

PASSION & PERSEVERANCE

WORDS + PHOTOGRAPHY **MARK BOXER**

Four years ago AMCN dropped in on an Aussie making a living out of buying and selling exotic and collectible motorcycles out of a modest shop in Los Angeles. It is modest no more...

Back in 2019 AMCN met an Aussie living in LA by the name of Adam Tromp (AMCN Vol 69 No 05). Adam had an incredible collection of bikes sitting around his seemingly modest bike shop in Marina Del Rey in California, including many iconic sportsbikes from the 90s such as GSX-R750s and 1100s, CBR900RR Fireblades and RC30s, Kawasaki ZXR750s and Yamaha YZF750s and FZR1000s. There was also plenty of European exotica,

such as Bimotas and Ducatis, a selection of famous racebikes and even some oddities including a Honda Motocompo 'trunk' scooter.

Our initial impression of Adam was that he was a passionate and enthusiastic bloke who wanted to honour an era of bikes that could be seen as the ones that shaped the modern-day sportsbike. And what seemed to be a decent collection of bikes back then has, despite the interruption of Covid, grown exponentially. And with that growth, Adam's company Iconic Motorbikes has had to employ a

much larger team and find much larger premises from which to operate.

As well as walk-in customers, a big part of the company's trade now comes through a relatively new website called Iconic Motorbikes Auctions, which conducts live online auctions of bikes and parts.

To get an idea of what machines are on offer, check out iconicmotorbikeauctions.com.

AMCN headed back to LA last year and caught up with Adam and his incredible collection of two-wheeled exotica once again.



CHECK THIS **ICONIC MOTORCYCLES** REVISITED



Covid-19 wreaked havoc in parts of the USA, but looking at your social-media feed it seems like you had a lot going on during that period. How was it for you and the team?

I'm very happy to say we made it through quite well. We took it very seriously and did have a couple of our team come down with Covid but the moment they showed any symptoms or a family member became ill, we made sure to send them home and not bring them back until they showed the 'all clear'. Thankfully the few cases we faced were all quite minor. In addition to that, we kept the hangar closed and we were very careful about keeping visitor numbers to a minimum, so that most certainly helped keep our team safe.

What have been some of the more challenging and rewarding parts of the move from your modest but very cool shop in Marina Del Rey to your new, much bigger new location at Santa Monica Airport?

There are so many perks to the new place that it's hard to recap them all. Most important... more room! We were fine at the old building with just one mechanic and a few bikes, but now that we have five technicians, two managers and a growing number of staff we need every bit of space we now have.

The walk-in business was great for getting us started at the old facility, as we were trying to get our name out there, but our new location is appointment-only and that allows us much more quality time with our clients and the ability to respond to emails and calls in a much more timely manner. The security at the airport is top tier, and that's always a concern in L.A. Last and most certainly not least, we had to roll bikes in and out each day at the old facility as space was tight, but here we're proud to say that clients' bikes are never out in the sun or at risk of being dropped by having to ferry them in and out each day. They are also not exposed to risk of damage from trees, birds or even transients.

Aircraft hangars are very large spaces. What was the main motivation to house the bikes in one? Security? Size?

The size, the proximity to some of our VIP clients, and the ease of running a business from a hangar as opposed to running it from a privately owned facility where the landlord may have their own rules/regulations. The security is most certainly a huge perk too, as the police are here faster than I can reset the alarm if it happens to go off. That's pretty amazing!

You get some seriously rare machines through the shop. Last time I visited you'd already had your hands on a few Honda NR750s, including one special black one. How many of those have you sold now?

I'm proud to say we've sold nine so far. We have two more in stock that will be ready for sale soon, and we've serviced three others from some well-known celebrity owners. I've even started building a bit of a collection of parts so we can keep them on the road, and some of those parts are obviously incredibly rare, such as cylinder heads,



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wiring harnesses, headlamps etc.

