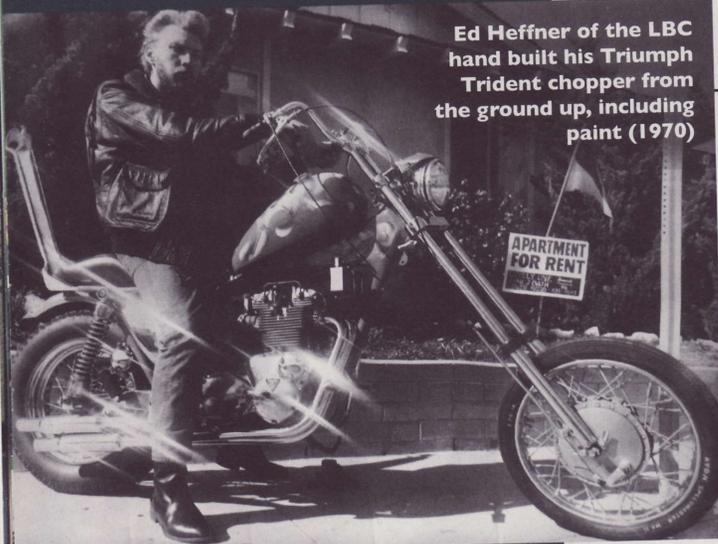


# TRIUMPHANT RETURN: THE TRIUMPH SPEEDMASTER



Ed Heffner of the LBC hand built his Triumph Trident chopper from the ground up, including paint (1970)

**Story:** Gary "Koz" Mraz  
**Photos:** Ron Sinoy

Triumph motorcycles were always cool. The first choppers I remember seeing were Triumphs. Bloody hell, Marlon Brando rode a Triumph Thunderbird in *The Wild One!* The Brits seemed to rule rebellion and rock 'n' roll for a moment there. But, just as the British invasion dethroned Elvis, Triumph to, was vanquished. Then, reintroduced in 2001 the Bonneville maintained its classic look and has sold well world wide. In 2003 we saw

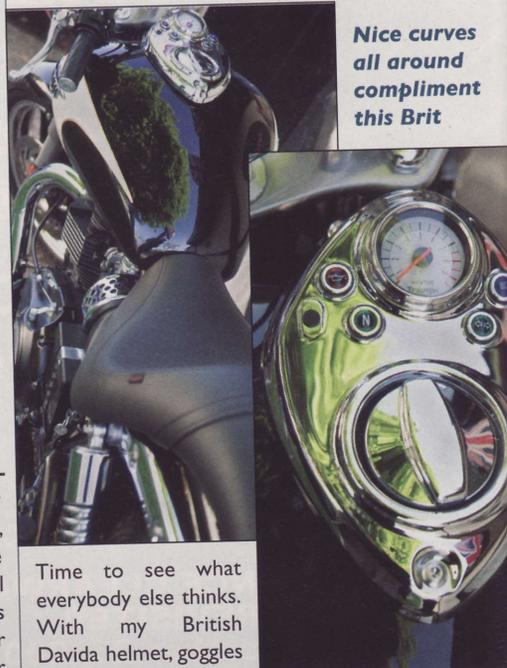
the rebirth of the America and Speedmaster with the re-release of the historic Thunderbird this year.

The Speedmaster caught my attention immediately with its modern yet classic appearance, air-cooled, DOHC parallel-twin 270 degree blacked out engine and tranny. With a pumped up 865cc motor and fuel injection for 2009 I had to ride one. This bike looks great, everything works together from the Metzler 110/80-18 dual disc front tire to the 170/18-15 rear. Slash cut pipes, gunfighter seat, 41mm forks and drag bars flow flawlessly front to back. Riding a Triumph Speedmaster is a completely unique experience.

