

EXHAUST NOTES By Ken Conte

News, Moves & Industry Gossip



Motorcycle enthusiast **Ken Conte** is the owner of Rise Above Consulting. Rise Above is a full-service public relations and marketing firm for the V-twin industry. His company provides press releases, branding counsel and execution, marketing materials, and coordination of promotional events. He somehow finds time to put thousands of miles a year on his rigid. Ken can be contacted at 970/227-3588 or www.RiseAboveConsulting.com.

Custom Bikes, Charity Rides, Top Sturgis Events

What was hot in Sturgis this year? The place to find out was the World Championship of Custom Bike Building, where 68 motorcycles from 13 nations competed for top prizes.

The winner of the elite Freestyle class, for the third time in five years, was Roger Goldammer with his Goldmember bike, a single-cylinder, fuel-injected, supercharged sportbike with nitrous that competed in the annual Bonneville Salt Flats speed trials last September, where it set a world record with an average speed over 160 mph.

Winners were also announced in three other classes. Jim Giuffra of AFT Customs took first in the Metric class, Lock Baker of Eastern Fabrications won first in the Modified Harley-Davidson class, and Mark Klein of Delaware American Motorcycles placed first in the Production class.

Meanwhile, this year's rally saw the addition of the Legends Ride, designed as part of the Kids and Chrome program, benefiting South Dakota's Children's Home Society.

The ride brought together more than 250 Sturgis Rally participants with an all-star roster of celebrities from film, television, and the world of premium cigars for a charity event produced by the Legendary Buffalo Chip. Among those taking part in the 50-mile ride, which started on Main Street in Deadwood, were Discovery Channel bike builders Roger Bourget, Jerry Covington, Roland Sands, and Yasuyoshi "Chica" Chikazawa. In addition, Sucker Punch Sally's donated its first Destination Duo motorcycle, a limited-edition interpretation of Harley's first, Panhead-powered, dual-suspension bike from the '50s for auction.

The first-year event raised an impressive \$38,000, exceeding the expectations of Lon Nordbye Jr., events coordinator for the Legendary Buffalo Chip.

"The response we received from this year's inaugural event has been overwhelming," he said. "The 2008 Legends Ride was the start of something truly special."

Sucker Punch Sally's also used the Sturgis Rally to launch its two newest products, Original Octane energy drink and SPS Shine liquor. The launch was accompanied by a raffle to win a Sucker Punch Sally's Original Octane motorcycle.



Another new feature of Sturgis '08 was the BAKER Burnout Drags, a tournament of eight contestants racing to be the first to a fifth-gear burnout. The contest attracted several big names, like Gard Hollinger of LA County Chopprods, John Shope of SSinister Choppers, Jerry Covington of Covington's Cycle City, Eric Gorges of Voodoo Choppers, Jeff Cochran of Sucker Punch Sally's, Scott Long of Central Coast Cycles, and Brian Klock of Klock Werks. But the victory went to Bill Dodge of Bling's Cycles, who rode 1,800 miles to Sturgis, won the burnout contest, then rode home on the same bike.

Triumph Ushers in a New Golden Era

Triumph Motorcycles has announced record sales, along with plans to expand its range of products. The brand announced that its unit sales were on track to top 50,000 worldwide in 2008, exceeding the previous record of 46,700 set in Triumph's "golden era" of the 1960s.



Triumph set sales records in 2008, and hopes to top them in '09 with bikes like the new Street Triple R.

Among Triumph's new products for 2009 are an updated Daytona 675 sportbike, plus a higher-specification version of the 675, designated the Triple R, two new Bonneville models, a 50th-anniversary, limited-edition Bonneville and new clothing products. Triumph also has unveiled its new 1,600cc parallel-twin Thunderbird cruiser, set to debut as part of its 2010 model line.