The Black NR, or the 'Iconic NR750 Black Series' as we called it, was a special build that I came up with over time. NRs were only available in red so the striking black paintwork with gold trim and carbon showing through was truly a piece of art. It wasn't just cosmetic, either: we 3D printed some velocity stacks, used a Honda Civic fuel regulator to get extra gas to the FI, opened up the restricted intakes etc. In addition, we had a custom exhaust bender make up a titanium half-system that really made the bike sing under throttle. We added forged magnesium wheels, a really special Öhlins front-end from a world Superbike with Nissin radial calipers, Brembo rotors, an Öhlins shock – and so much more! It came out incredible, and a build I'm not sure we'll ever emulate.

The team has expanded a great deal in several areas. With the need for so many specialists on site, is it hard to find the right people?

One of my favorite parts about Iconic is the shared passion we see from our followers. So much so, that we get offered bikes daily... and also get a constant stream of resumes. We get resumes from all around the world and I am happy to say we are fully staffed.

Steve (aka The Professor) looks after our social media and he's been wrenching on bikes before wheels were round. He's worked at a slew of dealerships, built drag motors for Russ Collins Jr, worked for Erion Honda and other teams... you name it, Steve has done it. That's why he's our main guy and we rely on him to make sure the staff have all the knowhow they need as rare or special bikes come into the premises.

Daniel came to us from Beverly Hills Ducati,

1. The man himself: motorcycle visionary Adam Tromp
2. A Troy Bayliss replica Ducati 1098R, which the owner leaves in storage at Iconic
3. Customs, stock bikes – Iconic will take them all!
4. The ducktail from the Suzuki MotoGP bike ridden by Spaniard Aleix Espargaro
5. One of the most prized possessions: a Honda CBR900RR ridden by the late Nicky Hayden in Formula Xtreme spec
6. The leathers as used by 2000 MotoGP world champion Kenny Roberts Jr
7. An immaculate inline-six cylinder Honda CBX
8. Honda NR750s form a large part of the Iconic collection
9. A Yamaha YZF750 which competed in the 1996 Laguna Seca WorldSBK round



"I WANT SOME TWO-STROKE-ONLY EVENTS WITH SOME SIZABLE CASH REWARDS"

1. Some more racing exotica
2. A Ducati 916 gets some love before it's sold or goes down the auction route
3. A signature from the maestro himself - Kenny Roberts
4. Neat T-shirt!
5. The 'Iconic NR Black Series' has been a labour of love for the team
6. The head of forensics...
7. More Suzuki MotoGP kit - which could soon be worth a pretty penny with the company pulling the racing pin!
8. An early model Suzuki GSX-R750, which took the supersport world by storm in the 1980s
9. The glorious Honda VRF750 world endurance racer

and he can fix anything. He's incredibly resourceful, an excellent welder and, if you can dream it up, he will get it done. Olly has a very extensive background in racing and is a two-stroke fanatic. He worked for Graves Yamaha for 15 years, Yoshimura for two to three years until they closed down, and for some pretty big teams in BSB and GP racing back in the day. Beyond that he works on two-strokes constantly, and he has a nice collection of his own - if you see him at our trackday, he will likely be on an RS125 or 250, but don't let the size fool you as he's incredibly fast.

Then we have Angel, who came to us from Beverly Hills Ducati, but he is a Kawasaki fan through and through. He has worked for Ducati, BMW and some other dealers on the metric side. His specialty is detail work and electrical, but he's also getting better and better with the older bikes as well.

The guys call Alex rookie but he too has worked at a few dealers including Beverly Hills Ducati. He has the least tenure of the group but he has a great do-anything attitude and he helps with tyres, chains, service work and driving. We are a close-knit group... like family.

You've done some sponsorship in the past. Will there be any more Iconic 'racing' sponsorships coming up?

We dabble in some small sponsorships from time to time and spent quite a bit on helping Corey

Alexander in 2021. Right now though, we're really trying to grow the company, get more perks for our staff such as full benefits and paid vacation, but sponsorship is most certainly something we are very keen to do. I personally want some two-stroke-only events with some sizable cash rewards, so keep an eye on that in the future.

