

**YOU** DON'T ASSOCIATE AMERICA

with niche, cottage-industry brands much these days. The USA is the land of the manufacturing behemoth, the muscle-bound, homogenous monster, and the average Stateside consumer isn't really interested in a product unless it is made in its millions (or, as with McDonalds, served to millions) and available everywhere. Preferably in size XXXL; Nike, Gap, Ford, Budweiser, Harley Davidson. The bigger the brand, the badder and better it is.

But the brawny American mindset is slowly changing. With the financial crisis biting hard, there's a new found appreciation of quality, bespoke production, old-school craftsmanship and engineering, and one-on-one customer care and attention.

The Confederate Motor Company, for instance, is a company making big motorcycles in very small runs. Founded in 1991 in Baton Rouge, Louisiana by diehard enthusiast Matt Chambers, the two-wheeled outfit set out to create a new breed of machines using (and we're quoting them directly here) "a holistic, avant-garde process, celebrating the art of rebellion with a dogged determination to challenge the establishmentarian view of what honest 'new world' American industrial and mechanical design can be." As you can see, this is a company long on ideas with a talent for bold hyperbole.

"We are 100 per cent focused on creating the ultimate street motorcycle experience," claims Chambers. "From the outset, this has driven our interpretation of perfect two-wheeled motoring. The machine will take whatever the road has in store for it with relaxed, professional aplomb. There will be nothing between yourself and the fate of what your road has in store except honest, world-leading street



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The first bike that Confederate produced, the super bad motorscooter known as the Hellcat, sent shockwaves through the conventional motorbike fraternity. Here was a heroic and beautiful, hand-finished, collision of carbon fibre and aerospace-grade metals that looked like it had been created by a design committee featuring Frank Miller, Miuccia Prada and Marilyn Manson. "Each component, down to the washers that live on your bolts," says Chambers, "is specified for one reason only – because it is the best in the world for application upon your machine." Celebrity rebel Brad Pitt was one of the first customers to place an order.

The insane Confederate Combat Fighter, with its Tokyo-influenced, extended rear swing-arm followed a few years later but it is with their most recent model, the Confederate B120 Wraith, that the Baton Rouge crazies have really set new standards.

This model described by the company as, "quite simply, the world's most luxurious, sporting two-wheeled device" acknowledges the courageous, free-spirited nature of the American "board track" racer as its inspirational starting point. "Holistic evolution of efforts made to evolve the radial aircraft architecture of our V twin power plant through the Wraith's chassis platform architecture was mandated. Perfected balance of proportion and evolutionary brand gestalt were referenced," says the press releases. Blimey.

The Wraith has been on sale for four years now, in a limited run of just 250, but our interest in it was piqued again recently when we learned, back in December 2008, that the bike had set a new world land speed record in the A-PF 2000cc push-rod and unfaired class at the historic Bonneville Salt Flats – achieving 166.459mph and shattering the old record of 141 mph.

If you want one, you'd better hurry up, though. Only 77 of the 250 remain.

[confederate.com](http://confederate.com)

The Bench Mark gets all revved up about the Confederate Wraith  
**DARK SPIRIT**

