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This German Company You've Never Heard Of Builds 12-Foot-Long Trikes With Mitsubishi Engines

By Mercedes Streeter September 14, 2023 4:48 pm 20 Comments



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If I asked you to name me a trike, I have a feeling you'd mention something like a [Can-Am Spyder](#) or a Harley Freewheeler, maybe a Morgan 3 Wheeler or a Polaris Slingshot. Maybe you even own one of the oddball trikes from China. Something I didn't expect to see at the North American International Auto Show was a kind of trike I've never seen from a German company I didn't know existed. Rewaco builds trikes with enormous tires and powers them with the same Mitsubishi engines that used to power Smart Forfours. Let's take a look.

This summer I have been giving trikes some love. Three-wheelers are sometimes the red-headed stepchild of the motorcycle world. For years, I've seen debates about whether trikes are even motorcycles and what's the point of buying one over a two-wheeled motorcycle or car. I think trikes have their place in the world, especially if you've lost your balance, have been injured, or just aren't that interested in balancing and leaning. At the North American International Auto Show in Detroit, I found a pair of trikes that look like ostentatious custom builds, but they actually come from a real company that's been around for three decades!

20



Driving Mr. Beast's \$1 Million Ford GT



The German Builder Of Silly Trikes



Rewaco

When I saw the brand name on these trikes, Rewaco, I was expecting a small American outfit with an exotic-sounding name. But no. Rewaco opened up shop in Germany in 1990 as a manufacturer of factory-built custom trikes. The company **powered** its initial builds with Volkswagen air-cooled engines before moving to large Harley-Davidson mills. In 2005, Rewaco ditched the Harley motorcycle engines for 1.6-liter Ford Zetec engines. (You might find that in foreign-market Focuses and other Fords).

Over in Europe, Rewaco trikes are **reportedly** popular with long-distance riders and rental firms.

It was around this time that Rewaco first tried entering the American market. Apparently, Rewaco **encountered** many roadblocks, including the fact that neither the EPA nor the NHTSA would certify the trikes, ultimately grounding the idea of their importation. Rewaco continued to **attempt** to enter America until 2008 when the idea became shelved.

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Rewaco

Long after Rewaco gave up on the idea of importing trikes, Shaun Cady and his father Doug, owners of Trike Traders in Lake Alfred, Florida, contacted Rewaco with interest in bringing the trikes over. Rewaco informed the father-son duo that the vehicles still had to get through the hurdles of the EPA and NHTSA before they could be sold in America. Given the recession at the time, Rewaco itself didn't have the funds to federalize its trikes for America. At the time, Rewaco and Trike Traders put the idea on hold.

In 2013, conditions improved enough for Rewaco to give it a try. The company found a potential distributor in Canada and later that year, Rewaco **gained** the certifications it needed to import vehicles into the United States. That year, the Rewaco RF1 made its way into America. At the time, Rewaco boasted German engineering and quality, sports car styling, and an American engine by way of a 1.6-liter Ford Zetec making 140 HP. The trike had other interesting traits too from a cavernous trunk, a gas tank large enough for over 400 miles of highway cruising, and a comfy ride thanks in part to a dual A-arm independent rear suspension.



Rewaco

Today, Rewaco is selling different flavors of trike in America and all of them now come with a Mitsubishi 4A91T 1.5-liter turbo four making 140 HP. Europeans get two more engine choices including the Mitsubishi 1.5-liter four making 110 HP and another turbo variant making 177 HP. The engine comes from Mitsubishi's 4A family, which saw use in the Mitsubishi Lancer, the original Smart Forfour, and the Mitsubishi Colt. Currently, the engine is used in a ton of Chinese cars as well as a couple of Asian market Mitsubishis.

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Rewaco says it's targeting a rather large swath of people. Its expected clientele includes middle-aged to senior-aged men and women, wealthy vehicle collectors, people who don't own motorcycles, and people who may not fit well on a traditional motorcycle. Rewaco also targets people who want to take very long road trips, people who need a lot of cargo space, and people who want to carry more than one passenger or who want to carry a passenger plus a pet. Basically, Rewaco's customers are basically anything but the typical riders.

What You Can Get In America



A dealership distributing **Rewacos** had two models on display in Detroit, **the RF1-ST-3 and the Pur3 Touring**. Let's look at the RF1-ST-3. This one is the latest version of the RF1 that Rewaco first brought into America a decade ago. All of Rewaco's offerings in the United States come with the 1.5-liter turbo four from Mitsubishi making 140 HP. Rewaco says it's good for a 60 mph sprint in 5.9 seconds and a top speed of 110 mph. That's bolted to a seven-speed automatic transmission.

