

Two wheels good, three wheels better?



It might seem like an odd thing to do, especially during the current economic climate, but as it turns out, setting up the first new sidecar manufacturing company in the UK since the 70's wasn't such a bad idea after all.

I've always held a fascination for these idiosyncratic devices and even before I owned my first outfit, I had thought that they might be due a resurgence in popularity. Let me try to explain why. Sidecars are a rare sight on the roads of this country, so when you do see one, they always attract attention. They make people smile.

Hello, my name is Rod Young and alongside writing for this glorious magazine I design and manufacture sidecars. There's a confession for you!

That alone is reason enough for me and I don't care if it was George and Mildred, Wallace and Gromit, or memories of Olive that made them smile, I'll just carry on spreading the joy.

The benefits of riding a chair are many; for one, you can carry a passenger who might never countenance riding pillion on a solo machine. You can go shopping, take your dog out, and carry all manner of goods that would be impossible on a bike; and go on holiday without all

the packing trauma normally associated with bikes. You can even go about your work with a sidecar; small trades-people are able to carry their tools and chattels whilst avoiding road charging. A sidecar outfit is also one of the most manoeuvrable vehicles on the roads; they turn on a sixpence and can park in the tiniest of spaces because of this. It's also very much harder to fall off!

And all of this is done in the open air with all of the feeling of freedom

associated with riding a bike. OK, so you get stuck in traffic and the rain falls on you, but these are small prices to pay and in my experience, they do not detract so much. I actively enjoy the fact that I do not feel the self-pressure to have to filter at every opportunity; in real life situations the time lost is negligible unless you spend your life riding through dense city traffic.

So a while back I purchased a Ural sidecar outfit, it was a few years old but in virtually new condition. This confirmed everything I knew to be true. After my first ride I was a confirmed sidecar rider. If bikes are about fun, then sidecars are the most fun you can have whilst not on two wheels. I've had more fun on that outfit than with any bike I've ever ridden, and I've ridden most. Riding an outfit is technically far more interesting than riding a bike, yet at the same time it's a skill that is easily learnt with a bit of good tuition; and once mastered, you'll never look back. A friend of mine, a confirmed and life-long biker, rode my Ural for the first time and he declared it the best biking experience he'd ever had. Similarly, my girlfriend recently rode it for the first time and claimed shortly afterwards that it was now her outfit. I've taken many people for a ride in the chair and without exception they have such a good time



they don't want to stop. Sidecars, without doubt, are huge fun. There is nothing quite as satisfying as a well executed roundabout in the wet, the back end sliding like a rear wheel drive car as you feed in the power as hard as you want with no fear of the front end tucking. Gravel, diesel, sand, mud, no problem here, no expensive broken fairings or unexpected visits to casualty for me. What's more, the general public

like sidecars, whereas – you may have noticed – they don't all necessarily like bikes. Not only that, but you can still ride an outfit on a provisional license, with no capacity limit on the engine, and your insurance actually goes down in most cases too. Seriously, this is the way forward!

So I got to thinking, most of the remaining sidecar companies still produce designs that were current in



the 50's and 60's. What if someone was to bring out something new, beautifully styled, that could be used for fun, touring or work? And so, after a long conversation over a few beers with my girlfriend, the Motopodd idea was born.

A few other projects delayed things as they do, but one day I came across a sidecar body which had been hand made out of sheet steel by a very talented man, a one off, completed but never used. Almost exactly the same as I had envisaged it would be. I bought it and spoke to a GRP moulding specialist, a

company that normally produce props for advertising and films, giant pink stiletto shoes and spaceships, that kind of thing. They confirmed my belief that I could use the existing body to produce a mould, in either right or continental left hand drive format. I was up and running. The next thing to do was to tell the world, so I spent many a long day learning about sidecar setup and eventually I had the Motopodd prototype firmly attached to my XJR1300 ready to spend the summer touring around the bike shows, generating publicity and (hopefully)

orders. The reaction I received was so strong and positive that within a few weeks I had my first orders and had agreed a deal with a distributor. What I had hoped for had happened, people who had never considered a sidecar before had their imagination captured and everywhere I go it attracts huge attention. The first Motopodd design is now about to be produced and I have plans to design a full range of modern sidecars to fulfil all possible requirements.

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