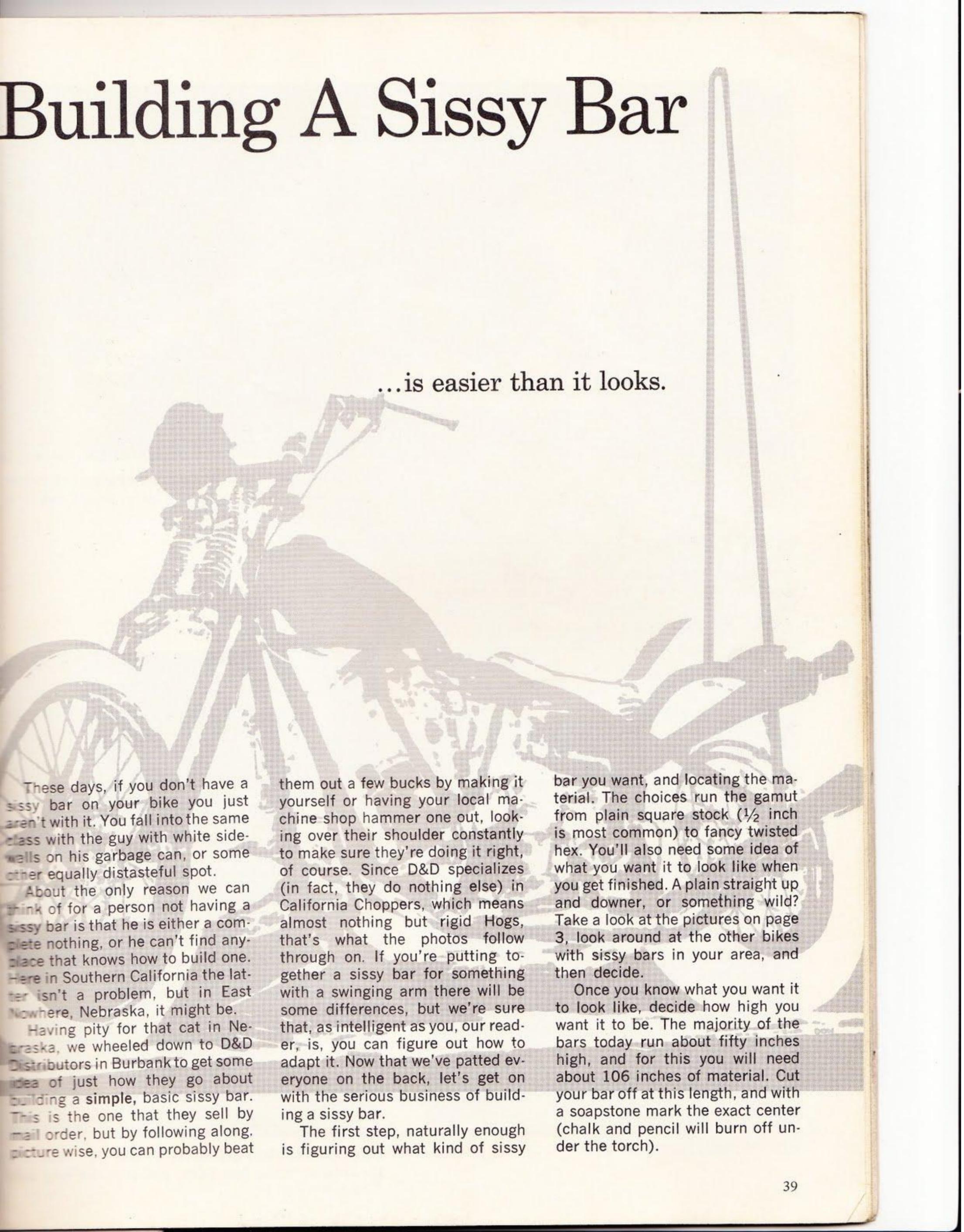


Building A Sissy Bar

...is easier than it looks.



These days, if you don't have a sissy bar on your bike you just aren't with it. You fall into the same class with the guy with white sidewalls on his garbage can, or some other equally distasteful spot.

About the only reason we can think of for a person not having a sissy bar is that he is either a complete nothing, or he can't find any place that knows how to build one. Here in Southern California the latter isn't a problem, but in East Nowhere, Nebraska, it might be.

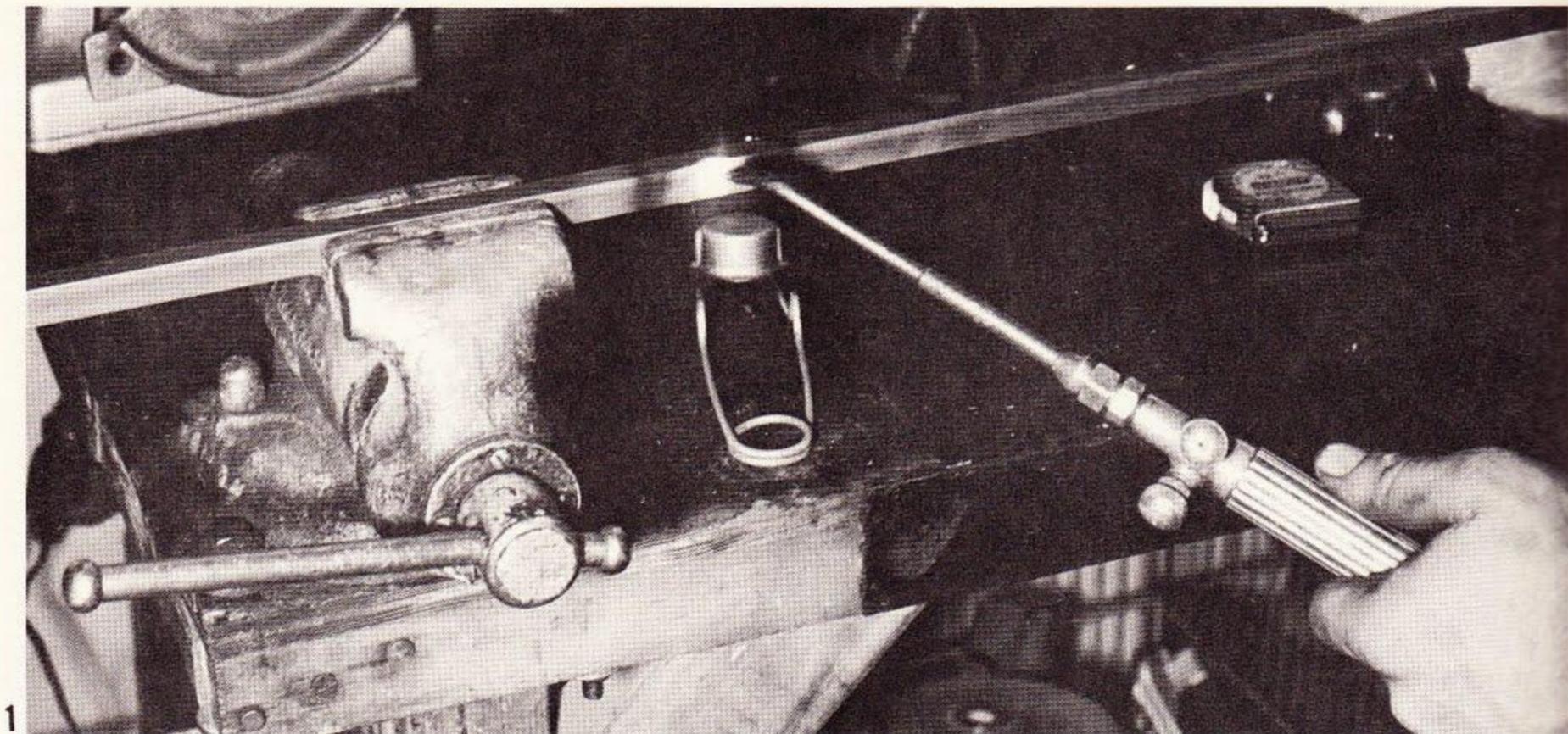
Having pity for that cat in Nebraska, we wheeled down to D&D Distributors in Burbank to get some idea of just how they go about building a simple, basic sissy bar. This is the one that they sell by mail order, but by following along, picture wise, you can probably beat

