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Vintage V-twin built from leftovers



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How these A65-based beauties were crafted



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SHAW THING

Austin Seven-powered 1929 prototype unearthed



MALLE MILE

Random racing in a stately home's backyard

Plus ARIEL SQUARE FOUR + HONDA CB77 + RD250 SPECIAL + MZ 250s GUIDE

WORKSHOP
RICK'S FIXES
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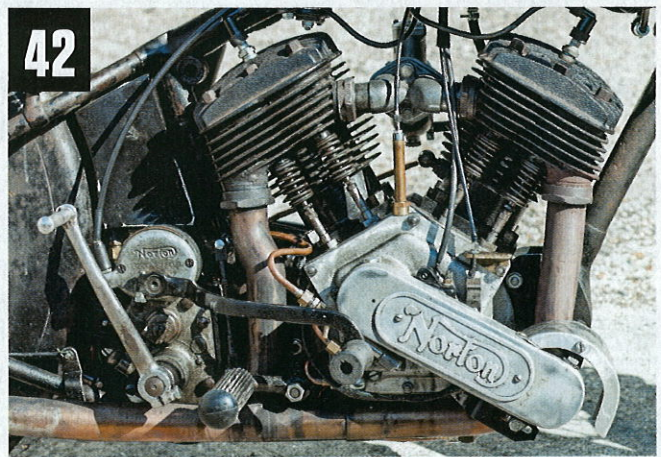
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The latest beauties from French maestro Frank Chatokhine



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Beauty AND THE BEST



Blending jaw-dropping aesthetics with top-class engineering, quality components and surgical attention to detail, French outfit Atelier Chatokhine has created a pair of BSA A65s sharp enough to cut it on modern roads



Words **BERTRAND BUSSILLET**
Photography **DAVID MARVIER**



CHATOKHINE TRACKMASTER-REP BSA 750s

“

A

beautiful motorcycle is not a question of aesthetics, but of manufacturing. You spend hours looking at it in detail – and each time you discover new tricks.” So says Frank Chatokhine, the driving force behind this pair of exceptional machines. And the ethos

of this French craftsman shines through these British-branded bikes that are inspired by BSAs raced in the early '70s on American dirt tracks, because these creations are not just eye-candy.

“These are road bikes,” insists Frank. “It was necessary to make engines that are not too difficult to start, are reliable – and, above all, useable.”

The work of Frank and his team in the Atelier Chatokhine workshops at Querry, south of Paris, will be well known to regular *CB* readers. In our January 2016 issue, we covered Chatokhine's Seeley Condor G50 replica, unveiled by Colin Seeley himself, who gave the bike his personal seal of approval. In the July issue later that year, we featured a visit to the French village that houses the Chatokhine workshop, where Frank lives out a passion for British bikes inherited from his father.

More recently, in the September 2017 issue, we featured a Trackmaster-framed BSA A65 flat-tracker built by the top-flight French outfit. That bike was a stunning tribute to the works BSA that David Aldana



Left: Making the bikes useable was Chatokhine's main aim, which includes making the engines easy to start. That doesn't mean you can't style it up a bit on the kickstart routine, though...

'THESE BIKES ARE STREET LEGAL, BUILT FROM SCRATCH WITH FRAMES MADE BY CO-BUILT IN ENGLAND'

raced on the mile and half-mile dirt ovals during the 1971 American Grand National series – a stripped to the bare bones, pure-bred racer with no front brake or running lights. Frank hinted at the time that he planned to build similar replica Trackmaster-framed machines in very limited numbers.

These two street trackers are part of the plan, which was to build just five bikes, reflecting the fact that #5 is Frank's racing number when competing in championships run by the UK-based Dirt Track Riders Association (DTRA).

"These two bikes, built for two different customers, are variations of the Aldana tribute bike," explains Frank. "But they are street legal and built from scratch with a BSA 650 engine transformed into a 750, mounted in a Trackmaster-style frame made by Co-Built in England. All the parts were machined in the Atelier Chatokhine workshop."

There's meant to be one more A65-based tracker, but the customer has not yet confirmed his order, which is frustrating for Frank because the workshop received a dozen requests to buy replicas following the launch of the race bike at the Moto Légende Show in Paris. The intention is to build the final Trackmaster powered by a Matchless G50 single-cylinder motor (as in the Seeley Condor replica mentioned earlier).

For those unfamiliar with this Anglophile French outfit, it's a bike shop with real heritage. Having worked in a Norton shop, Frank's father Roland established his own BSA/Norton Villiers dealership in 1972 and Atelier Chatokhine was born. Despite the decline in the British motorcycle industry, Roland introduced his son to the joy of British iron and taught him the art of fine-tuning old bikes. So naturally, in 1994, Frank carried on the family tradition by starting his career in the workshop.

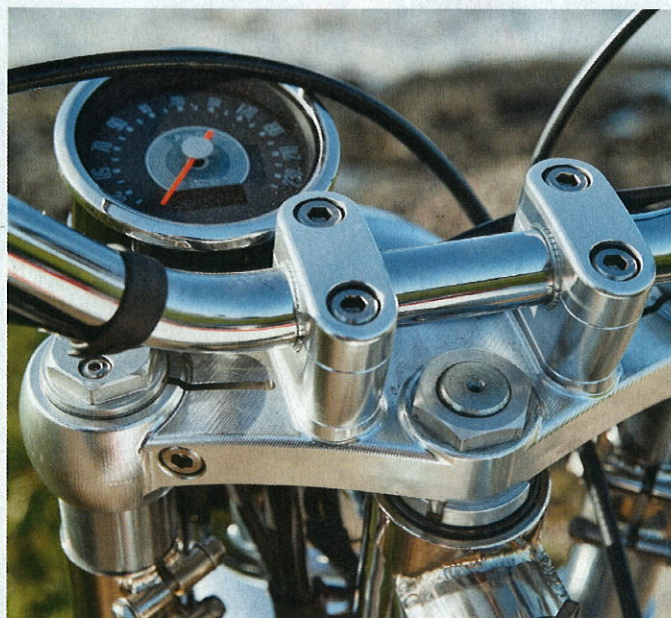
As for the history of Trackmaster, it was founded in 1969 by Ray Hensley, who produced innovative, lightweight, oil-carrying racing frames in his Californian workshop. Often associated with Triumph, Trackmaster actually built frames to take motors from a variety of manufacturers. "I don't think there were ever two Trackmaster frames that were exactly identical," says Frank. "The tube diameter, welding and the shape of the central beam was constantly changing."

Frank wanted to build a Trackmaster BSA that was a bit different, and as a tribute to David Aldana and other top-flight BSA flat-track racers of the era, so he ordered a replica frame – but he wasn't impressed. "It was so badly done that the obvious thing to us was to oversee the building of any flat-track frames ourselves in the future," says Frank. "The basis of the frames on these two bikes – the geometry, swingarm, steering head and subframe – were produced by Geoff Cain of Co-Built. The anchoring

CHATOKHINE TRACKMASTER-REP BSA 750s



Up front, a Brembo racing four-piston caliper bites on a Barnes replica disc featuring a disc support machined in 7075 alloy in the Atelier Chatokhine workshops



Short handlebars are European-spec Commando Roadster items fitted with Venhill controls. Electronic rev counter is driven by a sensor position on the rear wheel



Fuelling is by a pair of 32mm Amal Mkl Premier Concentric 900s, with the spark to fire it provided by a Pazon Sure-fire electronic ignition system



Front suspension is dealt with by fully adjustable, CR-Suspension GP38 forks – 38mm Ceriani replicas, with a quick-change Barnes-type alloy hub nestled at the bottom

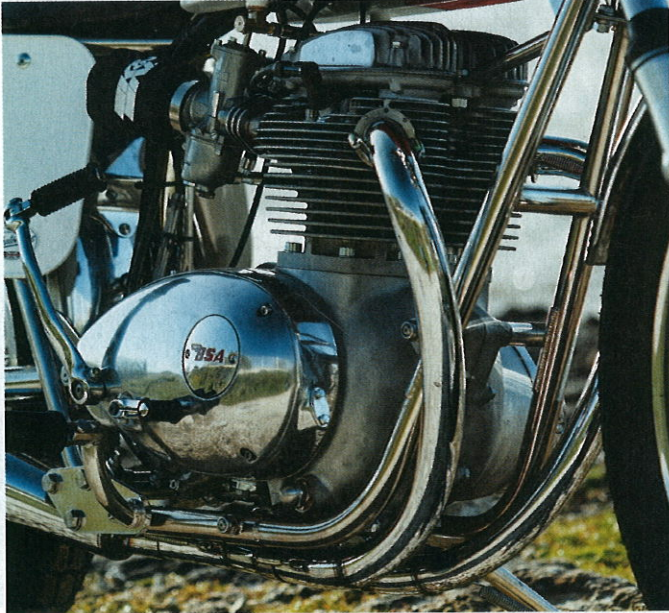
‘THE TWO TRACKMASTER-STYLE FRAMES ARE FITTED WITH COMPLETELY

and fixing points and the steering stops were added at the Chatokhine workshop. As a result, the frames of these two bikes are a little different – and certain parts, such as the footrest plates, do not mount from one machine to another.” When completed, the frames were chrome plated before being nickel plated.