The features list is huge and includes stainless steel crash protection, LED lights, seating for three, a folding front seat, cruise control, a rearview camera, ABS, a first aid kit, and more. Options include a trailer hitch, a wing, additional headrests, and even a 10-centimeter frame extension in case the trike just isn't long enough. Speaking of length, these trikes are 12 feet long and over 1,300 pounds empty. They carry a fuel load of 10 gallons and have a useful payload of about 600 pounds.



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Equally large and in charge are the rear wheels. You get 200/50R17 wheels standard but can get wheels as large as 305/30R19.



Also on display was the Pur3 Touring. This one doesn't have three seats, but it does come with a rather large fairing with a digital display, stereo, and plastic windscreen. It also comes with bits of kit like preparation for a navigation system add-on, a USB connection, adaptive suspension, and more.

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Regardless of which Rewaco you get, the trike has a seriously large trunk and the body itself is made out of fiberglass. Rewaco says all versions of its trikes can be upgraded to have fairings, windscreens, and sound systems. So, you really just choose your favorite body style then pile on the options. The company offers the trikes in a bunch of different colors, including two-tones and yes, you do get a reverse gear. These things do weigh two riders short of a Smart Fortwo, after all.







The cheapest **Rewaco** is the Pur3 Classic, a two-seater for \$37,400. It has all of the aforementioned standard features, a chrome frame finish, and 17-inch wheels. Representing the top of the line is the \$47,731 RF1 GT-Touring, which has all of the aforementioned Touring equipment plus nearly every option such as a black-painted frame, two-tone paint, a stereo system, glove compartment, and a wing. In between the Pur3 Classic and RF1 GT-Touring are a number of granular variations that mix and match options like fairings, seats, and paint. Most of the **98 Rewacos** for sale in the U.S. right now are at or slightly under \$50,000.

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Silly, But In A Good Way



Given the high price, I'm not entirely sure **Rewaco** is going to get most of the target demographics it is going after. Someone looking for a machine to ride after losing their balance will probably just buy a significantly cheaper \$22,099 Can-Am Spyder F3 and call it a day. A woman dipping her toes into the motorcycling world who also isn't interested in two wheels will probably follow a similar path. Not to mention Harley's much cheaper trikes, converted Honda Gold Wings, and similar. There are also a lot of nice motorcycles and cars you could buy for just one of these.

That said, I'm happy they exist. Rewaco trikes are daft like the custom trike builds you see on Facebook and on YouTube, but you can buy one from the factory! The big wheels are silly, the lengths absurdly long, and I love the idea of someone actually attempting a family road trip from a Rewaco. If you have the kind of money that Rewaco wants, you will probably feel like a big kid as you drive your big wheel trike down the highway. It's silly, but in a way, I respect it.





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(Images: Author, unless otherwise noted.)

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20

MERCEDES STREETER

Mercedes is a lifelong fan of all things powered by an engine. When she isn't driving one of her five Smart Fortwos or her 14 other vehicles she could be found in the cockpit of a Cessna 172 or perhaps swimming in any body of water that she could find. She also has a deep love for buses of all kinds. Please send her buses. mercedes@theautopian.com Instagram: @mistymotors Twitter: @Miss_Mercedes30 Facebook.com/neonspinnazz

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20 COMMENTS

**Rafael Ruivo** 🕒 2 months ago

The line between "I'm glad it exists" and "burn it with fire" depends on so many things... This one here isn't replacing the offer of better cars (unlike SUVs are) and it is ugly, yes, but in a silly way (unlike the Puma). Also, the company isn't run by a maniac robber baron (unlike the Cybertruck) and it isn't killing baby seals every kilometer (unlike coal rollers).

So, it checks out, I'm glad it exists, but also glad I don't have to buy one 😊

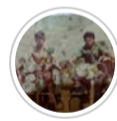
😊 0

**Scott** 🕒 2 months ago

I don't want one, but am glad they exist too. Also, that soft, pumpkinish metallic orange with the matching wheels is a great combo... reminds me of the cayenne orange metallic on the first couple years of the Ford Maverick: only seen one in person and that color is just awesome... until I saw it in RL, I was set on Area 51 (grey/blue), but that soft orange metallic is just fantastic. Great choice for an unusual bonkers trike. 😊

PS: were I ever to trike, I still think I'd rather have the two wheels in front, but that's just me.

😊 0

**-Nate** 🕒 2 months ago

I see the picture has a Geezer driving it .

This is fine, I'm a Geezer too but I still prefer two wheels .