them out a few bucks by making it yourself or having your local machine shop hammer one out, looking over their shoulder constantly to make sure they're doing it right, of course. Since D&D specializes (in fact, they do nothing else) in California Choppers, which means almost nothing but rigid Hogs, that's what the photos follow through on. If you're putting together a sissy bar for something with a swinging arm there will be some differences, but we're sure that, as intelligent as you, our reader, is, you can figure out how to adapt it. Now that we've patted everyone on the back, let's get on with the serious business of building a sissy bar.

The first step, naturally enough is figuring out what kind of sissy

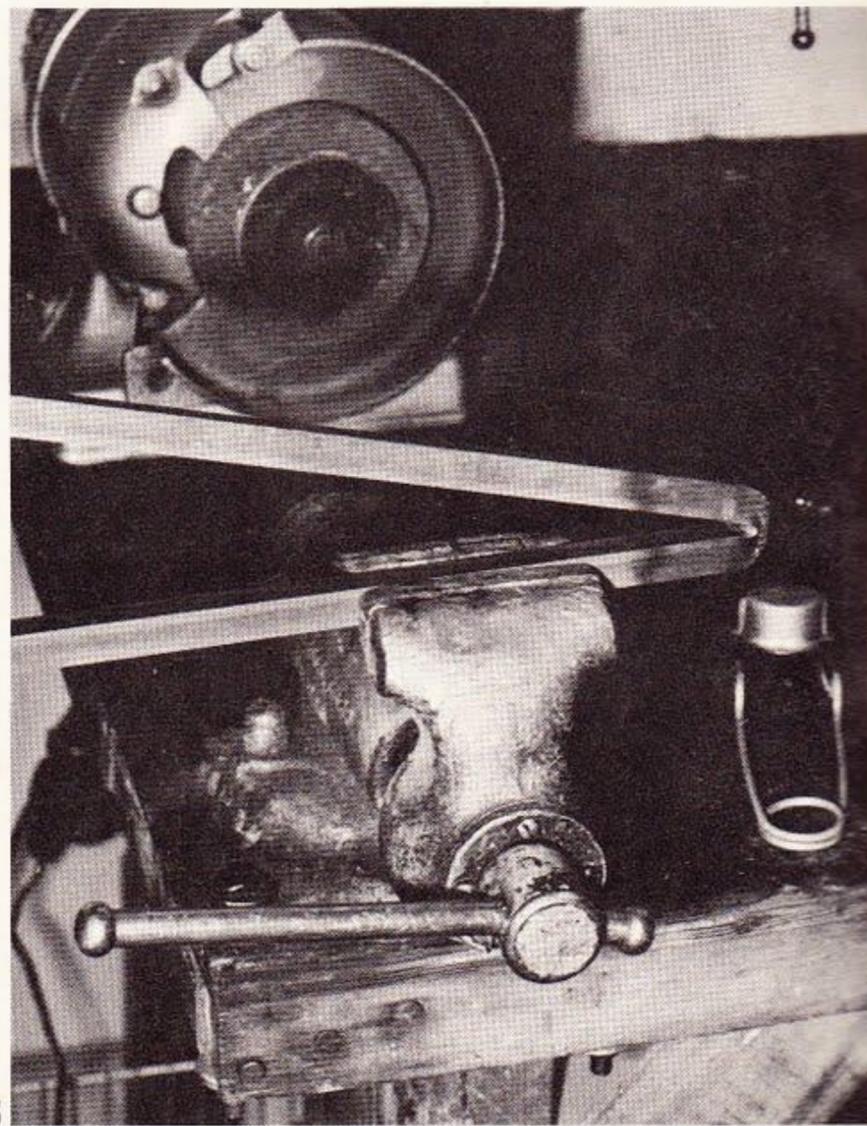
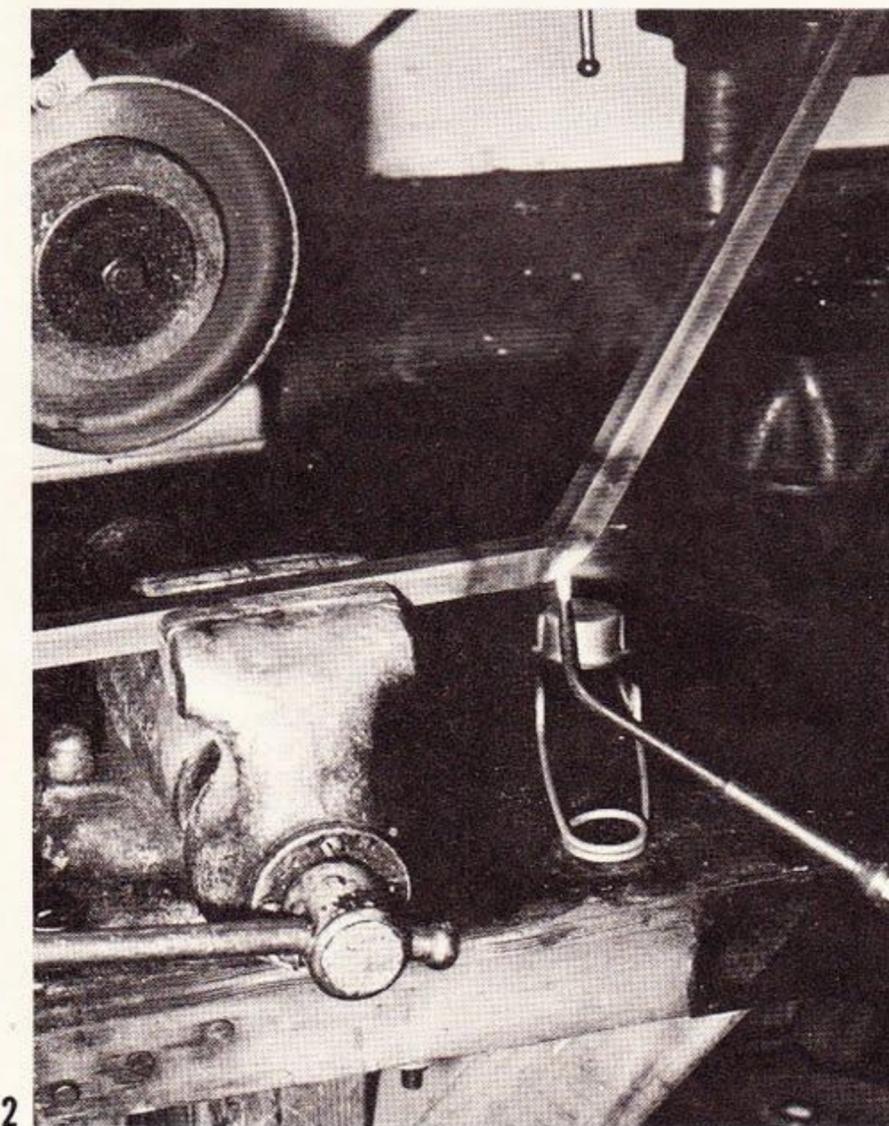
bar you want, and locating the material. The choices run the gamut from plain square stock ($\frac{1}{2}$ inch is most common) to fancy twisted hex. You'll also need some idea of what you want it to look like when you get finished. A plain straight up and downer, or something wild? Take a look at the pictures on page 3, look around at the other bikes with sissy bars in your area, and then decide.

