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KATANA, 30 YEARS A STUNNER
THE FUTURE OF MOTORCYCLING

ME & MY BIKE

1987 Yamaha FZR600 (mostly)

NAME: Turk

AGE: 46

HOME: San Francisco, California

OCCUPATION: Still searching...

Years ago, my buddy Poll Brown watched one of those reality TV shows where guys yell at each other while building really expensive choppers. Poll and the boys decided that they could construct cooler bikes for way less money, and have more fun at the same time. The Dirtbag Challenge—a bike build-off held annually in San Francisco, where participants build custom bikes in less than 30 days for less than \$1000—was born.

"I built this bike for the 2011 Dirtbag Challenge, where it won People's Choice. My total cash outlay was just under \$500. I grew up on a farm in New Jersey, where my dad constantly worked on old cars. We often had to make do with scant resources. Back then lots of things had to be made—not bought. We collected lots of scrap parts just to keep

our machines running. So I know how to make something from nothing.

"I used a scratch-built frame because I wanted it to be big and heavy looking, like a bulldozer. The spine frame was bent from straight steel for \$160. I spent \$130 on steel for the girder fork and swingarm. The front girder links are Honda CB200 swingarms, and the front shock is from a Yamaha SRX. Most of the mechanical stuff, including the motor, subframe and brakes, came from an abandoned 1987 FZR600. The wheels are both Suzuki Bandit rears. The fuel petcock knob is from a children's billiards table and the headlight is from an old pickup. The seat is from a '40s exercise machine. Almost everything on

this bike was bartered for, scavenged or built. Cash won't buy cool, though I did spring an extra \$30 for a vanity plate.

"Everything is difficult when you fabricate a bike from scratch. The toughest part was the frame, which doubles as the fuel tank. I'm proud to say it never leaked. I welded it right on my first try. It's a work in progress. I'm looking for some old electrical switches now. I need to tidy up the wiring, too. Then it will be my daily rider here in San Francisco. I also just picked up my donor bike for the 2012 Dirtbag Challenge. Just you wait..." **MC**

PHOTO: Rebecca Hinden