If they can make money selling these in the U.S.A. more power to them .

The rental market sounds about right .

-Nate

😊 1

**MiniDave** 🕒 2 months ago

These are as ridiculous looking as a Thoroughbred Stallion.....and make about as much sense. "Silly" indeed

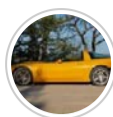
😊 2

**Black Peter** 🕒 2 months ago

I find the federalization stuff so odd.. Everything I know about the EU is they are picky about vehicles. The Japanese sell two wheeled bikes with the power to weight ratio of a fighter jet, the wheelbase of a bicycle etc., but this over engineered and (IMO) underpowered.. umm thing,

can't get a rubber stamp?

😊 1



Ben 2 months ago

Getting big Storylords energy from these.

If you get that reference, hello fellow Wisconsin child of the 80s. 😊

😊 0



MiniDave 2 months ago

all you need is a camper being towed behind it.....sheez, buy a convertible.

😊 1



Rich Hobbs 2 months ago

The trikes are fine, but the carpet under them is giving me a flashback!! Ah, the 60's , when the air was clean and sex was dirty!

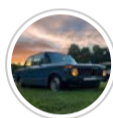
😊 1



Stef Schrader 2 months ago

Man, I wanna drive one of those original ForFours so badly. There was one on Stuttgart Turo of all places a few years back and I'm still kicking myself for not jumping at it.

😊 1



Alt Schule 2 months ago

Or buy an NB Miata for \$5k, remove the windshield and the top. Install a Brooklands screen. Cheaper, better looking, better handling, more comfortable, safer, and flat out cooler. It won't be accepted by motorcyclists but I am not sure if this thing would either.

😊 3



David Puckett 2 months ago

These make as much sense as all the Slingshots in my neighborhood, so, whatever. Choice is good.

😊 2



Doctor Nine 2 months ago

Personally, I feel that if you want a motorcycle with three wheels, then it should really be a sidecar rig. The ones from the Ural Motorcycle Company are very nice. And who wouldn't want to own a beast built by heros with enough gumption to -move the whole freaking plant to Kazakhstan- because they couldn't countenance the insane misbehaviors of the Dictator of Moscow? I am also moderately accepting of the kind of motorcycles that have two wheels in front and one in back. The Morgan iterations are kinda jaunty, and feel like you are piloting a WW I Sopwith Camel or something. Definitely dig that. But the 'one wheel in front and two wheels in back' thing just feels wrong when you ride it. I hate the driving dynamics. No matter how cool the people that build it actually are, in person. This is my own limitation. Admittedly.

Sorry Mercedes. This is a bridge too far for me.

😊 5



Lardo 2 months ago

↳ Reply to [Doctor Nine](#)

Piaggio MP3 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Piaggio_MP3
super fun to ride

😊 1



Doctor Nine 2 months ago

↳ Reply to [Lardo](#)

Exactly. With two wheels up front, so many steering geometry choices are possible.

😊 1

**Pappa P** 2 months ago

Women can ride on 2 wheels just as well as men.

I really feel there was a huge missed opportunity here with such a long chassis to fit an actual interesting engine.

They could have gone with a K series at least, or maybe even a Barra or a Coyote.

😊 3

**David Escargot** 2 months ago

↳ Reply to [Pappa P](#)

+1 for the barra... would 100% buy a barra trike to have a barra without an 1800kg sled wrapped around it

✎ Last edited 2 months ago by David Escargot

😊 1

**LTDScott** 2 months ago

I've absolutely heard of Rewaco. During one of their previous ventures into the US market, they were building trikes here in San Diego and three of my friends worked for them as assemblers. I've had more than a few beers with the former head of Rewaco US.

They also rented out trikes and as you mentioned they are popular with Germans with Route 66 fantasies on long distance road trips. More than once a friend of mine had to go and rescue some German tourists on a Rewaco trike stuck somewhere in the desert southwest.

😊 8

**Mike Harrell** 2 months ago

"If I asked you to name me a trike, I have a feeling you'd mention..."

HMV Freeway? Is the answer HMV Freeway? It's not? Aw.

😊 8

**Pit-Smoked Clutch** 2 months ago

I guess more companies and more choices in the market is always a good thing, but riding a bike you can't lean sounds about as appealing as driving a sports car you can't shift.

😊 7

**UnseenCat** 2 months ago

With respect to the "Are trikes really motorcycles?" debate, consider that traditionally, motorcycle clubs typically had a trike in the bunch for its ability to carry stuff – tools, camping supplies on long rides, or just to serve as the beer wagon. Or in this case, *bierwagen*.

😊 3

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