



ISSUE #34



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TRAVIS PASTRANA

Age, fatherhood and the
FMX athlete

FOUR WHEELS BAD?

Maybe not so! SxS fun in
sub-zero Poland

HARD HEADED WOMEN

Industry alert: women love
motorcycling



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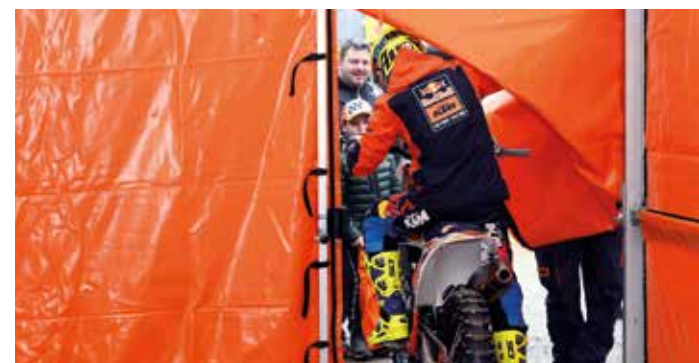
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THE OTHER HALF

Over recent years I've had plenty of opportunity to ride with and interview female motorcyclists and motorcycle competitors. And over that time I've found there isn't that much of a mystery over their involvement in motorcycling. Why do women ride? Same reasons as men do. Why do they race? Again, same reasons.

What's the buzz for them? The same as for men – the thrill, the connection with nature, the camaraderie...

It's an odd thing then that there's still some 'them and us' going on. And given that half the world's population is female you'd think that the bike industry would see the massive growth potential in that and chase those sales. Women in motorcycling should be entirely natural, the norm not the exception.

I do get frustrated then, when I see women's races dropped from high profile events. There's a class for women at the enduro world championships, only that's been diminished year on year and dropped to one round for 2018. That cannot be about quality – look at the skills of Laia Sanz, Sandra Gomez, Maria Franke, Jessica Gardiner, Jane Daniels, Kirsten Landman, Emma Bristow – these ladies will beat 98% of the world's male off-road riders. There is fortunately still a women's category at the ISDE but some federations, like the UK's ACU, are struggling to get with the times and support it (despite having world class female riders at home). These things need support – and with it they will thrive, as women do in other sports.

Having recently attended the International Female qualifier for the BMW Motorrad GS Trophy (in Mongolia this year), I have noticed one thing women don't do differently, but do better when motorcycling. And that's teamwork. Even when competing with each other, they still support and encourage each other. Men do that as well – you see it every weekend – but the women seem to do it better, they really share the pain and the glories. And definitely when things get tough they're there for each other.

So here at RUST we're going to do our bit to level the balance. In this issue we've a story on a group of women who took on Australia's toughest hard enduro. In future issues we'll have stories on women riding in adventure and elsewhere. And on our website you'll find stories on Patsy Quick (rally), Emma Bristow (trials and hard enduro), Jane Daniels (enduro), on Ezelda, Jocelyn and the girls of the GS Trophy, and more. We do this not as some kind of minority report but because we're equals, man and woman. In life, and on the trails.

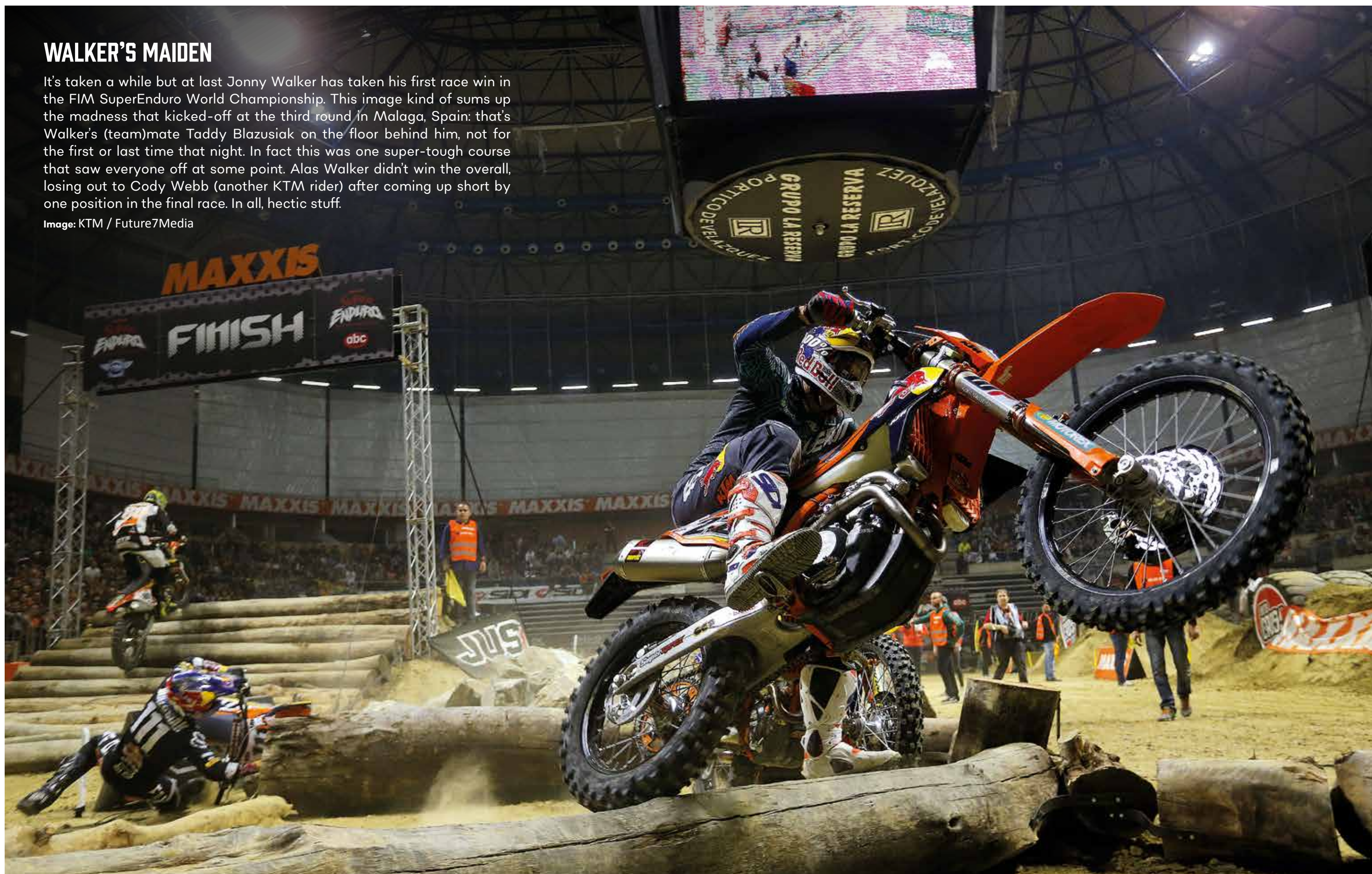
Ride safe, ride together 🇬🇧

JB

WALKER'S MAIDEN

It's taken a while but at last Jonny Walker has taken his first race win in the FIM SuperEnduro World Championship. This image kind of sums up the madness that kicked-off at the third round in Malaga, Spain: that's Walker's (team)mate Taddy Blazusiak on the floor behind him, not for the first or last time that night. In fact this was one super-tough course that saw everyone off at some point. Alas Walker didn't win the overall, losing out to Cody Webb (another KTM rider) after coming up short by one position in the final race. In all, hectic stuff.

Image: KTM / Future7Media



CURTAIN CALL MR CAIROLI

Fair play to Antonio Cairoli, extending his contract with KTM right up to the end of the 2020 MXGP season. We had guessed the 32 year old would retire at the end of the 2017 season. Go out at the top, eh? After all, with nine world championships and 163 moto victories he's got nothing left to prove. Well, maybe he has – probably he'd like at least to equal Stefan Everts' ten world titles? But while the Italian was champ in 2017, we don't envy his task now with that tyrant (teammate) Jeffrey Herlings (in full fitness) to battle with. Tough battles lie ahead. Still, he's started as he means to go on – pictured here at Mantova in February, he cleaned up to secure his tenth Italian national motocross championship. He can ride.

