

WRENCHED **Sal Correa**

(Pull Magazine 2015)

Ever dreamed of starting your own BMX frame company? You better call Sal. If you have a frame that was made in the USA, chances are pretty high that they came out of Sal's shop. Sal Correa has been making frames of every shape and size for the past 30 years and continues to weld-up some of the best frames you can find in the sport. We had the opportunity to pick his brain on his life-long career and this is what one of the most notorious frame makers in cycling had to say

Full name: Sal Correa

Age: 58

Location: California

Years building: Over 30 years

PULL: How did you originally get your start in building BMX frames?

SAL: I started with a motorcycle company, originally as a polisher, and before that I was changing oil and washing cars. Back, then, the minimum wage was pretty good. After a while the motorcycle company I was with went out of business and one of the owners opened a new company and asked me to come work for him. That was in 1979 and I was working for him when (SE founder) Scot Breithaupt came over and asked us to start building the quad angle frames and Landing Gear forks for SE. That was when it really all started for me with BMX

PULL: What are some of the iconic race brands you have built over the years?

SAL: I have built somewhere around 54 brands over the years. Probably one of the biggest was building the original Condor frame for Matt Hoffman. Others are Webco, Ssquared, Crupi, SE and a lot of others.

PULL: Over the years, what do you think has been the biggest innovation in BMX frames?

SAL: That is really hard to say. Every day someone comes out with something new. It eventually circles back to stuff they did originally. At one point of another they all come out with a similar product and they are all really high end.

PULL: What do you feel is the most important thing in a frame design?

SAL: For a long time people sent me a blueprint to get exactly what they wanted. Nowadays, I am able to create them what they want just off of a simple notes with basic dimensions. At first, it was pretty hard, but now it is much easier to get my clients what they want.

PULL: Is there a big gap, quality wise, between frames made in the US and those made outside of the country?

SAL: It really depends on the people building the product. You can get good stuff, or you can get something that is not up to par. A lot depends on costs and some people love having something that is made in the USA.

PULL: What do you think is the best BMX frame that has ever been built?

SAL: Man, that is a tough one. There are some that are had to make and really awesome, like the Condor and the SE Quadangle. It is really hard to say that one bike is above all others. Each frame has its own unique qualities, but in a lot of ways a bike is a bike and you can only do so much. A big difference comes when you start using high-end tubing and hydro-form it. At that point, you can really start making some crazy stuff.

PULL: From start to finish, how long does it take you to build a frame?

SAL: Years ago it was a multiple day process. Obviously over the years I have learned a lot and now I can make a frame pretty fast. The equipment and machines make things so much easier now that it used to be.

PULL: What is the biggest myth about building a race frame?

SAL: A lot of people see the final product and think it is easy. There is a lot of time and work that that goes into each bike. A lot of it for me has been a learning process. Anyone can make a frame, but it takes a lot more knowledge to make a great one.

PULL: Is there a single frame that changed the game for you and really set off your career?

SAL: Really, the SE bikes are where it all started for me. When Scot had us start building the

Quadangle frames, the rest just kind of fell into lace.

PULL: Why haven't you ever come out with your own Sal-branded frame?

SAL: You know, I wanted to do it. People still tell me I need to do my own. It is hard though because it is a lot more work when it comes to marketing, selling and everything else that comes into play with owning your own BMX brand. Maybe someday down the road

PULL: Lastley, if you had to estimate how many frames have you built over the years?

SAL: To put it simple it is 30 years worth of frame building. I don't know for sure, but it in the hundreds of thousands.

PULL: Any final words?

SAL: This is really a dream come true. I worked for somebody else and never really imagined I would build what I have for so many years.