The two Trackmaster-style frames are fitted with BSA A65 unit-construction twin-cylinder engines which have been completely rebuilt. Says Frank: “I found cylinder heads, crankshafts and crankcases in our spares store. By incredible chance, the crankcases have very similar serial numbers – A65D 5032 and A65D 5051, probably originally fitted to Lightnings manufactured in 1965. They must have been manufactured the same day!”

The engine rebuilds, carried out in the Chatokhine workshops, included the fitting of SRM aluminium cylinder kits which enlarged the displacement to 750cc, plus RNR forged aluminium rods and Gandini pistons. The intake ports in the cylinder heads were bored to accommodate 32mm Amal Concentric carburetors and Spitfire camshafts were also fitted, bringing the twins’ claimed output to 65bhp – so with an overall weight of just 165kg, the power-to-weight ratio of the bikes is impressive.

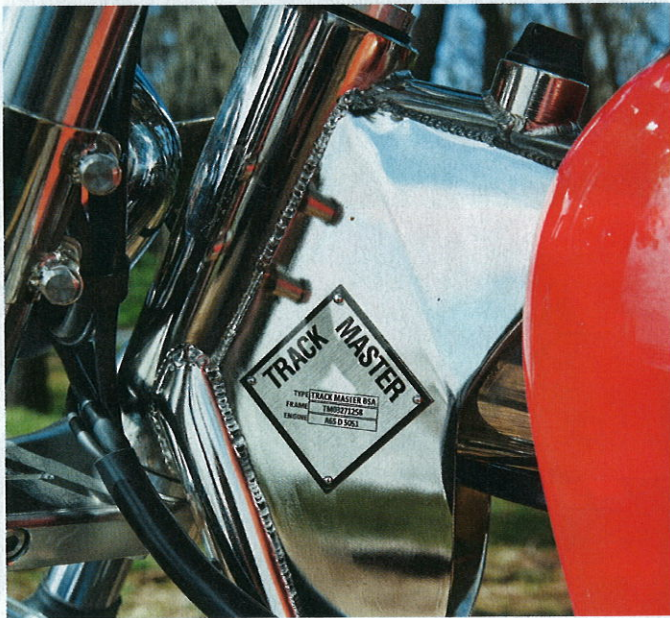
The actuation of the rear brake from the pedal on the left side is a good example of the attention to detail that has been lavished on these bikes. The connection goes under the engine to control a master cylinder tucked away behind the gearbox on the right side of the machine.



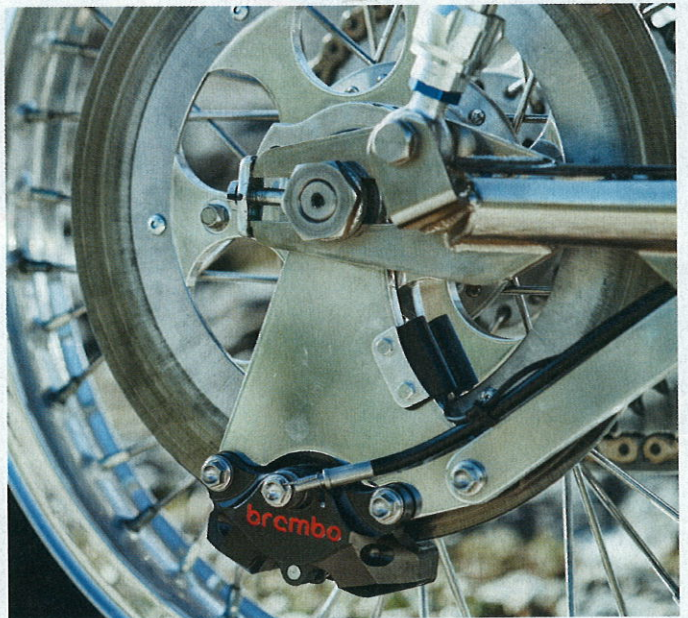
1965 BSA Lightning Rocket 650 engine has 750cc aluminium big-bore kit, high-comp pistons, Colsibro valve guides, plasma-hardened valves and aluminium billet conrods