Congress Passes ATV Safety Law

For years, major ATV manufacturers have voluntarily complied with a set of safety training and equipment standards regarding the use of their products, particularly by minors. Now, those voluntary standards are becoming law after legislators added an ATV safety provision to a bill that has passed the House and Senate, and was awaiting the signature of the president at press time.

The provision was created in response to the increasing number of ATV companies, mostly from China, that have entered the market and do not comply with the current safety standards. Sales of these non-compliant ATVs account for an estimated one third of new sales in the US. The new provision will require these companies to adhere to the currently accepted standards concerning appropriate configuration and performance aspects of ATVs, speed restrictions on youth ATVs, free hands-on training programs, and the promotion of helmets and other proper gear.

MotoStars Debuts at AMA Museum

The Motorcycle Hall of Fame Museum at the American Motorcyclist Association headquarters in Pickerington, Ohio, has opened three new exhibits, including MotoStars: Celebrities + Motorcycles.

The display focuses on more than 100 well-known riders, including NASCAR's Jim France, actors Tom Arnold and Robert Patrick, and guitarist Neal Schon of Journey, plus the Triumph Bonneville Scrambler ridden by Tom Cruise in *Mission Impossible III*.



MotoStars is now open at the Motorcycle Hall of Fame Museum.

MotoStars will be on display through spring 2009.

The museum has also unveiled a tribute to custom motorcycle designer and builder Arlen Ness, titled *Awesome-Ness*.

Curated by photographer Michael Lichter, the exhibit features 11 of Ness' significant creations, including *Untouchable*,



Arlen Ness and Nesstalgia.

the 1947 Knucklehead that launched Ness' career; *Two Bad*, his 2000cc twin-engine Sportster; *Ness-Tique*, a modern custom inspired by a 1903 Harley-Davidson depicted on a Cartier trophy he won at a Harley-Davidson ride-in show; *Red Flame Chopper*, a straightforward, high-bar bike inspired by his first Knucklehead; *Top Banana*, winner of top honors on Discovery Channel's *Biker Build Off*; *Overhead Cam Sportster*, a one-off 1200cc with sportbike styling that Ness

keeps in his office; *Mach Ness*, his helicopter turbine-powered bike; *Smooth-Ness*, modeled after a bronze of a 1932 Bugatti Roadster; *Ferrari Bike*, which evokes the iconic Italian automobiles; and *Nesstalgia*, inspired by a classic 1957 Chevy.

Awesome-Ness will run through June 2009.

The final new exhibit at the museum is a display of photography from motorcycle aficionado Dawn Deppi, titled "*Red Bikes*." Deppi chose to photograph only vibrantly red motorcycles for the exhibit.

For more information, go to www.MotorcycleMuseum.org.

S&S Cycle Celebrates 50 years

As a company that started out with the simple goal of making motorcycles go faster, S&S Cycle had a lot to celebrate in June, with approximately 30,000 visitors from across the country converging on LaCrosse, Wisconsin, for the S&S 50th Anniversary Celebration.

To mark the occasion, S&S President Brett Smith asked 50 world-class builders to build custom bikes using limited-edition engines, with \$50,000 in S&S product credit to be awarded in prizes.

The Grand Champion award went to Japan's Hot Dock Custom Cycles, while Dougz Custom Paint & Fabrication won the People's Choice award. Other highlights included The Horse ride-in chopper show and two hosted rides. The celebration also raised more than \$100,000 that will be divided among three local charities: the Boys & Girls Club, the Children's Museum, and Riverfront.

The Future of Myrtle Beach

A shooting death and lewd behavior at a rally in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, prompted calls from residents for an end to the annual spring motorcycle events. But now it appears the city council may be working toward a compromise that could keep the rallies on the schedule.

Instead of banning the city's two rallies, held each May, the council is considering various proposals that include a limit of 250 vendor licenses, down from 400 issued this year, and a reduction in the Harley-Davidson rally from 10 days to seven days.