Image: KTM / Stefano Taglioni



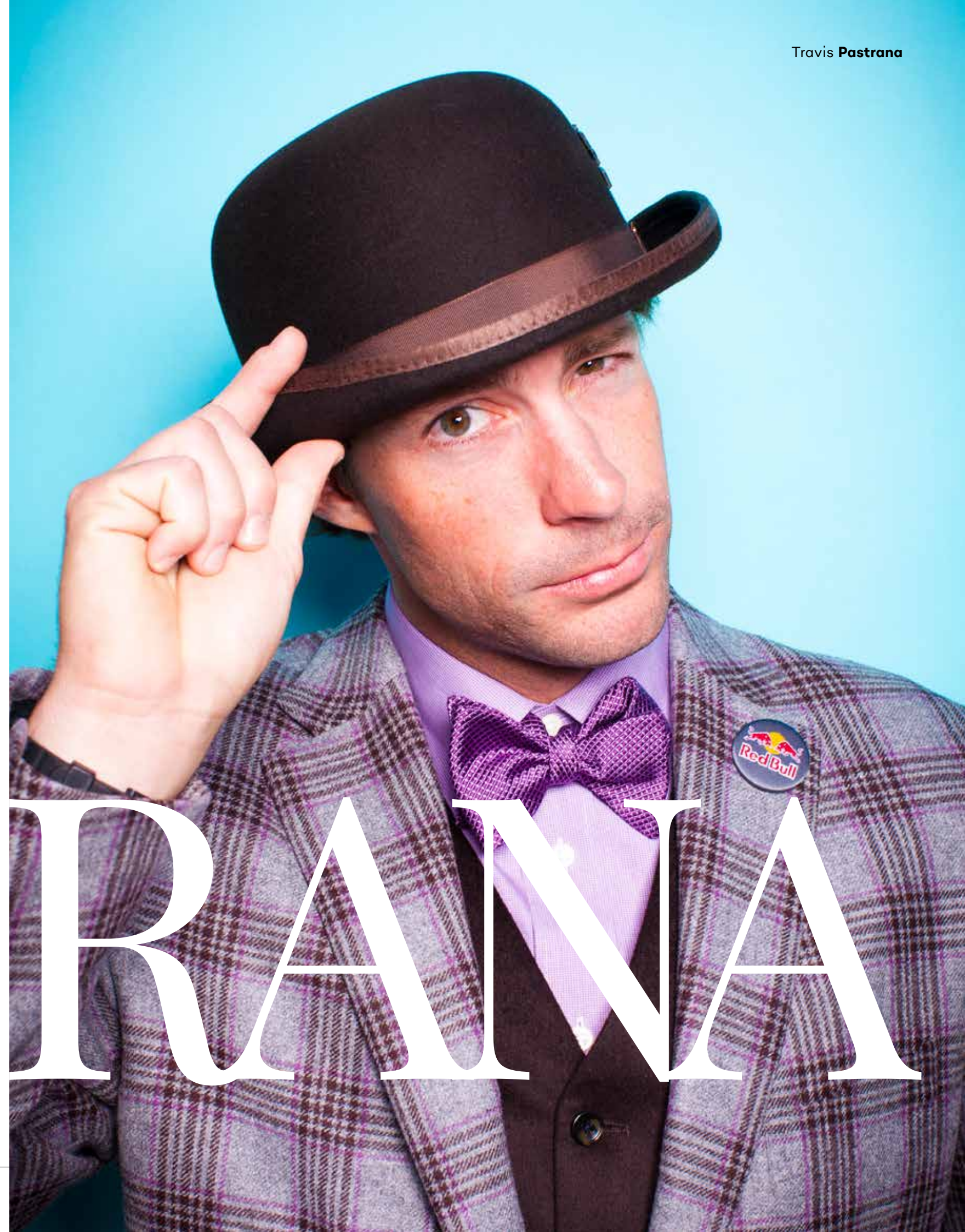
From teenage supercross sensation, to freestyle motocross icon, to action sports TV superstar, Travis Pastrana has cut his own path through his moto and stunt career. But at 34, and now a father to two daughters, Pastrana has to deal with his ultimate challenge – slowing down...

IN CONVERSATION WITH...

Travis PASTRANA

interview: Jon Bentman

Images: Future 7 Media, Red Bull Content Pool: Lukasz Nadraczew, Kin Marcin, Mihai Stetcu



BOY TO MAN

Yeah, life changes. When I was a teenager, racing, life was very simple. Difficult but simple. Every day you woke up, you trained, and you ate and you rested, everything was about being the first to the chequered flag. Then in freestyle it was about trying to stay healthy, innovating new ways to make jumps bigger, more exciting. My passion hasn't changed but my risk to reward ratio certainly has, and now I really enjoy spending time at home. I used to get home and I'd be waiting to be out racing and riding again, but now I come home and I think 'Man, this is really nice!'

REGRETS

You know, hindsight is 20/20. I never won a supercross championship in the big class and I would have liked to have done some other stuff and maybe taken a few less chances, but all those things are what made this life for me. I would never have been in rally car racing, I would never have been in Nitro Circus had everything gone exactly to plan. And the injuries have made me, I have definitely grown a lot through the injuries along the way!

REBELLION

For most people, they want for their kids what they couldn't accomplish for themselves, because they didn't have the means to accomplish it. And the fact that I - in the minds of many - back then could have been the best racer meant that I owed it to them to be that person, to be that supercross and motocross champ, when really I was so much happier with this group (freestyle) and pushing my limits in other directions. I think it was a little early, freestyle was still so new, and I think that there is still a big portion of the industry that will never understand action sports, yeah, even today the moto industry still is not fully engaged with action sports. Which is fine, and it kind of makes it what it is, it still has this air of unintentional rebellion I guess, to the hard core of the establishment.



INSPIRATION

I was into Crusty (Demons of Dirt – the freestyle film series) at 12 years of age, a huge fan of that series. You have to think, in the early to mid 1990s the whole culture of action sports just blew up because of those videos. For me as a kid on the east coast I'd never seen the dunes or desert riding, Glamis and all of this stuff. That was such an eye opener. And so to get that opportunity to go ride and be on film, that was special to me. The first day was with Jeremy McGrath and Brian Deegan. I'd looked up to both of those guys and I recall thinking this is so cool, it brought me into the sport for sure.

THE LONELINESS OF THE RACER

Nitro Circus started – and I mean this with the greatest respect – because of how lonely it is to be the best in an individual sport. When I was 15, 16, 17 years old, racing, I was very successful financially and in terms of winning etc, but I was the least happy as far as being a human being. But I found this group of misfits and all of a sudden we started building stuff – jumps – and yes we were still competitive, but even with Brian Deegan it was still fun, he'd still congratulate me when I'd beat him and vice versa. That was something I never experienced in racing. And for me action sports isn't about how cool you are, so we broke away from the typical skater-mulisha way, and I said I don't care if you're tattooed from head-to-toe or a clean-cut religious type who doesn't drink, cuss or anything, or whatever you do, just lets bring these passionate people together, lets unite on the one front we can all agree on, and that's sport.

So it's been so awesome to get this diverse group of people together. I've had people ask how do you get along when there's 12-14 of you together on a bus for months on end, but there's never really been an argument, there's never been anything. There are differences in people's culture and upbringing but the love of the sport is what Nitro is about and if you look at it ethically and morally it's about passion and that's what Nitro is.

MULISHA VS NITRO

There was a mutual respect. I feel, with any racer or any athlete, if someone else is at the top of their sport you have a respect for them. And for me Brian Deegan always had that (mutual) respect. He was always very nice, to my parents, to my friends, to me. We weren't buddies, we didn't hang out, I was early to bed, he was a party animal. But there was that respect and looking back our different styles unintentionally helped build the sport of freestyle, as it gave everyone someone to root for, or root against, if you will!



I did so much bad to my body, the worst injuries of my life, trying to make this one trick work but physics were not on my side

THE HARDEST, TOUGHEST, SCARIEST TRICK

The trick that gave me the most trouble my whole life was the backwards 360 or the corkscrew 720, or the TP7, or whatever you want to call it. It just doesn't really work well on a dirtbike. The point being if you spin as hard as you can you get half a spin for every one flip. So to complete the spin you had to add another flip because if you pull as hard as you can and flip as hard as you can you do two flips to get the one spin, to do that you just have to be willing to go higher. So I got to the point – it was definitely one of those moments – when you have to say alright, this trick that has been plaguing me obviously is not working. Although that was not before I'd shattered my ankle, knocked myself out, broke my back – I did so much bad to my body, the worst injuries of my life, trying to make that one trick work but physics were not on my side.

THE PAYBACK

My uncle played football for the Denver Broncos and he became a health teacher and a coach and his main thing was if you stay moving you'll be fine. So every time I get injured everything starts to hurt because you slow down your activity. It's not normal life for everyone, but from when I was 24-25 years old I'd have to start every morning by getting in the hot tub and if I can have 15 minutes in the hot tub and another 10-25 minutes just to do some basics, maybe cycling, some physical therapy, then if I can find an hour every day to dedicate to being active then I'm one of the physically fittest people in the world. But if I have a week where I can't do that stuff, oh man...



SOCIAL MEDIA AND A CHANGING WORLD

The world is changing so rapidly, TV is dying, or at least it's not reaching the masses the way it did. Social media has changed things; now to be reachable is more important than to be good. And things change. When I grew up you didn't follow the top guys day-to-day, so to meet Guy Cooper to meet Doug Henry or Jeff Stanton was the biggest deal ever. My kids, they can see these people through social media, so they don't get so excited, the passion is not the same.

I look at professional YouTubers, these guys have to post like 15 to 30 minutes a day! It used to be you would come out with a movie after a year of work, so the quality has gone down, while the realness has gone up. It's changed and as a father, like every parent you go through that transition where you think 'this is cool, coolest in the world' and the kids go 'yeah, it's okay...' and you're like 'What?!' I guess I'm going to experience a lot more of that...

Conversely, for Nitro Circus we have to stop the guys putting what they're doing right away onto social media. The second that happens it's old. So I'm there with the guys, saying, look, you have to work hard for this next month but you can't show anyone, this has to be new (to the crowds). It's tough for the guys!

