

YOU'RE JUST TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE

TEXT & IMAGES: NICHOLAS CARROLL

The nervous system twinges at the offer of a ride on the back of the gleaming Indian Chief. I hadn't been on a bike since my teens. But I trusted Harry; somewhere over 50, at 6ft.4 and a bit, the German designer has the physique of an Olympic downhill skier. "I don't do much exercise", he once told me, "I put it down to lucky genes".



ON A BIKE, NO ONE ASKS
"ARE WE THERE YET?"

- STACY WESTFAL

01

HARRY & IDI
take a ride
through Umhlanga
Town Centre



02

HARRY takes The Big Apple through its paces in their Dynojet tuning centre.



Halfway to uMdloti and realising that the bike wasn't going to fall over, I began to enjoy myself immensely! Wind buffets my skin in the open face helmet, the warm glow of the coastal forest is mesmerising through my amber tinted sunglasses. More people get turned on to motor bikes through the custom scene, rather than the allure of standard factory models. Before my encounter with Harry and **The Biker Store**, bikes were things I watched for in my rear-view mirror. The fast and loud ones getting snarled at, just like my dad taught me.

THE BIKER STORE'S CUSTOM BUILDS ARE SOMETHING TO MARVEL AT.

Aesthetically pleasing, triggering something in our ancient brains that once connected us to nature - before we covered much of it with tar and concrete. "All our custom builds are based on divine proportion, you know, the Fibonacci sequence", offers Harry. I quickly spent a couple of late nights learning that the universe thrives with examples of divine proportion. Leonardo's use of the Fibonacci Sequence, immortalising the Mona Lisa, her face - a picture of perfection, according to Phi - divine proportion.

An engineering graduate of Berlin University, Harry understands proportion intimately. "Proportion is everything", he says, "A bike will not look right if the proportions are out. More importantly, it won't be a balanced ride". Customers come to them with reference images of their dream bikes. Their response is to create a bike that exceeds expectations. The final product comes together like a work of fine art, evolving in their hands. "We make numerous mock ups of the final design, repeating the process until all the lines and proportions are just right", Harry continues.

