



RIVERA PRIMO'S BIG BEN

IT'S POSSIBLE THAT **BEN KUDON** might not be the quickest gun in the West when it comes to changing his underwear. What is certain, however, is that the 63-year-old executive director of Rivera Primo is one of a few powerhouse gents who oversee a most venerable and trusted manufacturer of American-made, aftermarket performance parts and accessories for our beloved machines. In fact, the number currently stands at more than 30,000 parts and accessories for H-D sleds. Its brute quality and enviable customer service ranks among the highest in a tough market, a market that the company has been in for 41 years. As for Ben, he's held his executive post for the last 15, largely due to his knowledge, his charm, and the fact the he does actually change his underwear, albeit perhaps slowly, on a regular basis. Just don't get him going on rolling suitcases. Or Amsterdam.

Who (or what) owns your spare time? I'm an avid gun collector, and I like to go shooting.

I haven't been hunting in many years, but I'd like to go again. However, I live in California so we won't talk about guns so much. This state changes gun laws quicker than you change your underwear.

If you weren't in the motorcycle industry, what would you do? I'd be a bank robber. Definitely. But I'm too old now. I'll keep things legit. Besides, I love my day job.

What's the best and worst thing about baggers?

From a business standpoint, the great thing is that they're so hot. They're also comfortable and can hold all your stuff. I like a bagger for its form and function, not for outlandishly customizing the crap out of it just to barhop. I mean, I like looking at them. I just don't want to ride them. Not that some guys don't do a great job customizing baggers, like John Shope and Eddie Trotta.

Does the term *bagger* seem in any way portly, slovenly, or unattractive to you? Not at all. The term *geezer glide* pinches my butt a little bit, though.

If you could have only one bike, would it be a bagger?

Yes. I've spent too much time on FXRs and customs soaked and freezing my ass off. I'm too old for that kind of crap.

How old do you think anyone should be before he seriously embraces baggers? There's no specific age I can think of. With all they're doing today, any kid can ride a bagger and look cool.

What would you give everything up for? My family ... or if I could get a couple of hours with Halle Berry, well, that would be ...

What has scared you the most? Fear comes from expecting something and having to wait, so I'm not going to say a motorcycle crash. The scariest times I've ever had were when I was in the Marine Corps, mostly during [high-altitude] training exercises involving 100' poles and ropes. I've got a problem with heights.

Who or what don't you have time for? Assholes, but I'm sure that's everyone's answer.

Personally, I have to stay away from people who are mean and egotistical.

Is it all about you? No. I'm very easy and accessible. Ultimately, it's all about cohesiveness.

When not traveling by bagger, do you favor a rolling suitcase? Absolutely. I bought this polycarbonate suitcase that's got four swivel wheels on it. It glides so smoothly over any surface. I could put a motor on it. I love that thing. In fact, it's time for me to get a new one. I think Harley-Davidson should do a line of rollers!

Who or what can change your mind? A big guy with a gun or a small guy with a gun.

Is there a motto you live by? It is what it is. That means you can't really change \$#!%, so just deal with it as best you can.

How much actual luggage space do you need before you can safely call your bike a bagger? I've been so cold, wet, and far out so many times that I'd have to say, in an ideal world, you could fill your Tour-Pak with a small inflatable house that had kickass heat.

What's been your most embarrassing moment? It's a story about being in Amsterdam. Everyone was getting annihilated. You know, it's Amsterdam. I was with some industry people who shall remain nameless, and an airplane stewardess girlfriend (now totally ex), who shall also remain nameless. We were in Amsterdam. The story is too long and what more can I say?

What brings you to your boiling point? I've got a quick temper that I've spent a lifetime trying to control. Basically, anything not done right really aggravates me.

Is this the last interview you'll ever do with *Motorcycle Bagger*? Hell, no. I love being interviewed by you guys. I'm 63 and have been doing this for 40 years. Believe me, I've had way worse interviews than this. You're a delight, Sam. [Editor's note: Ben must still be in Amsterdam to consider Sam a delight.] **MB**

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