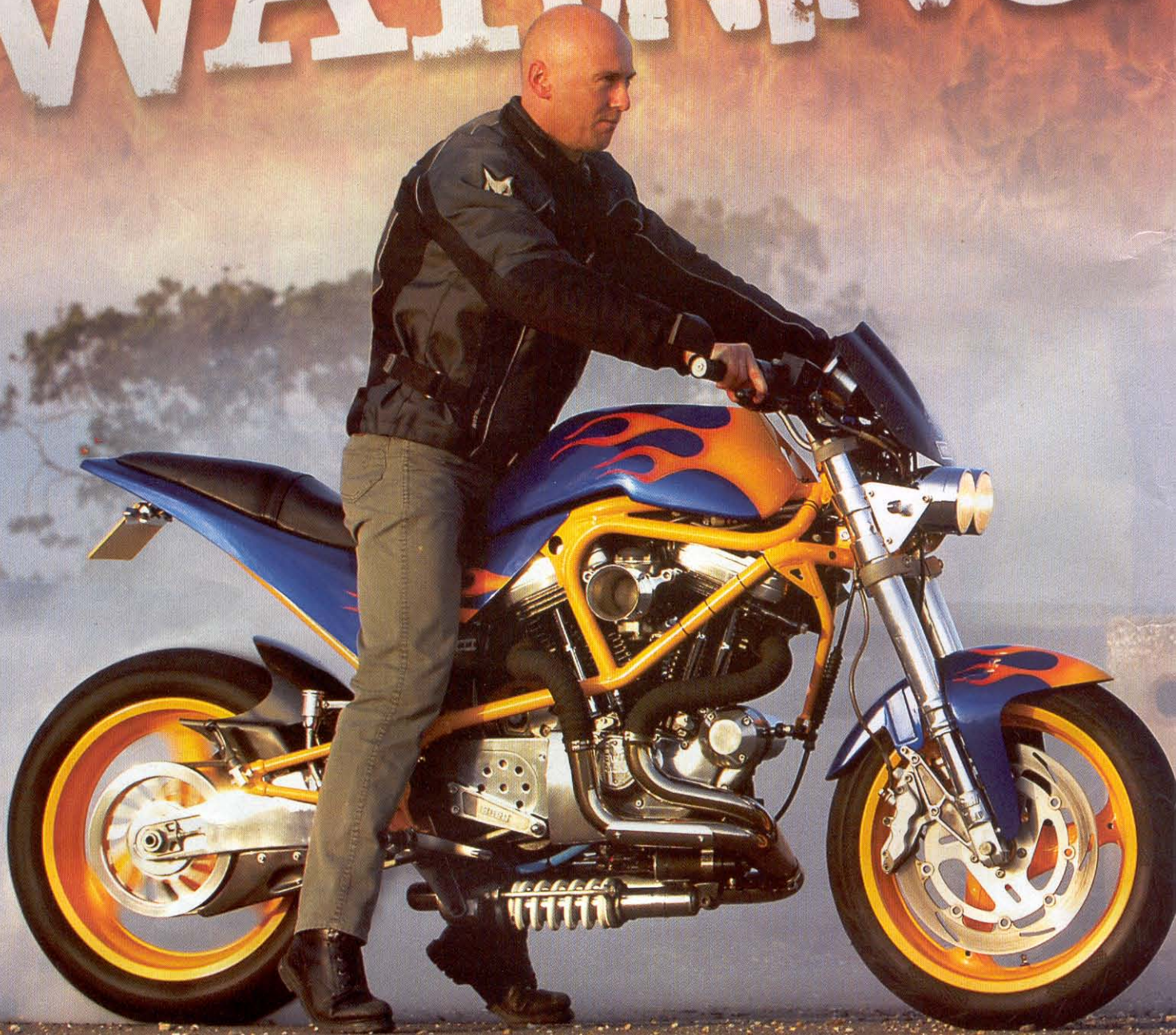


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STORM WARNING



It's often said that Britain doesn't have a climate, only weather. As unpredictable as a woman's mood swings, Albion is constantly battered by pressure drops, occluded fronts and Sian Lloyd's isobars.