There's no need to manhandle or muscle any part of this motorcycle. The clutch is adjustable and requires minimum effort, shifting gracefully with subtle taps. The wide plush seat is extremely comfortable;

this is a civilized, well mannered motorcycle. The broad 5.1 gallon gas tank gives the Speedmaster

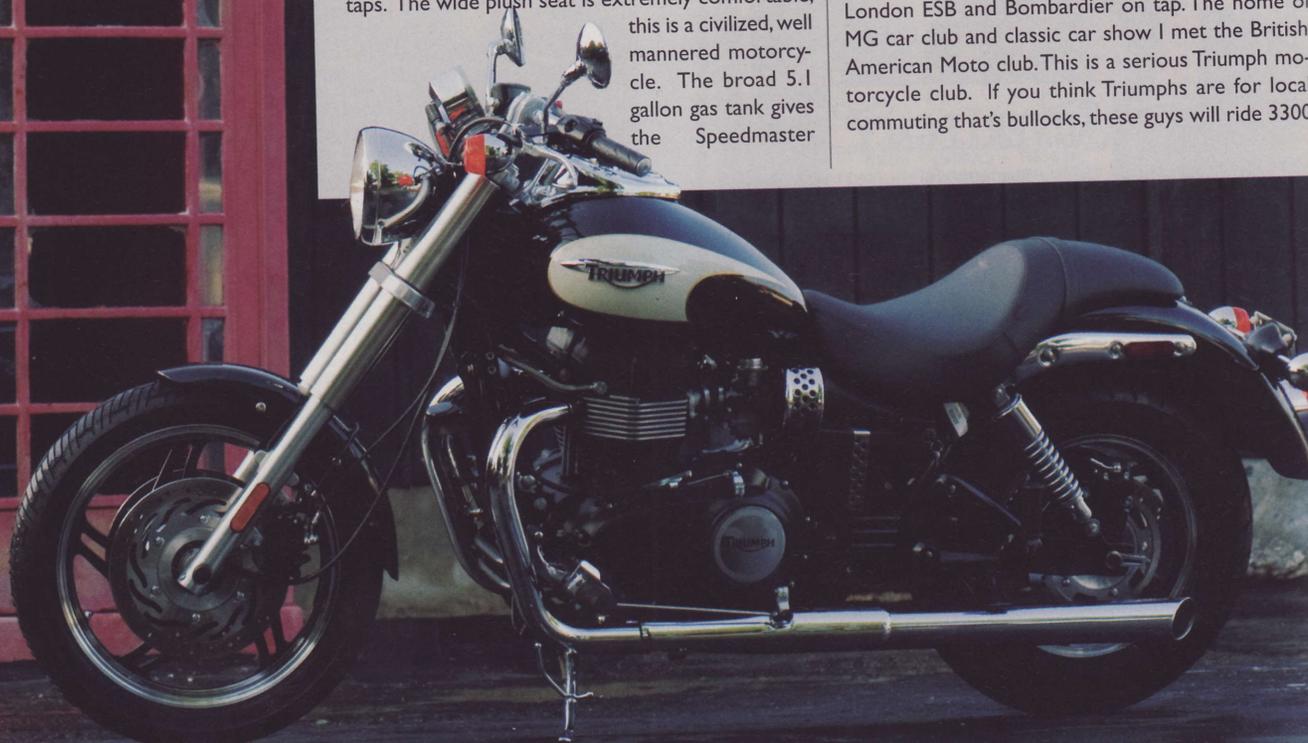
very sexy curves and some serious range between petrol stops. Weighing in at 504 lbs and low center of gravity, this middleweight cruiser is a very nimble and responsive ride. The only colors offered for 09 are Phantom Black/New England White or just Phantom Black, which only enhance its mysterious demeanor.



Nice curves all around compliment this Brit

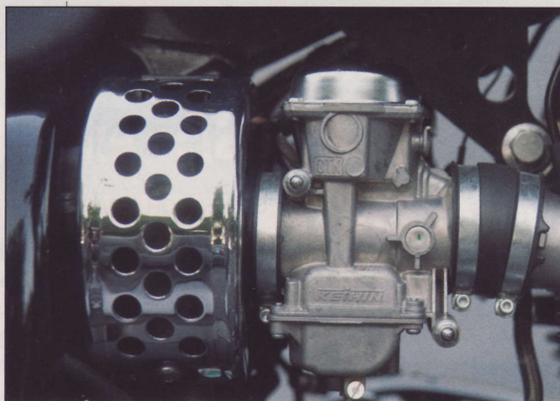
Time to see what everybody else thinks. With my British Davida helmet, goggles and rocker leathers I

embrace classic English motorcycle attire, but where are the pubs? Los Angeles is full of Pigs & Whistle's, Fox' n Hound's and Cock'n Bull's but there's sod-all here. Fortunately I stumbled onto The Olde Ship in Santa Ana. This Classic British Pub serves up quite the menu of Bangers and Mash, Fish n' Chips to Vegetarian Cottage Pies. It's the only place in town with London ESB and Bombardier on tap. The home of MG car club and classic car show I met the British American Moto club. This is a serious Triumph motorcycle club. If you think Triumphs are for local commuting that's bullocks, these guys will ride 3300



miles in 9 days! Most ride the modern Triumphs, which is a true testament their reliability. Needless to say I will be cruising with these blokes on my Bonneville test ride. Everywhere I went the Speedmaster garnered its share of attention. Several lady riders were completely astounded at how manageable the Speedmaster is.

