



## A Special SHIEN

Geoff Poulton discovers a fitting two-wheeled tribute to a motor racing legend

### NEW MODELS



64 CENTURION



**HELL FOR LEATHER** The Ducati Desmosedici RR is the road-going version of their Moto GP bike. As you would expect, it is a serious piece of kit. For renowned Italian tuners NCR, though, it obviously wasn't quite enough. They have decided to create the Millona 16, a super-tuned version of the Desmosedici, employing large amounts of carbon fibre, making this a lightweight speed machine not for the faint-hearted.



**B** “Believe it or not,” says Andrew Morris, “but the idea actually came to me while I was rowing across the Atlantic.”

A strange place to discover the inspiration to build your dream motorcycle, you might think. But then, the motorcycle that Morris is talking about is a particularly unique object. The Englishman is founder of Icon Motorcycles, a fledgling company, which earlier this year announced the completion of its debut project – the Icon Sheene.

It is a project dedicated to the memory of legendary motorcycle racer Barry Sheene. During the 1970s, Sheene won world titles at both 500cc and 750cc level, but it was his extrovert character and playboy lifestyle, as well as his thrilling riding style that made him a household name, transcending the world of motorsport and making him a hero to many, before he died of cancer in 2003.

One of those people was Andrew Morris. “When I was younger, Barry Sheene was a real icon for me. I’ve always had a love of cars and motorbikes, particularly bikes,” he says. “I went to art and design school and have tried my hand at designing a few things. I had a lot of trials as a motorbike rider and I even did some car racing, before I actually ended up running a shipping company.”

It was through this work that Morris came to take on an adventure race for charity, successfully rowing across the Atlantic five years ago – the race that sowed the seeds of the Icon Sheene. “When I came back I was still on a real high. I thought to myself, ‘Do I go back and focus on the company, which was more or less running itself, or do I get myself out of the office and do something that I really want to do.’”

And so Morris set about planning and building his dream bike. Initially, though, the Barry Sheene element was not there, “Until I went for a meeting with someone at a company called Spondon Engineering,” explains Morris. “He told me how he used to make Barry Sheene’s racing frames. They make fantastic quality frames and a lot of them are old engineers – a real spit and sawdust and fags on the floor type of operation – but some of the stories they told me were fantastic. This sparked something in me and the whole thing took off from there.”

While Morris found out that a number of people were

understandably keen to be involved in such a project, he also found that he had to overcome some initial caution from those closest to Sheene, most notably his family and former team mate and best friend, Steve Parrish. “It had to be right,” Morris says. “But once I convinced them how serious I was, they have all helped tremendously.” So much so that Freddie Sheene, Barry’s 21-year-old son and himself a motorbike rider, has been heavily involved in the project, working closely with Morris and doing a lot of the testing.



**BARRY SHEENE**

- 1950: Born in London
- 1973: Wins 750cc World Championship; 1976 and 1977 wins 500cc World Championship
- 1970s and '80s involves himself intensively in all aspects of motorcycle racing: invents the back protector, fashioned from old helmet visors; starts to hand-cut the tread pattern to make his own wet-weather tyres
- Late 1980s: moves to the Gold Coast, hoping to relieve arthritic pain caused by numerous riding accidents. Runs a property development business and worked as a motor racing TV commentator

The finished article is the result of five years of planning and construction. While Morris has designed some elements himself, he has also worked with an array of people who knew and worked with Sheene, from engineers to old team-mates. “The paint scheme, for example, is from Mike Fairholme, who used to do the artwork on Barry’s helmets. He also painted the helmets of the likes of Ayrton Senna, Nigel Mansell and Nelson Piquet. You need to get these guys inspired because for them it’s not about the money, it’s about making sure that the reputation of a guy they worked closely with is honoured.”

Handmade, each Icon Sheene will be fit precisely to its owner, “like a Saville Row suit” and takes eight months to build. The sleek, flowing lines represent a machine of both real beauty and power. “This bike is not for show. It’s been built to be ridden

hard,” Morris emphasises. There will only be a maximum of 52 built – one for each year of Sheene’s life – with owners becoming members in what Morris calls the 52 Club. He is keen to emphasise that this is more than ‘just’ buying a motorbike. “When you purchase the bike, you’ll meet his family, you’ll meet some of his friends and you’ll get to meet some of the mechanics and hear some of the amazing stories. We want it to be special.”

Morris, too, is keen to tell his own stories about the project and there seems to be one behind almost every design element on the Icon Sheene. “Take the brake callipers,” he says enthusiastically. “They’re made by a small company called ISR. Barry actually wanted to have these brakes on his bikes when he was racing, but he wasn’t allowed because Suzuki was contracted with another supplier. When I found this out I decided to get ISR to make the brakes for this bike. Everything on the bike has been made the way it has for a reason. This is the bike that Barry would have wanted.”

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**CLEAN BIKING** Motorcycle?

Bicycle? Well, a bit of both actually. The Eboard Tracker from French designer Jean-Francois Vicente is still only a concept, but would offer an aesthetically pleasing and green alternative to petrol-powered commuting. The vintage-look bike is battery powered, while the fold-out pedals and six-speed transmission mean that it can run on human power if the battery runs out.



**PLENTY OF BITE** The appropriately named Sharker, from German design company the Gerg Group, is an eye-catching monocoque creation, packed full of the latest electronics. The seat and the handlebars are adjustable and there’s no fretting about where you put the keys as the Sharker is keyless.