

# ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT ELECTRIC MOTORCYCLES

· 16 e-bikes tested · New electric Triumph PLUS! Will new 250mph e-bike start a revolution?









Racing in St Tropez

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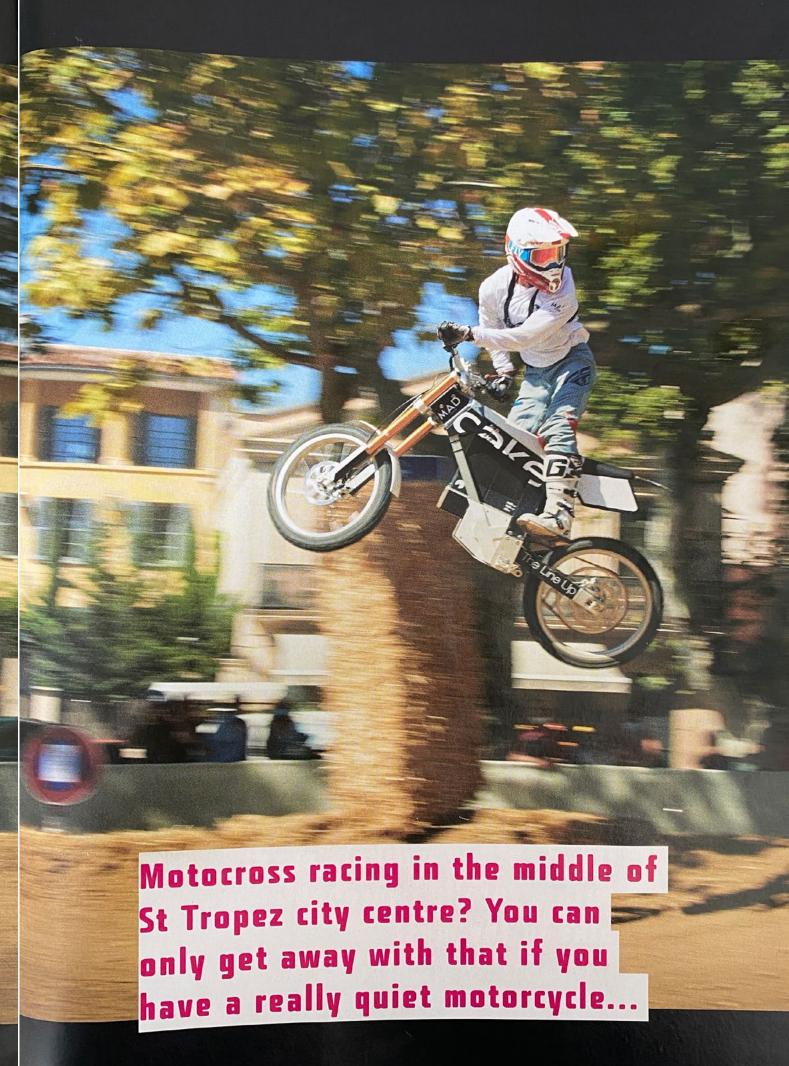
CAKE

AND

BATING

Words & Photography by Fabio Affuso





## Racing in St Tropez

elcome to the first ever Urban Electric Motocross Championship, slap bang in the middle of swish Saint Tropez in the South of France. Vincent Prat, one of the founders of Wheels & Waves, joined up with Olivier Le Quellec and Swedish electric motorcycle brand Cake to create this brave new event called Elektrafuture.

The championship is divided in three groups: Swallows, Cuckoos and Eagles, with qualification rounds deciding who goes through to the main event. I'm staying with the El Solitario crew (a ragtag bunch of motorcycle customisers) and, inevitably, a few of us are still recovering from last night's party. We make it to the track just in time for the last qualifying round in the afternoon.

I get on track to take pictures but soon it's my turn to jump in the saddle. This Cake is nothing like I've ridden before. Lighter than a trials bike — just 79kg including battery — the Cake has a hightech aluminium frame and the throttle response of a riled Doberman. There are no gears and the power delivery is immediate — it looks and feels like a toy, which can be

W.T.F. EL SOLITARI

deceiving, as I discover when I overdo it and crash after landing my first-ever double jump in qualification.

With a little practice and adjustment the ride can really be taken to the next level. For instance, the Cake has three riding modes: Explore, Excite and Excel. In Explore you get capped performance with three to four hours of battery life. At the other end of the scale, you get full-bore performance but only an hour of riding.

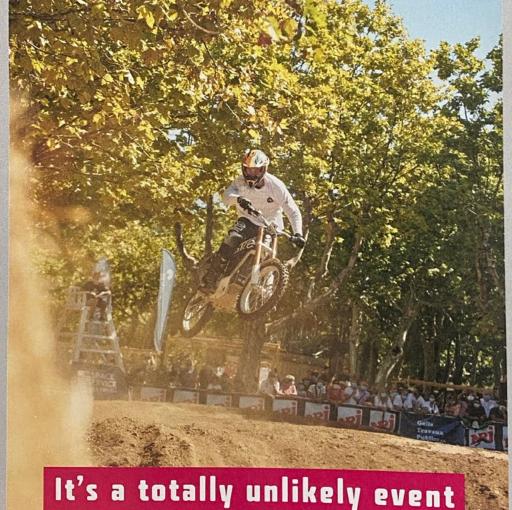
There are three engine braking modes: free wheel, two-stroke, and four-stroke. And the more engine braking the more regeneration you get. So with a bit of practice there are enough combinations to suit most riding styles.