GETTING OLDER

Personally, with the passing of Eric Roner (who worked with Pastrana on the Grand Canyon jumps and more) I've slowed down on the base-jumping a lot. There's a lot of risk in that sport. And it's tough to be a generalist (freestyle rider, car racer,

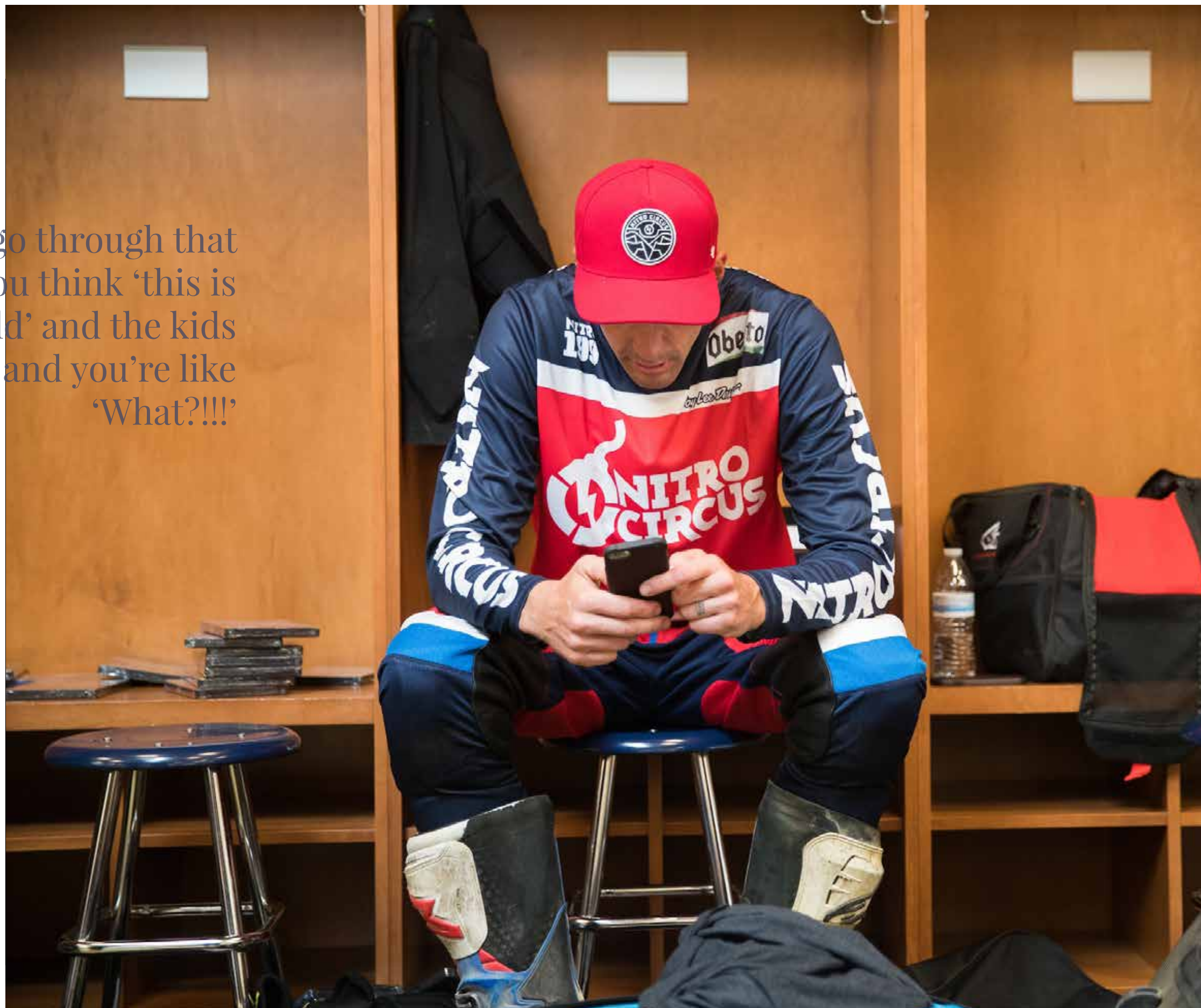


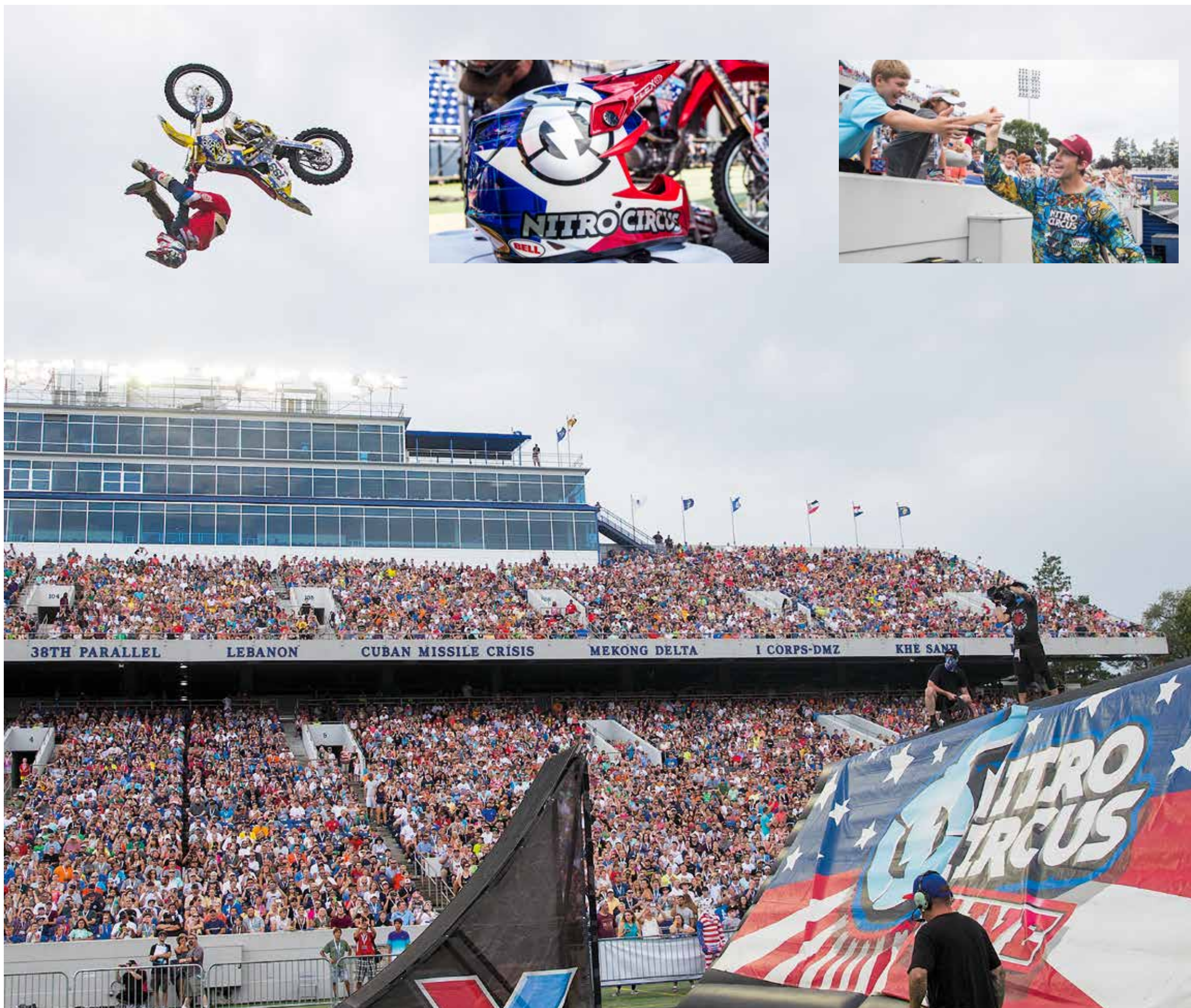
As a father, you go through that transition where you think ‘this is cool, coolest in the world’ and the kids go ‘yeah, it’s okay...’ and you’re like ‘What?!!!’

event organizer, TV personality...) in a sport where one mistake can lead to your death – but also it’s a lot of fun. It’s tough.

The hardest part with getting older is you always want to do stuff that looks fun but a lot of times you don’t have the physical time to put into doing it right. Even the simplest trick, if its not prepared enough, if you haven’t looked at everything that could go wrong, it becomes a high-risk thing. What we do and the life that we live – and most of your readers live it, too – even the simplest stuff, you’re still at risk, so I think what scares me the most is to do anything half-assed.

And without a doubt I will slow down on the competitive riding and I’ll slow down a lot on the touring – I love being at home, I love watching my four-year-old daughter ride her motorcycle, I love watching my two year old ride her four wheel, it’s fun. But I’ll always keep riding. I want to ride with them, I want to ride with my wife, I want to ride with my father, even as a road rider, or on a Baja ride, something easy. I’ll never stop riding, but the level at which I ride will change.





