

Press Release | Lignano Sabbiadoro (Udine - Italy) | Thursday, September 24, 2026

Italian Bike Week 2026, VM Cycles takes the IMC "Best in Show". The full international ranking of Lignano's finest Custom and Special bikes

The Italian Motorcycle Championship made a stop at the Custom Bike Show at Italian Bike Week, attracting a full field of international special builds. The top prize went to VM Cycles' 'Uwe', while Brescia-based Paolo Massera took the off-road build contest with a Ducati 900 transformed into a dedicated off road machine

Custom is back in **Lignano Sabbiadoro (Udine)** with the fifth edition of **Italian Bike Week**. The big event, held from Thursday 17 to Sunday 20 September, provided the stage for the opening round of the **Italian Motorcycle Championship**, the only Italian championship dedicated to special and custom bikes of every style and type. Supported by the **AMD World Championship of Custom Bike Building**, the "world championship" for custom builders organised by British magazine ***American Motorcycle Dealer***, the IMC round held last weekend saw around fifty creations from builders and workshops from all over Italy and several European countries go head-to-head, with particularly strong participation from competitors from France, Germany, Austria, Slovenia and the Czech Republic.

BEST IN SHOW

Among the many customised motorcycles competing in Lignano, the coveted **Best in Show** title went to **'Uwe'**, the latest full custom from **VM Cycles** (UD). Starting with a **Harley-Davidson 1450**, Verner Ortis created yet another masterpiece for an enthusiast from Kitzbühel, Austria: a refined mix of chrome, handcrafted work, reworked parts and influences from the dragster world. Among the most interesting details are the long hand-formed fuel tank, which flows seamlessly into the longitudinally split solo seat, as well as the bullet headlight, disc wheels and compact rear fender. Despite leaving the huge 300 mm tyre exposed, the fender conceals two tiny turn signals on either side, neatly "embedded" within it. And the rear-view mirror? It would be difficult to guess what it was in its previous life: it is actually the bottom section of a fire extinguisher, carefully cut, smoothed and finally chromed to give it an elegant and discreet new function.

EIGHT CATEGORIES

SCRAMBLER - Moving on to the individual categories, the top prize among the **Scrambler** builds went to France: **RD Kustom**'s Harley-Davidson 883 Sportster, transformed by the

Marseille-based builder into a pure tracker. The Cagiva Ala Rossa 350 from Savona-based **Santa Fox** was all-Italian and equally ready to tackle dirt ovals with slides and drifts: the little single-cylinder originally built in Varese took second place, ahead of **Stray's Garage**'s Kawasaki KLR 600.

CAFE RACER - Another Sportster, the one built by **Emanuele Magnanelli** from San Marino, won the **Cafe Racer** category. Here, the build draws on the great themes of 1970s sporting style, adding a tail section and fuel tank clearly inspired by endurance racing to the XL1200, together with a half fairing from which the intake trumpet feeding the carburettor protrudes on the right-hand side. Also centred around a Milwaukee twin-cylinder, but this time an even older Ironhead, is the interpretation that earned **Zoynek Threcek** second place in the category. The Czech custom builder took inspiration from the rat-bike world, while the trumpet exhaust with visible welds inevitably recalls the MotoGP machines. Third place went to **Antonio Celcini**'s Honda CB500.

STREETFIGHTER - A seriously aggressive Yamaha, **Giordano Loi**'s MT-01 from Sardinia, took the spotlight in the **Streetfighter** category. The Three Diapasons muscle bike, already an unusual machine straight from the factory thanks to its combination of the R1 superbike chassis and the V-Twin from the 1700 Warrior maxi-cruiser, underwent a weight-loss programme based on carbon fibre and the removal of everything superfluous, becoming a razor-sharp mountain-pass weapon focused on torque and lightness. Much more retro in character was the Suzuki GS 650 that finished second under the **Garajek** banner; while only a few but highly targeted modifications were made to the XR1200 with which **GPM Moto Garage** took third place, emphasising the track-oriented character of the iconic H-D that, in the mid-2000s, was also the subject of its own racing series.

