

Hello Jim and the XS650 forum,

My name is Rhy Norton and I am Jake Norton's son. I am not sure if you were aware, but two-and-a-half years ago my father was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. Jake did everything that he could to fight this disease. Major surgery, multiple rounds of chemotherapy, a multitude of clinical trials... Unfortunately, despite these actions, Jake passed away yesterday morning. His passing was peaceful with his wife and son by his side.

Dad had many interests and hobbies over the years, but one was constant, was his love of Yamaha XS650 motorcycles. I know how much he valued the "the guys" on the forum and wanted them to be aware of his passing and his appreciation for the friendship and advice that he received over the years.

A quality that I received from my father was a love for craftsmanship. If left to my own devices, I prefer to piddle around in my garage workshop. While most of my shop is geared more towards woodworking and CNC, I am also equipped to tackle a 650 build. Given this, I have two such projects of Dad's that I intend to complete and wanted to share with the forum.

The first is a 1980 XS650 that we purchased together this past summer. Here is the bike as purchased:



Given his declining health I decided to take over this bike from the beginning. So far, under his guidance, I have rebuilt the BS34s, performed general tuning on the engine (cam chain, valves, etc...), rewired several problem systems (rotor, turn signals, fuse box), rebuilt the frontend, brakes, clutch, filters,

handlebars, polishing, and just generally got the bike running solidly again. My latest projects have been to strip and repaint the gas tank, headlight bucket, and side covers. This bike came with two engines and I am currently rebuilding the second from the ground up. My goal with this bike is to simply get a good looking and good running stock(ish) motorcycle. Here is what I have done so far:



My next, and far more important, project will be finishing Dad's 1971 XS1 resto-mod. Here is the bike when purchased:



This bike was to be his 650 “magnum opus”, but he was unable to finish it. I say it will be quite the challenge as every component of this bike has been meticulously powder coated, custom made, polished, ceramic coated, nickel-plated, you name it. He has spared no expense and what he has finished so far looks amazing:





The major tasks left on this bike are ground-up wiring, painting of the gas tank, final assembly of the chassis, and another 1,000 items that are not coming to mind right now.

I mention all of this because I thought “the guys” would like to know that Dad’s work will be continued and there is yet one more fan of these cool old bikes in the world. I am also hoping that the forum might be able to assist me in these builds, as my authority on the subject is no longer with me.

I would like to thank all of you for being such good friends to my father over the years. I will keep you posted as to my progress with these projects and am looking forward to the day when I can share the finished products with you in his honor. I have created a profile on xs650.com and my username is “Rhy650” if you would like to get in touch.

Sincerely,

Rhy Norton