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Volume 20 Number 9

# IronWorks®

## BRASS BALLS ROCKETEER

A.M.D. WINNER  
& IRONWORKS GIVEAWAY BIKE



### ACME CHOPPERS

CLEAN MACHINES FROM A BUSY SHOP

PROJECT FLHX: STAGE 1+

INTAKE, EXHAUST & DYNO TUNE



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HARD NINE CHOPPERS • 2011 ROAD GLIDE ULTRA • TOURING OREGON HWY 97  
BONNEVILLE RACING • H.O.G. RALLY IN THE ALPS • MYSTERY MACHINE**



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## ON THE COVER

Volume 20 • Number 9 • Our 170th Issue

Looking like it has been the toast of Sturgis, Brass Balls Rocketeer (our giveaway bike!) shows it's pretty self behind the A.M.D tent at Sturgis in August 2010. The bike was sitting in the show all week and the night before our shoot BBB's Dar Holdsworth took it out for a night of celebrating and zipping around the madness that was Sturgis. Dar asked Editor Steve Berner if he should clean the bike before the shoot and as is his habit Steve told him, "Nah, looks great the way it is—ridden!" We hope you agree. Photo: Stephen Berner

## FEATURE BIKES

### Brass Balls Rocketeer

*A stunner for a winner*



### 154" Monster Mule

*Greg Gates takes on the Great White Dyno*

### Cali Customs

*A sweet Pan-Shovel bobber*

### Streetfightin' Machine

*Phil Lukas's hybrid musclebike*

### Danny's DMX

*Meet Switzerland's Hard Nine Choppers*

## FEATURE STORIES



### 2011 Road Glide Ultra

*A big bike for a big trip*

### Touring Oregon and Idaho

*Margie tours Highways 97 and 95*

### Bonneville Racing

*It's the spirit that matters most*

### H.O.G. Rally in the Alps

*IW heads across the pond with Pirelli*

## IW GARAGE



### Meet the Buell Bros.

*The gurus of quad camming*

### Metal

*Fabbing a dash console*

### Electric

*Two- and three-brush generators*

### Engine

*Knock, ping, ... detonation, yikes!*

### Mystery Machine & Die

*Part Two: Fitment and Adjustment*

### Project FLHX: Stage 1+

*Intake, Exhaust & Dyno!*

### Insurance 101

*Coverage for the rider*

### Paint & Finishes

*Flames that'll make you proud*

### Gasket Materials

*The deal with metal-based gaskets*



## DEPARTMENTS

### 10 IronWorks' Heroes

*Celebrating our 20th year*

### 20 Holiday Gift Guide

*It's that time again...*

### 30 REGULARS

### 38 Steve B

*Better is good enough*

### 54 Bert Baker

*Stupid People*

### Sam Kanish

*The first time*

### 34 Brian Klock

*Salt story*

### 44 Margie Siegal

*A 1910 Harley in OZ*

46

50

57

58

60

62

64

66

70

71

72



## SPOTLIGHT

### Acme Choppers

The Ahlquist brothers, Wayne and Jason, are all business regarding the bikes they build and the way they build them. This busy shop in Laconia, New Hampshire handles typical repair and maintenance work, but they also craft distinctive custom bikes full of their own hand manufactured parts. We think they are on to something, but don't take our word for it; take a look at the images and decide for yourself.





# 19th Annual European H.O.G. Rally in Switzerland

*IronWorks* hangs with Pirelli across the pond

Story and photos by *Sephen Berner*



Pirelli marketing team.



Amazing views.



Oh man, does it get better?



Pirelli and their guests.



Some adventures start in a benign manner, often preceded by a casual question. In this case the call and the question were both from long time friend Chris Wall, Director of Marketing for Pirelli Tires N.A. Moto Division. "What are you doing July 15th to the 18th?" Chris asked rather casually. I told him I'd check the calendar, confer with the boss, and take a look at the editorial schedule to see what I needed to have baked by that date so *IronWorks* production would stay on track. This of course begged the question from me: "Why? What's up?"

"Harley Days Lugano in the Italian Swiss Alps," Chris replied. "Pirelli is introducing the Night Dragon V-Twin tire in Europe and we've invited some media types like yourself to attend as our

guests. You wanna go and represent?"

Hey now! This is not your usual cubed cheese and summer sausage platter found under a pop up tent in the sweltering heat on the side of a parking lot, track or road side stop. This is cool and unusual and something that *IronWorks* has not been part of previously, uncharted territory so to speak. This is a big adventure, an international one at that. Dig it, count me in!

After conferring with the boss ("You are going where, for how long, and without me?") and checking my calendar of obligations, I made the call back to Chris..."I'm in." After nailing down details, discussing the agenda and socio-business landscape, I was psyched. This sort of opportunity just doesn't happen very often...to me anyway.

I did some research on the Harley Days

event and learned that it is a pretty big deal and the event has grown exponentially (25,000+ attendees) every year. I was beginning to realize that the H-D scene and how folks relate to H.O.G. (the organization), their machines, and the H-D culture are a bit different in the European Union.