Once you know what you want it to look like, decide how high you want it to be. The majority of the bars today run about fifty inches high, and for this you will need about 106 inches of material. Cut your bar off at this length, and with a soapstone mark the exact center (chalk and pencil will burn off under the torch).

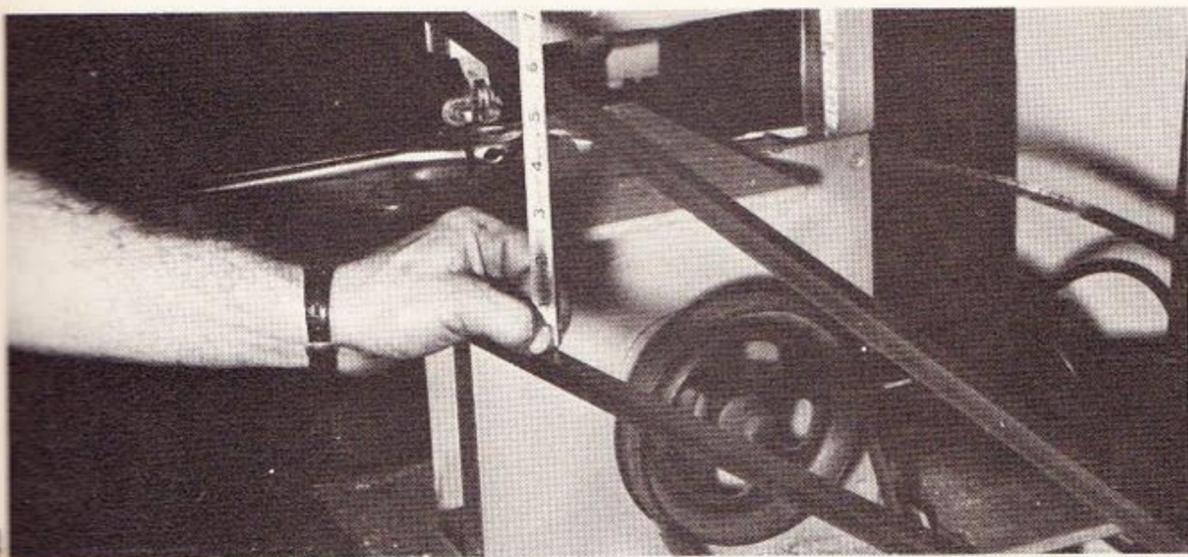


Clamp the bar in a vice and start heating the center with a torch. When it turns a nice, bright red it is ready to start bending.

As you are bending the bar keep the heat on, as this will make it much easier, and lessen the chance of you bending the bar out of true. If it does get out of true it's no big thing. A few whacks with a hammer will get it straight again, but why do the extra work if you can keep it straight to start with?



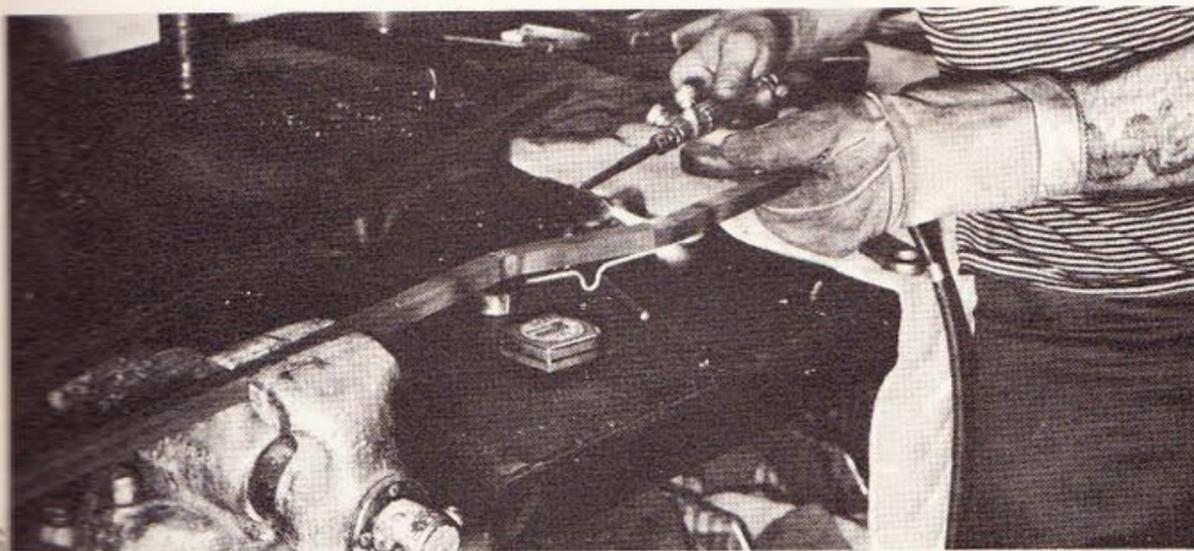
Bend the bar right around in a tight "V." Measure the lengths of the two sides, and trim the long side if they are not even.



At the point where the sissy bar will pass the fender it should be about five inches inside-to-inside, or however wide your rear fender is. Check it on your machine, and keep checking as you go along.

