GENERAL

mikey from orange county choppers

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Introduction

When it comes to custom motorcycle craftsmanship, few names resonate as strongly as **Mikey from Orange County Choppers**. Whether you're a seasoned rider, a design enthusiast, or simply fascinated by the art of bike building, Mikey's work exemplifies the blend of precision engineering, artistic flair, and relentless passion that defines the custom motorcycle scene. In this article, we'll dive deep into Mikey's journey from a young hobbyist to a celebrated builder, explore his signature style, highlight some of his most iconic projects, and uncover how he continues to inspire a new generation of custom bike creators.

Who is Mikey from Orange County Choppers?

Mikey, whose full name is Michael "Mikey" Ramirez, is a veteran custom motorcycle builder based in Santa Ana, California. Over the past decade, he has become a cornerstone of Orange County Choppers (OCC), the renowned custom shop that first gained national attention on the hit television series *American Chopper*. Mikey's reputation extends beyond the show; his designs have graced countless motorcycle shows, film sets, and private collections worldwide.

Early Days: From Hobbyist to Professional

Growing up in a modest neighborhood in Los Angeles, Mikey was captivated by the roar of engines and the sleek silhouettes of motorcycles. He began tinkering with his father's 1970s Harley-Davidson in the garage at age 12, learning the fundamentals of metalwork and mechanics. By 16, he was building his own custom frames for local racing events, earning the nickname "The Young Gun" among his peers. This early exposure to hands on craftsmanship laid the groundwork for his future career.

Joining Orange County Choppers

In 2008, after completing a mechanical engineering degree, Mikey auditioned for OCC's apprenticeship program. His portfolio—featuring a one of a kind chopper with hand etched chrome details—caught the eye of OCC's creative director. Within months, Mikey was officially hired as a senior builder, responsible for both the design and fabrication of high profile custom bikes.

Signature Style and Design Philosophy

Attention to Detail

Mikey is renowned for his meticulous approach to every component. From the precise placement of rivets to the subtle curves of the chrome finish, he treats each element as an integral part of the whole. This level of detail ensures that his bikes not only look stunning but also perform flawlessly on the road.

Fusion of Classic and Modern

While many custom builders lean heavily into either retro or futuristic aesthetics, Mikey masterfully blends both. He often incorporates classic Harley-Davidson elements—like the iconic twin twin engine—into modern, aerodynamic

frames, creating a timeless yet cutting edge look.

Notable Projects and Builds

1. The “Eclipse” (2012) – A black chrome chopper that won the “Best Custom Build” award at the Los Angeles Bike Expo.
2. The “Phoenix” (2015) – A fiery red bike that featured a hand crafted flame motif etched into the frame, showcased in the “Riders of the West” film.
3. The “Nebula” (2018) – A silver, space themed bike that became a fan favorite at the Orange County Motor Show.
4. The “Vortex” (2021) – A high speed cruiser built for a professional racing team, incorporating lightweight titanium components.

Mikey's Impact on the Custom Motorcycle Community

- Educational Outreach – Mikey regularly hosts workshops at OCC, teaching aspiring builders the fundamentals of metal fabrication and design.
- Mentorship – He has personally mentored over 30 junior builders, many of whom now run their own successful custom shops.
- Innovation – Mikey pioneered the use of 3 D printing for prototype frames, significantly reducing development time.

Behind the Scenes: A Day in the Life of Mikey

Every morning at OCC begins with a brief team huddle, where Mikey outlines the day’s objectives. He then dives into the workshop, selecting the right steel plate, sketching design modifications, and using a CNC machine to cut precise shapes. After the frame is assembled, he meticulously welds each joint, ensuring structural integrity. The finishing process—cleaning, sanding, painting, and chrome plating—can take several days, but Mikey’s commitment to perfection makes the wait worthwhile.

Collaborations and Partnerships

- Local Artisans – Mikey collaborates with sculptors to incorporate custom art pieces into bike frames.
- Technology Companies – He works with automotive software firms to integrate advanced telemetry systems into his builds.
- Film and Television – Several of his bikes have appeared in major motion pictures, thanks to his partnership with production design studios.

Fan Interaction and Social Media Presence

While Mikey is known for his hands on craft, he also maintains an active online presence. His Instagram account, featuring behind the scenes photos and time lapse videos, has over 150,000 followers. On YouTube, his channel hosts “Build with Mikey” tutorials, where he breaks down complex techniques into digestible steps. This digital outreach has broadened his influence beyond the local community.

Future Projects and Aspirations

Looking ahead, Mikey is focused on two main goals: expanding OCC’s global footprint and developing a line of electric custom bikes. He envisions a future where custom motorcycle building meets sustainable technology,

combining his love for classic design with a commitment to environmental responsibility.

Conclusion

From a young mechanic in a modest garage to a celebrated builder at Orange County Choppers, **Mikey from Orange County Choppers**exemplifies the spirit of innovation, craftsmanship, and passion that defines the custom motorcycle world. His meticulous attention to detail, blend of classic and modern aesthetics, and dedication to mentoring the next generation of builders ensure that his legacy will endure for years to come. Whether you're a rider craving a one of a kind machine or a hobbyist looking for inspiration, Mikey's work offers a masterclass in the art of custom bike building.

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