

CUSTOM FORK COVERS FOR V-STAR CLASSICS

By PairsNPaint



When I lengthened the front forks on my 2000 Classic with 3” Billski extensions, I had to deal with the lower fork tins being too short, exposing the inner fork tube. I had followed Webslinger’s lead of making some filler pieces out of stainless roof flashing, but I wasn’t completely satisfied with the extra seam, plus to be honest, I did a hurry-up sloppy job epoxying them into place.

So I figured, “What’s the big deal? They’re just a couple of pieces of tubing, how hard could it be to fabricate some new covers?” I tried to make full-wrap covers out of the flashing material, but that was a dismal failure. I started looking on the ‘Net for sources of 2.75” OD stainless tubing. I found some but when it arrived, I found the wall thickness too thick and the pipe was way too heavy (each 12” piece weighed over 2.5 lbs!) Further searching found 2.75” OD chrome exhaust pipe, but I didn’t want to deal with the possibility of rusting where it would be cut. I eventually found some polished aluminum tubing in 18” long sections designed for custom intercooling setups at <http://www.boostcontroller.com> and this was exactly what I was looking for.

I could have just cut the tubing 3” longer than the stock tins and be done with it but I wanted to be more creative, so I decided to shape the lower ends into a point, or “fish-mouth” if you will, something I had never seen before on any custom bike. I did this by first cutting the ends with my compound miter saw at an angle to form a “V”. I then used the end of a bench-mounted belt sander to work the final shape. After I was satisfied with the first piece, I wrapped a sheet of paper around the tube to make a pattern and transferred that to the second tube to assure the two would be equal.



Tubing cut to "V" shape



Shaped with belt sander

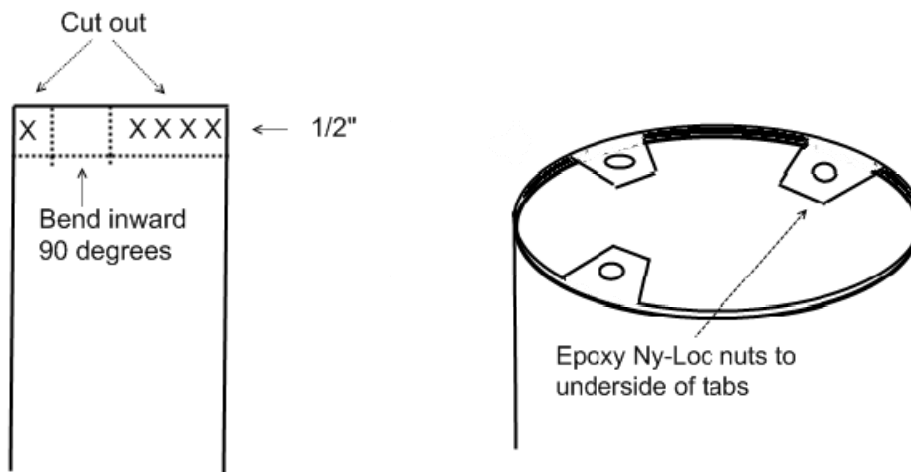
Once the shaping was finished, I had to figure out how to mount them. I had decided to polish the lower forks, triple tree, and upper stainless fork covers, so I disassembled the front end. I jacked up the bike and removed the front wheel and brake caliper, then loosened the pinch bolts on the upper and lower trees and slid the forks off (this also made it easier to polish the lower forks on my buffer). I removed the upper tree center nut and lifted the tree complete with handlebars and controls off the stem, placing a towel on the tank to protect it from scratches. I then removed the upper fork tins and the rubber isolators they sit on, exposing the three hex head bolts that hold the lower tins to the lower tree. When I removed the bolts, I saw the mounting plate for the factory tins. Basically it is a spot-welded ring with captured nuts on the underside.



I had originally planned to drill out the welds and epoxy the old ring into the new tubing, but when I placed the new tubing on top of the ring to measure it, I found that the diameter of the new tubing was just a little bit too small for that to work, plus I didn't really want to destroy the stock tins. I decided instead to fashion some tabs at the upper

end of the tube so I **measured the final length that I wanted the covers to be and added 1/2"**. I marked the tube and cut it to length then remarked it 1/2" down from the edge. Using the old cover, I plotted out where the tabs should be, making sure that the points were aligned where I wanted them to be.

I then got out my trusty Dremel with some reinforced cutting discs and sliced the tubing where I had marked and cut out the sections in between. I made the vertical cuts slightly longer to allow for the thickness of the tubing, then bent the tabs over 90 degrees. Holding the new pieces up against the lower tree, I marked the positions where the bolts would go through the tabs, again making sure the points at the lower end were properly aligned. I then cut back the tabs slightly to allow clearance for the fork tubes when they were reinserted.



Now there are two ways do the next step. You can drill undersized holes and tap threads into the metal which is a clean way to do it, though I would be wary of stripping the aluminum out. I chose to drill the holes slightly over size, then I epoxied (I use J-B Weld, it's great stuff) Ny-loc insert locknuts to the underside (metric locknuts are available from Lowe's or Home Depot). After the epoxy cured, it was a simple matter of reinstalling everything, cleaning up and final polishing.

The new tins are longer and sleeker, which I think adds to the beefy look of the Classic forks, and the unique shape of the lower ends never fails to draw a ton of "WOW's" from every other biker I've met.