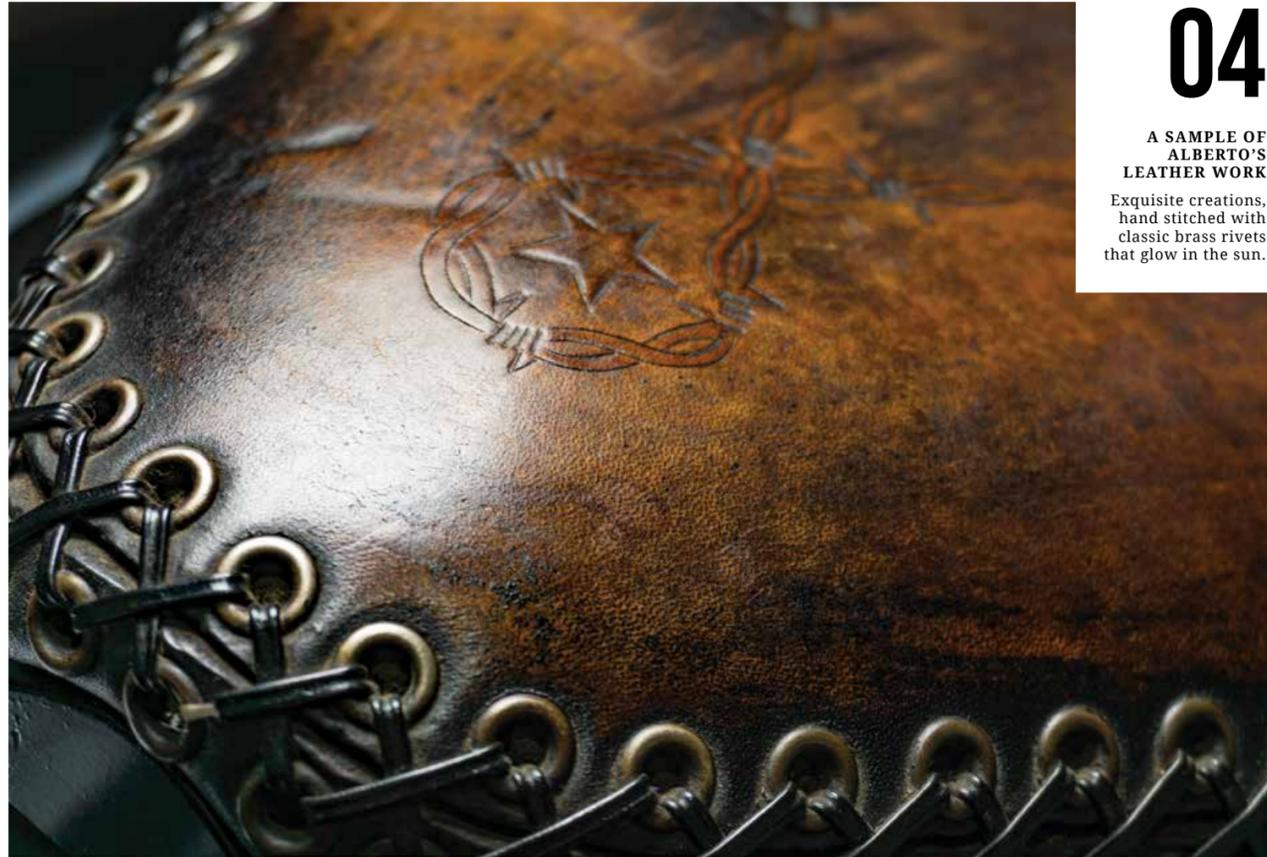
THE BIKER STORE



03

THE BIKER STORE
24 Solstice Rd,
Umhlanga Town
Centre
Closes at 5pm,
all welcome!

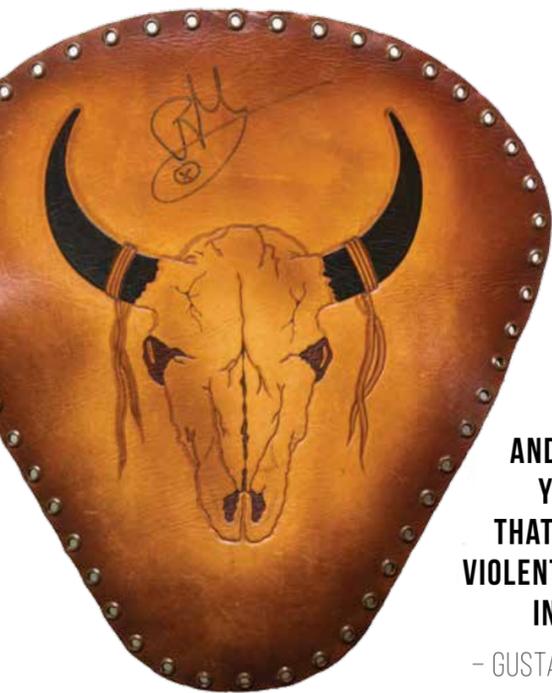




04

A SAMPLE OF ALBERTO'S LEATHER WORK

Exquisite creations, hand stitched with classic brass rivets that glow in the sun.



BE REGULAR AND ORDERLY IN YOUR LIFE, SO THAT YOU MAY BE VIOLENT & ORIGINAL IN YOUR WORK

- GUSTAVE FLAUBERT

Alberto Vergari works with Harry as co-designer and builds the bikes in their Town Centre workshop. "Everything takes a lot of time and careful preparation. Even a custom built petrol tank has to be perfectly symmetrical and smooth", he says. Alberto hand crafts the saddles, from the perfectly shaped foam cushion to the intricate carving and stitching of the saddle leather. Handlebars are thoughtfully contoured, complimenting the style of each bike, without a crease in sight. "Harry and Bert are leaders in the custom build space in South Africa", accords one of their customers. "Every finish is perfect".

