

Rucker Copperhead



Bill Rucker of Rucker Performance in Fort Worth, Texas, has unveiled the first of his new line of custom motorcycles, the Copperhead. With a 124 c.i. S&S engine and a six-speed transmission, the base price for the Copperhead will be \$34,995.

While we can't deny the stylish custom treatment, it is a little hard to swallow the press release claims that this bike has "better handling, stability, comfort and ergonomics" than most other custom bikes. Especially when the designer makes claims that the extremely lowered seat provides a lower center of gravity, thus providing "better handling." Looking at the picture, it's a bit difficult to imagine trying to turn this bike at anything over parking lot speeds.

For more information on this and other new models due out soon from Rucker, call (817) 838-3200, or see www.ruckerperformance.com.

The Malaysian car company Proton and Claudio Castiglioni signed an investment agreement for the entering of Proton, with a stake of control, in the capital of **MV Agusta Group**.

The agreement confirms the binding offer approved by Proton's board of directors on May 25, in which Proton will submit a capital increase of 70 million euro in MV Agusta. The objective of the new partnership is to develop the presence and increase the value of Cagiva, Husqvarna and MV Agusta in the international markets.

Proton, a public company listed in the Kuala Lumpur stock exchange, is one of the main Asian car manufacturers and owner of the Lotus brand.

Ducati Motor Holding S.p.A. has presented an "official" offer for the acquisition of the majority share of **Aprilia Group**.

This offer intends to solve the recent

financial crisis of Aprilia in order to re-establish its role as an industry leader.

"Ours is a long-term industrial project," said Federico Minoli, Ducati Chairman and CEO. "We are not financial investors. We are moved by passion and we are dedicated to the success of Italian bikes worldwide. We are conscious that this success depends on respecting and enhancing the different identities of each single brand, each one directly linked with its products, its history and its territory... Our Ducati turn-around experience leaves us confident of the possibility of success and conscious of the responsibilities we are assuming versus an industry sector that has always proudly brought the Italian geniality and passion for the two-wheel industry to the world."

There will be a **U.S. GP** on the provisional FIM World Championship Road Race calendar when it's released later this summer, but will there be a race? Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca is the proposed site, but there are considerable financial obstacles to overcome, according to SCRAMP general manager Gill Campbell.

"Obviously we're still in the fact-finding stages and we're getting closer," Campbell said during an interview. "There's no doubt about it. We're inching closer. We both want to do it."

Whether they can afford it is the issue.

"It's from SCRAMP'S perspective that we've got to do whatever event is best for the facility and we certainly know that MotoGP is," Campbell said. "We've already gotten the feedback that, from a fan's standpoint, there are a lot of fans out there that would like to see a MotoGP event. We would like to accommodate that. But it's got to be whatever is best for the facility from a cost factor, from a bottom line factor, and from a promotional factor. What is the best that we can absolutely do."

According to reports in Birmingham News, a dispute between Birmingham Mayor Bernard Kincaid and George Barber **could cost Barber Motorsports Park the proposed 2005 MotoGP**.

Barber, who owns the old Sears building in Birmingham, is threatening efforts to land the U.S. Motorcycle Grand Prix and its millions in economic impact, the paper reports.

According to the Birmingham News, Kincaid wants the Barber Companies, which owns the dilapidated Sears building, to commit to making improvements to the property before he will consider providing \$250,000 a year for three years to land the MotoGP event. City officials said they would also have to provide about \$80,000 in police security for the race.

According to the Birmingham News, Barber has told the mayor in writing and in person that he would negotiate a deal on the Sears building based on fair market value. The city has not initiated discussions with Barber on the building's future, Barber officials said.

"I don't think the council would be willing to accept any kind of proposal at this point until the Sears building is done, and I'm not willing to make a recommendation until we're straight on the Sears building," Kincaid told the newspaper.

Coming up with the money to support the MotoGP over three years would be difficult when the city is having to trim its spending plans for the fiscal year 2005 budget, which begins July 1, said Al Herbert, the mayor's chief of staff to the paper.

The newspaper says that Don Erwin, vice president of corporate development with the Barber Companies, believes the race is expected to bring in up to 15,000 international tourists and thousands more from around the United States. The race would also be broadcast in 200 countries.

Kincaid said Barber committed to do something with the Sears building four years ago when the city committed to a \$1 per year lease of the motorsports park land to the foundation because of its \$55 million investment in the track and museum on the 700-acre site.

"George Barber told me that if the city would help him get the motorsports park that he would deal with us on the Sears property," Kincaid said. "He has not yet done that."

We hate to keep reporting on our friend **Bill Janklow**, but he's in the news again, following an investigation into the South Dakota Highway Patrol's habit of letting him off without citations when caught speeding—a fact that came out in his trial.

According to a new report from the Highway Patrol, Janklow was stopped by State Troopers at least 16 times during his last term as governor, but was never ticketed.

Janklow told The Associated Press that he never asked for special treatment.

"I have never in my life said to a law enforcement officer, or suggested to them that I not get a ticket," he said. "I was going on official business and I had the authority to exceed the speed limit when I had the emergency equipment on my vehicles."

While governor, he had emergency lights installed on vehicles he drove.

Janklow said he had to speed sometimes because he couldn't always fly.

"Almost every incident where I was driving as governor I was going to important things for South Dakota," he said. "I lived in Pierre. Pierre is 100 to 150 miles from

anyplace where there's concentrations of people."

A check by The Associated Press last year of computerized court-system records showed Janklow received 12 speeding tickets in 11 South Dakota counties from 1990 to 1994 and paid more than \$1,000 in fines for driving as much as 20 mph over the speed limit. The records showed no speeding tickets after Janklow became governor again in November 1994.

