

# Bill Mayer Saddles Any Bike, Any Butt

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If memory serves me, the main character in "The Six Million Dollar Man" hailed from Ojai, California. You remember him, Colonel Steve Austin, in that totally cool 70s series about a pilot "barely alive" after an airplane crash. Rebuilt from bionic parts by Dr.

Rudy Wells, he was deemed to be "better, stronger, faster." Go ahead and hum the theme, you know you want to. Thankfully for us high-mileage rider types, the theme of rebuilding things to be at least better and stronger, still resonates through the hills around Ojai.

☞ *Hang out here in Ojai and Rocky will see to it your ride home is much more enjoyable.*



I'm referring, of course, to Bill Mayer Saddles. And although they aren't churning out any prototypes of supermen, they *have* mastered a time-tested system of making men, and women, feel super at the end of a long day on the road.

Bill Mayer III, better known as Rocky, is the proprietor and master saddle creator. Carrying on in the footsteps of his late father Bill Mayer II, inventor of the legendary Mayer Day-Long Saddle, Rocky and his wife Laura tend to the day-to-day operations of the business along with supervisory help from their seven dogs. If that sounds a little homey, it should. The production facility is located on their five-acre estate. What better way to start the workday than with a fifty-yard commute? The ride up their long, shaded drive reveals a welcome refuge for numerous birds and critters as well as a comfortable place for customers to wait as their custom saddles are created. That's right, with prior notice, Rocky can have you riding away on your new seat in just a few hours.

Hey, let's face it, a little ride to Ojai is never a bad thing. Easier said than done for most of us on the east coast and beyond, but we can simply send BMS the stock seat pan to ensure a correct fit, and Rocky will be more than happy to create a new perch and ship it back. Turnaround time is generally a week, but can be longer during peak riding season. Rocky likes to refer to his business as being "big time, small time." Despite shipping worldwide, he's proud of the fact that each saddle is handcrafted for each customer.



① Thin foam "scrim" for that smooth, perfect feel.

This process, in itself, begs the question: How can a saddle be custom made in California for a client in, say, New Zealand? It's not as daunting a task as you'd imagine. With each order, Rocky requests a photo of the customer with the bike to get a better visual feel for how to fabricate the new seat to the customer's exact specifications. His ability to "read butts" is a talent gained by years of experience building seats. Rocky is proud to say that whittling down the height of a seat to accommodate those challenged in the inseam is his specialty. Yet he has been known to build seats up to satisfy longer-legged clientele.

Regardless of what you want from your new seat, Rocky and his talented staff of seven full-time craftsmen strive to satisfy your needs. All work is fully guaranteed and less than five percent of all saddles are sent back by dissatisfied clients. In those cases, the seat is reworked until the customer is happy.

With countless happy customers across the globe, you may be wondering what the secret ingredient to this saddle soup really is. In reality, it's a very logical process with roots reaching back to 1971 when Bill Mayer II decided that stock seats could use a little help. He began experimenting with ideas to increase seat comfort. In 1978, he improved upon his original design of adjustable springs by using varying densities of foam. Rocky continues to use this concept of foam core technology and the BMS "perfected core" today. Construction begins with Rocky stripping

the seat cover and foam from the stock pan. He then fits and hand cuts a perfected core to reflect the customer's size, weight, and riding position. The newly reshaped core is then glued into place and hand sanded by one of his associates. Once completed, a thin layer of foam "scrim" is fitted over the top to ensure that smooth, perfect feel. The cover is then created using the "folded stitch" process. This method enables smoother stitch lines in a design that already minimizes them. Rocky goes out of his way to compliment his seven full-time associates, and with pride he admits, "I make it comfortable, they make it look good."

Bill Mayer Saddles offers customers the choice between leather and vinyl covering. Leather is, of course, a bit more expensive, but Rocky and Laura both swear by the merits of the natural option. The leather seat on the late Mr. Mayer's '92 R100GS is 10 years old and looks nearly brand new. BMS can fashion a seat in just about any color imaginable, and custom designs, within limits, are not a problem. If you have an idea, Rocky will go out of his way to work with you.

Prices range from \$359 to \$579 with the bottom line a bit higher on K1200LTs and "other light trucks." Check out their current rally schedule on their website, [www.billmayersaddles.com](http://www.billmayersaddles.com). To speak with one of their reps or to give the Mayer's a shout directly, call (800) 242-7625. When they say "any bike, any butt" they mean it. RR

① Call the folks, your butt will thank you. The honchos to call for your haunches.



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