

SHOP TALK

“I CAN BUY IT CHEAPER ON THE INTERNET!”

By Steve Taylor

Sound familiar? Probably yes. Or how about “How To Build A Chinese Chopper”? Probably not. Believe it or not these two phrases actually mean the same thing. Confused? I’ll explain.

When shopping for part(s), what is the deciding factor for purchasing? Most people would say price, and that is probably the # 1 mistake you could make. Let me tell you why. A cheap price on a product should raise a red flag in your mind because it is a direct indication of country of origin.

It’s the law, that all imported products have to be labeled with the country of origin. It’s right there in front of you; all you have to do is read. Even when you think you are “Buying American,” think again. All the way from the “Genuine Harley-Davidson Parts” to the Billet Forward Controls you find in the ads of magazines. Read the packaging, the imports have no boundaries, or limits.

“Made In Japan,” used to mean cheap, substandard product but not anymore. Actually if the label says “Made In Japan” it is probably the best of the imports. But what most packages will say is “Made In Taiwan” i.e.: CHINA. Not that I have anything against the Chinese people, it’s just that I feel that we are being invaded and our economy is being taken over. The manufacturing jobs in the US are disappearing and are being replaced with “Service” type positions.

When I was in the Tool & Die trade I worked at numerous Tool and Die shops in the area, none of which are around today. I can remember one shop in particular in which every time a new hire would start, the owner of the shop would look at his tools. If there were any China micrometers or calipers he would say, “Do you know somebody in China, do you have relatives there?” The new hire would always say no. “Well you are supporting them!” I would always laugh but how true it is. We have companies that are closing everyday in the U.S. because we will buy an imported product instead of being “Made In America.”

Don’t be fooled. Remember the Orange County Choppers P.O.W. bike? On the surface it would seem that it was a tribute to all the lost brothers of war. When the war veterans started to cry at the end when they were presented with the bike, do you think they noticed that the motor was “Made In Korea?” Probably not, but it’s true. It’s everywhere around us, just read the labels. From automobiles, clothing, furniture, tools, and yes, even “Genuine” parts for your Harley they are being imported from another country. It saddens me to think of all the

friends and families who lost loved ones in the war(s), and here we are giving money to support the countries that we were at war with while companies are closing everyday here in our country. I look at it as an “epidemic.” Our country is being invaded and we don’t even know it.

So you’re patriotic are you? Well, let’s see. Do you have an American flag? Where was it made? Your car? Clothes? Shoes? Do you shop from motorcycle parts catalogs? The Internet maybe? What do you think you are buying anyway? Don’t be fooled, for you are only fooling yourself if you think you are pumping money into the economy. You are, in a way, but it’s not our economy that you are supporting. I personally have issue with supporting other countries when I see production facilities closing and the “Mom and Pop” stores which are now a thing of the past.

Back to bikes. When people come into my shop (or call), and request a price for a bike part most are sticker shocked. I don’t quote a price for the “Cheapest I Can Get It For.” I quote a price for the best part made i.e.: “Made In America.” I get a lot of bikes in the shop for repair for things like leaking fuel valves, brakes not working, front ends leaking, etc. Almost always the products that are failing are the cheap imported crap that people install on their bikes. When I tell the customer that he needs a new starter, he states “It’s brand new!” Well, I don’t know what to tell you other than that cheap imported starter that you found in a mail order catalog is junk and the money you spent on it is probably in Bin Laden’s hands right now.

It’s creepy. An example of this is whenever I rebuild a motor I always use the best “Made In America” parts. However, recently I happened to notice that the “Made in U.S.A.” high quality, high dollar pistons I am accustomed to using are using Taiwan wrist pins. Says so right on the package. Now I am questioning who owns the U.S. companies. Just because companies have a U.S. name does not mean it is owned by someone in the U.S. Also the high dollar U.S. ignitions I use now come with a sticker that says “Made in China.”

Thank-you and ride safe.

Questions? Comments?

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