

1954 K-model gas tank

A K-model gas tank comes up four days after the rolling chassis.

The 1952 K-model rolling chassis did not have a gas tank. I was the only bidder on the tank, at 500 dollars.

It comes with the cap and the threaded outlet petcock. That petcock seems impossible to find. I don't regret the cost. It is a 1954-55 tank, since it does not have mounts for trim strips. I can add those or just glue the trim on with double-faced tape.



Note how the seller is lighting the tank so you can see the dents. Another honest eBay Harley aficionado.



That petcock with the threads would probably go for 50 or 100 buck. The tank came with a genuine cap, unlike those NOS (new old stock) caps in the Harley box that are most likely counterfeit. The cap is worth another 50 bucks.



The dents in the tank are the reason it was put in the junk bin. That's a better situation than if the tank was rusted out with no dents. Everybody tells me to use Kreem or the POR stuff to seal tanks. Sorry, that is just epoxy paint, and it never works. At least not in the long term. Ask my buddy Angel, whose Shovelhead would stall when the sealer peeled off in sheets and clogged his petcock strainer.



The bottom looks pretty good, this is definitely a 500-dollar tank. To my amazement, a 1952 tank went for 900 dollars few days before. This tank is a

1954-55, since it only has mounting strips for the nameplates. The 1952-53 tank has mounting strips for thin trim strips on either side of the Harley Davidson badge. Someone had taken that 1952 tank and cut the whole bottom up to recess it so it would fit over a Sportster motor with its overhead valves. I would rather start with a cherry tank like this and weld the 4 little mounting strips for the trim.



The tank looks pretty good inside. Thing is, they don't rust out here, its at the rear where the water collects. Now that the farm lobby forces us to have a bunch of corn ethanol in the gas, the tanks will rust out even faster. Alcohol is hygroscopic, it absorbs water from humidity in the air and holds it up against the metal inside your tank. I hear there are "no ethanol" gas stations popping up all over the country. The alcohol also swells and ruins the rubber and the seals in your carburetor.



Here is a genuine authentic 1952-1953 K-model tank that sold on eBay for \$976. The 1952-53 K-model tank has trim strips that mount on either side of the badge. In 1954-56 they took them off and just used the badge for ornamentation.



Here is the left side of the K-model tank that went for 1000 dollars. Pretty nice and it has the strip mounts. A lot of guy ground these off in the chopper days. I later bought a red K-model tank like this.



Best of all, the 1000-dollar eBay tank came with the badges. These are all available aftermarket, Harley themselves have re-issued the name badge.



But look at this hack job. Someone has cut the bottom of the tank and recessed it so it fits on a Sportster. Now maybe this is just me, but I would rather just weld back the tabs on the red tank I bought. Heck, you can use double-face foam tape to hold the badges and trim. V-Twin makes a repop of this great tank now, and that is my plan-C, if I can't get one of my two tanks working. With this tank you will be in constant worry that the crappy welds will spring a leak.



Oh, in case you want to see how a real Sportster tank is made, here is a picture of the bottom of a 1957 Sportster tank. The outer shell is the same, other than

the badges, but the bottom has the big divot to clear the overhead valve heads. The petcock is relocated to the right side of the tank as well.

Here is the table as I buy parts for this project.

Date	Description	Cost	Shipping	Total
Thursday, March 15, 2012	Sprocket cover	\$189.49	\$11.35	\$200.84
Wed, March 21, 2012	Engine, uncrating	\$2,500.00	\$464.56	\$2,964.56
Friday, March 23, 2012	Rolling chassis, uncrating	\$3,500.00	\$669.00	\$4,169.00
Sunday, March 25, 2012	Parts manual	\$30.00	\$0.00	\$30.00
Sunday, March 25, 2012	Gas tank	\$500.00	\$25.00	\$525.00
		\$6,719.49	\$1,169.91	\$7,889.40