NITRO CIRCUS 2018



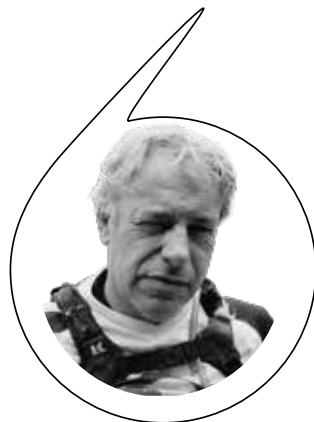
This year has been probably the biggest year for Nitro Circus in terms of what we are putting back into the ramps, into the design – and yes, how do we make it more spectacular? We have to figure how to get these guys doing these huge tricks indoors, where when they say the sky is the limit, no, the roof is literally the limit. So we have to figure how to get them to do tricks that they'd normally do with 70' of air in a stadium that's only 55' tall. The bicycle side of things is going to be absolutely phenomenal and scary with the contraptions and stuff, but exciting! The bicycles are going to be close to roof height, while the motorcycles are having to figure out how to do their tricks at a lower height and until we come back in the summer and go outdoors that's the biggest challenge for the European tour.

And I've been deeply involved. This year I really had to step up a lot because a lot of the riders were saying 'I don't want to do that trick' and I was saying, 'Hey, I'm old I can do it! You guys are young – you got this!' They were making fun of me, saying 'we don't have this!' That's how this European Nitro Circus tour got to be called the 'You Got This' Tour.



Nitro Circus You Got This Tour 2018 dates

November 20 Birmingham, England
 November 21 Glasgow, Scotland
 November 22 Manchester, England
 November 23 London, England
 November 27 Stockholm, Sweden
 November 30 Paris, France
 December 04 Munich, Germany



CHRIS EVANS

THE ALLURE OF OLD METAL

Our man in Paris, Chris Evans, hits the highs in the workshop and the lows in social media. Could it be he'll join JB in a twinshock trials shootout?

So the last of the 'working' KTMs has been sold off – and for not a bad price either. Helped no doubt by the fact that it looked absolutely immaculate. Like all of my bikes, it had a few hours on it, but you can't take it away from the Austrian brand, they do polish up lovely. I've got the whole process off to a fine art now. You take the bike back to its bare bones, give it a really good going over with the jet wash and then start attacking the bits that still look tatty. In the beginning the thing that stands out is the pale brown header pipe which brightens up really nicely with a wire brush on a bench grinder and some very nasty chemicals that are no doubt banned in the UK but which happily are still freely available over here in France. You then change the front mudguard, the side panels and the headlamp cowlings, replace a bent lever or two... In the 350's case I also fitted a new carbon fibre end cap to the Akrapovic silencer – not cheap but absolutely essential as the old one was looking more like crisp bacon. Once you've done all this you'll notice that the

one thing that's letting the side down are all the manky nuts and bolts. The solution, whip them all off and give them a twirl in the sand blasting cabinet. Total job satisfaction guaranteed.

In fact I enjoyed the whole process so much that when the 350 was actually sold I got workshop withdrawal and to compensate started developing a mild addiction to Facebook groups featuring old dirt bikes. They're an absolute goldmine for models you really don't want to own but are inexplicably drawn to. It all began innocently enough when I stumbled across a group called 'Yamaha XT500 - TT500 - HL500'. For those of you too young to remember, the XT500 was the bike that started the whole four-stroke trail bike thing off and won the first Dakar with Cyril Neveu aboard. The TT was the American market off-road only version (I actually owned one – it had tiny brakes), while the daddy of them all is the HL which was originally knocked up by a couple of over-excitable Swedes using a Husqvarna frame, before being turned into a limited production model





I HAD TO ASK MY WIFE TO HIDE MY CREDIT CARDS FROM ME FOR THREE DAYS TIL THE WR450 ARRIVED



in my case, once I joined every Facebook group specialising in anything with an XT500 engine in it, I hit upon a load of groups pimping Yamaha XS650s. This was mainly because some lunatic had put an XS engine into an XT500 chassis and turned it into a trials bike! You can see where this is going. The long dormant neuro transmitters in my brain dedicated to late 70s / early 80s Spanish trials bikes, created no doubt when I owned a Montesa Cota 123 at the age of 12, all started screaming 'feed me, feed me' and before I knew it I joined groups dedicated to Bultaco Sherpas, Ossa MARs and surely the most dangerous group of all, 'Hard to find Twin Shock trials'.

These groups not only feature bikes but also literature and old ads and it all came flooding back. When I was a yoof, UK dirt bike mags didn't exist so you had to buy American imports and one advert from that time had stuck in my subconscious. There was this elderly bloke in



a cloth cap popping off a waterfall on a Bultaco Alpina. He might even have been Senor Bulto himself – don't ask. The bike he was riding is even more marginal than a Sherpa. It was like a Sherpa but with a bigger seat and different gearing, and the post directly after this ad was by a bloke in America selling not one but two immaculate Alpinas with sequential serial numbers, one in blue, one in black.

At this point I had to ask my wife to hide my credit cards from me for three days til the WR450 arrived and I could go back into the workshop and do something vaguely constructive. There's a road book reader to be fitted and wired up and a shock absorber to be removed and sent off to get it shortened. Strangely since the WR has been in the workshop I haven't looked at any of the groups. I haven't actually been in the workshop either. Maybe before I start twirling any spanners I'll go for a quick solo blast round my 40 kay 'practice' loop... I mean that's what we buy the things for. Isn't it? 🇬🇧



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30/31 May – 1 June	Pyrénées SOLD OUT
13/14/15 June	Dordogne
27/28/29 June	Lozerien Bis
5/6/7 Sept	Cantal SOLD OUT
19/20/21 Sept	Pyrénées SOLD OUT
24/25/26 Oct	Tréfle du Morvan
7/8/9 Nov	Dordogne
21/22/23 Nov	Normandie



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COME TO THE DARK SIDE

Two wheels good, four wheels bad. That's our mantra, although vans (trucks) yeah, they're good. But recently there's been a new four-wheel phenomenon – not quads – these SxS things which actually looks pretty cool. So cool, we had to try them. On a cool day, jeez – 11°C cool enough for you?

words: JB & images: Polaris

I'm terrible when it comes to keeping up with the world. Things need to literally run me over before I catch on. That's been the case with the SxS phenomenon. There I was riding our Yamaha WR250F in a rally raid in Portugal early last year when this roar of an engine – no bike engine, something much-much bigger – comes sweeping up on me, I hear shouts of Spanish or Portuguese – and then this quad-car thing barges past and roosts its way up the trail.

That thing was a beast, but the trail was technical so I was able to tag along and see just what a ball of fun the two

occupants were having – sideways in every corner – right up to the point where they wrapped said beast around a tree, knocking a wheel off and putting themselves out for the day (clearly you can have too much of a good thing). But by then they had piqued my interest and while I love my dirt biking I could see those guys were having a great time, too. And while it was clearly a quad-car-thing, those guys looked just like us, with motocross helmets and goggles, were equally getting covered in mud, and obviously had the same sense of lunacy – kind of brothers from another mother.

Actually, not from another mother, for I found a fair few of these SxS guys were bike riders too. In fact, in the UK one of the top SxS guys is an ex-motocrosser. So already there are a few of 'us' migrating to join 'them' – and clearly enjoying the experience.

PERISHING POLAND

It took me another year and an invite to this European launch of the Polaris General to find out what SxS stood for. It's 'side-by-side', just as 4x4 stands for four-by-four, meaning four-wheel-drive.

Although to confuse me again these things are also called SSVs – that's Side-by-Side Vehicle. And, I think, non-racing types go by the acronym of UTVs, that's Utility Task Vehicle. Confusing for a simpleton like myself, but really not that difficult to grasp.

What is simple to grasp is 100hp. That's the output of the Polaris General XP 1000 I was going to drive. That's a healthy number – probably twice what my Renault Scenic family MPV

(hey, another acronym!) pumps, and in a vehicle that weighs a much-lighter 700kg. That 100hp was also what the last supersport 600 I raced (a Yamaha R6) used to make too – and that thing flew. So I like that number.

The motor is in fact a 999cc DOHC water-cooled twin, essentially the same as found in the mad-as Polaris RZR XP1000 race model, just slightly detuned from that model's 110hp. The transmission is automatic, what Polaris call PVT (Passivley Variable Transmission) where two belt-linked clutch mechanisms vary the transmission speed according to load and power. Tricky stuff to understand, and not something we'd ever like on our dirtbikes, but in these SxSs it kind of makes sense and means you just have the two pedals to master while bumping all over the trail (that is 'go' and 'stop'). So, steering wheel, throttle and brake – nice and simple.

Being a newbie it took most of the Polaris product presentation for me to understand just what the XP 1000 General is. It is, it turns out, it's an Adventure SxS. The RZR is a race SxS and their Ranger is a utility (farm) SxS, while the General treads the middle ground, offering RZR type performance but with a wee flatbed on the back so you can carry stuff. That might be loads of soil, or farm tools, but I'd like to think it would be a tent and camping stuff (and, well, lunch at the least). The General is then, a kind of BMW GS of the SxSs. Powerful, like a 125hp waterboxer is, but equally not quite a gazelle-like motocrosser in the dirt. Where the RZR bounds around on

16" of suspension, this baby has 'just' 12", albeit, as I spotted, there were Fox Podium shocks on my cart – again, stuff we can relate to. Mind you, four such shocks – I could see \$\$\$ signs rolling before my eyes (and I wasn't wrong: more on that later).