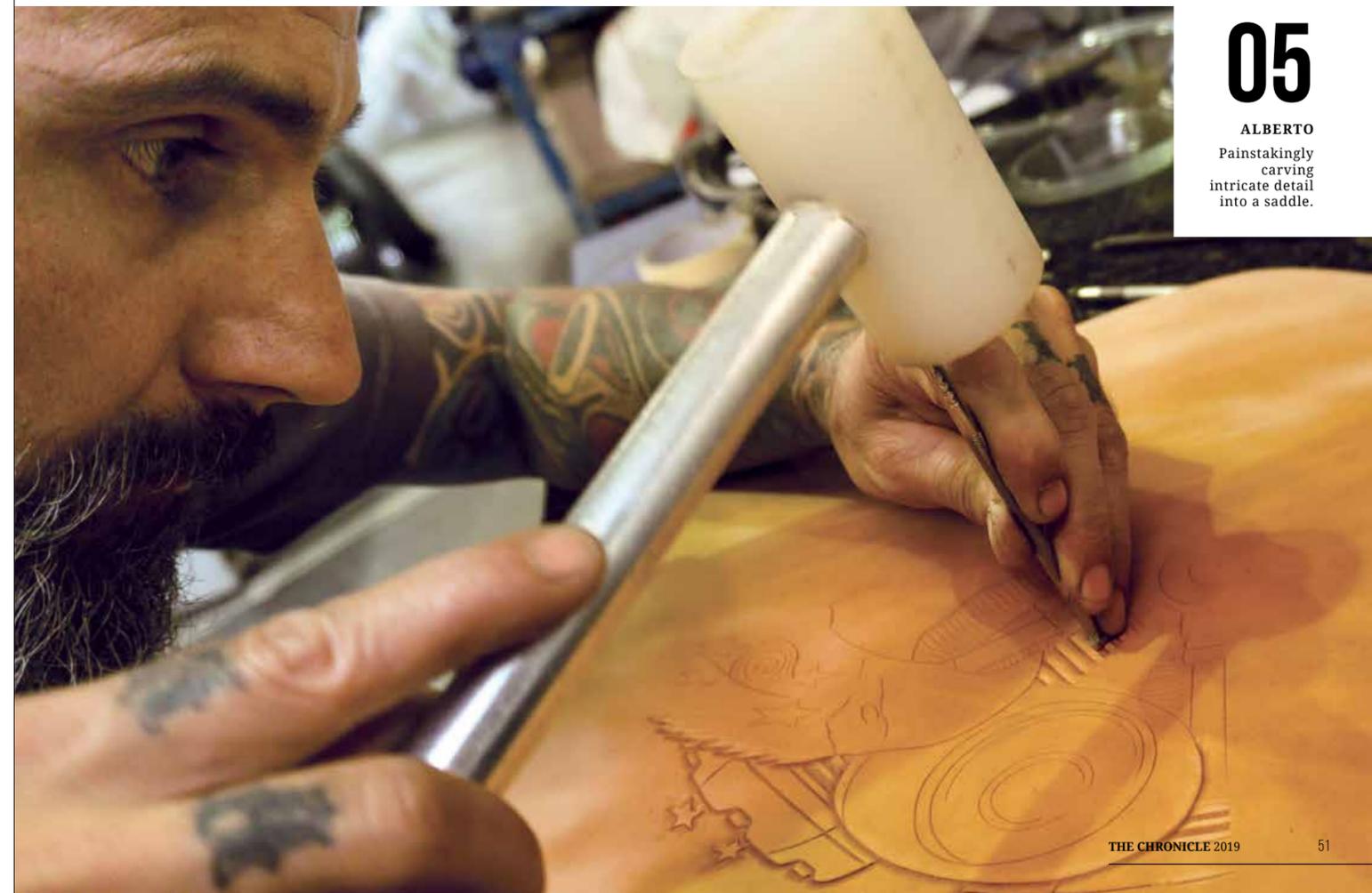
"Under that beard, Bert is actually a very handsome guy", says Harry. "Think Harrison Ford". "Wouldn't it be ironic", I say, "if Bert's face was in perfect proportion like the Mona Lisa?"

We make turn at uMdloti and head back to The Town Centre again along the M4. My senses wide open, I become aware of the bite of the tyres as we careen smoothly around the circle at Sibaya, quickening pistons surging the bike forward and upright to join the straight road. Awash with negative ions from the sea air (the good ones), and Phytoncides from the coastal forest (almost touchable with an outstretched hand), intense satisfaction rises from within me - I'm not made of glass and everything will be alright.

Now I'll never stop looking at motor bikes of all kinds, to see if they can hold a candle to **The Biker Store's** marvellous custom builds.

05

ALBERTO Painstakingly carving intricate detail into a saddle.





THE BIG APPLE

While on a Red Sea diving trip, Harry meets Oliver Truffer from Switzerland. Truffer orders a custom built bike on hearing what Harry does for a living. Oliver flew to South Africa to take delivery of his bike and fell in love with the country as many of us have.

The donor bike for the Swiss Truffer, A 2011 Sportster FortyEight was, bought from Terence Ramiah, who sold it as he was leaving to live in New York. Terence follows the story of his old bike through social media. Planning his return to South Africa a few years later, he calls to order a new custom built bike, to be ready for his birthday in three months time.

Terence buys (from a picture) a 2009 Fat Bob off the showroom floor and gives **The Biker Store** the go ahead to customize it. When Terence finally arrived at the shop to take delivery, he had never seen the bike, nor did he know what exactly the customization entailed.

**THE UNVEILING WAS A COMPLETE SURPRISE.
HE LOVED IT! THE BIG APPLE IS BORN.**