MODIFIED H-D - In the "single-make" **Modified H-D** class, the judges chose the Night Rod from Mantua-based workshop **Custom Thom**, specialists in Bar & Shield power cruisers, who have produced yet another seriously mean machine centred around the Revolution V-Twin developed by the American manufacturer at the beginning of the millennium in collaboration with Porsche. Riding the wave of the performance bagger phenomenon, with numerous composite details, is the 'Kaborniosa', a Road Glide that earned **Mr Fighter** second place, ahead of the Sportster 1200 on which **Overdrive Customs** created a build halfway between the bobber and chopper worlds.

BUELL - To win the category reserved for American "naked" Buells, the Taurus from **Rod Custom Motorcycles** travelled all the way from the Czech Republic. The custom builder from Třebíč decided to dare, choosing not one of the more traditional Harley-Davidson-powered models but an 1125, a naked bike from the new generation in which a liquid-cooled Rotax V-Twin replaced the proven Thunderstorm twin-cylinder used on the previous series. Short and

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highly aggressive, the Taurus retains typical East Troy streetfighter features such as the perimeter front brake disc and the frame/fuel tank, details also shared with the two XB models (9S and 12S) that took second and third place. The first belongs to **Garajek**, while the second also carries the signature of **Rod Custom Motorcycles**, who therefore return home with a splendid one-two and a full haul of trophies.

OLD STYLE - Classic taste and stretched, low-slung forms give another Harley, the Heritage Softail, a distinctly chicano-inspired look. The builders from Campania at **Pacelli Customs** have "chicanised" it with stretched fenders, a towering ape-hanger handlebar and wire-spoke wheels. The baroque paintwork typical of the quintessential Mexican style gives way here to a more understated silver livery, but that did not stop the Caserta workshop from taking first place in the **Old Style** category, with second place going to a much smaller Motom 48 with a bell-shaped fairing and 1950s racer looks. Verona-based **Umberto Righi** converted the little four-stroke single-cylinder engine's valve train from pushrods and rockers to an overhead camshaft, while also transforming the gearbox from three to four speeds, all in his home garage: now it can reach 14.000 rpm and 115 km/h. The bronze medal went to **Chemical Team**'s bright-green chopper based on an H-D 883.

METRIC - There was a surprise in the **Metric** category — reserved for motorcycles manufactured outside the United States — with first place going to the exquisite Moto Guzzi from Treviso-based **MC Cycles**, a modest and once-neglected V50 that has found a new lease of life as a chopper with a Springer fork, king-and-queen seat and, naturally, prominently displayed cylinder heads, as is customary around Mandello del Lario. Behind it came **Simon Poplatnik**'s highly distinctive and divisive Rex. The Slovenian used 1917 mechanical components to build an unconventional custom bike in every sense: the gearbox and clutch are operated manually by side levers, the handlebar is made from two bull horns and, as if that were not enough, a barrel takes the place of the fuel tank. 'Blue Wave', a chopper powered by the air-cooled four-cylinder engine of a Honda CB650 and clearly inspired by the "long forks" of the 1970s, earned Venice-based **Tony Selvaggi** third place.

FREESTYLE - Returning to American-made V-Twins, Swiss atelier **Cool Man Customs** topped the **Freestyle** category with its Swedish-style 'King' chopper, whose frame proudly houses a powerful S&S engine with open drag pipes and an intake assembly with exposed butterfly valves ready to gulp in fresh air with every twist of the right-hand grip. The Springer fork is extremely long, although not as exaggerated as the one on 'Paruk', the BSA 650 that **Renato Peres** dedicated to a late friend who had once owned this British twin-cylinder bike, earning it second place. Speaking of monumental front ends, the third-place bike is no less impressive: **Samuele Gorni**'s unrecognisable Yamaha XT 600 'Annina'. Once a "dual-use"



single-cylinder machine for enjoying both road and dirt, it is now a chopper distinguished by its striking S-shaped fork paired with a completely home-built frame.

SPECIAL AWARDS

The aforementioned **RD Kustom** (France) was not content with its outstanding result in the Scrambler class: the French builder also won the special award offered by the organisers of the **Salon du 2 Roues** in Lyon. The winning bike was a two-stroke **Yamaha YZ 250**, with its expansion chamber proudly on display and plenty of attitude thanks to its supermoto setup and slick tyres just waiting to bite into the asphalt.

