

11TH ANNUAL BARBER VINTAGE FESTIVAL

# THE BIG ONE

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STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY LARRY LA



The parking lots all around Barber Motorsports Park looked like this during the Vintage Festival. A total of just under 70,000 attended the three-day event this year.



# Vintage Meet Has Motorcycle Event

AWRENCE



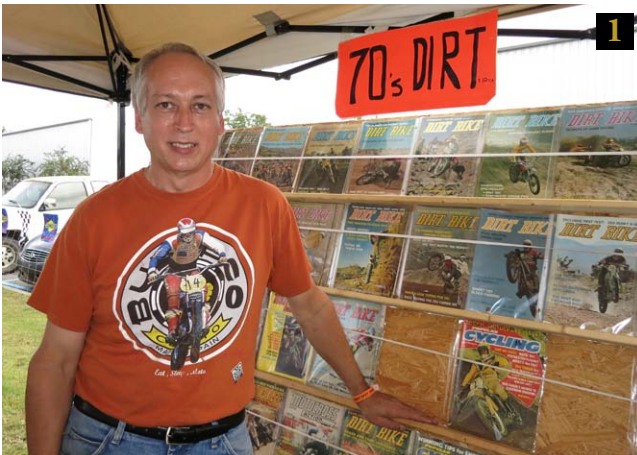
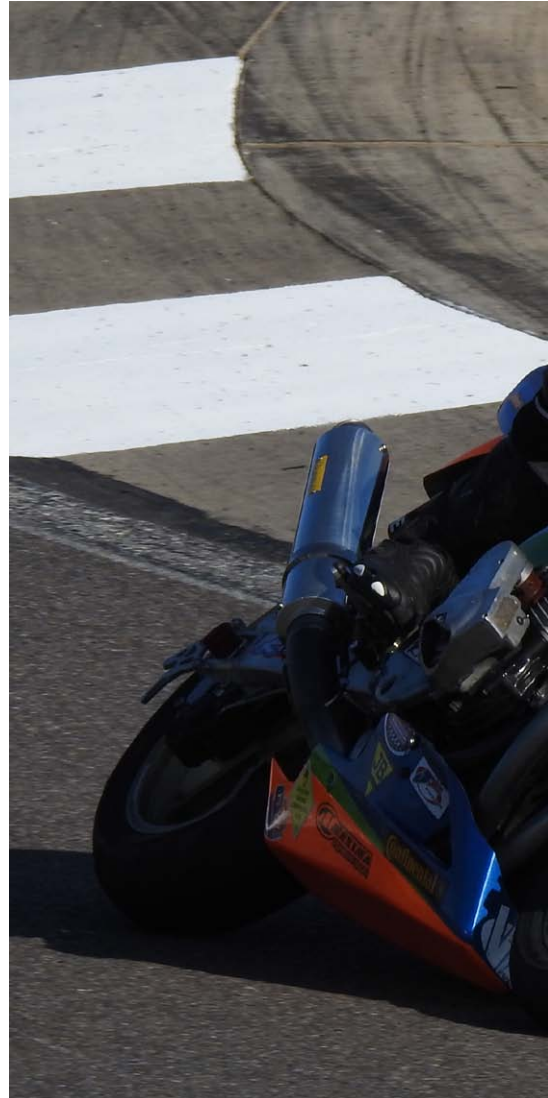


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**P**ro road racer Jake Zemke said it all when he talked about his first time coming to the Barber Vintage Festival: “I pulled into the place and my eyes got as big as saucers. I know what this place looks like with a big crowd from the Superbike races of a few years ago and even that doesn’t compare to what this event pulls in.”

This was the 11th edition of the Barber Vintage Festival and suffice to say the BVF is a BFD. It seemed that every nook and cranny of the 830 acres of the Barber Motorsports Park complex was filled with people, bikes and activity. American Historic Racing Motorcycle Association (AHRMA) road racing was the centerpiece, but there was a massive swap meet, several large vendor displays, test rides, vintage motorcycle judging contests, camping, stunt shows, sidecars, motocross, hare scrambles, trials, movies, dinners, seminars, the honoring of the Britten motorcycle and of course the Barber Motorsports Museum serving as the glittering main attraction.

The three-day Barber Vintage Motorcycle Festival has truly become one of the premier motorcycle events in America and you couldn’t wipe the smile off





Carry Andrew of Hypercycle, found his old Kawasaki Z1 AMA Superbike he raced back in the 1970s, repurchased it and brought it back to life. The Z1 was a beast. Nick Ienatsch rode it to victory Saturday and Andrew himself (pictured) took over the controls to win Vintage Superbike on Sunday.



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1 Dan Huff is the man to see if you're looking for an old motorcycle magazine. Huff had hundreds of issues for sale at Barber spanning from the 1960s to the 1990s.

2 Pete Hokenstad's Kawasaki KZ1000 Superbike has over 70,000 miles on the odometer. It just might be the high mileage king among Superbikes raced in AHRMA competition. 3 The Hollingsworth Race Team has a long and rich tradition with the Harley-Davidson Sprint road racer. Brothers Dick, Don and Al Hollingsworth are pictured here with their mother Myrtle. Both Al and Don won national championships on Sprints and Don is still racing them today in AHRMA.



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The Race of the Century featured motorcycles that were at least 100 years old.



**1** Talk about dedication! After a massive engine failure in Thursday practice, Stephen Pettinger (left) and Jason Koschnitzke (right) went through a dizzying 1400-mile, 24-hour odyssey to get their buddy Paul Elledge (center) and his Yamaha XT500 back on the track for AHRMA racing at Barber.

**2** A lot of people stopped to check out the Honda CBX six-cylinder that's raced by Will Brint (left).







the faces of the nearly 70,000 attendees.

We went to the Festival this year not exclusively to cover the races, but to try to take in the entirety of the event and tell some of the stories. There were plenty.

**The 70,000-Mile Superbike**

Pete Hokenstad may have the distinction of owning the racing Superbike with the most mileage in the country. The former MRA racer-turned vintage campaigner found a 1981 Kawasaki KZ1000 on eBay and decided to convert it into a Superbike for AHRMA road racing. As I take a closer look at the KZ Hokenstad eagerly points out the odometer to me. “I decided to keep the original odometer on the bike,” he says with a grin. “Check it out—over 70,000 miles. Only about 300 miles of it was on the racetrack.”

Hokenstad machined most of the race engine parts for the bike himself. He had to custom grind some pistons to make them work. A supreme improviser (or as others





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might call it, shade-tree mechanic) Pete did much of the work with tools he carries with him in his van.

Hokenstad's Kawasaki Superbike photographs beautifully, but he warned me not to get too close. "It's a little rough when you look at it up close, but the black paint disguises all the blemishes pretty well doesn't it?"

### Keepers of the Harley Sprints

Your neck tends to get sore at an AHRMA event from swiveling back and forth trying to take in all the cool historic motorcycles, but even among a sea of great machines, the bright red Harley-Davidson Sprints campaigned by the Hollingsworth Race Team stand out. It turns out that not only do the beautiful Harley race bikes have a great story, so does the Hollingsworth family.

For over 60 years the Hollingsworths owned the Harley-Davidson dealership in St. Augustine, Florida, and for decades it was an annual hang-out for many racers and racing teams leading up to Daytona Bike Week. All three Hollingsworth brothers (older brother Al, and twins Dick and Don) were successful racers. Al was AMA Novice Road Race National champion in 1964 and Don did the same in 1968.

Don also has the distinction of being the last rider on a Harley-Davidson 250 Sprint to win a national-level road race against the rapidly rising two-stroke racing machines, primarily from Japan. It happened at Loudon, N.H. in June of 1968. By then it was getting very tough for the four-stroke Aermacchi-built Harley's to hold off the speedier and ever more reliable Yamaha TD-1Cs, but thanks to his brother Al's tuning, Don had a strong Sprint that ran nearly on equal footing with the Yamahas.

The tight and twisty Loudon circuit was the perfect track for the precision handling Sprint and even then Hollingsworth needed a little help to be the last Harley 250 Sprint rider to beat the two-strokes.

"A lot of those guys on the Yamaha crashed or broke and my little old Sprint kept going and I



**1** For his lifetime of achievement in vintage racing Dave Roper was presented a painting by artist Gregg Bonelli.  
**2** The wife of the late John Britten, Kirsteen Britten, and her family were on hand at the Vintage Festival to celebrate the life of her husband and the beloved racing motorcycle he created.





Do you think KTM factory rider Chris Fillmore was having fun at the Vintage Festival? Check out the black streak he left while braking for a turn in front of Jamie Thompson (819) and Mike Harlow (X30).



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ended up being the winner.”