POWER-UP

Hopping into the General reveals a unique command module. On first inspection it's all very plasticky, like a bottom-of-the-range Skoda. There are no frills, no laced-leather steering wheel, no CNC-milled billet gear lever, even the seats, while bucket-type to stop you rolling about, are quite frugal. It's almost a let down, but then this thing runs without windows and (as I found) as there are minimal mudguards either then everything flies at you and into the cockpit. So an easy-to-clean with a jetwasher setup is just right for this vehicle.

There is a gear stick of sorts. It's actually a transmission position stick, because you don't shift gears, just select drive mode of choice. The choices being park (not very exciting), reverse (surprisingly useful, in fact much needed), low (for grannies and extreme hill climbing) and high. And high deals with 99% of what we want to do.

The motor starts on the turn of a key, like your car, and the engine note is throaty. It's a 100hp 1000cc twin, it bloody well should sound throaty. And it kind of warns you of its potential.

Only here we should insert a wee story of bureaucracy killing that cat. You see, the model we were testing has been catchily labeled the Polaris General™ 1000 EPS Deluxe ABS – T1b. I kid you not, that is the name the marketing department gave the model. Now the Americans don't get this model because the T1b refers





to EU type approval, the T denoting its designation as an agricultural and forestry tractor, 1b further categories it as 'fast' one and in order to meet the legislation's requirements as a road-registerable vehicle fast in this instance means no more than 65km/h (40mph)... So for the General to be legal (on road) in Europe it is indeed limited to 65km/h.

So we have a 100hp fun-buggy, but it can't go over 65km/h... Great. And for the purposes of this test, which was part on road, part off-road we ran with the limiter working. You can imagine what that felt like. For recreational purposes though, the restrictor can be removed (should be removed...).

Incidentally, somewhere near the end of the test I spotted a switch which offers instantly switchable drive modes, AWD for tricky stuff, 2WD for letting the back hang out and full-beans speed runs and Turf Mode which I suspect is for golf courses! There's ABS too, which is apparently new to this sector, probably very handy, and if you still want to do skids, well there's always the handbrake.

0-65 IN TWO SECONDS

So here's part of the story: the General has big stomp. You'd start it, rev it a couple of times, then select high and floor it. The thing would almost wheelie as it leapt forward, wheels spinning as it did its best WRC impression – that 100hp is no idle boast. Only this being a T1b model it hits shutdown barely two seconds later! Damn that limiter...

So for the entire test the game was to tickle the throttle to a point just below where the limiter cut in so you could get the power to tear the rear wheels loose to help steer through the turns, or to scrabble up a hill – to do anything exciting. For the moment the limiter cut in the front would either dive and over-steer or the exciting rush up a hill would sink into a steady plod.

Fortunately much of the test track was technical so that 65km/h was just



about enough (although for sure we wanted full power). It was enough to understand what is unique about these SxSs.

First benefit is they go easily where no car can, and certainly they'll go there much faster. The Fox Podium suspension setup is sublime, big bumps and hollows that would have a car bellied and broken are nothing to the General – up to a point it's a magic carpet ride – and it'll pretty much go anywhere a bike will go until the trees get closer together than 1587mm (the General's overall width). It really is a go anywhere thing.

Second benefit is, for a car-quadractor-thing, it gets very close to the feeling of riding a bike. Having no windscreen or side windows (although both are an option) means you feel the wind and duck for the branches just as you do on a bike. And when you hit the water splashes, yes, you get wet. But it gives you that connection to the environment that a bike does and a car doesn't.

Third benefit – well, I can't wait to try one of these without the speed limiter. The sound from the 1000cc twin is awesome (it's sitting there just behind your butt) and there's a Neanderthal-like pleasure in letting it rip. I got to making it go sideways as much as possible and bearing in mind the General looks to have a high centre of gravity it hangs in there. We did once tip it on to two wheels but if it does go further there's a fair roll cage around you. Just two things then: firstly I'd fit a proper four or is it five-point harness (another option in the catalogue) for real fast action, and then make sure you keep your hands (and arms obviously) inside the car at all times. For a driver that means keep your hands on the wheel, for the passenger there's a handy grab handle to hold onto. The RZR has a dummy handlebar for the co-driver for that purpose, but I guess the



▷ General being an adventure vehicle, not a racer, then the one grab handle was deemed sufficient.

And that neatly brings us to the fourth and biggest attribute of the SxS – and there's a clue in the name – that ability to take a passenger. Without a doubt the fact you can scare the bejeezus out of a mate or wife or girlfriend – anyone mad enough to step in beside you – makes the SxS double the fun. For our test drives on the first two occasions I had a co-driver onboard, from the Polaris fraternity, and for sure the squeals, screams and laughter as we barreled around the course made the drive all the more fun. And bearing in mind where we drove, the same trip on a bike would be very uncomfortable and tricky with a pillion, whereas in the General it was max comfort (or as you could get in -5°C temperatures with water and ice washing into the cockpit) and so max fun. Later I took a drive on my own and it wasn't half the fun I'd had earlier. Sharing – clearly a good thing.

Oh, and lastly, given this thing runs on balloon-type tyres it can – given a moderated use of the throttle – tread lightly. This is handy if you find yourself driving through an environmentally sensitive terrain. Where a 4x4 will sink and trench in squelchy going, the SxS will float. You just have to resist flooring the throttle and using the SxS's virtues for evil...

ADVENTURING WE WILL GO

Without a doubt we'll need to revisit these SxSs, they're just too much fun to leave alone – as other dirt riders before me have already found out. If you've got the funds (ahem: see later) they are a great toy to have in the garage. For farmers the Polaris Ranger is a great workhorse. For racy farmers – and I recall nearly every farmer in New Zealand racing hare and hounds at the weekends, boy those boys like to live



the dream – then the General is a utility vehicle that can double up as an alternative racer for the weekends. Nice.

And in certain countries I can see the General honestly fulfilling the adventure role. That tray on the back, capable of taking a whopping 272kg load (that's a lot of camping gear), makes this a great overland adventure machine. Unlike a 4x4 it's an outdoor experience too (given the minimalist cockpit enclosure), it's just a great way to see the trail less travelled. And when I think of those Backcountry Discovery Routes in the US, if I couldn't take a bike then this would be a perfect alternative way to travel them. Heck, if you picked a four-seater option you could take the whole family too (given just the two kids). What a great tool.

Unfortunately there is a downside. And in the UK there's a massive downside as the General stands on a RRP of a whopping £23,899, which is sitting in there shoulder-to-shoulder with very-nicely spec'd family SUVs. This is odd because the US price of \$16,299 isn't nearly so shocking. Yeah, making a quick price comparison, a Nissan Qashqai/Rogue (same thing) starts at £19,295 in the UK, at \$21,640 in the US. But of course import duties and the cost of EU homologation heavily tilt the balance. Yeah, the UK is an expensive place to live. There are cheaper SxSs in Polaris' range, mind.

That cost obstacle aside – and it's amazing how many people find ways to hurdle these things – these SxSs are brilliant fun. I'd not be giving up my biking for one, but if I could have the both, yeah that would be nice.

And hey, I got through that whole article without once saying 'rugged' – which is more than can be said for Polaris' promotional video. It's rugged you say? Yes a thousand times... 📺

SPECIFICATION

POLARIS General 1000 EPS Deluxe ABS (– T1b)

POWERTRAIN

Displacement: 999cc
Bore & Stroke: 93mm x 73.5mm
Compression Ratio: 10.5:1

PERFORMANCE

Power: 100hp
Torque: 64.5lb-ft
Fuel Capacity: 35.9L
272kg capacity cargo box
680kg towing capability

BRAKES

Front: Hydraulic disc
Rear: Hydraulic disc

SUSPENSION

Fox Podium X 2.0 QS3 shocks, independent struts
Front: 311mm travel **Rear:** 335mm travel

WHEELS & TYRES

Front Wheel: 14" aluminum
Rear Wheel: 14" aluminum
Front Tyre: 27x9-R14
Rear Tyre: 27x11-R14

DIMENSIONS

Overall Length: 3000mm
Overall Width: 1587mm
Overall Height: 1905mm
Wheelbase: 2060mm
Ground Clearance: 305mm
Dry Weight: 700kg




STUFF

SIDI X-3 Xtreme SRS Boots

£329.99 / \$375.00

Contact: www.sidi.com www.feridax.com

New boots are a bit of a double-edged sword. On the one hand, they're an expensive item so you probably held on to the old ones too long, and are happy to at last have something respectable to put on your feet again. On the other hand, the old boots were at least broken-in and relatively comfy whereas new boots can make for an agonising first few rides.

So the initial bit of good news with these Sidi X-3 Xtremes is that they aren't massive and heavy, like say Alpinestars Tech 10s, so you feel instantly at home. There's a lot of protection though, with plenty of plastic shielding, yet the construction is minimalist, even the easy-to-use buckles appear nice and light which altogether means the Xtremes were relatively easy to get on and off. Sidi don't use leather in these boots, instead a man-made material called Technomico, which is said to be stronger, softer and lighter than leather. And with the ankle pivot design I was able to walk out of the garage without looking like I was going for a moon walk.

