



BIG DOG, another company in America's heartland—Wichita, Kan., in this case—also straddles the fence between pure custom and mass production. Within its dramatic, 9-foot-long profile, the **Big Dog K-9** (www.bigdogmotorcycles.com) fits a 117 cu in, 45-degree V-twin motor, along with a mold-breaking Baker 6-speed transmission with a right-side final belt drive. The transmission's configuration helps to better the machine's balance and thus improve the bike's handling. As a chopper with a 39-degree rake and 300 mm rear tire, the K-9 does prefer to run in a straight line. Although it appears to be a hard-tail, the motorcycle is available with an Air Ride rear suspension that adjusts easily to suit your preferences. The K-9's price starts at \$29,900. Big Dog has a virtually endless array of accessory combinations to ensure that your K-9 looks like no other. —D.W.

The **Ecosse Heretic** (www.ecosse-moto.com) sets the stereotype of an American V-twin on its head. The Heretic was designed primarily for performance, but its appearance does not suffer; this is a stunning piece of industrial art, which is priced from \$65,000 to \$140,000. The powder-coated chromium-molybdenum tubular steel frame and swingarm—available in any color—are juxtaposed

with carbon-fiber bodywork (which can be pin-striped or fully painted) and an American-made, Ecosse-customized, carbureted 120 cu in aluminum motor (which can be polished or powder-coated black). On the road, the Heretic handles superbly, thanks in part to its fully adjustable Öhlins suspension. Tactile enhancements abound, including adjustable foot controls and a choice of Momo premium handgrips. —D.W.

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When the conversation turns to distinctive cruisers, the **Triumph Rocket III Classic** (www.triumph.co.uk) must be recognized, although England is not

often associated with cruisers, and neither is an in-line, longitudinal, 3-cylinder powerplant. You would expect a machine that displaces a startling 2.3 liters and carries more than six gallons of fuel to be both muscle-bound and overweight. But the Rocket's dry weight is just over 700 pounds, and the delivery of its 140 hp is as controllable as it is impressive. The wide but well-balanced Rocket, which has a starting price of \$15,700, is a pleasure to ride. It offers a nimbleness that reminds you that it is, after all, built by Triumph, a company renowned for its performance bikes. —D.W. ☐



Ecosse Heretic (top) and Triumph Rocket III Classic (above).