

A Most Gallic Excursion



On the last weekend of May every year, an event takes place that draws hundreds of classic bike aficionados to a rather well appointed little race circuit just outside the French city of Dijon. Nestled in the idyllic landscape of the Cote-d'Or, the Cirque du Dijon Prenoix, hosts the Coupes de Legende (The Cut of Legends), which is one of Europe's largest gatherings of classic 2 wheeled, racing machinery and exotica. So popular is the event, that it regularly attracts former race legends such as Giacomo Agostini who, once more get astride their equally legendary and priceless 2 wheeled stallions, to mix it with mere mortals the likes of you and me; yes, even you can get your bike out on the circuit and with none of that nanny state, health and safety, BS standard clothing/helmets etc. nonsense. Bloody marvellous! This year's guest stars included 2 x 500cc World Champion, 'Fast Freddie' Spencer and the 1984 250cc World champion, Christian Sarron.

I had been promising myself a trip to this gem of an event for years, but something else always conspired to hamper my ambitions, for instance; I was all set to go last year, but only

managed to get as far as Folkestone before my regulator/rectifier went tits and fried the battery! This year however, I finally did it and can only say the whole experience was as thoroughly enjoyable as I'd expected it would be. What can only be described as a sensory overload for any motorcycle enthusiast; the sights, the sounds and the smells as you freely wander through the pits and watch 2-wheeled history hammering past on the start/finish straight, is something truly grin inducing. There's everything from Egli Vincent's and Manx Norton's to fire breathing 80's air-cooled Super bikes and endurance machines, intermingled with screaming TZ750's, works Kawasaki H2's and even a lush TR750! Not to mention all the rare, European mechanical eccentricity that you will have barely heard of, let alone witnessed in action; which all goes to make the Coupes something of a unique event for us classic types. Don't get me wrong; the Donington Classic is gathering strength year by year and has the potential to match the Coupes in terms of sheer attendance, but the Coupes just has that certain "je ne c'est quoi" as they say. But it's the journey and the experience of getting there and the town of Dijon to savour once you are; that just makes a trip like this special.

Our adventure started in top form; the weather was glorious and the forecast was for it to remain so for several days (I know, pinch me!). My wingman Stu and I, meandered down to the South coast, avoiding motorways, for our first