

BACK ON TRACK

BIMOTA IS BACK IN THE UK WITH A NEW DISTRIBUTOR IMPORTING THE ULTIMATE ITALIAN EXOTICA

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Exotic aficionados rejoice – Bimota is back. Let's be more specific, because Bimota has never been away. Bimota is back – in the UK, with a new company, AMV Motorcycles, becoming the UK distributor.

The engineering artisans building boutique bikes have remained busy at its Rimini factory, drip feeding its small but enthusiastic band of followers with a succession of Ducati-engined machines over the last few years.

Of course, Bimota has a famed history since its inception by Messrs Bianchi, Morri and Tamburini in 1973. Squeezing the world's best motors into its bespoke rolling chassis reaped rich rewards – especially through the late seventies and into the eighties when Japanese manufacturers couldn't build a decent frame between them. Consequently, Bimotas pepper lists of the world's most desirable bikes.

But Japan soon caught on, and when Bimota tried to ape its engine suppliers and built its own motor (to fit in the staggeringly beautiful 500cc V-Due), the firm imploded at the start of the 21st century. Bimota had shown the Japanese how to build chassis and had become a victim of its own success. Thankfully, the strength of the Bimota name attracted new investment, and since its rebirth in 2003 the firm has been slowly getting back to its feet with a small range of wonderfully engineered and perfectly powered machines.

Of course, anyone could still buy any of Bimota's bikes, but it wasn't an easy task. Woods Motorcycles, a dealer in North Wales, was a Bimota dealer (or Concessionari), otherwise it meant a trip out to Italy. Spares, repairs and warranties were also problematical, meaning that only the truly devoted got to experience the magic – and mayhem. But now AMV has become the UK distributor, meaning the whole Bimota experience for UK customers should run a whole lot smoother from now on. ▶

“SINCE ITS REBIRTH THE FIRM HAS BEEN GETTING BACK TO ITS FEET”

DB6 Delirio - the 1100cc Desmodue engined naked - at full tilt

► With the complete Bimota range on its demo fleet, AMV offers customers a few ways of experiencing its unique offerings. The first port of call is AMV, who will then either supply a bike to one of 11 dealers around the country (mainly Ducati dealers) for a customer to try. The other option is to fly out to Rimini, meet the small team at Bimota, go for a ride, have a chat, eat some pasta, sink a Peroni and then return home. If you decide to buy a bike then AMV will refund your flight and hotel (not a Lear jet and the Rimini Hilton).

So what of the product then? Well, AMV presented the fleet dynamically at a scorching hot Brands Hatch trackday. All trackdays are special, but this was off the scale. The current range was well represented, with the DB5, DB6 Delerio, DB7 and Tesi 3D all ready, willing and able to be used. The new fully carbon DB7 Oro Nero and Ducati 1198 engined DB8 were present, but non-running prototypes, while a demonstration run of Bimota's Moto2 machine, the HB4 didn't get back from its Le Mans duties in time. Given the exquisite machinery available to ride, we were hardly in a position to complain.

In a nutshell, the DB5 and naked DB6 are both powered by Ducati's venerable air-cooled 1,079cc motor, and as such you initially feel that they're woefully underpowered – especially given their sporty posturing. But Bimota didn't fit this motor by accident and though wonderfully tractable, the motor lets the chassis do the talking. Without a surfeit of power, a rider is able to concentrate on braking, beautiful lines and other elements of



Price list

- ▼ DB55 €16,900
- ▼ DB5R €19,400
- ▼ DB6 €16,550
- ▼ DB6R €18,550
- ▼ DB7 €22,800
- ▼ DB8 €20,800
- ▼ Tesi €23,800

(VAT not included, delivery and OTR extra)

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the craft that is riding. Forget power, this is art.

The DB7 uses the 1098 motor from Ducati, and as such introduces power that you need to be wary of. Bimota tune the engine differently to Ducati (through electronics rather than anything mechanical), and the origins of the donor bike are well disguised. With a different riding position to the 1098, the DB7 takes on a new dimension that certainly takes some getting used to. Nirvana was never found due to a caned tyre and being stuck in a novice session, but the potential is clear to see.

And then came the Tesi 3D. This is a machine as fascinating at a standstill as it is fantastic flowing through Brands' bends. I don't know what I'd do more with it; drool or ride. OK, so centre-hub steering has never become mainstream (the Tesi 1 was launched in 1990), but this avant-garde alternative steers

beautifully, offering no transition between balls-out braking and quick turn-in. On smooth turns, it's a revelation but over bumps, the effective extension of the wheelbase through the centre-hub's system does give the sensation of the front pushing.

And then there's the future. Many bikes are mooted; a naked Tesi, a streetfighter-type bike, a machine based loosely on the HB4 racer amid many other dreams. Stymied by racing's rules (it can't homologate a WSB bike, no can it produce a Moto2 replica as the machines have to be prototypes), Bimota has the freedom to go its own way. And that's why AMV has got involved – Bimota's heritage is strong, its current product range encapsulating and the future is bright. Given the investment and commitment of AMV, Bimota is less likely to return to the bad old days with the Brits barking at them to fulfill our dreams.

Bimota used to work because it was better. Now it works because it is different. We should celebrate the past and embrace the future – so long as you're rich enough to indulge. ☐

“STYMIED BY RACING'S RULES,
BIMOTA IS FREE TO GO ITS OWN WAY”



Not the most common sight
on a trackday - but certainly
one of the nicest