Let's talk torque: 61bhp at 6,800 rpm it's slightly increased this year to 55ft.lbf at 3300rpm. The critical difference is maximum torque kicks in 1200 rpms earlier than last year; also new in 09 is EFI. Snapping to 100mph very quickly and cruising the L.A. freeways at 80 seems natural, with its 5 speed tranny hovering around 4300 rpm this bike doesn't feel strained. No, there's really no more throttle up here and down shifting is your best bet for any additional bursts. A 33.3 degree/153mm rake and trail, 18-inch custom front wheel with dual disc brake discs are complemented by a clean front fender and bold headlight. All the controls are well placed and easily accessible. My only complaint is we Yank's have gotten used to self-cancelling turn signals, so I forget to turn off the bleedin blinker every time! The electronic fuel injection conforms to EPA emissions and the new system claims to be five times cleaner than the older carbureted version also promising better fuel efficiency. Triumph introduces EFI with a twist however, packing the injectors into a twin carb façade, (fake carburetors) including a functional two-stage fuel-enriching choke lever. I have ridden a lot of the new middleweight cruisers and notice the proliferation of plastic, cutting costs and weight. There is no dodgy compromise with Triumph. From the cool retro instrument panel, (which includes a tachometer, thank you) turn signals, covers, tank badges to the tubular steel frame, are all pure metal. The teardrop tank and two-tone paint scheme make the Speedmaster a Triumph well worth its weight in plain old fun. The Triumph Speedmaster reminds me why I kept riding motorcycles all my life.



**Looks like a bleedin' carburetor?**

Donning goggles and the Classic Jet helmet made by Davida, the only manufacturer of helmets in the U.K., complete the British riding experience. The Classic Jet Helmet is certified to American DOT 218 Safety Standard and is surprisingly light weighing in at only 100 grams. I was also very impressed with its low wind noise. A credit to its overall shape and the handmade full leather interior. The fiberglass shell is shaped using time honored clay modeling techniques. A full range of visors can be attached to a standard 5-stud configuration and the colors and designs are inspired by street culture and racing. I got mine at Orange County Motorsports.

**Final Thoughts:** A bit lighter in weight and a little heavier in price than it's American cousin, the Sportster 883 Iron, the Speedmaster is worthy, especially for a beginner or female rider. The seat height is only 28.3 inches and the overall geometry lies lower but, at no time did this 6-footer feel cramped. A respected, admired motorcycle, even with most "American" motorcycle purists. Check out

your local Triumph dealer for a test ride and, Bobs your uncle.

Single Color - \$8,699 / Two Toned Color - \$8,899

- Olde Ship-** <http://www.theoldship.com>
- So Cal Motorcycles-** <http://www.socaltriumph.com>
- Orange County Motorsports**  
[www.otdcyclesports.com](http://www.otdcyclesports.com)
- Davida Helmets-** <http://www.davida.co.uk>
- British American Moto-**  
<http://www.ba-moto.com>
- Ron Sinoy Photography**  
[ron@ronsinoyp photography.com](mailto:ron@ronsinoyp photography.com)



### GLOSSARY OF BRITISH SLANG:

<p><b>Bollocks</b> Technically speaking it means <b>testicles</b> but is typically used to describe something that is no good (that's bollocks) or that someone is talking rubbish (he's talking bollocks).</p>	<p><b>Bob's your uncle</b> This is a well used phrase that is added to the end of sentences a bit like <b>and that's it!</b></p>	<p><b>Blimey</b> An exclamation of surprise. A corruption of the oath <b>God Blind Me.</b></p>
<p><b>Sod all</b> Nothing, non existent.</p>	<p><b>Dodgy</b> Not to be trusted. Dodgy food should be thrown away, Dodgy people are best avoided.</p>	



Looking good outside the Olde Ship Pub in Santa Ana