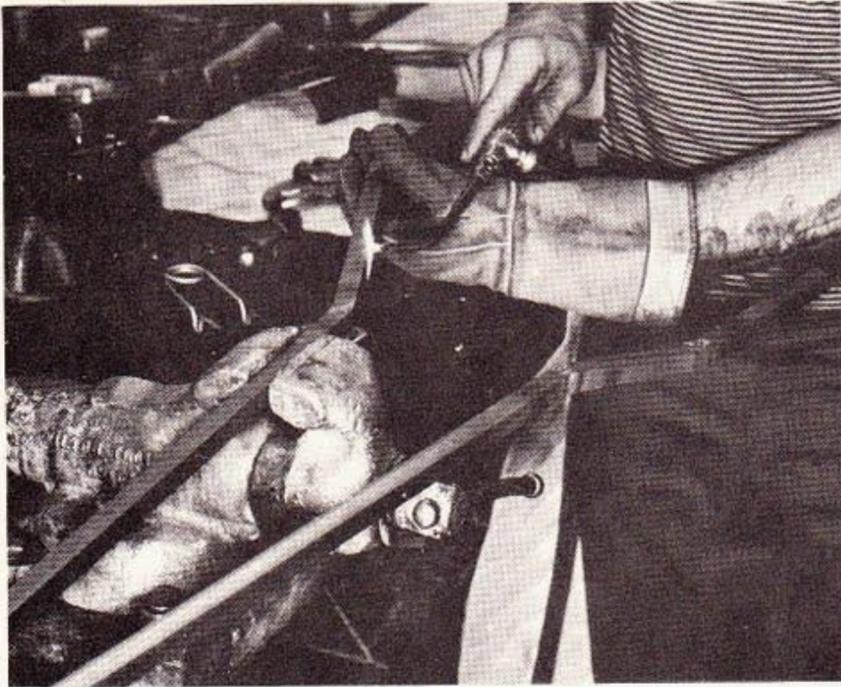


Where the sissy bar meets the top of the fender heat the bar and bend it outwards as shown. This is to clear the frame and chain.



Follow through with another bend about three inches below this to bring the bar back to its original direction.

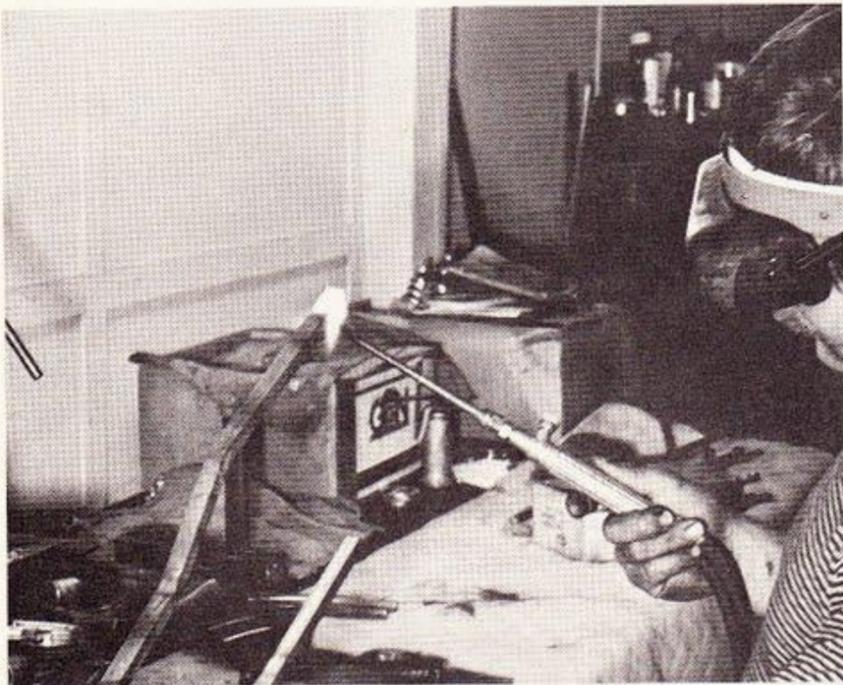




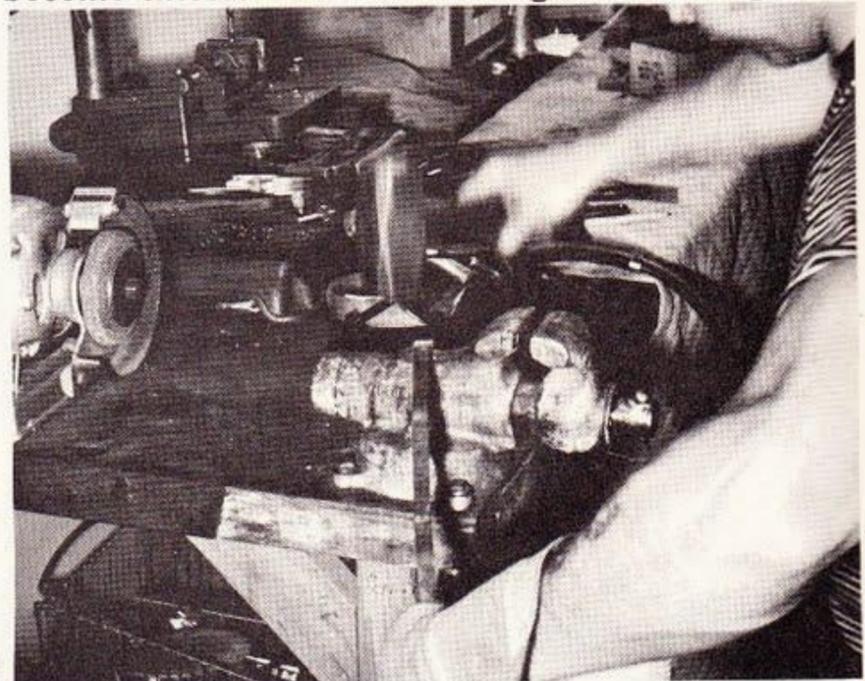
8 Now repeat on the other side.



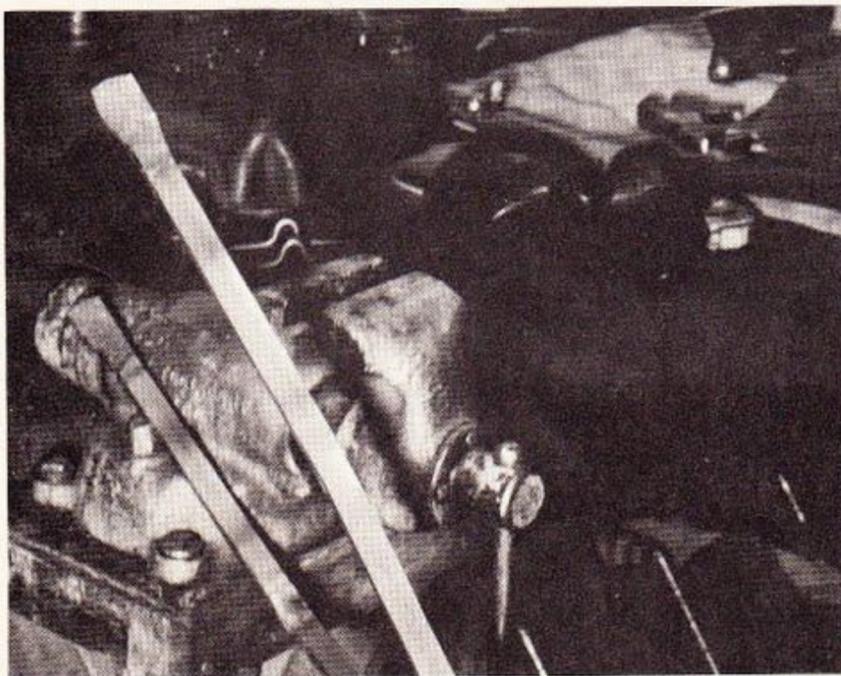
9 Stick the whole thing on the bike and make sure that everything is fitting properly, and that the bar hasn't become twisted in all the heating and bending.



