

AUTO E MOTO D'EPOCA 2023 26-29 OCTOBER

Rich and raucous

With everything from a genuine Tamburini to a top-secret MV Turbo prototype, this year's Auto e Moto d'Epoca was a melting pot of wild and interesting machines and people. The motorcycle hall of the Bologna show drew a healthy proportion of the 180,000 visitors who attended over four days

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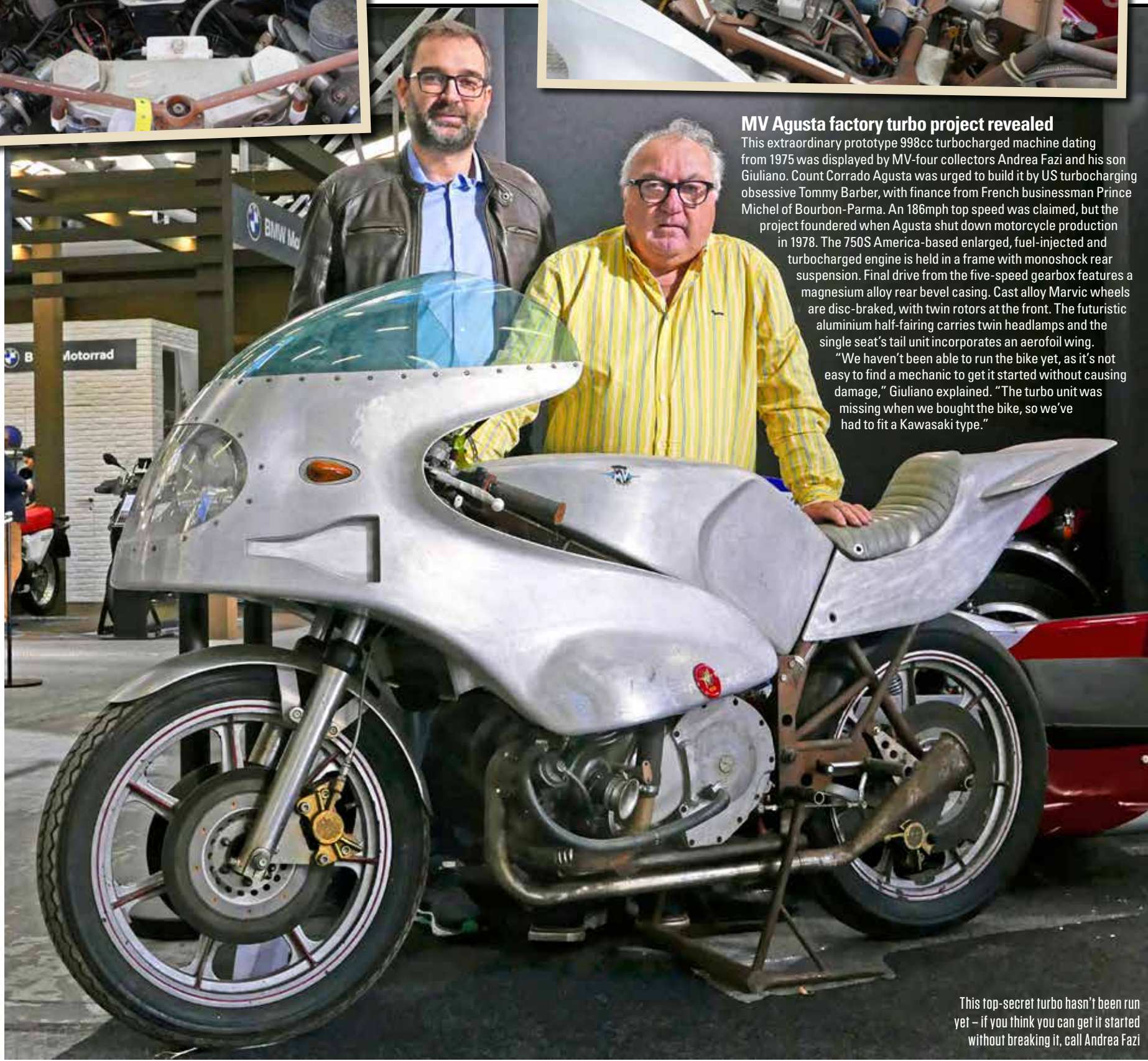


Glamorous Italian duo
Simona Tamburini and MV
special were a head-turner

Here's one my dad made earlier

Legendary designer Massimo Tamburini's daughter Simona visited the Altinier stand to take a look at an MV Agusta-based special that her father built before she was born in 1971. He transformed a 600cc MV four-cylinder shaft-drive tourer into a 750cc café racer with chain final drive and precise handling. The subsequent demand for similar beauties led to

Tamburini founding the Bimota brand along with Valerio Bianchi and Giuseppe Morri in 1973. However, the first Bimotas had 750cc Honda engines because Count Agusta refused to supply his units for series production. The special's bodywork was changed by a private owner – but because it was seen and approved by Tamburini, it remains in place.



