

The Chiang 750 comes to town

Luke Zeng builds motorbikes and sidecars in Beijing. He sells locally and he exports. He brands himself as Sidecar Solutions and his website is www.sidecar-solution.com. Luke produces bikes in whatever colours his customers ask for and you can have the sidecar on the left or right hand side depending on your ultimate destination. Pictured left is one of his flashy paint jobs:



My bike took about three months to manufacture in China and spent another month on the sea and getting cleared from Riyadh dry port. Although payment in advance is required, I found that the purchase, shipment and customs clearance in Saudi Arabia was a remarkably simple and trouble-free process.

The bike arrived fully assembled and nicely crated up. Webbing straps had been used to secure each of the three wheels to the base of the crate. The sides and top of the crate although not touching the bike had obviously protected it during its journey. The wing mirrors needed attaching and some fluid was needed for the front brake, but it was more or less "turn-key" and ready to go.



The engine is a 750cc twin cylinder boxer.

Following the process of getting the bike out of the crate, I was ably helped by Jim Mann and Marcus Cleverton to get it going. Jim has the unique experience of having driven a motorbike and sidecar through a brick wall. I am leaving that lesson for later. However, as we took it in turns to ride, be pillion and sit in the sidecar, we frightened the proverbial out of each other.



In a near death experience, we turned one corner in a remote area of the compound to find someone else practicing with her bike. Unfortunately she was (and still is) a really cute eight-year-old girl in a pink dress on her pink bike. The encounter took on all the drama of a health and safety video. Forget colour, this went to black and white with cross hairs on the camera. The collective burst of panic, adrenalin and terror stopped both our bike and our hearts. The little girl pedalled serenely on by. She was, of course, passing a bunch of silly old geezers who should have known better. It is with a combination of pride and shame that I record the total age of the bike's cargo at that time was 150 years. Pride that the 750 ccs of the bike was capable of shifting us at all, let alone at terrifying speed and shame that we were way past our collective sell by date as far as looking cool on the bike. Incidentally, I have discovered a great tip. Sit bolt upright when riding as this does look cool, but more importantly, it keeps your tummy off the gas tank which is both gauche and uncomfortable.



The bike comes with reverse gear. It is recommended to try reversing slowly and in a straight line at first as the bike gets a mind of its own when powered backwards. Select neutral, apply the clutch, select reverse and let the clutch out extremely slowly.

And here is what we have: