



Back in Business!

Custombike Show

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There were a few hours when it was evident to everybody that the Custombike Show at Bad Salzungen in Germany was finally back in business. Three years since the last show in December 2019 there was a time, on the afternoon of December 3, 2022,

when both the exhibition halls at the Messe Bad Salzungen expo complex (near Bielefeld) were fully packed with visitors.

It was hard to find a free spot to look at the massive 260 competitor bike show stretched along the main axis of

the two halls. The Biker Build-Off action by H-D Bielefeld and Bike Farm Melle, the activities on the show stage, some 160 or more exhibitors busy serving the more than half of the 18,950 visitors who attended the three-day show on the Saturday, all

amounted to 'proof-of-concept'. One of Europe's major custom bike events is not only back in business but laying the foundation for future expansion back to - or beyond - its previous size.

In recent years, the highlight of the

'Best of Show' was won by "Cadbike 49", a 1964 Triumph T 120. Mark van der Kwaak of DBBP and Aad Hemskerk worked 14 years to make Cadbike Design #49 a real riding machine! Everything on this bike was handcrafted or highly modified.



49
1964 Triumph
All steel hot hand made stainless
Steering and handrail hand made
Hand shift and hydraulic foot clutch
Aerodynamic disappearing side stand
Bakelite moved to the right
Hidden wires, coil, oil lines & cables.
Designed by Mark van der Kwaak
Owner & builder Aad Hemskerk
Paint by KustomBart
Seat upholstery by Silver Machine
www.DBBP.com

show has been the custom bike show, of course, and the much-anticipated Sunday afternoon awards. There were 14 classes this year, plus a 'Best of Show' award. With the AMD World Championship now having announced its cancellation after a four-year break, many potential AMD World Championship competitors showed up at Custombike (as some had a month earlier at the Bigtwin Show in the Netherlands) to compete and show their handcrafted masterpieces: Ukraine, the Netherlands, Sweden, Belgium, Austria, Switzerland, Poland,



The bike show at Custombike always means a massive interest of German and European custom bike specialists as well as garage-built modified motorcycles. 260 custom bikes in 14 categories were squeezed into the existing show space - many more had to be turned away.



Czech Republic, Denmark and many more countries were among the exhibitors of the 260 strong bike show - more than 100 had to be rejected when the planned available exhibition space was running out long before the entry deadline.

The winners line-up showed some incredible engineering and design skills, highlighted by 'Best of Show' winner Mark van der Kwaak's "Cadbike 49", Aad Hemsker's super-clean Triumph T 120 and Czech Republic based Marek Foltis who, at

to fill the void left by the bankruptcy of the former promoter (publisher Huber Verlag) with one shared aim - to promote custom bike building. Both teams have agreed to continue the name of Custombike, but in ownership terms are a complete reboot, a new ownership formula arising from the ashes of the mid-2020 Huber Verlag bankruptcy. The "Custombike Show" brand name was acquired by Messe Bad Salzuffen's

Andreas Reibchen. Andreas has a strong personal interest

Biker Build-Off action by H-D Bielefeld and Bike Farm Melle

in seeing the show continue, having been the 'main mover' 25 years ago in persuading the founder of the show

(Egbert Eschenbacher of 'High Performance' magazine fame) to move the event from Mannheim up to Bad Salzuffen.

Andreas also just happens to be the owner of several authorized Harley dealerships in nearby Bielefeld, Düsseldorf and Osnabrück and is soon to open a new Cologne/Bonn dealership in Wesseling.

The other survivors of the Huber crash

'Best of Show' winner Mark van der Kwaak's "Cadbike 49"

the age of 31, constructed his own 500 cc ten-cylinder radial engine which integrated five separate compressors feeding the motor.

There were many more superb, handcrafted masterpieces that didn't make it to the stage as only the first placed trophies were handed out.

