

Media Information
20 February 2023

BMW Motorrad presents the R 18 IRON ANNIE. R 18 custom bike from BMW partner VTR Motorrad AG & VTR Customs in aviation style.



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Munich/Schmerikon. The old "Aunt Ju" Junkers Ju 52, the legendary three-engine commercial and transport aircraft from the 1930s, is still familiar to many people. The Ju 52 with the aircraft registration D-AQUI in the Lufthansa colour scheme grey-black from 1936 became particularly well known worldwide. During its time in the USA from 1970 to 1984 under the American aircraft registration N52JU, it was christened "IRON ANNIE" for short by its then owner Martin Caidin.

It was precisely this aircraft that inspired a customer of BMW partner VTR Motorrad AG & VTR Customs in Schmerikon, Switzerland, to create a very special customized version of the BMW R 18 – the R 18 "IRON ANNIE". Years before, the architect had already had an individual R nineT built entirely according to his ideas at VTR Customs and this time, too, aviation style elements from aircraft construction were to be used.

For example, the dial of the speedometer integrated into the tank, which is intended to be reminiscent of old cockpit instruments, or access panels with quick-release fasteners, as found on many aircraft.



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And of course, it was imperative to borrow from the Ju 52's characteristic corrugated aluminium planking. At the same time, the seat was to be reminiscent of a riding saddle and, of course, only the "IRON ANNIE" colour scheme in grey and black was to be used for the paintwork.

A BMW R 18 First Edition served as the starting point for the customizing project. First the engine was removed and painted black. All chrome parts were painted black and the fork stanchions also received a black coating in the form of a DLC (Diamond Like Carbon) coat.

The cockpit trim was pulled back as narrow and flat as possible to emphasise the streamlined shape. The 7 cm shorter fork and a height-adjustable Wilbers shock absorber emphasise the crouched stance of the motorcycle. "To make the bike look smaller and give it a more filigree appearance between the wheels, we had large 18 and 21 inch wheels made by Kineo," adds Daniel Weidmann, Owner & Managing Director of VTR Motorrad & VTR Customs.

As a further technical treat, racing-style HC3 pumps from Magura were fitted in place of the standard R 18 brake and clutch fittings. The dial of the customized speedometer also received a hand specially made by watchmaker Zeitzone Zurich.

"One of the big challenges with the R 18 IRON ANNIE was the replica cooling fins in the area of the rear silencers. Shaping these parts into parallel and beautiful radii and at the same time still fastening them harmoniously took a number of attempts," says Daniel Weidmann about the aluminium sheet metal work. This consumed countless hours of work, as the fuel tank, the tail with the suggested tail fin of an aeroplane, the side panels and the cockpit were artfully hand-formed from aluminium sheet. Reminiscences of traditional metal aircraft construction are also provided by the numerous lens-head rivets.



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"What almost pained us a little when we saw all the handmade, bright aluminium sheets shimmering and shining was that they would have to be painted. However, we are extremely satisfied with the result because the R 18 IRON ANNIE differs even more clearly from our well-known SPITFIRE, which is also designed in aviation style," Daniel Weidmann continues.

The R 18 IRON ANNIE will receive road approval and is sure to turn quite a few heads in its new home on Lake Geneva. It will remain a unique model as promised to the customer.

BMW R 18 IRON ANNIE by VTR Customs specifications:

- Base: BMW R 18 First Edition.
- Sheet metal parts: Fuel tank, rear, side panels, cockpit, mudguard, Aluminium handmade by VTR Customs.
- Fork: shortened and DLC-coated stanchions.
- Suspension strut: Wilbers, height adjustable.
- Wheels: Kineo front 3.5 x 21", rear 6 x 18".
- Tyres: Avon Cobra, 120/70-21 and 200/55-18.
- Handlebars: ABM Vario Clip.
- Speedometer: Customized by Zeitzone Zürich.
- Brake / clutch pump: Magura HC3.
- Saddle: VTR Customs & Yves Knobel Saddlery.
- Exhaust system: Walzwerk.
- Number plate holder: Berham Customs.
- Side indicator and rear lights: Kellermann Atto.
- Headlight: HIGHSIDER.
- Paintwork: VTR Customs & Freuler AG, Benken.



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