10 Assuming that everything matches up, take up your torch again and heat the ends of the sissy bar, where they will bolt to the frame.



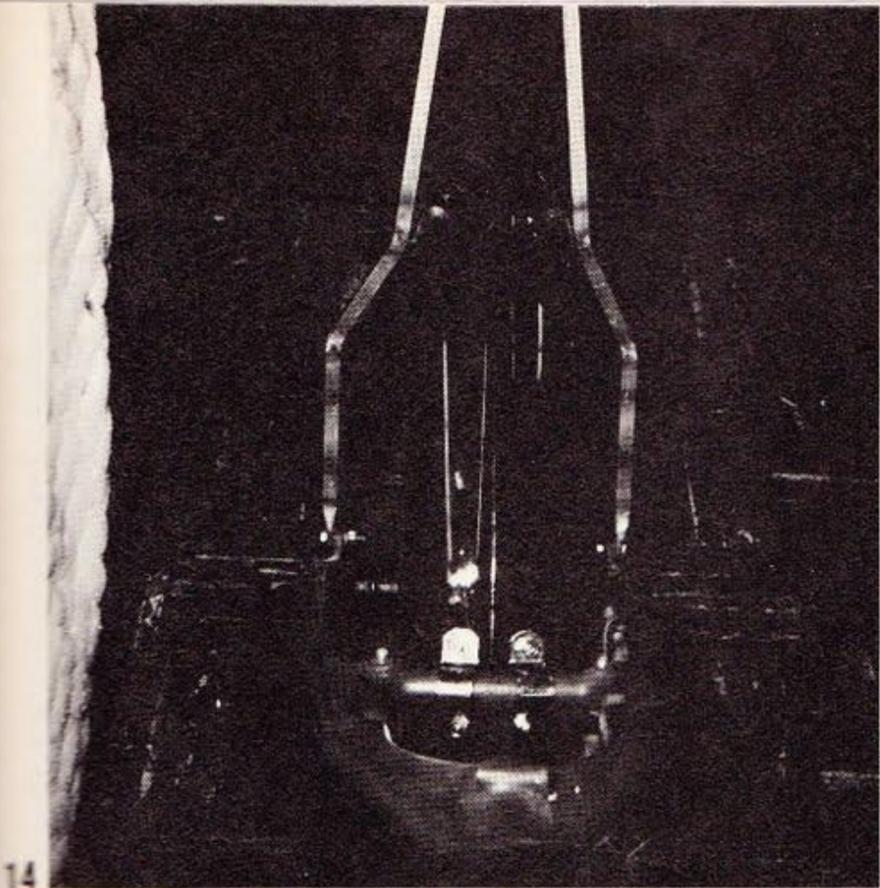
11 Take a Harley tool (heavy sledge hammer) and begin pounding on the heated end of the bar, flattening it to a tab shape.



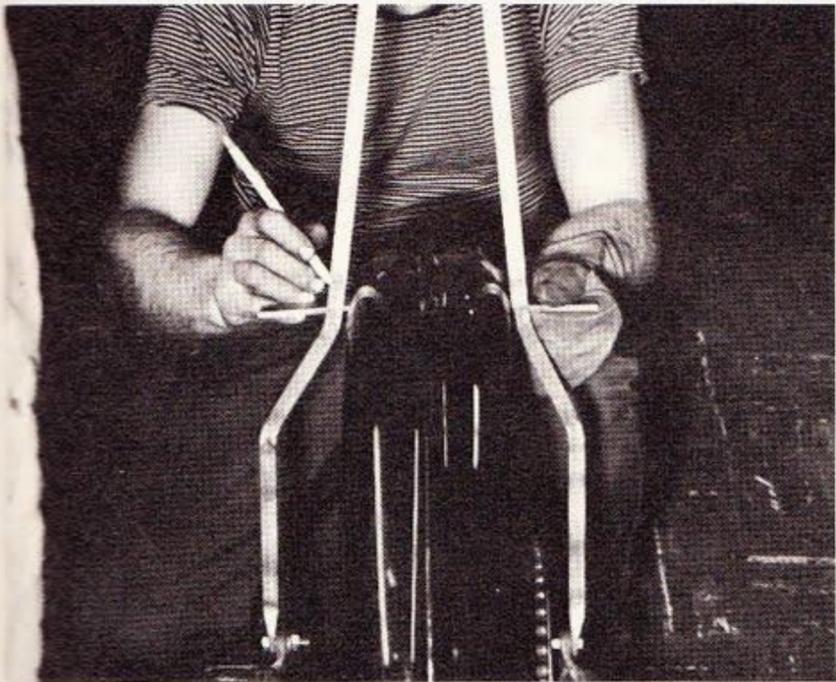
12 When finished the end of the bar should resemble a very dull chisel.



13 With a $\frac{3}{8}$ inch bit, drill mounting holes in the end of the bar.



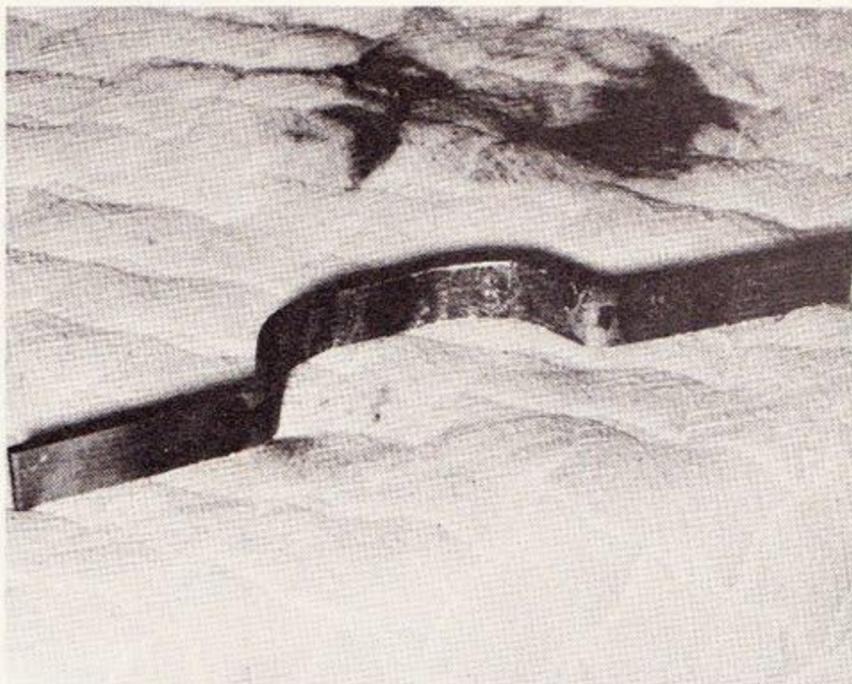
14 Bolt the ends of the bar to the fender brace mounting brackets, and once again check for straightness.