Whatever continental America gets, we're sure to follow; from piss-poor weather to slammed sportsbikes with nine-foot swingarms. And **Streetfighters** is a bit like that: a barometer to prevailing trends that blow in like so many Zephyrs (thanks for nothing, Kawasaki...). So when Eric Buell turned his face against the tsunami of conventional thinking and dropped a H*r*t*y engine into a sportily handling chassis, it was surely only a matter of time before the idea caught the jet-stream over to Blighty and started registering on the rain-gauges of British enthusiasts. ↵





➤ With a brace of booming V-twins that announce their arrival like the rumble of rolling thunder, Chris and Mick "Always Take The Weather With Them" (sic). Converted to the church of Buell-dom by their love of Big Twins (fnar, fnar), Mr Eric's fine handling sports offerings were the only way to go since neither liked the thought of the motor in its original Milwaukee framework. Chris's glowering-cloud blue and electric-storm yellow bike started out as a cheap as water-damaged chips 1997 S3T Thunderbolt. But because it was uglier than a New Orleans disaster policy he swapped all the bodywork to sleeker S1 Lightning spec. Changing the Thunderbolt to Lightning was indeed very, very frightening because the frames have more differences than a hurricane and a tornado (one's death from above that'll rip yer bricks to shit; the other's a fighter/bomber). Thankfully Chris had a mate with a spare S1 (Lightning) frame just hanging around, so he could gauge the differences before taking a gas-axe to his S3 variant. Mick at ProMod Engineering was tasked with the execution, and soon the original rear tubing was lying on the floor looking up at a nice new rear loop to accommodate the amended bodywork.

While the frame was being worked on Chris wisely turned his attention





to the eye of the storm: the engine. A quick tear-down and check revealed valves with worse seating than a Vauxhall Conference grandstand, so a regrind was in order to prevent further hemi-head pressure drop. And while they were out of the frame the barrels and cases got a coating as black as night, pierced like forked lightning by chrome-plated pushrod tubes from America. Polished outer cases reflect any sun that dares to peek out from behind the inclement clouds, and complete the contrast. By now the frame and forks were back from Thornix Coatings in Nottingham wearing a shade of yellow that'd put a coward to shame, while the bodywork was despatched to Chris's mate Neil at Race Paint UK for an understated fire (and brimstone) design.

Rebuilt from the ground up with stainless fasteners and all-new bearings, the Thunderbolt/Lightning just needed a little extra something to inject the equivalent of golfball-sized hailstones. Raining liquid NOS into the foggers, a Tim Blakemore Racing nitrous kit was deemed just sufficient to add a 25bhp kick to the proceedings and hangs off beautifully machined brackets on a left-side frame rail. Geronimo!



SPEC

CHRIS' THUNDERBOLT:

ORIGINAL MAKE & MODEL: Buell S3T Thunderbolt

ENGINE: Buell Thunderbolt with all stock internals, velocity stack, Taylor HT leads, Vance & Hines exhaust can on standard header pipes (half wrapped), 25bhp hit NOS nitrous oxide system, carbon fibre lower belt cover.

FRAME: 1997 S3T Thunderbolt frame with new rear loop by Mick at ProMod Engineering (01159 440327, pro-mod-engineering.co.uk), LSL rearsets.

FRONT END: Standard wheel, disc, caliper, forks, yokes, master cylinders, clocks & switchgear, Renthal bars, Goodridge brake lines, home made aluminium clock surround.

REAR END: Standard swingarm, wheel, disc & caliper, WP shock, Rizoma rear pulley.

BODYWORK: Standard front mudguard, carbon fibre XB fairing with Scroungers MCC sticker (!), early S1 Lightning petrol tank, S1 Lightning twin tail tailpiece, cut-

down carbon fibre rear hugger.

ELECTRICS: Standard loom, twin headlight, mini LED rear light & indicators.

Paint: Blue/yellow flames by Neil at Race Paint UK (01773 533072), powder-coated wheels & frame.

POLISHING: Forks, cam cover, primary cover, clock surround, rocker covers, headlight brackets, nitrous bottle bracket, swingarm all by owner.

ENGINEERING: Clock surround, nitrous bottle holder & headlight brackets by owner & Rush, Oberon pillion footpegs and rear brake fluid reservoir.

SOUNDTRACK: Classic rock.

THANKS TO: "Neil at Race Paint UK for the paint job; Rush, for letting me use his workshop and materials and giving me a hand with various brackets; new old mate Gav for helping me fit the NOS kit; Mick at ProMod Engineering for altering the frame; eBay for loads of stuff; Chris for lending me a frame."