During AMC's last visit mid-2019, you were just starting to make plans for the auction website. How is that part of the business going?

Iconic Motorbikes Auctions has become our largest and most profitable division. We went from two to three listings a day to as many as seven or eight, and the listings continue to flow through. We just hired another writer to help get bikes up faster, and I'm thrilled to say that clients love it. We are leaps and bounds ahead of our competitor as we offer a full array of white-glove services, and sellers just keep coming back... as do buyers.

Just last week we sold 16 motorcycles for a 94 percent sell-through, which was over \$370,000 in sales. I couldn't be more pleased with this segment, and we will continue to grow the staff, improve the site and offer 'the best in motorbikes'.

What are your top three personal favourite bikes that have come through the doors?

I've never been good at favourites of anything. My wardrobe is pretty much jeans and Iconic shirts, and when my wife and I decided to get a second car as the hangar was too far from home, I bought the exact same SUV she has, even the same colour. When I order food and drinks, I have a hard time deciding so I just pick what the person before me picked... I'm embarrassed to say that I'm just horrible at things like that. I will say that I adore



RC45s and RC30s, but I sure love a green ZX7 or a GSX-R. Granted, I'm a huge MV fan, and a Ducati just gives me chills as they are so beautiful. Show me a custom, I'm in! Show me a stock bike... heck yes! Now you're seeing why we have so many bikes here.

As the business has grown, so has its reputation. How are people now approaching you to look after the sale of their collections? And how are you sourcing bikes?

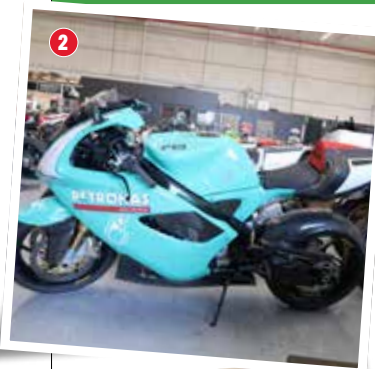
It's wonderful to see so much love thrown our way. In May last year we had 23 million impressions on Instagram alone, and that's incredible. With this many followers, this many great clients and so many positive referrals, bikes pretty much come to us these days. We walk in daily with messages about selling this, find me that, estates coming up for sale, collections that are available... every day brings a new exciting list of bikes.

Are any Iconic events or tours on the cards?

We had a special trackday in late-September at Laguna Seca. It was a two-day event with special bikes, great people and a smaller riding group, so riders got all the track time they wanted in a much safer environment than your typical over crowded track event. We cater it, have a pre-party, typically a masseuse or two and some surprises.

We have a similar event planned at the amazing Barber Museum in May of 2023, but this event will be even more special; private access to the museum, some tours of behind-the-scenes areas and something really special called the Iconic 12 (that number may change). You will be able to pay a premium and ride some *really* special bikes for a couple laps around one of the most beautiful tracks in the USA at Barber Motorsports Park. Bikes like an NR750, RC45, ZX7R and possibly some

"WE REALLY TRY TO BE 'ANYTHING ON TWO WHEELS', SO WE CAN HELP ANYONE"



really cool retired racebikes. It's going to be an event people will remember for a lifetime!

The name Iconic works perfectly for your business. Clearly all the bikes in here are iconic, but where do you draw the line with what is just a run-of-the-mill bike and what is a really collectable one?

We truly believe that every bike is iconic to someone, so you'll see projects, new bikes, rare bikes, racebikes, customs... you name it. We really try to be 'anything on two wheels', so we can help the anyone and everyone find their dream bike... and getting more people on motorbikes is our main motivation. 🏍️



1. A Suzuki XR69 F1 replica, still with the cool Harris frame and flat-top tank

2. A very rare road going Petronas FP1, the race version was raced in WorldSBK by Aussie Steve Martin

3. The business motto: 'Every bike is iconic to someone'

4. The ultimate 'Speed Merchant'