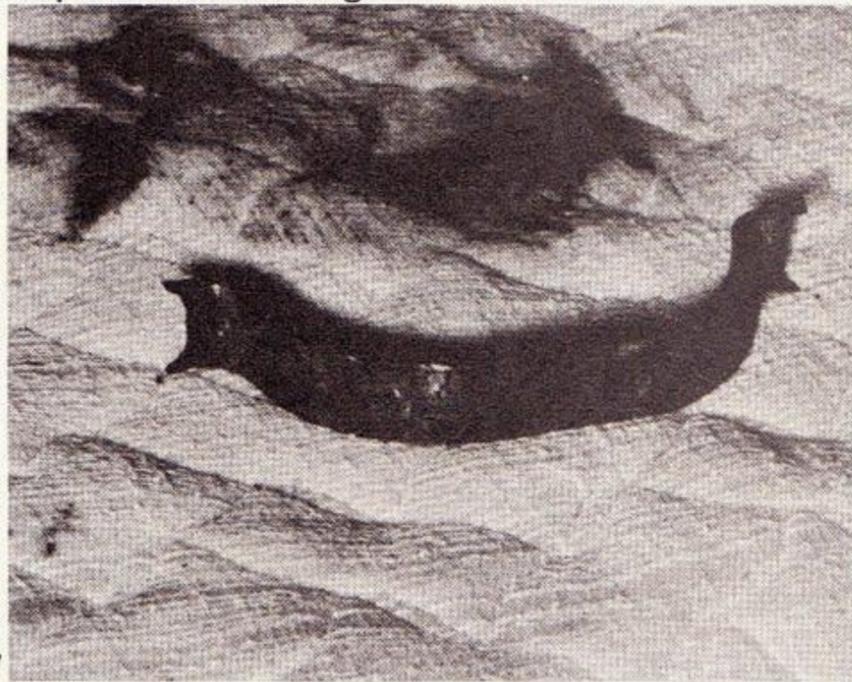
16 Slip it up inside the fender and mark the protruding ends at the halfway part of the sissy bar.



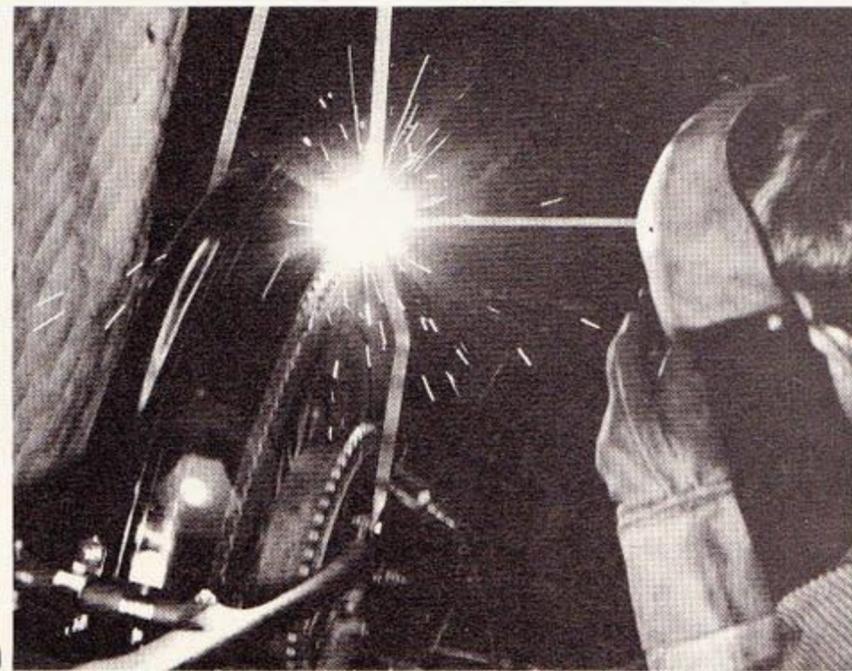
18 Slide it up inside the fender and match the ends to the sissy bar. Check everything again for straightness.



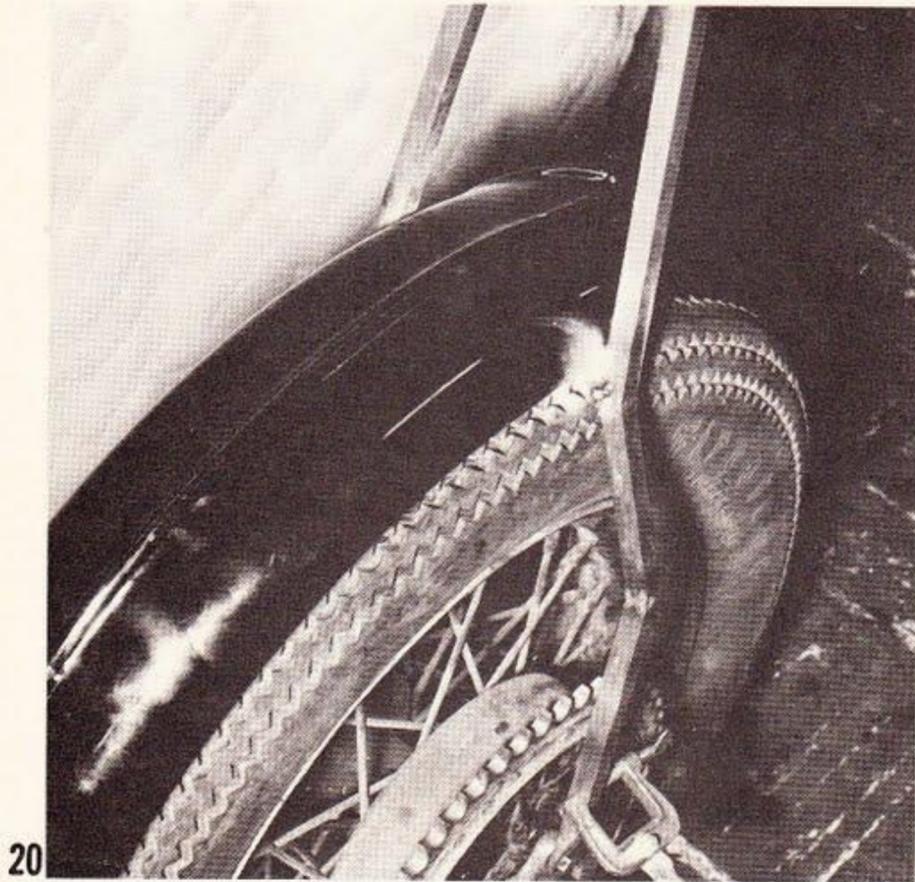
15 Take a $\frac{5}{8}$ inch by $\frac{3}{16}$ inch steel strap and, once again using the torch and hammer, bend it to the exact inside contour of the inside of your fender, leaving a couple inches sticking out each side.



