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Bikes, beards and bikinis at the 2014 Wheels & Waves Festival

Lead

Every year, the European motorcycle scene gathers at the Wheels & Waves Festival on the French Atlantic coast. Hermann Kopf took not only his bike, but his trusty Leica to Biarritz, too...

Mediterranean weather, curious bikes, long beards and illegal racing



Anticipation for the third running of this event was huge, thanks to the flood of media images released in the preceding few months. Mediterranean weather, curious bikes, long beards and (apparently) dirt track racing more than surpassed expectations. This is no marketing event, it's an honest four-day festival run by the Southsiders Men, mixing art, music, surfing and custom motorcycles.

Contemporary motorcycle culture in an old industrial building



On day one, surfing friends came together at the nearby beach for the amateur surf contest, before riding into town that evening for the 'Art Ride' exhibition, housed in an old industrial hall. The artists themselves were present, their works reflecting the spirit of this 'scene'. They came from around the world, travelling here to share their interpretations and exchange ideas with like-minded people. Contemporary motorcycle culture was brought to the fore.

Sprint race in the Basque Country





The following day we travelled to the Spanish side of the Basque Country for a sprint race. Thirty-two riders on old machines took to a picturesque 800-metre mountain route on the Jaizkibel. Although this year the race was properly organised, with compulsory leathers and safety areas, the ‘spirit’ was not diminished in the slightest.

Surfing, mountain riding and a stunning sunset



On Saturday, the Southsiders invited us on a tour of the Basque mountains. About 80 riders were in attendance, and that evening both the best surfers and the best bikes were chosen. Brian Bent and his band were on hand to play some appropriate music to accompany the fine sunset.

Threatening success?



We wonder whether the Southsiders will throw a fourth edition in Toulouse next year, or has the surging popularity of the event tainted their vision of what the festival was originally meant to be? We'll just have to wait and see...

Photos: [Hermann Köpf](#)

Gallery

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