The other two things I liked were that they don't have an inner boot (which I usually end up replacing with a thick pair of socks) and they have what looks like a very easily removable sole, that's the SRS bit (Sole Replaceable System). I've tried replacing soles on other brands before without much success, which means that I keep wearing them until I can feel the footpegs. Hopefully I'll get round to replacing these soles before that happens and get a bit more life out of them. And of course after protection and comfort that's the real test of a boots worth – how long they last.

First ride with these was a 40km test ride with my new Yamaha WR450F and I'm happy to say both boots and bike impressed. Sidi seem to pitch the X-3 Extreme boot somewhere between a light enduro boot and heavyweight adventure boot, either way the protection feels real and the combination of light weight and good comfort promises well for the future. Yeah, first impressions are the Sidis are comfortable right from the off, with almost no break-in being required. That's good news. I'll be putting a good few miles on these Sidis over the coming year and be sure to let you know how we're getting on in 300 hours or so's time!

Chris Evans



Shark Explore-R Peka helmet

£369.99 / \$469.99

Contact: www.shark-helmets.com www.nevis.uk.com

The Shark Explore-R has been around for a few years now but this new version has an attractive new graphic from design house Peka. There are multiple combinations you can adopt on visor-peak-goggles (which all come with the helmet) for on- and off-road use (ie. visor only, visor and peak, goggles and peak, or goggles only – the latter for that 4-man-bob look) and after all of that there's also a drop-down sun visor. So far I have used it in the most dirt-orientated setup with the peak and goggle combination. The seal between the helmet aperture and the goggles is perfect not allowing any water in whilst riding but allowing just enough airflow to keep the goggles from fogging. The goggles are of that quick-release strap type, which works well enough, although occasionally is a faff to hook-up.

The styling is a selling point. It's a mix-up of adventure and urban street and heritage looks, which at least gives it some versatility in use. The street bit is reflected in the generally close fit, with the big chin bar being much closer to your face than on the usual off-road offerings. You wouldn't want to be wearing this on a hot day in tight, tricky going. Quality is high-end, being constructed from a carbon aramid and glass fibre weave and the comfortable lining material is both anti-bacterial, moisture wicking – and washable.

Weighing in at 1550g with the larger shell size it isn't the lightest lid around but I never found it too heavy and appreciated the quality noise insulation during faster road riding. For extended faster road riding you can swap out the goggles and peak for the visor, effectively turning the Explore-R into a road lid, offering real flexibility whilst touring and covering longer distances. And it has recesses already in place for a Bluetooth kit, or their own Sharktooth (geddit?) custom-made kit. There's a lot of lid for your money.

Alex Waters





STRIKING A BALANCE

Suspension setup is THE fundament to top off-road performance. Starting this issue, RUST has engaged one of the best suspension tuners in the world – Alan Stillwell – to help all of us understand our suspension better and find that optimum set-up. Lesson 1 is about finding balance... (and hey, this applies to adventure riders too – don't you guys go skulking off now)

Words: Alan Stillwell, Stillwell Performance Suspension

Images: JB, Stillwell Performance & KTM/Redeye

A COMMON SCENARIO

It's Sunday, 6am and you hardly slept because TODAY is the day. The day you get to take your brand spanking new off-road machine for its maiden voyage. You spent all week checking bolts, greasing everything you could think of, adding your bolt-on goodies and generally spending as much time prepping your new machine as you could. You saved, scrimped, read every scrap of info on the new models you could get your hands on, made your decision, now all that's left is to get out there with your buddies and PIN IT.





Fast forward to 6pm that night, and your mood has changed. How could this be? How could this image of perfection, the bike of your dreams, this latest and greatest EXC/CRF/YZF/RR/RMZ/KXF be this bad, right out of the box? It dived, kicked, swapped, under-steered, over-steered, stepped-out, bottomed, jarred your teeth, felt harsh, felt mushy, rode high, rode low and generally made your day suck.

As you sit there on your stool, nursing a Guinness, you realize that the bike just didn't feel good. Whatever it was doing or not doing, you know it could be better, much much better. But where do you start?

The scenario above plays out quite literally every weekend. We know this because we field the phone calls and emails from guys and gals just like you, looking for help, especially on Monday mornings. So here are some tips that will help you take your ill handling bike – new or used – and turn it into a machine that will have you grinning ear-to-ear.

REALITY CHECK

The bike

Let's start with some realities about your bike. When it rolled off the assembly line, the engineers did their best to select a suspension setup that was suited for a wide variety of riders and terrains. While this is true, this also means that certain compromises had to be made. Spring rates, for example. Most manufacturers target a weight range of 170-180lbs (75-80kg) and a valving spec that suits both this weight range and the bike's intended purpose. The manufacturers use a totally different set of tuning parameters for a motocross bike and an off-road bike, for example. If you have ever tried to ride a supercross track on an EXC, you'll get what I mean. In general, here in the States, KTM SXF's are moto specific, XCF's are GNCC/Enduro spec'd while the XCW's (your EXC's) are generally singletrack and more relaxed in their suspension setup. So understand that and think of your terrain and how your specific model was (or was not) targeted for what you ride.





You
The second reality is you, and your particulars. Are you heavy, light or in the middle? Do you stand or sit more? Do you ride aggressively, or click a higher gear and flow? Are you a newer guy, an ex-Pro or someone who is in good/bad shape? How is your form, what is your style of riding? Believe it or not all of this makes a huge difference in where your tuning efforts will end up-and having an honest conversation with the mirror is a great place to start.

GETTING A BASELINE

Now that you have a good understanding of these principles you can actually start to zero in on a better setup. With this in mind here's we are going to first work on establishing your BASELINE SETTING. Once you have a good, comfortable baseline setting you can work on the fine tuning and/or adjusting for different conditions. NOTE: I am assuming that you have a basic understanding of your suspension clickers at this point. If you do not, read your manual or hit YouTube there are tons of videos that will explain their basic function. Later on I will delve into how/why we adjust each one, but a basic understanding will suffice to begin here.



SPRING RATES/AIR PRESSURES

Don't turn a wrench or spend another Dollar/Pound/Euro without getting the correct rates on your bike. Putting the right springs on your bike allows the suspension to be set without sacrificing clicker adjustment to make up for incorrect rates. It's a must do.

This is the cornerstone of suspension tuning and you will shortchange yourself if you try to tune your setup with incorrect spring rates (or fork air pressure if your bike runs air forks). You can select springs by consulting your manual for spring/weight ranges, call your tuner if you have one or use one of the handy spring calculators you can find online. Speaking of online – be careful taking spring advice (or any suspension tuning advice) from the online forums, and so-called suspension experts. It's a minefield of bad information out there and we see the result flow through our shop for fixing every week.



As with any section of this article we are happy to help, feel free to reach out with questions.

RACE OR RIDER SAG

Whether you are a newbie or a veteran you have no doubt heard of the importance of setting the sag on your shock. After selecting the correct spring rates, this is by far the most important tuning tip you can do. Incorrect sag, especially on any modern dirt bike creates multiple problems when you are tuning, and disguises itself in ways that will have you confused and making other adjustments to compensate (and sacrificing your ride). My recommendation if you are just starting out is to set your rider sag in the middle of your manual's adjustment range to start. If you are not sure how to set your sag, you can visit our website here for a video that takes you through

the process: www.stillwellperformance.com/videos

MAKING FIRST ADJUSTMENTS

Okay, by completing those two critical items you have saved yourself countless headaches. Now for the fun part, we are going looking for 'the magic balance'... so pack up your bike and gear and head to your favorite riding spot. Remember to set your tyre air pressures at your normal rate.

MAKE VIDEOS

Use your smartphone, GoPro or DSLR in video mode. If you have 'burst mode' or a slow motion feature things will be much easier. Use a tripod or a buddy, but pick out a section of track or trail – it does not have to be long, maybe 30-60 metres, but make sure it's full of rocks, ruts, bumps, jumps and the like. At this stage we are not

going for a fine tune, just looking to find some balance in the chassis and you are going to ride this section 3-4 times, once warmed up and at your normal speed. It's important to note here that you do not want to do anything different with your speed, riding style or anything else just because you are on camera. Ride as you normally do but hit all the obstacles to see how the bike reacts. Set your clickers per your manual, or to the middle of their adjustment range for starters. Once you have recorded a few runs, review the video in slow motion. You will start making adjustments with your fork first.

TUNE THE FORK FIRST

You will be able to determine more about the current overall feel of the bike by focusing on the fork first. Once you have the fork in the ballpark, then move on to the

shock. After a baseline of chassis balance is achieved, you will then be able to zero in on the fine-tuning of both ends, as as a whole. It's noteworthy to state the golden rule here: **ONLY MAKE ONE ADJUSTMENT AT A TIME.** It's very easy to get confused and if you see a gain or loss in feel after making two adjustments at once, how will you know which was the effective change?

In general, to start with you want to get your suspension moving throughout the stroke in a fairly fast manner – this is the easiest way to begin to feel what the fork is doing. So, after shooting a baseline video, run the same section with fork compression turned softer by three clicks. There is only one answer to the same three questions you will ask yourself throughout the tuning process: Is it better, worse, or no different? There are no wrong answers here, you are tuning by feel.

So run the compression clicker out 3 at a time, then back in 2 at a time (even going past your initial baseline setting as required) until you find the most comfortable setting. Now do the same with the rebound. You can then go back to the compression adjuster and make small adjustments as rebound does have a significant effect on compression.

