



Delkevic Replica Exhausts – The Inside Story

In June of last year, I went over to the D&K motorcycle dealership, also the home of Delkevic UK. Some of you will be familiar with D&K, as they import many a classic motorcycle from the US or A as well as producing the replica exhaust systems that many of us have fitted to our Kettles. They also produce pipes for modern bikes too. I was meeting Paul Dyer the general manager, who has been involved with Delkevic from the start and he happily agreed to discuss the background of these systems.

For any manufacturer, there has to be a trade-off between development time and possible returns. As far as the system for the Kettle is concerned; that is the main reason why the pipes for the J & K models are not available, as there weren't considered to be enough of them about to warrant making exhaust sets for, that would generate a sufficient return and they are significantly different to the later model systems. With the exception of the 'L', the M,A and B models all use the same pipes, which are of a far simpler design.

The pipes are made in D&K's own factory in China. The development of the system took about five years from inception. Tooling had to be made, which is the expensive bit. You can probably imagine the size of the dies that go to press the eight main halves (two per silencer). Each pair of die halves has a 'male' and a 'female' side. A sheet of 1.5mm steel is laid over the female half and then the male half forces the steel into the female half under tremendous pressure. When I asked if the dies were finished using spark erosion, which can produce an incredibly smooth finish; I was quite surprised when Paul said "no, they're all finished by hand!" Now that takes real skill! There are of course other press tools required for the 'polo' baffles up the inside of the pipes, the removable tubular baffles (I'm guessing laser cut?), and the baffle parts in the tapering section just after the header pipe. The welded on threaded section is a section of threaded tube, and lastly the cast, winged header collar.

Although there is a European quality inspector on site, nothing is wasted and the finished products are sold in three quality grades; 'A': are top production quality whereas the 'B' & 'C' grades may have varying minor defects, such as slightly imperfect or marked plating (though this might not be readily visible to you or I). The good thing is that these latter grades are still perfectly sound and available at a much reduced price (though the club discount does not apply), you just have to accept the fact that they are not perfect. I purchased a set of pipes last year and they fitted just fine, although it requires a little perseverance when it comes to fitting the middle pipes to the splitter with new seals and clamps! Honestly, you'd be hard pushed to tell that they're not originals.

Delkevic are also planning to manufacture expansion chambers for the Kettle, but these will not be available for some time. A big thanks to Paul for taking time out to talk.

Nick Lowe