

BLACKED OUT SHOOTOUT

VISION EIGHT BALL & SRATOLINER DELUXE

Written by Gary Koz Mraz • Photos Ron Sinoy
with special thanks to Ali Dowis and Todd Lester

There is something very enticing about a woman wrapped in black leather. The supple sheen of animal skin accelerates every dangerous curve of the feminine physique. It's raw earthy smell and crisp crack of plunging zippers and exploding snaps is very appealing. Black leather is a biker favorite for both men and women and our sanctioned dress code. Rolling up to the bar in a red leather vest, white boots and blue chaps will *not* make you patriotic. There are other benefits to wearing black; first, black is slimming, secondly, everything always matches. You can open the closet blind folded, grab any shirt and pair of pants and look acceptable. This comes in very handy on those hazy morning-afters. Finally it's amazing how long it takes black to look dirty (the scent usually gives that away first). Basic black is classic and fits in anywhere and a blacked out look has become very popular. From high fashion runway sheik to low riding roadway street, everything comes in black. I don't know when black became the new chrome but it's really cool. What's also really cool are the two very sexy models at my pad, the Victory Vision 8-Ball and a Yamaha Stratoliner Deluxe. Both blacked-out beauties are targeted squarely at the same market with nearly the same price point.

The Victory Vision 8-Ball

Victory released the Vision 8-Ball this year and it's a blacked-out distance cruiser targeted for riders who like streamlined touring motorcycle riding. The Vision 8-Ball is a no-frills cruiser providing style, performance and value that hit's the open road with only the essentials. For 2011 The Victory Vision 8-Ball includes a Freedom 106/6 Stage 1 V-Twin which produces 92 horsepower and 109 ft.-lb. of torque. Black Roulette rims accentuate the ultra modern esthetic of its completely unique, stealthy design. Blacked-out components such as handlebars, wheels, belt guards, frames, bodywork and side stands. All brake calipers, rotors, lower belt guards, and floorboards are black as are left- and right-hand switch cubes, the audio control switch block and cruise control switch block even the triple clamp is black.

Letting the sparks fly

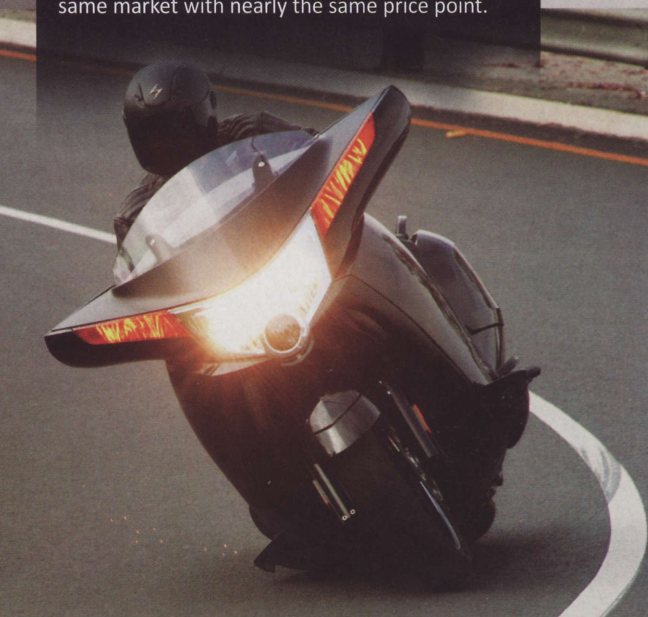
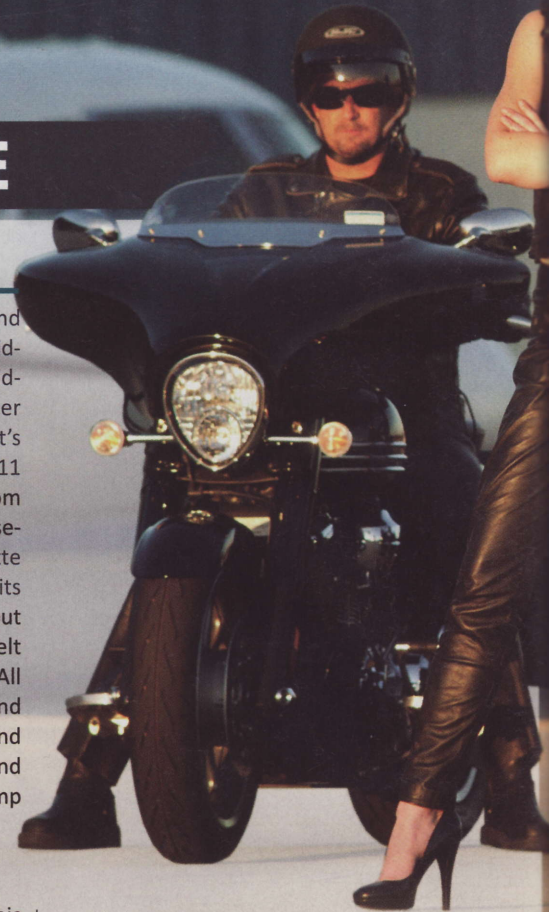
The seat height is only 24.5 inches and this stealthy no-nonsense motorcycle inspires aggressive riding, pushing the edges just a little farther. Basic black doesn't waste time accessorizing. The 2011 Vision Eight Ball rescinds the usual features of the Vision. Features like ABS, Stereo system, ipod input, cruise control, even the rear tip over pads are accessories. The Victory Vision 8-Ball has passenger pegs rather than floorboards for a cleaner look that enhances the 8-Ball styling. The

