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NCR has been tuning Ducatis since the late '60s. During the '90s and early 2000s, you'll probably remember the black NCR Ducatis competed in World Superbike, ridden by the likes of Borja, Bontempi, Xaus Bostrom, Laconi and Chili

In 2001, NCR, which is part of the Italian Poggipolini Group, wound down its racing activities to concentrate on building their own Ducati-engined specials and producing aftermarket Ducati spares.

It also does 3D rapid prototyping for the aerospace industry, Formula 1, MotoGP and for car-makers like McLaren, Pagani and Lamborghini. The carbon-fibre, aluminium, steel and titanium works of art they produce are simply the most mouth-watering best of the best.

NCR has even been commissioned by Ducati to produce special projects and in their workshop is an early Streetfighter concept and a prototype set of fully-titanium 998 race crankcases, which are 40% stronger than aluminium, allowing the engine to make big power figures.

Coming hot on the heels of their Desmosedici RR-engined NCR M16 (Millona 16v), the new NCR M4 (Millona 4v) café racer is their latest creation based on their current Milona race bike.

NCR owner Michele Poggipolini explains the thinking behind the M4 "The goal was to make a street version of the lightweight Milona racer. We started the project in 2010 with styling by my partner Joseph Ippoliti, based on the M16

"It weighs 130kg dry and the Ducati engine is about 60kg of that. We created a full titanium trellis frame and based the geometry on the Milona – a bike that gave us a lot of results on the race track."



THE NCR M4

EXOTICA REDEFINED

Say hello to NCR's ultra-exotic, titanium-framed, £35,000 M4...

THE NCR M4 IN DETAIL



1 ELECTRONICS/HANDLEBARS

Traction control, telemetry and two riding maps, developed from a Magneti Marelli system with a lightweight NCR wiring loom. ECU, relays and fuses are tucked inside a carbon-fibre box under the enlarged oil cooler and hooked up via a 72mm military connector. Titanium tubes with aluminium clamps.



2 WHEELS/BRAKES

BST carbon-fibre wheels (Blackstone Tek are a South African carbon fibre specialist, which has also made complete carbon fibre frames), shod with Pirelli's excellent Diablo Supercorsa SPs. The Ohlins FGRT800 forks are fitted with Brembo monoblocs, while the exotic materials stretch all the way to titanium brake reservoir caps.



3 ENGINE/FRAME

Standard 105bhp, air-cooled V-twin Ducati 1100 Evo motor. If that's not enough, you can upgrade to NCR's 1200cc kit, which boosts power and saves 3-4kg. First ever road legal titanium production frame. 32mm tubular trellis structure takes between two or three weeks to produce and weighs just 4.5kg.



WHAT'S THE STORY?

■ NCR has created the world's lightest, most exotic Ducati café racer special and the £35,000, 1100 Evo-engined NCR M4 is the first road-legal production bike to come with a titanium frame. We visited their factory in Bologna to drool over its magnificence.

IAN JUBB

The NCR M16



Only three carbon-fibre and titanium M16s have been built: £175,000 without motor

As if the standard MotoGP-inspired Ducati Desmosedici RR road bike wasn't special enough, NCR created their own carbon fibre-framed version in 2010. The M16 makes the Des seem as ordinary as a Fireblade.

This feat of carbon fibre and titanium is the first of three built and sold for £175,000 with the owners having to source the engine themselves. It's back in the NCR workshop to be made even lighter and more powerful.

"It's the masterpiece, like a Mcaren P1, Pagani or Ferrari – the best of the best", says Poggipolini. "We wanted to create a light bike with Ducati's most powerful engine. Normally you don't see the beautiful engine because it's all covered, but we redesigned everything.

"All the structural parts are one-piece carbon fibre and everything from the suspension tie rods to the rearsets is titanium. It weighs 145kg, makes over 200bhp and we developed the electronics to give it traction control and variable power maps.

"There's a pressurised carbon-fibre ram air system, for more power and the exhaust is loud – over 120db!"

'All the structural parts are one-piece carbon-fibre and everything from the suspension tie rods to the rearsets is titanium'

NCR OWNER MICHELE POGGIPOLINI



Ducati's most powerful engine ever with a ram air system boosting power to 200bhp+ is on full view on the M16



4 HEADLIGHT / SIDE STAND

LED headlight can be removed with just two bolts and by disconnecting one military grade electrical connector to make way for a full race fairing, which NCR are still developing. The M4's sidestand is made in aluminium, but for a mere £1400 you can have it supplanted by a titanium one. After all, if you're going to spend £34,000, you might as well spend £35,400...



5 EXHAUST / BODYWORK

Carbon-fibre fuel tank and self-supporting seat unit, with faired-in LED rear light and indicators. It's held on with five bolts and can be quickly removed to make way for a dedicated race tail, sold separately. NCR designed exhaust, made by Zard, with the cat hidden well away. Full titanium lightweight race exhaust available.



6 SWINGARM / SUSPENSION

Aluminium swingarm with a direct suspension link is based on the NCR Milona, but you can have it in titanium, if your pockets are deep enough. FGRT800 Ohlins forks with machined billet aluminium NCR fork bottoms and anodised yokes. Ohlins rear shock. Ohlins TTX shock with a titanium spring sold as an option. Suspension will be set up and sprung to suit the customer.