With U.S. prices for regular unleaded gasoline cresting at over \$2 a gallon, **Piaggio has launched a major assault** on the American automotive market, heavily targeting cities on the East and West Coasts where commuters are seeking less costly modes of personal transportation.

Other scooter manufacturers, such as Honda Motor Co. and Yamaha Motor Co., are pursuing the same market. They are betting that thousands of Americans, at least for daily runs between home and office or quick trips to the supermarket, are willing to abandon their more fuel-thirsty cars and trucks for scooters that can get from 60 to 90 miles per gallon of gasoline.

So far, according to figures published by the Motorcycle Industry Council in Irvine, Calif., that bet is paying off in terms of rapidly rising U.S. scooter sales.

MIC analysts say U.S. scooter sales rose to 84,000 last year, up from 12,000 in 1997. They are projecting a 20% increase in scooter sales for 2004, up to 100,800.

High mileage, low purchase prices and, in the case of Vespa, Italian styling flair, are boosting the ranks of scooter owners.

Certain misconceptions also are playing a role in higher scooter sales. For example, there is a popular belief among scooter shoppers that they can buy and ride the bikes with little or no training and without getting a license.

As of July 2, 2004, **all the US states now have .08 BAC drunk-driving laws**.

Signed into law by Gov. Ruth Ann Minner, Delaware became the final state in the country to adopt the .08 BAC legal standard. The District of Columbia and Puerto Rico also have adopted .08.

"We now have a law of the land. The message is clear: Nationwide, there is no room on our roads for drinking and driving," said U.S. Secretary of Transportation Norman Y. Mineta. "Tougher laws mean safer roads and more lives saved."

According to preliminary estimates, 40%, or 17,401 of 43,220 highway deaths in 2003, were alcohol-related.

When Congress adopted the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) in 1998, it provided \$500 million in

incentives to states adopting .08 BAC laws. With Delaware's approval, all states have met the requirements for those grants.

The Motorcycle Hall of Fame Museum has announced 11 new members for induction into the Motorcycle Hall of Fame, with ceremonies scheduled for Saturday, October 9, 2004.

The Class of 2004 includes some of today's best-known racing champions and industry leaders, as well as legendary figures that played a major role in creating and building America's motorcycling heritage.

The Motorcycle Hall of Fame Class of 2004 includes:

Joe Bolger—Five-time New England Scrambles Champion, mid-1960s and 1970s. Designer and manufacturer of motorcycle tools. Long-time contributing editor for *Cycle World*, *Cycle Sport*; engineer and designer, including work on Yankee motorcycles.

Willard "Red" Bryan—Eight-time National Hillclimb Champion, 1938 through 1951. Built his own engines, made heads, cast cylinders, designed and built frames.

Roy Burke—1947 Class A National Hillclimb Champion, 1952 Open Class C Hillclimb Champion, 1955 Big Bear Grand Prix winner. Motorcycle dealer.

Wes Cooley—1979 and 1980 AMA Superbike Champion. Eight AMA Superbike race wins. Member of two winning Suzuki Eight-Hour endurance race teams.

Linda Dugeau—Pioneer and Founder of the Motor Maids of America, the oldest motorcycling organization for women in North America. Motorcycle rider and enthusiast throughout her life.

E. Paul duPont—Major investor and former President of the Indian Motorcycle Company in the post-Depression years from 1929 through 1945. Saved the company from financial ruin.

Jeff Emig—Three AMA Motocross Championships, one AMA Supercross Championship. 1999 US Open of Supercross winner, 37 National victories, member of six Motocross des Nations teams 1992 through 1997.

Johnny Gibson—Winner of 1956 Daytona 200 and over 100 dirt-track, road-race and TT races. Helped organize speedway racing revival in U.S.

Steve McLaughlin—Successful road racer in the 1960s and 1970s. Winner of the first AMA Superbike race at Daytona, member of the Transatlantic Match Races team, originated the World Superbike Championship in Europe.

Steve Morehead—Career spanning three decades; dirt-track racer from 1972 to 1999. Upon retirement he was ranked tenth on the all-time AMA Grand National win list, and

MCN Online Poll Results:

"Do you regularly wear body armor when you ride?"

Yes	826	65.76%
No	301	23.96%
Sometimes	129	10.27%

Hits : 25427

Replies : 1256

See www.mcnews.com for this month's poll question.

fourth-ranked in half-mile victories. Currently operations manager for AMA Flat Track.

Dal Smilie—Passionate advocate for motorcyclist rights throughout his 35-year industry career. Longest-serving AMA Director, first American Motorcycle Heritage Foundation Chairman. Recipient of Motorcycle Safety Foundation Award of Excellence for national safety leadership.

Each year, the Motorcycle Hall of Fame recognizes individuals who have made significant contributions to motorcycling, including those known for their contributions to road riding, off-road riding and all categories of racing, as well as those who have excelled in business, history, design and engineering.

The Class of 2004 will be inducted on Saturday, October 9, during ceremonies at the Motorcycle Hall of Fame Museum, located on the campus of the American Motorcyclist Association in Pickerington, Ohio. Supported by families, industry peers, friends, past Motorcycle Hall of Fame inductees and media, the induction is an emotional celebration that brings together some of the most recognizable names in the world of motorcycling. The Hall of Fame Weekend will also feature the Museum's 3rd annual Concours d'Elegance, which drew over 100 juried entries in 2003, including many of the machines that Motorcycle Hall of Fame members became forever linked with.

Inductees are chosen by seven committees consisting of Hall-of-Famers and independent experts in various disciplines. For a nomination form and instructions, visit www.motorcyclemuseum.org.

For more information, call (614) 856-2222, or visit the Museum's website at www.motorcyclemuseum.org.