Don continues to successfully race AHRMA events on that same historic Sprint with Al doing the tuning. Their fleet of Harley-Davidson Sprints have almost as much history behind them as the Hollingsworth family.

### The Seller of Memories

Would you like that February 1977 issue of *Cycle World* magazine because of a road test of a used Kawasaki KZ650 you just bought, or for the profile of Jay Springsteen and his mechanic Bill Werner? Then Dan Huff is your man. Huff, of Owensboro, Kentucky, had hundreds of old motorcycle magazines on display in the swap meet area of the Barber Vintage Festival. He was one of hundreds of vendors and easily one of the most popular. As I stood gazing at old back issues, several people came up and asked for a particular issue.

“My picture was in one is-

sue in 1974 of either *Cycle* or *Motorcyclist*,” one customer says. “It was a photo from the US Motocross Grand Prix at Mid-Ohio and I was standing there as a fan watching. You could clearly see me in the center of the background and they used that photo for months on subscription ad cards inside the magazine. I’ve been looking for it for years.”

Huff said growing up, like most magazine subscribers, his issues got thrown away or lost, but later in life he began buying old collections and today he sells back issues for seven dollars apiece or 10 bucks for the rarer *Dirt Bike* magazines.

“I sell a lot of them and it’s mostly for the test articles,” Huff explains. “That’s why I set up a cross-reference for the bike tests and people come in and I can look up their bike pretty quick and get it in their hands.”

For Huff the old magazine business is strictly a hobby.



There was plenty of close racing action during the Vintage Festival such as this grouping in Saturday’s Sound of Thunder 2, BEARS and Motard combined race with Peter Politiek (P59) leading Tom Wilbert (50R), Ricky Orlando (94B), Robbie Scudder (49) and Andrew Stroud (10).







1

1 Jake Zemke talks about remembering the expression on his face the first time he saw the crowd that attended the Barber Vintage Festival. 2 Fans line up to watch the thrills of the Wall of Death, a motorcycle sideshow that's been going on since the 1920s. 3 Sidecars were popular with the fans at Barber. Here the team of Eric and Celia Trospen lead a group of rigs through a high-speed sweeper.



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### HONORING BRITTEN

The Britten motorcycle was the featured brand at this year's Barber Vintage Festival and the reunion of Britten machines, racers and the late John Britten's family was hugely popular.

Nine of the 10 Britten V1000 motorcycles created by innovator John Britten (1950-95) were said to be at the Barber Festival. This was significant, as there have never been that many of the rare Britten V1000s together at the same time. Five of them were ridden around the road course on display laps and two of Britten's most famous riders, Andrew Stroud and Stephen Briggs, were on hand to ride and to talk with fans. Stroud and Briggs finished first and second respectively in the inaugural World B.E.A.R.S Series (British European American Racing Series) in 1995 aboard Britten V1000s.

John Britten's wife Kirsteen Britten, his children, and grandchildren, traveled to the event from New Zealand. Kirsteen Britten spoke at "An Evening with Britten," a fundraiser dinner for the Barber Museum. The documentary about John Britten's life, "One Man's Dream," was featured at a local theater.

"It was a great honor to celebrate John Britten's incredible accomplish-

ments with members of his family and his friends, along with the Britten owners and our museum guests at this year's Vintage Festival," said the museum's founder, George Barber.

Stroud and Briggs sat down with a small group of fans for a discussion on their days racing the Britten and it was fascinating. *Cycle News* recorded the lengthy discussion and it can be heard **HERE** <https://archive.org/details/151009007>

"What comes through for me this weekend is that John's story, while it's fun and interesting, also has motivated and freed people to live their dreams," Kirsteen Britten said. "I had a beautiful young man come through this morning and say his family told him he had to be a lawyer and he says, 'I'm not a lawyer, I'm building motorcycles.'" And he was crying and he loves what he does and he's living his dream."

**Stephen Briggs (left) and Andrew Stroud (right) finished first and second in the World B.E.A.R.S Series (British European American Racing Series) in 1995. The two riders were on hand at the Barber Vintage Festival to help celebrate the Britten motorcycle, the featured brand of the festival this year.**



Talk about your unique mix of motorcycles. Sometimes the combined classes of AHRMA produce some great racing action between a diverse set of machines such as this Next Gen Superbike, Formula Vintage & eSuperSport class. In this photo it's Ryan Hunt (X76) leading a pack that includes Brad Coleman (77), Peter Politeiek (P59), Paul Germain (1V), Alan Perry (162), Mick Vaclavik (0075), Keith Powell (X49) and Will Brint (118).