The front suspension is upsidedown as sprung forks by Öhlin with 38mm stanchio tubes, while the rear is also Öhlins but wit Cake internals an linkage. They feel goo and responsive.

The wheels are 19i front and rear wit aluminium forged rim and CNC-machine hubs, with both enchaving a four pistocaliper and 220mm dis

This bike is fun, and get better with every la I could get used to this Perhaps not for remotocross, but enduror trail riding – and ever commuting.

Saturday is the officing race day and although Friday night wasn't a early one, I make it the track in good time explore the event ar with artists painting motorcycles and helmets, stalls with a stalls with a stall of the office of the offi



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MUDFEST IT AIN'T
Being St Tropez, this is not
your average mud-splattered
MX meet. 1700 tons of dirt
were used to make the course

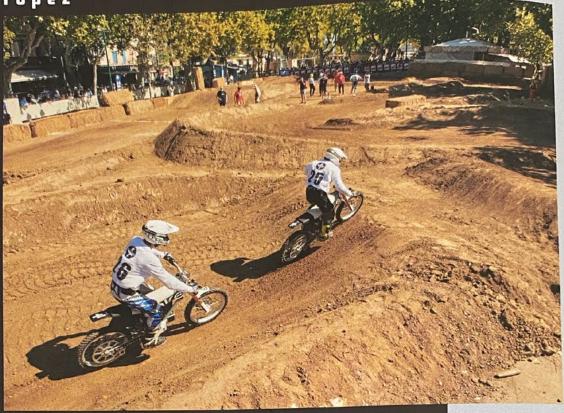
# Racing in St Tropez

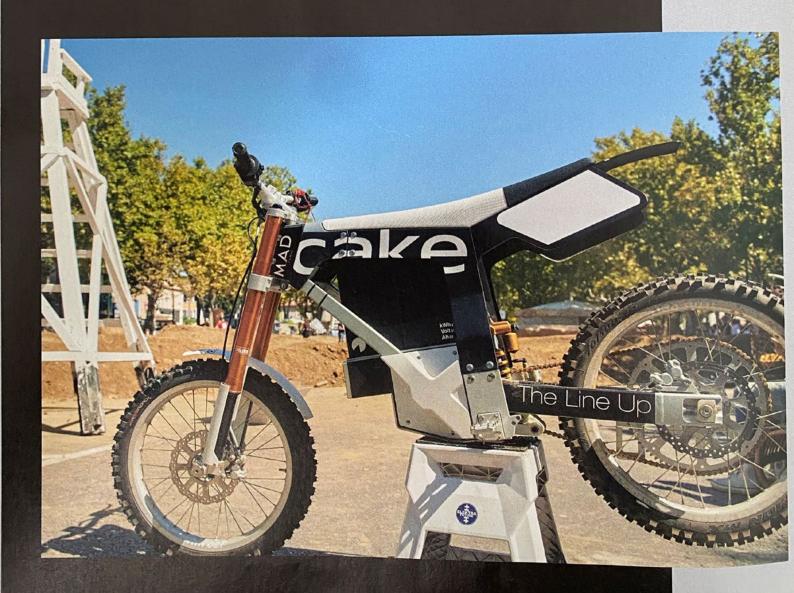
Fablo (far left) and friends - including crews from El Solitario and Blitz Motorcycles

RIGHT
The course was part supercross, part BMX. The professionals hit it hard

BELOW The Cake is light but strong - all the bikes survived the ordeal

FAR RIGHT, BELOW Organisers Vincent Prat and Olivier Le Quellec







happens with almost no noise, but that's why the event got the go ahead — the city centre has never promoted a motorcycle race before



Elektrafuture merchandise and mags, other electric bikes on display including a fun-looking mini bike by Cake called Ösa.

Professional motocrossers have arrived from all over the world to try the bikes for the first time and compete one-on-one on the gnarly city track. They don't disappoint, pushing the bikes to the limit and beyond. It's surreal that it all happens with almost no noise, but that's why the event got the go ahead – the city centre has never promoted a motorcycle race before.

For the award ceremony Olivier and Vincent hand out beautiful trophies designed and produced by two design students from the School of Decorative Arts in Paris, created by hand from melted engine parts and assembled on an oak base to symbolise the transition between the old and new world.

Elektrafuture has been fun because of the cool friends, crazy bikes and surreal setting. But it's been a breath of fresh air too – something new and brave, a totally unlikely event with a totally improbable bike in the most implausible of places. If that doesn't show vision and tenacity to break old paradigms and forge new ways of living with motorcycles, then what does?

Some may cringe at the idea of motocross in such a setting, but the majority – including local authorities – welcomed this fresh vision, which involved dropping 1700 tonnes of soil onto the tarmac to

The Cake motorcycles did their part too. They survived the rugged track in the hands of both amateurs and professionals, and showed that motorcycles don't have to be a nuisance but can perfectly coexist with peaceful and green city living. Isn't that what motorcycling desperately needs more of right now?