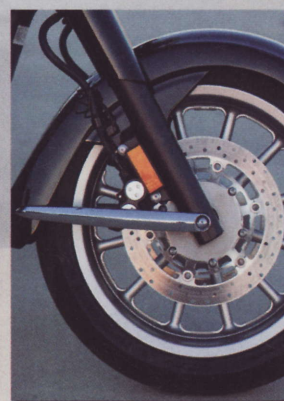
lower seating position and aggressive look and sound inspire one to really dig into corners. As most Vision owners will attest the lean angles are very respectable for such a large bike and I have put allot of miles on Visions over the years and rarely scrape the floorboards or tip over pads. But, all that's good about the Vision 8-Ball brought out the bad in me and I found myself burning rubber and letting sparks fly. As stated: the rear tips over pads are *not* standard for 2011 but my 2010 was equipped with them and I was having so much fun with this bike I found myself grinding them down! I understand why not offering tip over pads for 2011 makes complete sense because you will truly enjoy knocking this eight ball into the corner pockets.

Note: The air-adjustable rear suspension still comes standard on the V-8 and rear shock pressure starts at 22 psi – not zero as on other versions with taller rear suspension.

SIDEBAR 2011 VICTORY Vision 8 Ball Improvements

Approximately 40% of the drivetrain is new for 2011, with the transmission receiving so many improvements it is virtually a new transmission. In terms of operating sound, selected modulation frequencies have been eliminated. This produces





a more-appealing sound – consistently in each gear. In 4th and 6th gears in particular, gear whine has been greatly reduced and the driveline lash has been reduced by 66%. Louder more aggressive street legal exhaust comes standard.

Yamaha Stratoliner Deluxe

The blacked-out Yamaha Stratoliner Deluxe however takes a completely different approach. This Retro Art Deco motorcycle is beautifully appointed and its vintage demeanor is stunning. From the tear drop headlight to the clear lensed 50's inspired taillights. Introduced in 2010 It's the first time Yamaha has utilized a fork mounted batwing style fairing, the fairing includes integrated speakers and an iPod® jack, plus a convenient, handlebar-mounted audio control system and the beach style handlebars fits the vintage look, and I love the loud car horn. Lean angles are aggressive and the riding position is very comfortable but it's more *ON* the bike rather than in the bike. A solid cruiser, with large hard bags, a great sounding stereo system with easy access volume controls. But this ain't your daddies cruiser, this air-cooled 48 degree 113-cubic-inch (1854cc) V-twin produces 91 horses and 117 foot-pounds of torque. It is the world's largest air cooled V-Twin engine. With twin counterbalanc-

ing and 3300 rpm at 75 mph gives some idea of the Stratoliner Deluxe's power and cruisability. Maximum torque is reached at only 2500 rpm. Four pushrod-activated valves and two spark plugs per cylinder provide optimum combustion efficiency. The 5-speed tranny is more than sufficient but we long distance cruiser types appreciate that drop in RPM's a sixth provides at 80 mph.

Quite honestly, 120 mph on a Stratoliner Deluxe comes up shockingly fast. The Speedo taps out at 140 and 130 was easy with no end insight except my ass in the slammer. Yamaha claims 45 mpg but that's probably calculated in an anti-gravity test chamber. With a 4.5 gallon gas tank and that much power I was running in the low 30's. The 27.8 inch seat height was very comfortable for this six footer but doubt small inseam riders will feel sure footed duck walking the 800 lb Strat around the parking lot. The Yamaha Stratoliner Deluxe is unchanged for 2011 and in this rider's opinion is without a doubt, hands down, the coolest Yamaha cruiser ever made.

The Victory Vision Eight Ball feels like a sport touring bike with aggressive handling, futuristic styling and modern technology. The 24.5 inch seat height and 6 gallon tank offers inspired riding and an easy 200 miles between fill ups. This

Victory V- 8 has all the comforts and storage needed for canyon carving or freeway flying. The lack of standard Victory Vision Tour features like ABS, stereo, iPod, cruise control and electric windshield are its only detraction.

The Yamaha Stratoliner Deluxe harkens back to motorcycling past. A retro-vintage styling with the comfort and amenities of ipod/stereo connections and controls. Though thoroughly impressed with the powerful and responsive 1854 cc power plant, the range at 80mph with a smallish 4.5 gallon tank and lack of a sixth gear may be a consideration for touring purists.

Lets get black to basics, black gets hot in the sun and the truth is if you've ever owned a black car you know its dusty an hour after you've waxed it to a rich luster and shows water spots worse than any other color so just deal with it. Also black vehicles virtually disappear at night...cool. So which 2011 blacked out beauty is the badass on the block? With the Victory Vision tagged at \$17,999 and Yamaha Stratoliner deluxe \$17,490 it's not really about price. The battle of beautiful blacked-out bikes is all about style, fashion and sex appeal and both bikes ace that hands down. The choice is really very simple; do you prefer that a black leather cat-suit have zippers or snaps?