



Wild West Motor Company

Taking Choppers into the Future with Alias StudioTools

Sexy, innovative and commanding, the cruisers of San Diego-based Wild West Motor Company will leave you breathless. With signature models such as the Dragoon, Vigilante and Gunfire, it's not surprising its key software is Alias® StudioTools®. Founded in 1995 by Paul Seiter, a Mechanical Engineer, Wild West Motor Company designs, tests, tools and manufactures some of the most exotic, high performance machines in the world. Intensely focused on offering high quality, top-of-the-line premium motorcycles using technology to modernize their design, form and function, Wild West has established and pursues a well-laid plan. Since adopting StudioTools software two years ago, production has increased one hundred per cent and its manufacturing facilities have expanded two-fold into an innovative design center with a strong focus on technology.

Wild West Challenges Tradition

With an in-house design center, Wild West can now create and craft many of its motorcycles' major components allowing for total control over style and performance without facing the design limitations of outsourcing. Seiter, particularly sensitive to style, believes Alias StudioTools software has helped Wild West break away from its competition. "StudioTools offers a way for us to drive innovative designs and bring style into our motorcycles, imparting a strong competitive advantage," explains Seiter. As Wild West's competition looks to the past for their design influence, Seiter thinks trends within the motorcycle cruiser community have become retro and ordinary. Seiter continues, "Wild West's philosophy is based on pushing the limits for new designs; by looking into the future for modern technology and styling, we are taking cruisers forward, challenging the norm."

Designers Wish List

Continually challenged to produce new and unique designs under tight time constraints, Seiter feels Alias StudioTools software's "construction history" is a critical component to getting products to market faster. Seiter explains, "Prior to using StudioTools, changing a profile of a curve was time consuming; we would have to start from scratch, slowing down the entire workflow. Now, making a change to a curve 20 steps back means the entire design becomes updated at once." Wild West also previously lacked the ability to

build surface models for areas such as the tank and seat. Wild West needed software that supported organic, free flowing surfaces and shapes – something it couldn't achieve with its existing CAD system. “After thorough research, we found StudioTools was the top choice for flexibility, and it possessed the capabilities to develop original and organically shaped components while easily interacting with other applications,” comments Seiter.

From Initial Design to Final Production

Hand-built with genuine precision and sharp attention to detail, the cruisers of Wild West epitomize magnificent works of art. The crafting process begins with a vision and a careful determination of what the product should do and how it should look. Once performance-based parameters are established, the design process begins with idea sharing and collaboration of design staff, customers and dealers. The design team then explores sketches of styles and themes to determine how the design will flow.

“Sketches are imported into StudioTools allowing us the ability to snap curves to the orthographic views. These curves become the foundation of the production surfaces,” says Seiter. “Once the surface model is complete, we typically CNC machine a physical model, something tangible we can touch and feel. This process ensures the original design concept is kept pure.”

Seiter values StudioTools direct modeling capabilities. For Wild West, the software's ability to take ideas and simple sketches and refine them into working designs is crucial to a successful workflow. “We are constantly in situations where we are pulling control vertices. Alias StudioTools software allows us to take the process up a notch so it gets our designs to a maximum efficiency level without limiting our creativity.”

An iterative process follows where designers take the physical model of the surface, determine what changes need to be made and then return to StudioTools to make the alterations. This manipulation occurs in real-and computer-space giving the designers a final result reflecting their design intent. “Because of our in-house design studio, we can take a surface model to the machine shop immediately. This not only helps get the product to market quicker, but since this process can happen a few times a day, outsourcing would be very expensive taking weeks or months,” states Seiter. Eventually, a production part is built with the development of a die or mould. Seiter estimates he saves at least \$75,000 per fuel tank project by doing the design and tooling in-house.

Visionary Tool

Poised to be a significant player in the custom motorcycle market, Wild West is a visionary shaping new opportunities. The company is currently working on a new platform using Alias StudioTools software to communicate ideas to key stakeholders including financial investors, customers and dealers. Without using expensive tooling or prototypes to introduce a bold new design, Wild West plans on presenting design concepts using realistic renderings in StudioTools for collaboration, consideration and validation.

The Value of Design

For many companies, collecting a healthy net profit means having to sacrifice important creative elements of a product; for Seiter, the two go hand in hand. "Alias StudioTools has provided a great return on investment because we have been able to reach our vision of increasing sales by consistently delivering innovative designs and bringing the product to market quickly. Time to market is crucial. We measure the success of our designs through consumer interest and enthusiasm, which results in new sales and repeat business, and industry publications getting excited about Wild West's fresh new approach," says Seiter. "Ultimately, the buzz around our motorcycles is from our ability to use technology to make new and innovative concepts a reality."

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