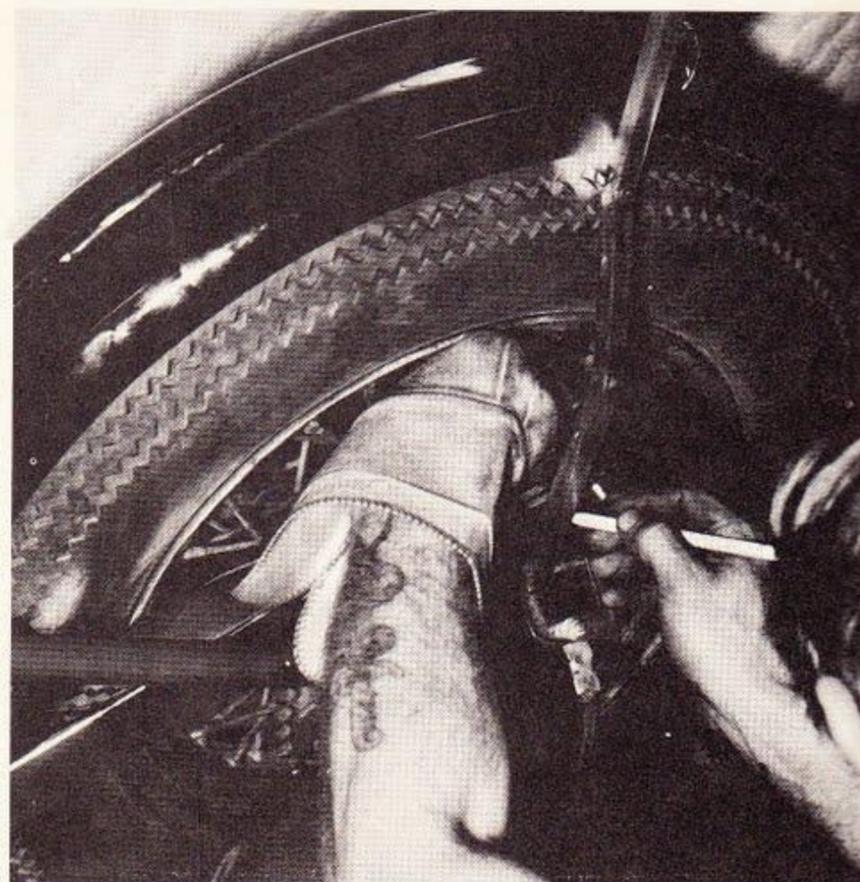
17 Now hacksaw the tabs off at the mark, and then with a file or grinder notch the insides so that the strap will fit around the inside edge of the sissy bar.



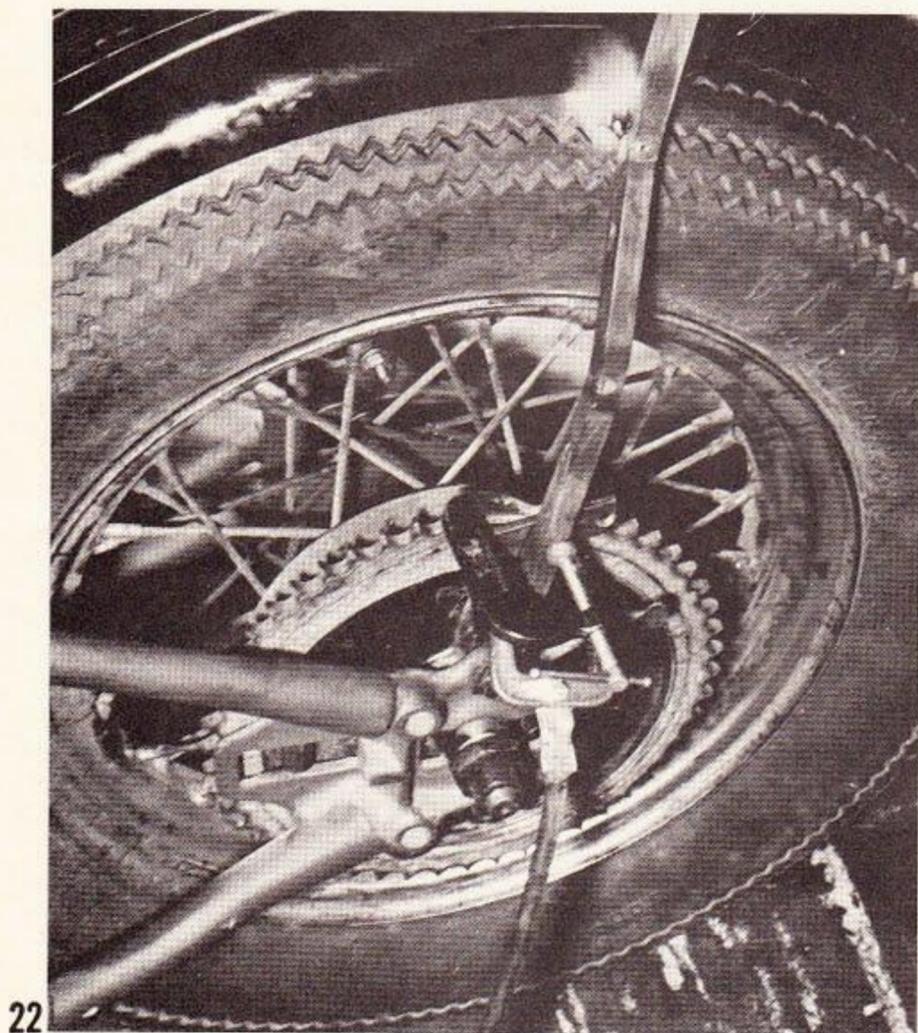
19 When you are sure that everything matches up OK weld the strap to the sissy bar on each side.



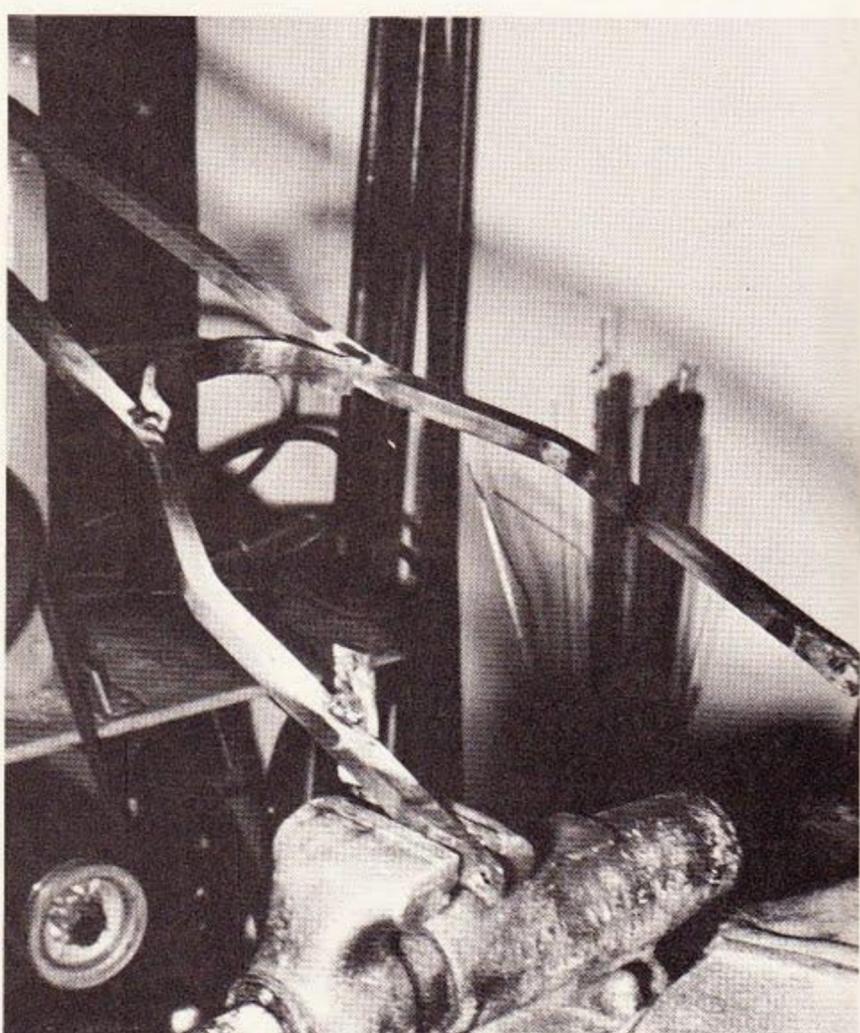
Once the bar and fender strap have been welded together on each side you have the basics of the sissy bar completed. As long as it is on the bike, you might as well drill the holes through the fender and the strap to bolt them together at this point.



