

# Addicted to restoration

Main dealers who sell new bikes *and* restore classics are a rare beast indeed. Welcome to Spa Motorcycles of Cheltenham...



**W**E'RE NOT RUN by accountants. From an accountant's point of view, restoring bikes is a waste of time. It's three times as hard to make £100 working on a restoration as it is servicing a newer bike. But we're addicted. Our technicians Rob Pemberton and Mick Potter have completed 80 restorations in the last few years, including carb mods and exhaust work. Full restorations take six months and we've done over 20 of them now.

We've got a real passion for keeping old bikes on the road. For a job to be successful in our eyes the finished bike can't just look good, it has to ride well, too. We may do upto 20 jet changes to a single bike, and test performance using both seat-of-our-pants and dyno runs. Nearly every one of our restored bikes is ridden out of the dealership. The ones that

aren't, could be. We work hard so that a customer's bike can cope with fifth gear roll-ons using modern unleaded petrol for years to come.

We've just finished working on a modded RD400, the owner of which had spent two years trying to get the thing to run. It's now reliably making high-50s power, and he's absolutely ecstatic. Right now, in our workshop, Mick's rebuilding a '70s Kawasaki S1A-250 and has the engine out of a '78 Z900.

One of the reasons we started specialising in restoration was Yamaha's recent focus on heritage bikes. Their Yard Built and Faster Sons projects are very successful right now. Other manufacturers have dabbled in the market, but Yamaha are the only ones who've jumped in up to their necks. We're a proud Yamaha dealership, crossing between restoring older bikes and supplying new bikes with a heritage feel.



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## SPAS RESTORATIONS Five classic machines brought back to life



» **1979 Yamaha RD400**  
We rebuilt the motor on this RD, while the customer wanted to do the cosmetics. Work included carb mods, a Zeeltronic ignition control box that works with the original generator, an ignition coil from a TZ250 and modified cylinder heads for modern fuel.



» **1984 Yamaha FJ1100**  
Race Techniques ported the head, dialled in cam timing, and Rob did the re-bore. It's also got XJR carbs, starter motor and ignition plus a Stage 3 Dynojet kit which helps produce 92lb.ft and 136bhp. Thundercat front end with 5VY R1 fork internals fitted.



» **1987 Yamaha TZR250 2MA**  
Rob Pemberton's own subtly modified F3-spec TZR. All Yamaha parts including race kit pipes and R1-Z wheels, have helped it achieve a peak 58bhp. The Zeeltronic ignition control box allows access to power valve timing where real gains are made.



» **1975 Yamaha RD350 B**  
This RD had spent 25 years in a barn before its owner brought it to us - in three plastic crates. His vision: retain original patina and make into a café racer with a banzai engine to remind him of his teen antics. Ramair filter and Lomas race pipe included.



» **1967 Yamaha H3C**  
A very rare 90cc H3C from Rob's own collection. Bought for £500, re-chromed, re-painted, and re-covered seat. Engine stripped and cleaned plus new main bearings. Rubber parts such as the speedo surround are still available.

## The Team

Spa are a cooperative. Five owners who all love bikes, new and restored...

**Nick Cheshire**, Sales  
Experience: 17 years

» **Favourite route into Wales:** the A417 from Gloucester to Leominster, with a stop at the open-air Dom's Bike Stop Café - tasty breakfasts and delicious burgers.



**Mick Potter**, Servicing  
Experience: 39 years

» **Favourite local road:** the B4077 between Cheltenham and Stow-on-the-Wold: fields, curves, forests and straights on my TDM900 or my '70s Ducati 250.



**Paul Ambridge**, Aftersales  
Experience: 11 years

» **Best place in Europe to ride:** it must be Northern Spain, where the weather's warm, the roads are clean, grippy and devoid of holiday traffic.



**Rob Pemberton**, Servicing  
Experience: 30 years

» **Dream bike build:** a Yamaha TZ750 Racer, but I'm busy fettling my 20 other bikes, including a TZR250 2MA, RD250/350 Special and a TX750.



**Warren Wicks**, Parts  
Experience: 24 years

» **Type of rider:** I like my sportsbikes. I've owned various GSX-Rs and an '01 929 Fireblade, but my favourite has to be my black GSX-R1000 K6. Love the midrange.



### Get in Touch

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