

# NEWS & events

## Go on 'de Tours' in 2015!

2015 sees the wonderful Grand Prix de Tours held over three, not two days – a welcome extension to his marvellous event which celebrates old vehicles on two and four wheels. We asked Mike Davis to tell us how good the 2014 event was, and why we should be looking forward to 2015's event.

"On the circuit at Tours, it would take a cafe racer all day to complete a lap – there being that many pavement cafes lining the closed roads of the French city centre, over which this demonstration event is run. But where else could you sip your coffee, at a table under the trees, and watch motorcycles sweep by at speed?

At just under a kilometre long, the circuit at Tours comprises two

long, narrow straights, at one end linked by a tight 180° bend and at the other by a broad circumnavigation of the city's main square – where the city's new tramway uniquely crosses the track on the level! Speed is limited by chicanes on the straights, but these gave riders the chance to demonstrate their two-wheeled dexterity and thus to make the motorcycle class probably the most rewarding of the day.

The motorcycle class of the Tours GP attracted mainly the post-historic big vehicles. This year half the field were from Japanese manufacturers. The rest came from Europe. But every one was French owned and ridden, demonstrating either the Gallic passion for these



**Honda four sings on the Tour!**

powerful, foreign machines or that the Brits haven't yet discovered this event.

The pick of the Hondas was that of Edouard Delage. His 1969 CB750 Four racer looked and sounded the part, particularly in the company of the ex-works 1971 BMW R75/5 750 (the mount of Jean-Paul Passet at the time of his tragic accident at Rouen in 1972) ridden by Christian Hervet.

Also impressive was the 1973 Honda 750 Daytona of Thierry Delage. In the company of numerous

650, 750 and 850 racing Triumphs, Nortons and Tritons of the same era, ridden competitively despite it being a demonstration event, this classic big bike spectacle was most appealing – particularly to 'those of a certain age'.

But it was not only the big bikes that contributed to the show. When not astride the BMW, Christian Hervet demonstrated how well suited the little 1971 Ducati 450 Desmo is to the sinuous circuit, as was Patrick Caralp's gorgeous

1975 Kawasaki 500 H1R. They left in their wake more powerful vehicles – including Gregory Benoist's 1975 Ducati 860GT and Bruno Normand's 1976 Benelli 750 Sei. Like so many of the big 'open road' motorcycles, they were not entirely comfortable negotiating such a compact, obstructed course, which offered little opportunity for an open throttle.

Not only was it the good weather and class fields that combined to draw large numbers of spectators, but also the relaxed and inclusive ambience of the event. Access to the circuit and paddocks was free. Barriers were limited to the absolutely necessary. In the motorcycle paddock, there was real fraternité between riders and public.

■ Check out 2015's event, it takes place over June 5-7. Go to: [www.grandprixdetours.com](http://www.grandprixdetours.com)



**Honda CB750 racer wows the crowds.**



**Ducati 860GT basks in the sunshine...**



**...with a Ducati desmo racer alongside.**