Bolt the front of the chain guard to wherever it goes (the bottom of the oil tank in this case), carefully support it the proper distance over the sprocket, and mark where the chain guard support bolt passes the sissy bar.



Take another piece of that $\frac{5}{8}$ inch by $\frac{3}{16}$ inch stock, drill a hole in it for the chain guard bolt, and c-clamp it into the proper position. Bring out the torch again and weld it into place. (C-clamps have a habit of falling off when riding.)

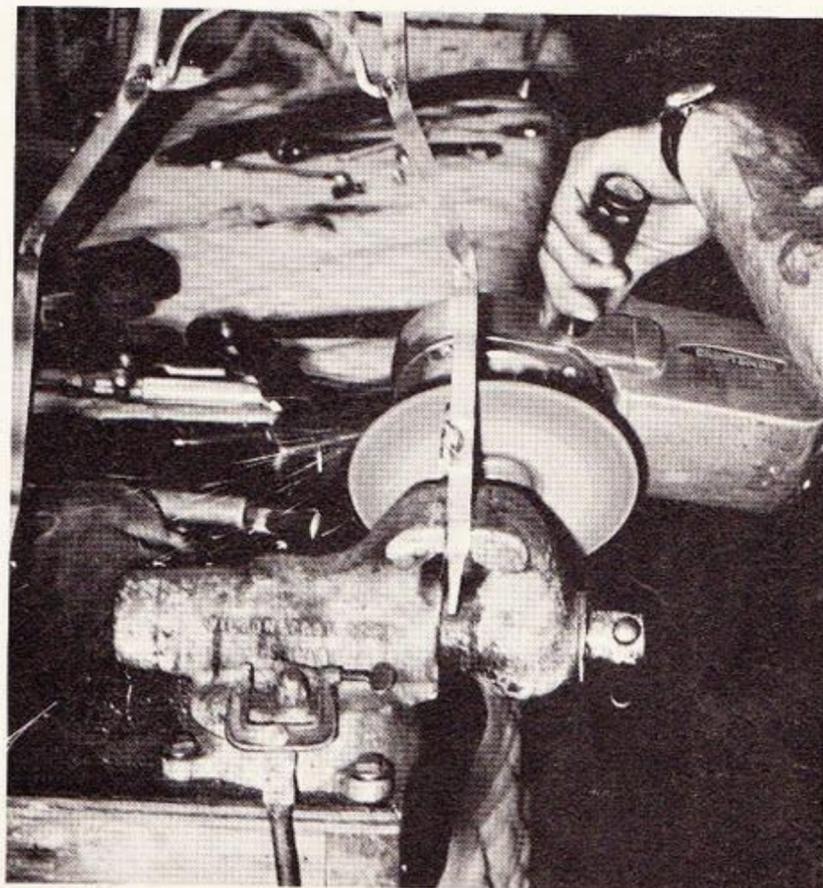


If you are going to mount the license plate or the exhaust on the sissy bar, this is the time to figure out where they are going to hook on, and weld tabs in place just as you did for the chain guard. When this is done take the bar off and put in in the vice. A hacksaw can now be used to remove the excess portions of the tabs you have welded on.



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Take a grinder and start smoothing off the welds and hacksawed edges.



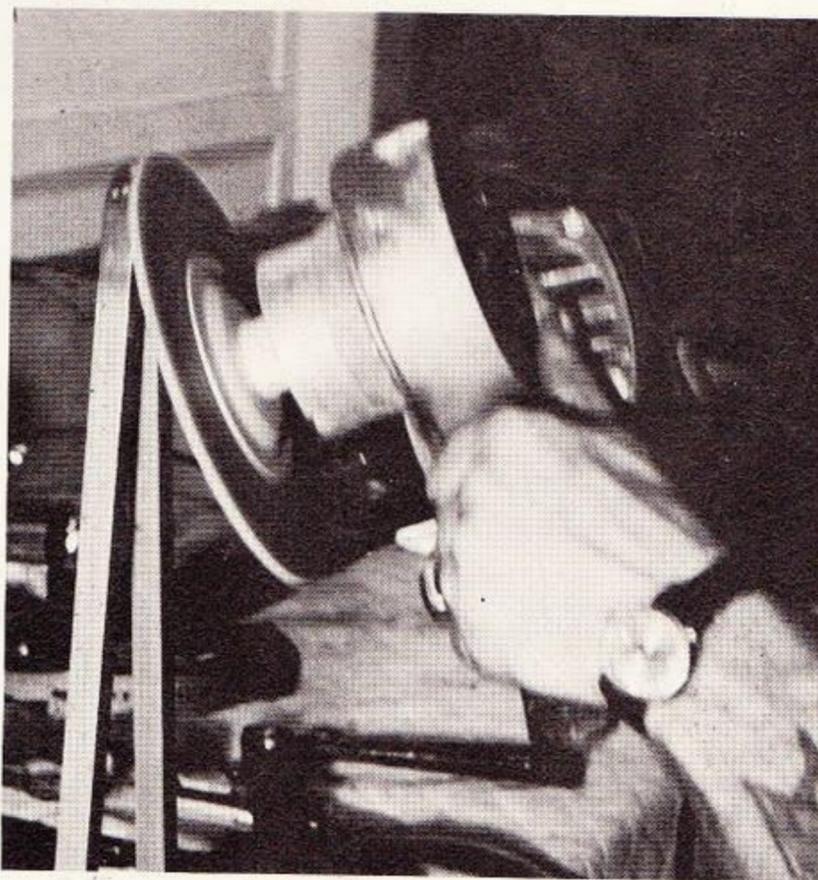
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As a final touch with the grinder, round off the ends of the mounting tabs you have installed and the wrinkles at the acute bend at the top of the bar.



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Your finished sissy bar, ready to be chromed and installed.



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