I learned before departure that we'd be riding bikes shod with the new Pirelli Night Dragons in the Alps, an idea that equally attracted me and repelled me. Attracted me, because, I mean, how cool is that? Riding an H-D through Alpen villages seems pretty damn happening. Conversely, the idea of riding in the Alps repelled me due to the fact that I'd seen pictures of the roads and they looked, well, kind of hairy. I didn't want to splat in front of all the Pirelli and Euro-journalist high rollers. That would definitely not



Chris Wall, Pirelli, my host.



Lakeside views.



Small towns along the way.



Villa Malpensa.



be a cool manner in which to represent. Of course, I manned up and banished any of the snively, whiny thoughts that were trying to worm their way into my psyche.

Plane tickets and passport in hand, I packed my bags thinking, "This is the Alps, right? How hot can it be?" So I packed my riding gear: summer leather, helmet, gloves, boots, Aerostich suit and camera bag, and headed off to JFK. Red-eye flights suck and this one was no exception. I got off the plane, poorly rested, hungry, knowing I had a full day ahead of me. Time to man up, there was stuff to do, things to see, and food to eat.

The Rally for 2010 was held in Campione d'Italia/Lugano, a beautiful Swiss lake side (think Great Lakes-size lakes) town with winding streets and a beautiful action packed shorefront. Accommodations provided to the journalists by the Pirelli team were outstanding, really top shelf, about 15 minutes from the event epicenter at the Swiss Diamond hotel located right on Lake Lugano—an emerald green, warm as a bathtub, beautiful body of water. Not so bad!

Heat! I was having a fit of déjà vu having recently visited North Carolina in the midst of a heat wave while attending the Smoke-Out. The weather in the Swiss Alps was just as bad. I was glad I had packed shorts and some casual hot weather gear. The miserable weather was the talk of the event; everyone was gacked and a lot of the Euro riders sport full leathers and full-face helmets. I can only imagine how they felt poodling down busy streets in traffic. Ugh.

Total digression here: The food, ahhh, the food! In a word the food was stupendous. Every single meal I ate (and I fit in as many as I possibly could) was fantastic—and this is coming from an admitted food snob. You like pasta? Oh man, do they have pasta! You like cheese? Yeeha, oh boy, you'll be clogging arteries! Espressos after every meal, mineral water, cheeses, fruit, smoked meats and sausages—heaven! My rock star hosts made sure I ate like a king and that my hand always clutched a glass of mineral water (mit gas).

Anyway, Pirelli had brought about a dozen journalists from hither and yon to the Harley Days event as their guests to not only experience the event through Pirelli's eyes, but also to get some seat time on machines that were equipped with their Night Dragon tires. Through a confluence of events I described in my column last month, I selected a Sportster as my steed for this mountain

jaunt and all I can say is that I had a lot of fun. I rode a Big Twin for a bit and was happy to switch back to the Sporty, as stuffing it into corners and flicking it through the turns was a blast. Thankfully someone had scuffed the tires before I got on the bike, so I didn't have to remain calm during break in. I had the Night Dragons on edge a good deal of the time, testing their most excellent grip and look forward to putting a set on my Street Glide to see how they manage with a big bike sitting on them. I am about half way through a set of Metzeler 880s; Pirelli Night Dragons will go on next, so stay tuned.

One of the neat aspects of Lugano culture is nighttime. Everyone in the town or visiting the town likes to get outside and walk around the waterfront streets just enjoying the air, the scenery, and the people watching. I enjoyed the people watching the most. It is, in a word, enlightening.

I noticed something else about the Swiss Harley Days event, as opposed to its American counterparts—the time people get going. Europeans hit the streets much later than the rise and shine Americans and they stay out later. Between time zone differences, jet lag, and the heat, I didn't know if I was coming or going, but a good night's sleep, a morning swim in Lake Lugano, and a true Continental breakfast of pastries, fruit, espresso and smoked meats set it right. I was thinking I could do this on an on-going basis.

A day was spent simply wandering the event, shooting video and stills, people watching and basically educating myself on the manner in which the Europeans have embraced Harley-Davidson and its American centered culture. And the way they have made it distinctly their own. Everyone I saw really loves the H-D brand, they love it as much, if not more than Americans do. When one factors in the astronomical costs of owning a H-D in Europe, you can begin to appreciate the level of commitment these folks have.

One evening H.O.G sponsored a party at a luxurious lakeside casino, replete with a trip across the lake in great style aboard a yacht, band, and a food spread that had me swooning. Folks from all over Europe attended with their signature vests identifying their origin. There was a lot of camaraderie in evidence.

All too soon, it was time to pack bags, leave Lugano and cross the border back into Italy so Chris and I could fly out of Milan to

return home. Our last night was spent at the Villa Malpensa, adjacent to the airport. What a way to end a memorable trip, staying in an Italian villa! Chris and I walked to a local restaurant for a final meal that was one I will not soon forget. The next day saw us up and out early and on our way home.

Epilogue: Riding a motorcycle (and a H-D to boot) in the Alps is something special. If you are in the least bit curious and want to make the trip, there are plenty of resources

available. It was neat to be able to demo the Night Dragon tires on their home turf and I can see why performance is so important to Europeans; the roads don't quit, testing you and your machine at every corner. It was fun seeing how the Europeans have adopted H-D and love this icon of Americana as much as we do. It made me proud to represent!

I'd also like to thank my fantastic Pirelli hosts: Chris Wall, Kevin Allen. You guys are rock stars, thanks for the opportunity! **HW**

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