

Mikes Trike

Designlincd's Interview with
Mike Richardson

Written by Alice Ford



Designlincd has the pleasure of introducing fellow architect and colleague, Mike Richardson in regards to his homemade 'trike' and his unusual way of getting to the office each day. With three wheels and a sleek silver exterior, this little machine has been traveling the roads of Perth since 1996. Mike gave us an insight into the inspiration, creation and design of the 'Tracer MKIII.'

Q. So how did you first come up with your idea of the trike?

Whilst I was a student at Curtin, I used to ride a little motorcycle all the way from Armadale to Bentley. As a poor student, of course carrying all that extra study material and models proved to be rather difficult in the unpredictable weather. I thought to myself, surely there would be an easier way to ride and carry all this type of gear? That is when the first sketches and ideas for the trike took form. By the time it was officially finished however, I was ironically 8 years out of university.

Q. What process did you go through when constructing your initial design?

The first thing I had to think about when creating the machine was to have not only three stable wheels, but three stable wheels that could lean and turn the vehicle as well. With lots of research and investigation, I came across the Honda CX 500. I bought it and it somewhat became a donor bike for my design, as I meticulously measured it and altered it to fit my specifications and parameters. I established a good friendship with Peter Bradford, the local motorcycle man who was another lateral thinker and inventor like myself. The process however wasn't as easy as creating a design and then constructing a result, there has to be leeway between design and creation, which is not a two step process. Its iterative.

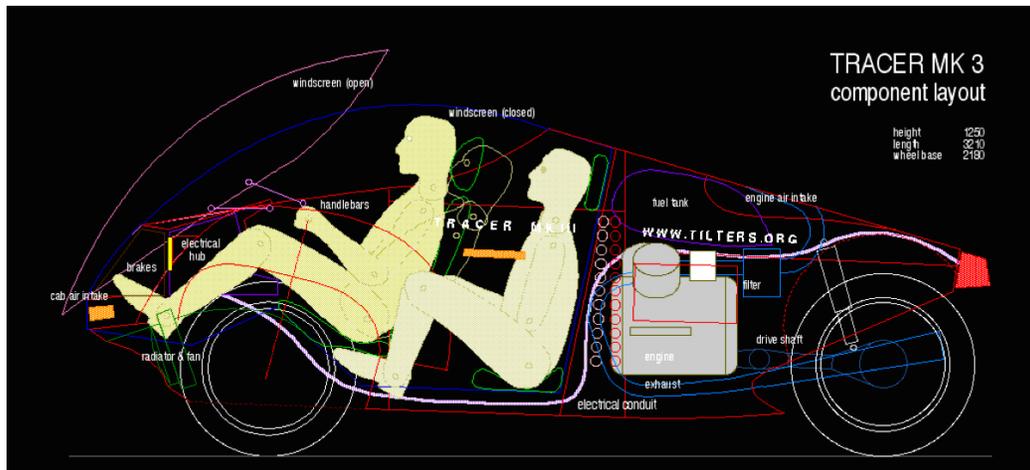
“The first thing I had to think about when creating the machine was to have not only three stable wheels, but three stable wheels that could lean and turn the vehicle”

Q. What do you think influenced your design besides its initial purpose?

I didn't want it to look home built and instead wanted it to look fast and sleek. The third model has a lot more aesthetic appeal as compared to the clunky first model, and I think this is due most to the progression of its little kinks and faults which have been solved along the way.

Q. Have there been any close calls whilst wheeling in-between everybody?

Yes there has, on Stirling bridge I was filtering between two lanes whilst the lights were red. I came to a point where I was sliding between two trucks and one decided to turn his wheel in blocking me and almost trapping me in the middle of the lane. The mudguard as a result was bent. My first model was actually crashed quite thoroughly however, as a leaning lock malfunction occurred due to my design and I crashed into a tree.



Q. Do you have any other specialized vehicles?

Besides my homemade plane, I collect a lot of bicycle parts that I tend to tinker with and many other 'three wheeler' machines.

Q. How has this machine impacted on both you and your daily routine?

I would say I have done over 300,000 km across my years during my daily commutes to work. Which is a long way to travel in a trike. I do worry sometimes about where I can park because it gains so much attention. On the other hand, I can maneuver through traffic with greater accessibility and timing, which probably improves my punctuality immensely. I'm not sure if that maneuver is illegal however.

Mike is an integral part of our Designlinc'd team, please visit us at 1/106 Stirling Highway, should you wish to find out more about our design team and Mike's trike – The Tracer Mark III.