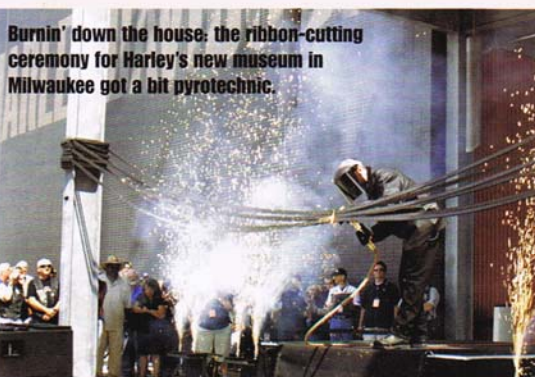
At presstime, discussions continued on these and other proposals that could result in a continuation of the Myrtle Beach rally tradition in 2009.

Harley Opens Its Museum in Downtown Milwaukee

The new Harley-Davidson Museum, located in downtown Milwaukee, opened its doors in July with a ribbon-cutting ceremony in which a motorcycle primary chain was cut with an acetylene torch.

The museum is designed to tell the stories of the people, products, history, and culture of Harley-Davidson through exhibits linked together by a chronological procession of landmark motorcycles. Vintage photographs, posters and other artifacts explain major moments in the company's history, from its beginnings in 1903 through its survival during the Great Depression, involvement in World War II, and the landmark buyback from AMF in 1981.

Four galleries delve into specific topics of importance to Harley-Davidson culture: engines, competition,



Burnin' down the house: the ribbon-cutting ceremony for Harley's new museum in Milwaukee got a bit pyrotechnic.

customization, and design.

"Harley-Davidson has dreamed about building this museum for a long time," says Jim Ziemer, president

and chief executive officer of Harley-Davidson Inc. "It adds a whole new dimension to the Harley-Davidson experience."

In addition to the exhibits, museum patrons will be able to take a peek into a portion of the company's previously private archives, home to hundreds of motorcycles and thousands of artifacts and historical photographs.

The museum is located on 20 acres of park-like green space that is open to the public free of charge, 24 hours a day. General admission tickets are \$16 for adults, \$12 for students and seniors, and \$10 for children 5-17. Children under 5 years

of age are admitted free with an accompanying adult. For information and online ticket purchases, go to www.H-DMuseum.com.

EXHAUST NOTES

Motorcycles for Moguls? The New York Times Says So

While ordinary folks are riding out tough economic times, the rich are still infatuated with high-end two-wheeled toys. At least, that's the message from the *New York Times*, which recently ran a review of the MV Agusta F4CC—list price \$120,000—under the headline “A Motorcycle for Moguls.”

\$120K? That's the asking price for MV Agusta's F4CC.



The *Times* noted that the limited-edition CC (only 100 have been made) appeals to the same crowd that pays thousands for high-end wristwatches, fountain pens, and wine. And as evidence of what it calls “a steady migration of motorcycle makers toward the top of the market,” it points to Ducati's \$72,500 Desmosedici RR, plus Indian's new line of Chiefs, starting in the 30s.

Remembering Click and Mel

The industry is mourning the loss of Clifton “Click” Baldwin and Mel Magnet.

Baldwin was the owner of Carolina Harley-Davidson/Buell in Gastonia, North Carolina, and an award-winning custom builder. He was killed in an accident while riding in Montana with members of the Hamsters Motorcycle Club.

Magnet was the founder of Rivera Engineering. He got his start importing SU carbs for Harley motorcycles, then expanded by purchasing Primo Belt Drives. He went on to develop many products for Harley motorcycles and supported scores of competitors, including champion drag-racer Jim McClure.

Become a Member of the Sturgis Museum

For the first time in its history, the Sturgis Motorcycle Museum & Hall Of Fame is offering memberships to its supporters. The memberships, which will provide operational funding for the facility, will offer museum benefits not available elsewhere.