MV Agusta factory turbo project revealed

This extraordinary prototype 998cc turbocharged machine dating from 1975 was displayed by MV-four collectors Andrea Fazi and his son Giuliano. Count Corrado Agusta was urged to build it by US turbocharging obsessive Tommy Barber, with finance from French businessman Prince Michel of Bourbon-Parma. An 186mph top speed was claimed, but the project foundered when Agusta shut down motorcycle production in 1978. The 750S America-based enlarged, fuel-injected and turbocharged engine is held in a frame with monoshock rear suspension. Final drive from the five-speed gearbox features a magnesium alloy rear bevel casing. Cast alloy Marvic wheels are disc-braked, with twin rotors at the front. The futuristic aluminium half-fairing carries twin headlamps and the single seat's tail unit incorporates an aerofoil wing. "We haven't been able to run the bike yet, as it's not easy to find a mechanic to get it started without causing damage," Giuliano explained. "The turbo unit was missing when we bought the bike, so we've had to fit a Kawasaki type."

This top-secret turbo hasn't been run yet – if you think you can get it started without breaking it, call Andrea Fazi



Globetrotting Ducati 175cc single wears its considerable mileage with pride

How do you fancy riding all the way round the world on this?

Leopoldo Tartarini rode around the world on this 175cc Ducati single in 1957. He was accompanied by Giorgio Monetti on a similar bike and their 37,000-mile voyage took them a year, visiting five continents along the way and making water crossings by ferries and freighters. Despite being weighed down by luggage, the bikes stood up well to the rough going, although punctures were a frequent occurrence. Later, Tartarini, a former Giro d'Italia winner and factory Ducati racer, founded Italjet in 1966 and as well as manufacturing his own and some Ducati machines, he deftly styled the sleek sporting Ducatis of the 1970s. After the 2004 Italjet factory closure, this bike – along with other machines – has been preserved by ex-employee and marque historian Pasquale Mesto.



Identified Flying Object: Riva racer from the 1920s

Benito Battilani displayed this otherworldly 500cc blown in-line four with chain final drive, built by racer Valerio Riva in 1929. The machine features duplex steering similar to that used by British maker OEC, and was raced unsuccessfully at Monza twice by Riva before he ran out of money for the project. At the show, Benito released his latest book, about the Riva – alongside which several other rarities from his huge collection were displayed on the stand of the ASI, Italy's main historic car and bike club. His collection, located in Imola, is open to the public by appointment.

Supercharged Bianchi racer's Libya track test

This fabulous 1939 500cc dohc four-cylinder supercharged Bianchi was displayed by the Bologna-based Righini collection of (mainly car) exotica. Designed by Mario Baldi, at a time when Bianchi's singles were being outpaced by multi-cylinder machines, its engine is unusual for an Italian four in having vertical cylinders and camshafts driven by a vertical shaft and bevels. Although track-tested at Tripoli in Italian Libya, the four was never raced due to the intervention of World War II, Baldi's death and superchargers being banned from international racing in 1946.



This blown beauty never saw a racing grid

Under the skin of an Elf

The French Elf oil giant started funding racers with experimental chassis in the 1970s and collaborated with Honda from 1980, firstly in Endurance racing and then with grand prix machines like this Elf2 of 1984. With an RS500 two-stroke triple engine, the radical 'frameless' chassis has parallel suspension arms at the front and a single-sided rear swingarm, forerunner of Honda's Pro-Arm. Unorthodox steering is by two separate push-and-pull bars. In 1986 the Elf3 with revised front suspension and NS500 engine took Ron Haslam to ninth place in the 500cc world championship.



Topless Elf 2 came from a private collection. Read how Ron Haslam helped develop the bike on page 48



Piero Taruffi thought out of the box (and the bike) when creating this World Speed Record-chaser

Outré Gilera outrigger: car or bike?

One of Italy's top car and bike racers, Piero Taruffi, broke world speed records riding 170mph supercharged Gilera-four streamliners in the late 1930s. In the post-war years, he built himself two four-wheeled streamliners, Tarf 1 (seen here) in 1948 and later Tarf 2 (also on show), for world record attempts. Aware that cars often set lower speed records than bikes due to their weight and aerodynamic drag, he hit on the bizarre twin-boom construction as a radical method of minimising both. Various engines were fitted from 1948 to 1957; when Tarf 1 had Moto Guzzi Prand Prix V-twin power, it was the first 500cc car to cover 200km (124.27 miles) in an hour. In its present form, Tarf 1 has a 350cc Gilera four-cylinder GP engine in the right-side pod.



Scott special unusually suspended

This mysterious UK-registered Scott special featured cantilever rear suspension controlled by coil springs. Its large alloy fuel tank houses a small toolbox that flips up to reveal the oil and water fillers. The radiator is behind the cylinders and an Amal Monobloc carburettor projects from the left side. Holding the machine for inspection is breaker's yard proprietor Tiziano Comini from north-east Italy, whose varied outdoor trade display included aero engines.

Auto e Moto d'Epoca
Motorcycles had a dedicated hall at Auto e Moto d'Epoca, which is Italy's biggest annual historic car and bike show. Supported by manufacturers, museums, clubs, collectors and traders from several European countries, it moved to a new venue this year – Bologna Fiere, the city's huge exhibition centre.
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