In general, use this rule – the closer and more square-edged the bumps, rocks or roots are, the softer and quicker you want the suspension to react to them. The further spaced and more rounded the bumps are (think sand whoops) the more compression and rebound damping you will want. Using the ‘by feel’ method and not getting too hung up on what specific click you are on allows you to focus on the feel of the bike.

TUNING THE SHOCK

Once you have the fork feeling better, move on to the shock. Use your slo-mo video camera! The same rules apply, but with a twist when it comes to adjusting high-speed compression. On your shock there are both high- and low-speed compression adjusters. Think of the low-speed adjuster as an overall stiffer/softer adjustment, and the high-speed as a ‘more sharp’ impact adjuster. An example of that would be a typical trail that has some smoother, rounded bumps and an exposed rock/root in the middle of them. The high-speed adjuster will come into play when that shock needs to react FAST to an obstacle like that rock/root. Keep this in mind as you do your tuning.

Start with the low-speed compression adjuster in the middle of the clicker range. Run the section, then turn your high-speed adjuster 1/2 turn left/softer. Look at the video. You are going to notice a difference, whether that is good or bad is up to you, but you want to get a feel for what the high-speed compression adjuster does, as



it comes into play in a big way when you get to the fine tuning phase.

Continue to tune in the same manner as the fork. Note that shock rebound if too slow will start to ‘pack’ or jackhammer you and potentially make the shock feel like the compression is too stiff. It is a delicate feel and I might suggest you make big clicker changes in the rebound at first, learn (and see the difference in feel) then zero in.

FINDING BALANCE

Okay, by now you should have a good feeling for what each adjuster is providing, and come up with a better overall feel to the bike. Now is when your hard work is going to pay off. First, record EACH INDIVIDUAL CLICKER/SAG SETTING as this will be your current baseline setup. Put your tools away, and go rip for a number of miles and/or laps. Don’t worry about

CLASS NOTES

- 1 Make sure you have the right springs for your weight
- 2 Set the sag correctly
- 3 Tune your forks first
- 4 Tune the shock second
- 5 Video is a great way to see how your suspension is working
- 6 Take notes, especially note your baseline settings





making adjustments, just concentrate on finding flow with the bike and tune in to what feedback it is giving you.

Overall, you are looking for the bike to act 'calm' in the rough stuff. If you look at one of our Pro's on a set of fully-tuned suspension, you will see the wheels are moving under the bike, gobbling up the 'gnar' but in general the handlebars and rear fender are not pitching or bucking wildly on a rough straightaway. This is the type of feel you achieve when you have tuned the chassis to be 'flat' and when you have adjusted to this the bike will settle in turns, track straight, hook up on acceleration and drive straight through most obstacles when you hit them head on. Understand that we ride off-road, with ever changing set of circumstances and your bike is going to move under you. You are looking to make it predictable, giving you confidence speed and a more relaxing ride.

EVALUATION

When you get back to the truck – evaluate. Was it riding flat? Did it dive? Kick, step-out in ruts? From your previous tuning you should now be able to make single additional adjustments that will give you a quick better/not better feeling. Follow

your senses here, and don't be afraid to try changes (again, one at a time). I can tell you that after working with some of the best off-road riders in the world, and having won 11 National and International Championships, the balance stage is all about trying things that work best for YOU. Your buddies may think your bike is kicking when you feel hooked up – it's you in the saddle so follow the feedback you get and trust your video!

TRUST YOURSELF

Suspension tuning is a black art, I have been at it for over 20 years and I can tell you there are times when something does not feel right and it takes a bit of experimenting to diagnose it. Trust what you are feeling, and you will be smiling as much after the ride as before it! 🍷

NEXT TIME

Next time we will be focusing on drilling down into the more advanced techniques for finding the ultimate tune, and tuning for more specific track and trail conditions. Keep It Pinned!



ALAN STILLWELL

Alan Stillwell is a recognized top expert in suspension tuning in the US. He was the resident suspension expert on ThumperTalk.com, with over 400,000 members, and has tuned for top factory teams and riders (mx, off-road, GNCC, WORCS and national enduro). Stillwell Performance has amassed 11 National and International #1 plates in the past 10 years, including working with Factory Husqvarna, Geico Honda, Shane Watts, Cody Webb and many more. Most recently working with Factory Beta as team manager of their US team, winning the Endurocross title in their third season as well as claiming two junior titles.



NEW SEASON, NEW KIT, SAME OLD INERTIA...

Winter is not yet over in the UK but the new season has kicked-off nonetheless, leaving JB needing to hurry up on his 'winter projects'

words & images: Jon Bentman



PROJECT TLR - THE STORY

Editor JB shipped his old 1985 Honda TLR250 back to the UK after it lying dormant in a New Zealand garage for over 13 years. It hadn't been prepped for storage, yet once released from its shipping crate and given a splash of old fuel it started fourth kick. Suitably emboldened, JB decided to recommission the TLR, and see if he can rekindle an affection (love would be too strong a word) for trials riding. So far just about everything he's touch has broken or crumbled. Check out RUST 13, 15, 19, 25 & 27 for previous instalments.

Okay this is a bit of a mini-report as there's only so much to say. Now, as it is for a lot of folk, what you want to do and what actually gets done are two separate things when priorities take a hold...

PATINA
Chris Evans was on the phone. "I couldn't do what you're doing." "What am I doing?" "You know, running that old TLR as it is. I'd strip it, get the frame sprayed and all that." A wave of guilt washed over me. "Yeah, but I worry that if I made it all new again I'd be too afraid to ride it." I'm not sure even I believed that. Maybe I'm just lazy. Or scared.

So I've made something of a pact with myself. This year, with a following wind, the house gets its extension built, complete with new garage. When that's done, for the first time in my lifetime I will have a real clean, clear sizeable workshop space, so then I'll strip the TLR and do a full resto, it'll be my winter project of 2018-19.

For now, I'll keep applying the virtual sticking plasters and get out and ride it more. I'm hoping for six trials, if I can, over the year.

2 A SHOCK SHOCK!
Yeah, I treated myself – or rather the TLR. Having narrowly missed out on a pair of NOS TLR dampers on eBay, I decided it was time to take the plunge and just buy new shocks. Some might recall in RUST #27 I reported how the old shock on the left side blew its seal at the one and only trial we rode last year. With no rebuild seeming possible and having procrastinated too long it was time

to do some buying. So a call to Dave Renham at InMotion Trials revealed a set of OZO Pro shocks (£150) would do me – at my level – just fine. There was only one variable, the spring weight, and given my weight the heavier 50lb spring was the choice. Nice shocks these are too. I like the design and finish, a combination of chromed steel and milled alloy, and there's a little tech involved too, given separate oil and nitrogen chambers in the damper. I would love to have gone gold standard with a pair of British-made Rock Shocks, but they're double the price, and I need to spend on toys for the rest of the family, too. So needs must. Even so, I'm pleased, and boy between the shocks and the new chain and sprockets there's a bit of shine coming back to the old bike...

3 ON GUARD
Another element needing some attention has been the six-piece rear mudguard. It should be one-piece but instead is a shambles held together by alloy plate and pop rivets. The ultimate plan here is to simply replace it with a new RTL-type guard from a TLR/RTL specialist called Dave Pearce who has an Aladdin's cave of parts in his stores in the south of England. But just before I sprung the cash with Dave an old original came up on eBay. At £30 it's half the price I've seen previous ones sell for, so I snapped it up. Ultimately I know it'll end up on a shelf, I'm 100% sure, while one of Dave's will take pride of place. But for now, this lovely old original guard is a small step in the right direction. A small step.



4 JOBS TO DO
Reality is I need to get cracking. I'm a bit half-assed right now. I managed to buy some new fork seals and dust caps but forgot to get in some new fork oil... I've got some fresh 10-40W oil ready for the motor, but I need to get a new o-ring rubber seal for the oil filter... Yeah, I need to join up my thinking. There's pitiful little to be done, but between magazine (aka my job), family and commitments to sailing (don't ask), progress is glacial.

ANYWAY, MORE RIDING
So to wrap up this short update. I need an afternoon (or two) working on the bike. And after that I need to get an entry in for a local trial. The sooner the better because with plans for the odd rally and a big ride in Mongolia coming up, I need bike time. 📧

THE MOUNTING COSTS

Valve stem seals	£16.56
Carburetor gasket kit	£12.04
Float bowl drain screw	£2.99
Spark Plug	£2.99
Air filter	£7.93
Chain & sprockets	£61.26
Sprocket circlip	£6.08
Exhaust gasket	£3.90
Rear sprocket bolts	£9.60
Brake shoes	£31.00
Fuel filter	£1.25
Pirelli MT43 front	£38.00
Pirelli MT43 rear	£58.00
Renthal 6" handlebars	£48.96
Renthal trials grips	£7.98
Tap & thread float bowl	£20.00
OZO Pro shocks	£150.00
Shock fixing (screw) kit	£13.00
OEM fork seal kit	£39.95
S/H original mudguard	£30.00

Total £548.49

The Women of

Women are increasingly getting on board with motorcycling, especially off-road. And when you witness female riders of the calibre of Laia Sanz at Dakar you know the sky is the limit for them, just as it for men. But everyone has to start somewhere and in the Outback pastures not far out of Melbourne eight ladies recently took on Australia's toughest enduro. Wildwood today, the World tomorrow...

words & images: Michelle Linnane



It was during last minute grocery run that an innocuous poster at the supermarket caught my eye. This would result in a 6am drive out to the middle of nowhere. I was about to experience my first Wildwood Extreme, one of Australia's toughest off-road events. The race is a 13-kilometre loop, to be completed as many times as possible in a three-hour period. It began eight years ago and has gone from strength to strength.