Charter memberships are available for a \$35 annual fee. For that, members will receive an exclusive charter-member patch, free admission to the museum, a 10-percent discount at the gift shop,

a quarterly newsletter, a membership card, access to a members-only area at the Sturgis Rally, and invitations to members-only events.

Lifetime memberships can be purchased for \$500, entitling the holder to all that, plus a Life Member chevron on the membership patch, a 20 percent discount at the gift shop, and an exclusive denim jacket. Memberships can be purchased online at www.SturgisMuseum.com.

Victory Teams with Arnold

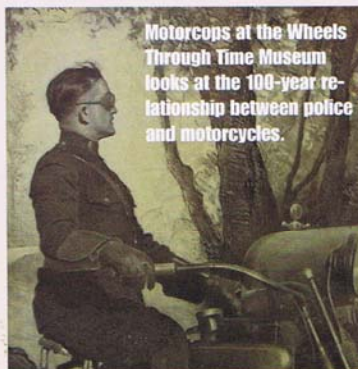
Actor Tom Arnold teamed up with Victory Motorcycles to create a custom motorcycle that was auctioned on eBay for charity. The Victory Vision Street, with its one-of-a-kind Iron Man paint job by special effects guru Stan Winston, went for an impressive \$24,655.

The auction proceeds will be donated to Operation Homefront, which helps the families of American soldiers, and Camp del Corazon, a pediatric heart patient camp for children who have undergone life-changing operations.

Victory has also teamed up with Arlen Ness to launch the Lowliner V, which combines some of the custom work the Ness family has done on Victory's Jackpot, Vegas, and Vision models into one bike.



Wheels Through Time Opens Final Exhibit



Motorcops at the Wheels Through Time Museum looks at the 100-year relationship between police and motorcycles.

The Wheels Through Time motorcycle museum in Maggie Valley, North Carolina, is opening its final exhibit before an expected closing late this year. The new exhibit is titled *Motorcops: A 100-Year Love Affair between Police and the Motorcycle*.

“Through this historically significant exhibit, the Wheels Through Time Museum will pay tribute to the men, women, and machines that have patrolled America's cities, towns, highways, and byways over the past 100 years,” says owner Dale Walksler. “We are eager to share, from past to present, the fascinating history of these two- and three-wheeled uniformed patrol officers.”

For more info, go to www.WheelsThroughTime.com.

EXHAUST NOTES

Going Electric

Has the era of electric motorcycles finally arrived? *USA Today* thinks it may have. The newspaper recently did a story on the electric off-road bike offered by Zero Motorcycles of Scotts Valley, California, and the electric maxi-scooter offered by Vectrix Corporation in Middletown, Rhode Island.

The Zero X off-road machine is powered by a 23-hp electric motor and runs for about two hours on a charge of its lithium-ion batteries, adapted from power units used on cordless construction equipment. The cost is \$7,450.

Vectrix's scooter has claimed range of about 55 miles, a top speed of about 60 mph, and a price of \$9,395.

The Harley Report: Profits Down, Italian Brand Purchases Up

As a bellwether of the industry, you can't get much better than Harley-Davidson, which has been the motorcycling success story of the past two decades. So how is the Milwaukee Marvel weathering the current economy? The answer is a decidedly mixed bag.

In July, the company announced second-quarter results showing a 15.6-percent decrease in units shipped and a 23.3-percent decrease in net income from the same quarter of 2007.

CEO Jim Ziemer attributed the decreases to the weak American economy, adding, "We expect US economic conditions and ongoing consumer concerns to continue to create challenges at least through the end of the year."

One indication of the scope of the problem in the US can be found in the performance of Harley's financial services, which saw a decrease in revenue of 43 percent compared to '07.

But while US sales may be sluggish, the company reported that it was doing considerably better in the world market, with an 11.2 percent increase in second-quarter sales in other countries compared to the same period in 2007. The other bright spots came in revenue from parts and accessories, which were up 0.9 percent, and apparel and collectibles, which were up 5.6 percent over last year.

