

Buying a Rebuilt Salvage

by Rachel Howland #16981

Last year, my husband bought me a 1996 HD FatBoy off of eBay. Bo saw the paint job, and knew it was me. It had already been lowered which was a plus and it was a good price. We had it shipped to our house from Wisconsin. At the time, Bo was overseas. I had never even ridden a bike other than as a passenger. The delivery guy rode it into the garage for me. The bike went a few weeks before Bo was home to test it out.

Our first problem was with the electrical system. I believe we are on our third battery now. As long as it is hooked up to a tender, it is ok. We had to spend a nice little chunk at the Harley shop to get the lights working correctly. We also discovered that the gas tanks holes were clogged. Whoever painted the bike left the holes from the tank to the fuel lines sealed with paint. Bo was able to punch out the paint and get the gas flowing. We could see stuff floating in the tanks, but it was small. We decided to wait to mess with that. At that time, I hadn't taken the MSF class. I wanted to make sure I even liked riding before doing anything else to it. We decided to wait and see what would happen.

A year later, when I really started riding, the bike started giving me problems. I told Bo, there is something wrong with this bike. Of course, he gets on it and it works just fine. So I tell myself, it's just me. It was fine until about 2 weeks after Bo left for Iraq. The bike decided to act up on me cruising along the Flint Hills Scenic Byway. A few miles before I reached Council Grove, the bike died. I was thinking, "there is no way I'm out of gas." Luckily, I had come to a spot to pull over. The right side of the tank was out and I could see chunks of stuff floating at the bottom. The left side was completely full. They are supposed to siphon over. I switched over to reserve and got to a gas station. I filled up and headed on my way again. A few times the sound of the bike would change, and it would slow down; acting like it wasn't getting gas. Then it would be perfectly fine. The entire trip the bike wasn't using the left side for fuel. I made it home and the next day I made an appointment to have it looked at. The verdict was that the lining on the inside of the tanks was sloughing off in big chunks thus clogging everything. From the Harley store, it went to a painter. He then took it to a radiator shop. Lucky for me, boiling out the tanks with water worked and I didn't have to have the tanks repainted. It still took 7 weeks to fix, but the guys saved me some money doing it that way.

The tanks are doing what they are supposed to, but if I haven't ridden for a few days, the bike wants to stall out, changes its sound, and acts like it isn't getting enough gas. I've found myself in a few scary situations. Not to mention the thing sounding like it's being strangled. I am hoping that it is just residual gunk in the lines, and it will blow out. One day it will do it 4-5 times and the next just once or twice. I'm procrastinating taking it back to the shop. I know, I know, I need to have it fixed before it becomes a big problem or I end up stranded somewhere. November 1 will be the shop date for sure.