Chris and Mick's Buells are as different and individual as sunlight on a rainy day, or snow in June.





➔ By contrast, Mick Jackson's bike started off as a damaged engine from a 2001 Buell Cyclone, together with a big pile of bits and an unregistered Cyclone frame. The initial idea was to conjure up a storm by just rebuilding the standard Cyclone and trusting he wouldn't be issued with a dreaded Q plate. But then Mick got offered a stock S1 Lightning frame with V5 logbook, so the original bits were flogged and the search began for S1 bodywork. Guess that makes it an anti-Cyclone, right?

Unfortunately, the only set of forks left over from the Cyclonic pile of bits were more knotted than a twister so had to be ditched. Ducati came to the rescue however, with a set of Monster legs (!) donated by his mate Richard. Mick then only had to make his own yokes from billet with the same offset as a standard Buell, but with the same distance between fork centres as the Ducati, and the front end slipped in a treat. As luck would have it, the Ducati front wheel was a doppelganger for the rear Buell rim since both hoops were made by Marchesini. A handy side-effect of this swap was better handling, since the stock Buell WP forks had prebound and reload soggy than Toll Bar after a touch of summer floodin'. So in one fell swoop Mick had solved the bent forks problem and upgraded his braking potential by the power of two. Two birds, one stone.

Detail improvements include a home-made rear caliper mount so a twin-piston Ducati Brembo unit to match the front set-up could be used, a cut-down timing cover and braided lines and fittings from Speedflow. Since the motor had had a hole the size of Michael Fish's head welded shut in the front of the crankcases, Mick thought it prudent to completely rebuild the engine to ensure oil tightness and all-round correctness. Pity the piscine weather gonk wasn't so thorough in his 1987 prediction of storm non-arrival... Once again, Neil at Racepaint UK took care of paintwork duties on the bodywork panels, which were all sourced from appeals on the UK Buell Enthusiasts Group website. Further inter-web ether trawling netted a Mikuni carb from American eBay, and an S&S filter simply because he likes the look of them, and they're a break from the norm. Mick reports that the end result is more fun than stormrunning, but that "the seat's a bit hard." Can't have everything I suppose.

Although initially looking like a "Spot the Difference" competition for the terminally thick, Chris and Mick's Buells are as different and individual as sunlight on a rainy day, or snow in June. However, they really *do* prove Lightning strikes twice.



SPEC

MICK'S LIGHTNING:

ORIGINAL MAKE & MODEL: Buell S1 Lightning.

ENGINE: Standard Lightning crank, clutch, gearbox & ignition, Thunderstorm heads, barrels & cam, Mikuni HSR carb, S&S teardrop air filter, standard headers with ProMod Engineering can.

FRAME: 1998 Buell S1 with bracing tube added as per later models.

FRONT END: Ducati Monster S forks, one-off billet yokes & handlebar clamp by ProMod Engineering, Ducati Monster wheel, calipers, discs & brake master cylinder, Goodridge brake lines, standard Buell bars & switchgear.

REAR END: Polished & deluged Buell X1 swingarm, standard shock, wheel & disc, Ducati Brembo caliper on Pro Mod Engineering caliper bracket.

BODYWORK: Ducati carbon fibre front mudguard, Buell flyscreen, standard small Buell tank, Buell S1 'twintail' seat & tail unit.

ELECTRICS: Standard loom & headlight, LED mini tail light & LED Tincators.

PAINT: Pearl white with blue flames by Neil Rosling at Race Paint UK (01773 533072), powder-coated wheels & frame by John Whiteman Engineering & Powder-coating (01159 468566).

POLISHING: Primary casing, forks, swingarm by John at Nottingham Polishers,

smaller parts, yokes etc by owner.

ENGINEERING: Billet yokes, handlebar clamp, headlight brackets, rear caliper mount, breather tank, exhaust by owner at ProMod Engineering (01159 440327, pro-mod-engineering.co.uk)

SOUNDTRACK: From classical to AC/DC, depending on my mood.

OVERALL APPROXIMATE BUDGET: About £3k.

THANKS TO: "Myself of course!; Neil Rosling at Race Paint UK; John at John Whiteman Engineering & Powdercoating; Richard Colton for supplying Ducati forks & brakes; Nicky at Robin Hood Harley Davidson for her patience and good nature; Fay at Speedflow for helpful & professional service, thanks to Kyle for donating the screen."