In the face of difficult times, Harley has made some major moves, including the purchase of Italy's MV Agusta Group, makers of MV Agusta and Cagiva motorcycles, for \$108 million. The purchase contains a strange echo of the

In with the New

A roundup of significant changes in the industry, including:

- **Samson Motorcycle Products** has broken ground for its new manufacturing plant in Sturgis. The 40,000-sq-ft. plant will be the first motorcycle parts manufacturer housed in the Sturgis Industrial Park.
- **S&S Cycle** has announced voluntary separations and layoffs affecting 60 workers, mostly at its Viola, Wisconsin, facility. "This was a very, very hard decision personally," S&S President **Brett Smith** told a local newspaper. "People I've known for years were impacted. In the grand scheme of things, we make a product that people don't need to have."
- **Peterson Machine Tool** has launched a new web site featuring detailed product descriptions and specifications, product literature, and a new search function for improved navigation.
- To help support "the backbone of America," **Darwin Motorcycles** will extend its \$500 discount program for active-duty military, police, firefighters, and teachers to include federal, state, and local authorities, sheriff's departments, and employees of the FBI, DEA, NSA, US Border Patrol, Port Authority, and Coast Guard.
- **Bob Maynard**, one of the original founders and a 28-year employee with **Thor Motocross**, has announced that he is retiring from **LeMans Corporation** this fall to pursue other interests.
- The **American Motorcyclist Association** has appointed Erik Buell as a corporate member of the AMA Board of Directors.
- **Anthony "Scout" Underwood** has left **BAKER Drivetrain** to work with **Harley-Davidson** in its efforts to respond to the next generation of prospective riders. **BAKER** has announced that **Latricia "Trish" Horstman** will assume responsibility for public relations, while **James Simonelli** has joined the sales and marketing staff.
- **Kymco USA** has announced the hiring of longtime motorsports executive **Steve Lazoff** as the company's director of sales. In 23 years in the industry, Lazoff has held management positions with Suzuki, Bombardier, Outboard Marine Corporation (OMC), and Genmar.



Steve Lazoff is the new director of sales for Kymco.

past, since the company currently known as MV Agusta is a direct descendant of the Aermacchi brand that Harley owned for a time in the 1960s and '70s.

According to Ziemer, the acquisition is intended primarily to expand Harley's presence in Europe, complementing the Harley-Davidson and Buell motorcycle families.

"The acquisition of MV Agusta Group will enhance Harley-Davidson Inc.'s position as a global leader in fulfilling customer dreams and providing extraordinary customer experiences," he said. "We look forward to a long relationship with the MV Agusta and Cagiva families of customers and employees."

Twenty-five years after the disappearance of Harley's three-wheeled Servi-Car, the company has unveiled the new Tri Glide.



MV Agusta built its reputation as the dominant factory in motorcycle grand-prix racing from the late '50s into the '70s, when the company won the premier 500cc championship 17 years in a row. Today, the company specializes in a line of high-end sportbikes capped by the \$120,000 F4CC, powered by a 1078cc four-cylinder engine claimed to make 200 hp.

Meanwhile, Harley has also chosen this moment to introduce its new three-wheeled Tri Glide model, which has been under development with Lehman Trikes for two years. The new model, based on Harley's existing Electra Glide Ultra Classic, marks the first production trike by the manufacturer since Harley stopped offering its venerable Servi-Car in 1973.

Tri Glide conversions will be performed at the Lehman facility in Spearfish, South Dakota, and the bikes will be offered for sale through regular Harley-Davidson dealerships at a suggested price of \$29,999.

Harley may have taken another step toward production of a niche motorcycle aimed at a different part of the market when it purchased the trademark rights to the XR1200 name from Storz Performance Inc. Storz has been selling XR1200 dirt track conversion kits for Sportster motorcycles since 2005, and Harley recently released an XR1200 production bike in Europe, but that machine was not available in the States. No word on whether that will change with this agreement. **MSR**