

# BLOG

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## ELEKTRAFUTURE

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*Story by Fabio Affuso*

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One way or another, everything is changing, and those living and breathing motorcycles are really going for it. Vincent, one of the original founders of The Southsiders and Wheels & Waves, in partnership with Olivier Le Quellec and Swedish electric motorcycle brand Cake, at the beginning of September wipe out any practical and philosophical obstacles during these incredible times of uncertainty to create this brave new event called Elektrafuture. Just imagine a completely silent motocross track in the famous Place de Lices of Saint Tropez, the uber rich and refined town of the French Cote D'Azul! Who wouldn't; want to tbe there? Even just to escape from the depressing social segregation and the glooming world prospects, more so to hang out with the rest of the crazy El Solitario crew, and of course to jump around on some of those new Cake motorcycles. They are no custom bikes, but all the same exciting as they look and feel like nothing you've seen before.



Capture d'écran

And so with camera bag ready and face mask in the pocket I jump on the next flight to France for this quick weekend of friends, exhilaration and discovery. To hell the travel restrictions and quarantine on return. As I get to the villa booked by the organization for El Solitario crew in the beautiful vines covered hills surrounding Saint Tropez, some of the guys are already there but heading out to town to meet the others, and we are immediately on the move. A 'riders and friends' welcome party awaits us at the clothing store and style hotspot Battaglia, where I discover the owner Marco is not only a stylish and chilled dude, but also a friend of a friend, and rider of vintage choppers who knows how to throw a good party fuelled by wine, champagne and great music.



On the morning of the first day of racing (Friday) some of us take it easy at the villa as the party last night continued until the early hours and we have one or two brain cells to recover from the bottom of the pool. Anyway the championship is divided in 3 groups: Swallows, Cuckoos and Eagles, and the beginning is for the first round of qualifications, so a few of us decide to first go and recharge with an amazing brunch by the sea. We make it to the track just on time for the last qualifying round in the afternoon, when the light is just perfect to shoot (I shall really say I planned that all along) and I get on the track to take pictures, but before I know it's my turn to jump in the saddle. This Cake bike is nothing like I've ridden before. Light as a bicycle with a frame made of forged, extruded and machined 6061 aluminium weighting just 62kg (plus 17kg for the 2.6Kw battery), and with the throttle response of a pissed off Doberman (obviously there are no gears and the whole power delivery is immediate), it looks like a toy and it feels like it wants to be pushed for more, so much so that I even overdo it and fall off on my first ever double jump.



Finished with the races we hit the road to explore the French Riviera with the coolest rides. David brought his Norton Commando, El Solitario David with a Panhead, Vincent with another Norton, Fred with his custom R80, Mike the Doc with two gorgeous BSAs... We keep going on and on through twisty roads with gorgeous views of vine filled fields and amazing bushy hills, and somehow arrive to the same blue water beach we were at for lunch. It's a great spot and it turns out they have fab cocktails too.





Saturday is the proper racing day and although last night wasn't an early one either, I make it to the track in good time to properly explore the rest of the event area with artists painting motorcycles and helmets, stalls with Elektrafuture cool merchandise and mags, other electric bikes on display including a fun looking mini bike by Cake called Ōsa, and a stand by high tech French helmet brand Naca showing off some really clever lids.



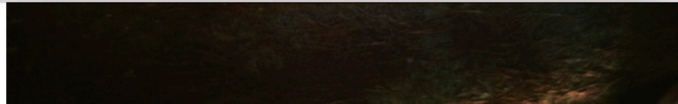
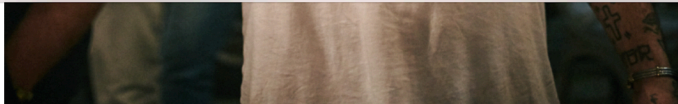
Professional MX riders including champions have arrived from all over the world to try the bikes for the first time and compete on a one to one on the city track, and they don't disappoint. Riding Cakes like madman and jumping as if they were birds, sometimes they fall and it's not that big of a drama, because of their skills, and because the bikes are a game changer without any hot or leaking parts (no exhaust, nor petrol or oil). At one point a young rider even flies off the edge of the track, still magically escaping any injury. It looks like these fun machines may be less dangerous than the traditional combustion bikes, even if they feel quick and edgy like your Italian wife. In a way, they seem kind of perfect for a city / outback experience. Light, silent and agile, you could be excused to ride where combustion vehicles aren't allowed (and I would), with most cyclist and horse riders probably not knowing the difference.



At the end of the racing, for the the award ceremony Olivier and Vincent hand out beautiful trophies designed and produced by two students in object design at the School of Decorative Arts of Paris, created by hand out of melted engines and assembled on an oak base to symbolize the transition between the old and new world, the thermal and electrical.







Elektrafuture has not just been fun because of the cool friends, the fun crazy bikes and the unreal setting. It's been a breath of fresh air, something new and brave during a time when not even the most ordinary things are allowed. Yet, here there is a totally unlikely event with a totally improbable bike in the most implausible of places. If that doesn't show vision and tenacity to brake old paradigms and forge new ways of living our motorcycles, then what can? Some may cringe at the idea of motocross in such a setting, but the majority including local authority welcomed this fresh vision, which of course involved also dropping 1700 tonnes of soil onto the tarmac to create the track! The Cake motorcycles did their part too. Light as bicycles and more agile than 2 strokes, they kept up with the bouncy tracks in the hands of both amateurs and professionals, while showing that motorcycles don't have to be a nuisance but can perfectly coexist with peaceful and green city living. Isn't that what every other mayor wants right now?!