Frank Chatokhine swears by these CR-Suspension GS03AR CNC forged racing shocks, fully-adjustable for preload and rebound damping and with a CR-MO shock shaft



Trackmaster replica frames were made by Co-Built in the UK, with additional with anchoring and fixing points and steering stops added at the Chatokhine workshop



At the rear there's another Barnes replica disc with a Chatokhine disc support lovingly machined in 7075 alloy, this time acted upon by a Brembo racing two-piston caliper

REBUILT BSA A65 UNIT-CONSTRUCTION TWIN-CYLINDER ENGINES'

Frank's partner Zoé David explains: "In order to hide the master cylinder, which isn't very aesthetically pleasing, the rear brake cross-shaft passes under the engine, through the engine plates in which bronze bushes have been inserted to limit the play of the cross-shaft and allow it to slide without seizing in the engine fixing plates." It's the kind of tweak that results from many hours of looking, thinking, experimenting, and fitting and removing again and again, before you get it right. It takes patience and unswerving dedication to the task in hand.

The cycle parts and other components are top-notch, too – whether bought-in or machined in-house. The business end of the braking system at front and rear consists of Brembo calipers gripping replicas of American

Barnes discs created in the Chatokhine workshop. Frank, Zoé and mechanic Cyril Dubois all took turns at the lathe and milling machine to machine these rotors from the hardest 7075 aluminium.

"We started with an 8mm-thick square block and had six disc centres to make – it took us a week to machine them!" says Zoé. They have 4mm shoulders on which the heat-treated cast-iron disc are centred. "All of these parts could have been done in an hour by laser cutting, but we wanted to do everything ourselves to experience this together," adds Frank. The discs are mounted on refurbished Talon hubs laced to Excel wheel rims.

The front suspension is by replicas of Ceriani forks produced by CR Suspension (for which Chatokhine is the



CRATING... MASTER...

Frank

BSA

BSA

CR
SUSPENSION

Chatchrine

BSA



Oh yes, Chatokhine's back alright – with a vengeance



Right: Zoé isn't just Frank's partner and riding buddy, she helps out in the workshop, too

French distributor). Originally, Ceriani forks came in 35mm diameter, but CR Suspension have developed a 38mm version. Both sizes were available, but Frank explains why he opted for the 38mm forks: "First, modern tyres have more grip than 1970s rubber, so you need stiffer forks. And second, on the 35mm forks the traditional triple clamps only gave 180mm of clearance – that's not enough for fat dirt tyres. With the 38mm forks, the distance between centres increases to 200mm." Frank swears by the quality of these Hungarian-made forks, having won several flat-track titles using them in DTRA championships. "I have never touched the settings of my Rickman dirt forks, which work perfectly with very modern CR Suspension internals. Even the oil seals seem indestructible."

The shock absorbers developed by CR Suspension have also won Frank over and add to the stocky stance of these meaty street racers. Chatokhine thought twice about fitting mudguards, but relented in the end – and they do contribute to the bike's low-slung look by visually shortening the forks.

As for the other components, the short handlebars are European-model Norton Commando Roadster items fitted with beautiful adjustable Venhill controls, while the electronic rev counter is driven by a sensor position on the rear wheel. An original flat-track aluminium tank was used as the mould for the glassfibre fuel tank – a



design inspired by the Gold Star motocrosser and modified to fit the Trackmaster frame, which, conforming to Frank's avowed aim of useability, offers reasonably practical fuel capacity. The base, foam and felt of the saddles was pre-fabricated in the workshop before being dispatched to the saddler to cover them.

The finished bikes evoke the style of the factory racers of the early '70s as well as their substance – and with some street bike gear added they're both eye-popping and practical. They also benefit from top-flight modern componentry that allows them to exploit those nimble-handling Trackmaster frames on the back roads.

Surely even the most hardcore traditionalists in the classic bike movement can appreciate that... atelier-chatokhine.com

'THE FINISHED BIKES EVOKE THE STYLE OF THE FACTORY RACERS OF THE EARLY '70S AS WELL AS THEIR SUBSTANCE'