As much as this year's Custombike Show looked and felt like the traditional Bad Salzuffen showcase, this was an all-new, completely different event, continued by two organizational teams who stepped-up

"Volksracer" won the 'Best Radical' class, a VW-powered Bonneville racer. Kilian Wahl implanted a 1641 air-cooled Beetle motor, charged it with an Eaton M45 charger and fed it with a Weber 45 double carb. Rolling chassis components are modified from various motorcycle brands for just one reason - land speed records.



landing, Katharina Weber and Carsten Heil, founded Garage 21 Editions, taking on heavy financial risks to recreate the print magazines Custombike and Dream Machines. An especially risky undertaking given the current paper, print and distribution cost price explosions that are still hanging over all printed magazines. It took some time for both partners to approach each other again, but they finally did in time to organize a very successful Custombike Show 2022, with the magazine organizing the bike show and Messe Bad Salzflun fully taking over event and show organization. However, from an exhibitor perspective, the transition has been almost seamless. Even after the two-

Katharina Weber and Carsten Heil founded Garage 21 Editions and brought back Custombike and Dream Machines

show, three-year break, the exhibitor booking and set-up processes went well. The decision to only occupy the two main halls of the Bad Salzflun complex was deliberately conservative. Andreas Reibchen's declared objective is to move the show upscale with more, higher quality exhibitors and he has clearly also been mindful of the fact that it would be



'Best Old School' was won by "Digger". Owned by German custom bike enthusiast Stefan Rüll, this "Digger" was originally built and painted by Arlen Ness, very likely in his San Leandro workshop. The bike has been restored, and the tank's paintwork and style are new, but many original parts have survived.

better to under-promise and over-achieve. Many of the "traditional exhibitors" and some big names in the German custom industry were hesitant and first wanted to see if the show could be brought back successfully. One of the primary areas of concern had been the way in which the German authorities had been handling Covid restrictions - been seen by many in Germany as overly restrictive and less than commercially enlightened.

However, the show ran well and without restrictions being imposed. The major custom parts distribution names were all present - such as Zodiac International, Motorcycle Storehouse, and Custom Chrome Europe using the event as a world premiere showcase to introduce its new line of RevTech exhaust pipes for various H-D models [see report on page 34 of this edition of AMD]. Fred and Len Kodlin introduced new Sportster S parts, plus a stylish

new line of CNC-machined risers. Dutch exhaust manufacturer Dr. Jekill & Mr. Hyde introduced its new Sportster S exhaust, already mounted to numerous Sportster S conversions in the halls. The rising interest in BMW's R 18 Cruiser was highlighted on several displays, including BMW's own "Custom Booth." All variations of the custom theme were covered, showing how the concept of custom continues to evolve and broaden - delivering on the trends that the AMD World

'Best Café Racer' was won by CB-Café's "750 Four." This 1975 Honda CB 750 K6 is a great base for a "second generation" Café Racer and perfectly modified into a seventies style Café Racer. Michael emptied the frame triangle and moved the oil tank into the tail end. Drilled brake rotors are reminiscent of Honda's racing heritage, and the calipers are (scary) stock seventies.



Andreas Reibchen's declared objective is to move the show upscale with more, higher quality exhibitors

Championship harnessed at its first event back in 2004 in California and showcasing it ever since. Guus Hoogland of VG frames fame in the Netherlands introduced a radical rigid (!) frame for Milwaukee-Eight motors and a very stylish alternative rigid "Indian" frame - in which Bike Farm Melle had installed a 1162 Thunderstroke for its European Biker Build-Off winning "Purple Haze" Chopper. This year's live customizing battle was fought between two local arch rivals, H-D of Bielefeld and Bike Farm Melle (celebrating 35 years in business in

'Best Chopper' was won by Swedish craftsman Jan Andersson of FLH Chopper, who built his Dream Chopper in 2021. Based on a 1965 FLH frame, fixed "rigid" with a simple strut, the S&S Shovel motor is a very powerful addition to the set-up with a genuine 1948 Panhead Springer fork. Hakan Lindberg of Stockholm painted the flaming paint job, covering frame and sheet metal. Super-clean in typical Swedish style, this is a true rider!