“The best part is meeting all the people at these events,” he said. “I’ve kind of got a fan base and I meet a lot of the same people every year and have a lot of fun with it. It’s not that much money and it’s a lot of work, but I really enjoy it.”

Huff said he collects any motorcycle magazine starting at about 25 years back and older.

“The 1960s and ’70s and even the



The trophy winners of the popular Vintage Japanese Motorcycle Club (VJMC) bike show.



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'80s are really popular," he says. "I have some from the 1950s, but they just don't sell. I guess the guys who were interested in the bikes from the '30s, '40s and '50s just aren't around anymore."

As far as the holy grail of motorcycle magazine collectors he says first editions are rare and popular and the June 1973 *Cycle Guide*, which features the infamous fiery Mark Brelsford Daytona crash.

And the most he's ever sold? "One guys bought \$2300 worth of magazines off me once," he says with a smile, "but mostly it's people buying one or two issues at a time."

### CBX Racer

There were a lot of father-and-son stories at the Barber Festival this year. The winners of the Antique Motorcycle Club of America's "Best in Show" was an Indian restored by a father-and-son team, and one of the road-race bikes that made you do a double-take at Barber was the Honda CBX raced by Will Brint. The CBX was built by Bill Brint, owner of specialty shop Tim's CBX in Cornelia, Georgia.

When asked what it felt like to race the six-cylinder beast, Will said with a smile, "Heavy. It's a lot of work, but a lot of fun, too. I guess I don't know any better."





**1** If you've been missing full road racing grids the Barber Vintage Festival is the event for you. **2** The Wall of Death was one of the most popular shows at this year's Barber Vintage Motorcycle Festival. **3** Father and son Cory and Judd Moore, of Birmingham, Alabama, worked hand in hand in restoring this immaculate 1948 Indian Chief that won Best of Show in the Antique Motorcycle Club of America contest at Barber. Cory spent a decade collecting parts and he and his two sons then took about 18 months to do the restoration.



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AHRMA vintage motocross was part of the racing activities at Barber. The course was old-school natural terrain through the woods.

Koschnitzke takes up the story from the time the XT's motor blew: "I went to the swap meet to look for another motor. Made a few calls to dealers and shops, went on Craigslist and nothing was happening for us. Then it dawned on me I had Paul's XT ice-racing bike back at my shop in Chicago that was getting prepped for

Will is just 27 so he wasn't even born yet when the CBX he's racing was built.

When asked about cornering clearance on the mile-wide six-banger, Will pointed to the bike's crankcase. "You can see I've drug half of it off," he says proudly. "We keep an extra crankcase cover around just in case."

When asked how he convinced his son to race the CBX, his dad Bill says wryly, "He was the only one we could find who was naive enough to ride it."

### True Dedication to Racing

What do you do if you're at Barber practicing on Thursday and the engine on your race bike blows up? If you have friends like Paul Elledge it's no problem. Elledge's buddies Jason Koschnitzke and Stephen Pettinger showed amazing dedication by setting out for the almost 1400-mile round trip to Chicago to get another engine for Elledge's Yamaha XT500 and parts for Pettinger's BMW, which he crashed Thursday.

Saying he ran the van at about 85 mph, Pettinger did the driving, while Koschnitzke worked on the bike in the back of the van in transit.

sale. So we put the plan together—hop in the van as quickly as we could and head straight for Chicago."

The duo of Koschnitzke and Pettinger left Barber at about 4:30 in the afternoon Thursday with Elledge's XT in the back and got to Chicago at about 2:30 in the morning. They pulled the motor out of the ice racing bike in about 45 minutes, gathered up all the parts that Pettinger needed for his BMW, threw everything in the van and sped back to Alabama with Koschnitzke wrenching in the back for all he was worth as they raced down I-65.

"We got back down here at three in the afternoon on Friday, finished it up and it fired right up. Paul was even able to take it out for a scrub lap. Then Saturday it was off to the races."

So after a crazy 24-hour odyssey Elledge's Yamaha XT made it on the racetrack. The team's story was told at the trophy presentation and they guys got a big hand from their fellow racers, many in the crowd probably having at one time or another, a similar story of sheer willpower when it came to finding a way to race come hell or high water. **CN**