The spirit of the **Artigliate Custom Contest** goes in the diametrically opposite direction, seeking out the dust and mud of dirt riding. The "ring" that Italian Bike Week has dedicated for the second consecutive year to off-road builds saw the crown go to the stunning **Ducati MX900** created by Brescia-based **Paolo Massera**, inspired by specialist dirtbikes such as the recently introduced Desmo450 MX. Beneath its taut, stripped-down forms, however, beats an old-school Demosdue twin-cylinder engine, with two-valve heads, air cooling and a dry clutch. It is so finely finished that it genuinely looks like a production motorcycle!

Custom Bike Show Results – IBW 2026

❖ BEST IN SHOW IMC ❖

HARLEY-DAVIDSON 1450 'UWE' | VM Cycles (UD)

Wins a two-person stay at the 41st Biker Fest International in Lignano Sabbiadoro (UD), from May 20 to 23, 2027

❖ ARTIGLIATE CUSTOM CONTEST ❖

DUCATI MX900 | Paolo Massera (BS)

wins a €150 Faster96 gift voucher

❖ SALON DU 2 ROUES LYON AWARD ❖

YAMAHA YZ 250 | RD KUSTOM (France)

Wins a stand for the 2027 edition (February 11–14)

❖ SCRAMBLER ❖

1st – H-D 883 SPORTSTER | RD Kustom (Marseille, F)

wins a Blauer jacket

2nd – CAGIVA ALA ROSSA 350 | Santa Fox (SV)

wins a €150 Faster96 gift voucher

3rd – KAWASAKI KLR 600 | Stray's Garage (MO)

wins Blauer gloves + Melo Orafo plaque

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❖ CAFE RACER ❖

1st – H-D SPORTSTER XL1200 | Emanuele Magnanelli (San Marino)
wins a Blauer jacket
2nd – H-D IRONHEAD | Zoynek Threcek (Czech Republic)
wins a €150 Faster96 gift voucher
3rd – HONDA CB500 | Antonio Celcini (PD)
wins Blauer gloves + Melo Orafo plaque

❖ STREETFIGHTER ❖

1st – YAMAHA MT-01 | Giordano Loi (Rome)
wins an Alex De Pase Tattoo voucher worth €350
2nd – SUZUKI GS 650 F | Garajek (BG)
wins an Alex De Pase Tattoo voucher worth €200
3rd – H-D XR1200 TROFEO | GPM Moto Garage (BS)
wins an Alex De Pase Tattoo voucher worth €100 + Melo Orafo plaque

❖ MODIFIED H-D ❖

1st – H-D NIGHT ROD | Custom T.H.O.M. (MN)
wins an Avon tyre voucher
2nd – H-D ROAD GLIDE 'KARBONIOSA' | Mr Fighter (TV)
wins a €150 Faster96 gift voucher
3rd – H-D SPORTSTER 1200 | Overdrive Customs (VE)
wins Blauer gloves + Melo Orafo plaque

❖ BUELL ❖

1st – BUELL 1125 'TAURUS' | Rod Custom Motorcycles (Czech Republic)
wins a Blauer jacket
2nd – BUELL XB9S | Garajek (BG)
wins Blauer gloves
3rd – BUELL XB12S | Rod Custom Motorcycles (Czech Republic)
wins a BSMacchine discount voucher + Melo Orafo plaque

❖ OLD STYLE ❖

1st – H-D HERITAGE SOFTAIL 1450 | Pacelli Custom (CE)
wins an Avon tyre voucher
2nd – MOTOM 48 | Umberto Righi (VR)
wins a €100 Rizoma gift voucher
3rd – H-D SPORTSTER 883 | Chemical Team (UD)
wins a Wemoto discount voucher + Melo Orafo plaque

❖ METRIC ❖

1st – MOTO GUZZI V50 | MC Cycles (TV)
wins a Blauer jacket
2nd – CUSTOM RAX 1917 | Simon Poplatnik (Slovenia)
wins a €150 Faster96 gift voucher
3rd – HONDA CB650 "THE BLUE WAVE" | Tony Selvaggi (VE)
wins a Wemoto discount voucher + Melo Orafo plaque

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❖ FREESTYLE ❖

1st – S&S CHOPPER 'KING' | Cool Man Customs (Switzerland)

wins a Blauer jacket

2nd – BSA 650 'PARUK' | Renato Peres (UD)

wins a €100 Rizoma gift voucher

3rd – YAMAHA XT 600 'ANNINA' | Samuele Gorni (MN)

wins a BSMacchine discount voucher + Melo Orafo plaque

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