2022), arguably Europe's largest independent Harley dealer and customizer and a recent addition to the growing line-up of Indian Motorcycle dealers in Germany. Both had smoked "pipes of peace" before the show, and H-D Bielefeld's stylish 'Chicano' Twin Cam took shape quickly with a very sophisticated 'Purgatory' paintjob by AHA Design's

music and, less restricted than usual by local fire regulations, the Fuel Girls from London were definitely a crowd pleaser.

Messe Bad Salzuflen dug deep into its budgets to give the show as much hype as possible - including a brand-new H-D Nightster give-away bike

coming from the combined Harley dealerships of Andreas Reibchen in Bielefeld, Düsseldorf and Osnabrück. Many 25-year veterans of the Bad

Guus Hoogland of VG frames in the Netherlands introduced a radical rigid (!) frame for Milwaukee-Eight motors and a very stylish alternative rigid "Indian" frame

Alex Henkemeier, while the Bike Farm team burdened itself with squeezing a complete packet of "Chief" electronics into the hardcore Chopper donor frame - earning the Melle team the audience's vote and the victory trophy.

Many of the other traditional Custombike show features were retained - such as the 'Wall of Death', now operated by hotshot Indian rider Jagath Perera, bike and body painting,



'Best Engineering' - without doubt one of the most discussed and ingenious bikes of the show, Marek Foltis developed and built this outstanding ten-cylinder BLOWN (!) rotary engine from scratch just to prove that it can be done! Take a look at his website www.bistella.cz to get a grasp of the skills and development work. Fuel is delivered by not one but five tiny roots blowers sitting atop the two-row cylinder design.



Bike Farm Melle founder Gerd Remmert is excited about the victory of his team at the 2022 European Biker Build-Off at Custombike. His efforts had paid off, as in just two months' time the team had VG Motorcycle designing and building a rigid frame for the stylish Indian Thunderstroke motor - and sacrificed a complete Chief Bobber to create this unique Swedish style Chopper.

Salzuflen shows visited or exhibited - familiar names such as Claus Guenther of USM fame, Robert Rost of Avon Tires and Steve Schneiderbanger (SSC). All underlined the importance of the event, not just for the German, but also

for the international custom bike industry. Custombike show at Bad Salzuflen remains the international custom bike and parts show where decisions are

made and business is done - today as much as it has been in the past 25 years. The good news for Germany and the world is that "the show will go on!" www.custombike-show.de



Drag racing was already in the DNA of Custom Salzuflen! All Harley Drags and Supertwins Top Comp Bike Dragracing returned some



Custom Chrome Europe returned in force as the company celebrates 25 years in business in 2023. Friday's unveiling presented the upcoming RevTech exhaust line, which is set to become a great addition to CCE's already huge range of exhaust systems.

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CUSTOMBIKE SHOW



Dutch exhaust specialist Dr. Jekyll & Mr. Hyde unveiled the one-pipe Sportster S exhaust at its 25th anniversary party in October. Many Sportster S at Custombike were already equipped with the system.



VG Motorcycle's frames have been part of the custom scene for decades. Guus Hoogland, creator of many custom and stock exchange frames, is now concentrating more on "special projects", being closer to his heart than mass production. At Custombike he introduced a solid wide tire rigid frame for M-8 conversions and a stylish rigid frame for Indian's Thunderstroke twin, also used in Bike Farm Melle's Biker Build-Off winner.



Custom Performance when the event came to Bad Top Gas had a permanent home. In 2022, the Super some "drag race spirit" to Bad Salzuflen!



Thunderbike of Haminkeln/Germany always displays a massive number of exciting custom bikes and parts! The company's interpretation of the Sportster S featured a set of CNC-machined covers, TB design wheels and Jekyll & Hyde's new "one pot" exhaust system. Not to mention a complete parts line for the Nightster. Andreas Bergerforth has reasons to smile!



Back in town: the Zodiac truck and display also is a long-time exhibitor at Bad Salzuflen.



Antonio Blanco, International Sales Manager at Motorcycle Storehouse, introduced new parts along with the new tools catalog.