Set amongst the wheat fields and rolling hills on the edge of Sunbury town (about an hour inland from Melbourne) the drive in provides a very wild and isolated outback feel, to this exceptionally well-organised event. People of all ages were enjoying the atmosphere and lining the track to get up close to the action. Here close to the action means getting covered in dirt and dust, it's the Aussie way. Food and coffee stalls were dotted in a variety of convenient locations around the track, providing welcome relief from the scorching sun and the chance to debate which rider looked likely to win their category. Another hot topic for fans of previous events was this year's track. The course is completely rebuilt every year, so no two years are ever the same. A whopping 150 tonnes of extra boulders was added to the rock gardens for this year. New and more challenging obstacles were also added ensuring the course is constantly evolving with the

event. This keeps some hard-core riders coming back time and again to take on the challenge. Competitor numbers are limited to 150, though, and this year eight women made the cut, the largest women's class since the race started in 2009.

Here at the track, the day is shaping up to be a scorcher, temperatures reaching 28 in the shade. Australian weather can be brutal, really brutal, and 25-knot winds buffet the entire site, doing absolutely nothing to cool things down. It's Australia, even the wind is hot. The riders are boiling, clad in armour, goggles and helmets. But they might be slightly more comfortable than the crowd who are happily getting covered head-to-toe in a coating of dust over their sticky sun cream.

I find the female riders lining up to take on this gruelling three-hour course. Standing shoulder to shoulder with all the male riders (or as close as you can on bikes), it lifts the heart to notice not only the easy banter between them but the genuine sportsmanship you can see. And after three action-packed hours cheering them on, I caught up with a few of the girls to get a full look into why they do it and what it is really like to be right there in at the deep end.

RIDERS:

Amber Lock, 43, Macedon, Victoria.

Sue Emery-Smith, 45, Melbourne Australia

Ina Halls, 27 Yarra Valley Victoria

Cheyenne Jones, 25 Latrobe Valley Victoria

Jenna Lupo, 21, Launceston Tasmania





WHAT MADE YOU START?

Amber: When I first met my boyfriend, he doubled me on his bike. Which I didn't like. I had a ride by myself and loved it. I immediately bought my first dirt bike, which was a clapped-out Yamaha YZ80, and have never looked back.

Cheyenne: My dad brought my brother a YZ80 that he never rode, so I started riding it.

Jenna: My whole family rides bikes, so it was something that the family did together. How hard was it to get started?

Sue: Hard enduro takes a lot of practice and patience to learn the skills. This is the first time I have raced in this event, so I am new to the sport of enduro.

Amber: My first ride, I jumped on, kicked her over, held the throttle on the stopper and took off. It was like I had been riding for my entire life.

Ina: It wasn't hard at all to get started; Dad found a bike for me to learn on and taught me how to ride. I entered my first competition in the junior's class and just kept going from there.

WHAT WAS THE MOST DIFFICULT THING AT THE START FOR YOU?

Ina: The most difficult thing at the start is probably still the most difficult thing now. Trying not to get frustrated or down on yourself when you are having a hard day, or had a few crashes. It is easy to get annoyed or lose confidence after you have a few offs. The hardest thing is trying to get your mind clear and get your confidence back to keep riding.

Cheyenne: Height, learning how to use my shortness. Being smart about where I can and can't put a foot down.

Jenna: Not running into people!

HOW DO PEOPLE REACT WHEN YOU TELL THEM YOU DO THIS SPORT?

Amber: People who don't know me think I'm crazy, mad, weird, irresponsible and/or too old.

Ina: People that don't know I ride bikes are usually surprised when I tell them. Apparently I don't look like a motorbike rider. However if I say I ride trials, most people have no idea what that means! But generally people are pretty interested and think it's a cool sport to be into.

HOW DO YOU FIND THE ATTITUDE OF THE MALE RIDERS TOWARD YOU?

Ina: Generally the attitude of male riders has always been great. I've never felt as though I have been treated any differently to any males that ride.

Jenna: They are definitely a lot more aggressive on the racetrack, as no one wants to be beaten by a girl. This has taught me how to be an aggressive rider, which is an important skill to have. So I'm able to give these riders the same aggression back. I feel like I have earned the respect of a lot of male riders by not letting them take me out of the track.

HOW MUCH TRAINING DO YOU HAVE TO DO TO TAKE PART IN AN EVENT LIKE THIS? WHAT OTHER TRAINING DO YOU HAVE TO DO?

Sue: I do a lot of physical and weights training, at my age it is critical. It's a very intense sport and it lessens the chance of injury. I also have a trials bike which helps with the technical side.

Amber: I shifted my focus to extreme/hard enduro roughly four years ago. I ride and train on my enduro bike twice a week. I do the odd trials ride on my trials bike, which I plan to increase. On top of that I go to the gym (strength/cardio) twice a week and Pilates once a week.

HAVE YOU HAD ANY MAJOR CRASHES WHILE RIDING? WERE YOU INJURED?

Sue: I have had major arm/shoulder break. I couldn't drive for several months due to frozen shoulder, from a complicated injury that happened training.

Amber: Yes and yes. The major injuries being fractured vertebrae/slipped disc. Fortunately no surgery required. Broken my hand twice, one requiring surgery. Knee reconstruction due to ruptured ACL as well.

AS SOME OF THE FEW FEMALES TAKING PART THIS YEAR HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THIS?

Sue: I think there are more than usual. It is a very physically demanding sport and tough. I would love to see more women doing this sport

Amber: This year is the biggest group of females riding in Wildwood Rock Extreme Enduro since it started. Which I think it is fantastic. Extreme/hard enduro is extremely demanding on you physically and mentally. Seeing more women in the sport venturing down this path is inspiring.

Ina: It is so great that there is women's class and that there are enough girls to make one. Hopefully the class continues to grow. However If there wasn't a women's class, I would just enter clubman or expert, it wouldn't really worry me! When you're out there, we are on the same track with the blokes, riding together. It really doesn't make much difference during the race.

WHAT MAKES YOU WANT TO DO THIS HARD, LONG EVENT? WHAT KEEPS YOU COMING BACK?

Sue: The feeling of getting through is unbelievable (like at a club race). Also progression of my skills even at my age continues to inspire and surprise me.

Amber: This will be my fourth year racing this event. I love the technical aspect of riding extreme/hard enduro. In previous years I rode and trained all year for just this event, as it is the only event like this in Australia. I feel elation when I get through an obstacle or section with skill and grace, also the sheer exhaustion nearing the end of the three hours, willing for the finish line.

Jenna: This race has been on my bucket list for a while. It gets harder every year, so I think I wanted to do it before it got ridiculously hard. Plus to finish it is an awesome achievement. I was also thinking about the beer I was going to demolish when I'd finished. I was absolutely spent.



WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE MEMORY/ PROUDEST MOMENT OF RIDING?

Amber: This year by far, by being successful in being a Bronze finisher at Red Bull Romaniacs in Romania. This was a true test of my physical and mental strength. The ultimate test of my skill set when riding dirt bikes. It was such an amazing experience.

Ina: I guess I would say being selected to ride on the Australian women's trials team for the first time in 2012. A lot of the time it is just those moments in riding, when you finally master a new skill or have a 'clean' ride through a tough trials section. That is what really give you those feelings of accomplishment and make you want to keep riding.

Jenna: I've got a few actually. My first proud moment was finishing fifth at the Australian MX Nationals a few years back. Next would be when I finished fifth at the Australian Trials Titles this year, after only riding trials for about 10 months. Finishing Wildwood is definitely something I am extremely proud of.

WHERE WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE FEMALES GO IN THIS SPORT?

Ina: I think females are already stepping up and showing that they have a spot in motorsports. Our Aussie enduro women's team are dominating on the world scene and showing everyone what they are capable of. I just hope that girls continue riding and our numbers continue to grow.

Jenna: I would hope that one day women weren't such a small percentage of the motorcycling community. We are just as capable as the boys are, more girls just have to have faith in their abilities and give things a crack.

WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR ANYONE WANTING TO TAKE IT UP?

Sue: Don't give up and be patient and laugh at your mistakes.



Cheyenne: Just have fun and don't take it too seriously, unless you're getting paid. It's just a hobby.

Jenna: Make sure you have a good job, because dirt bikes cost a fortune!! Also don't drink beer for the two weeks leading up to an extreme enduro.

WHERE TO NEXT? WHAT IS YOUR NEXT STEP?

Ina: I'd really like to get better at riding on an enduro bike as I've always ridden these events on my trials bike, and maybe next year have a crack at an overseas hard enduro!

Cheyenne: Next step is more practice on the skills that I may be lacking on. Getting ready to tackle Red Bull Romaniacs 2018.

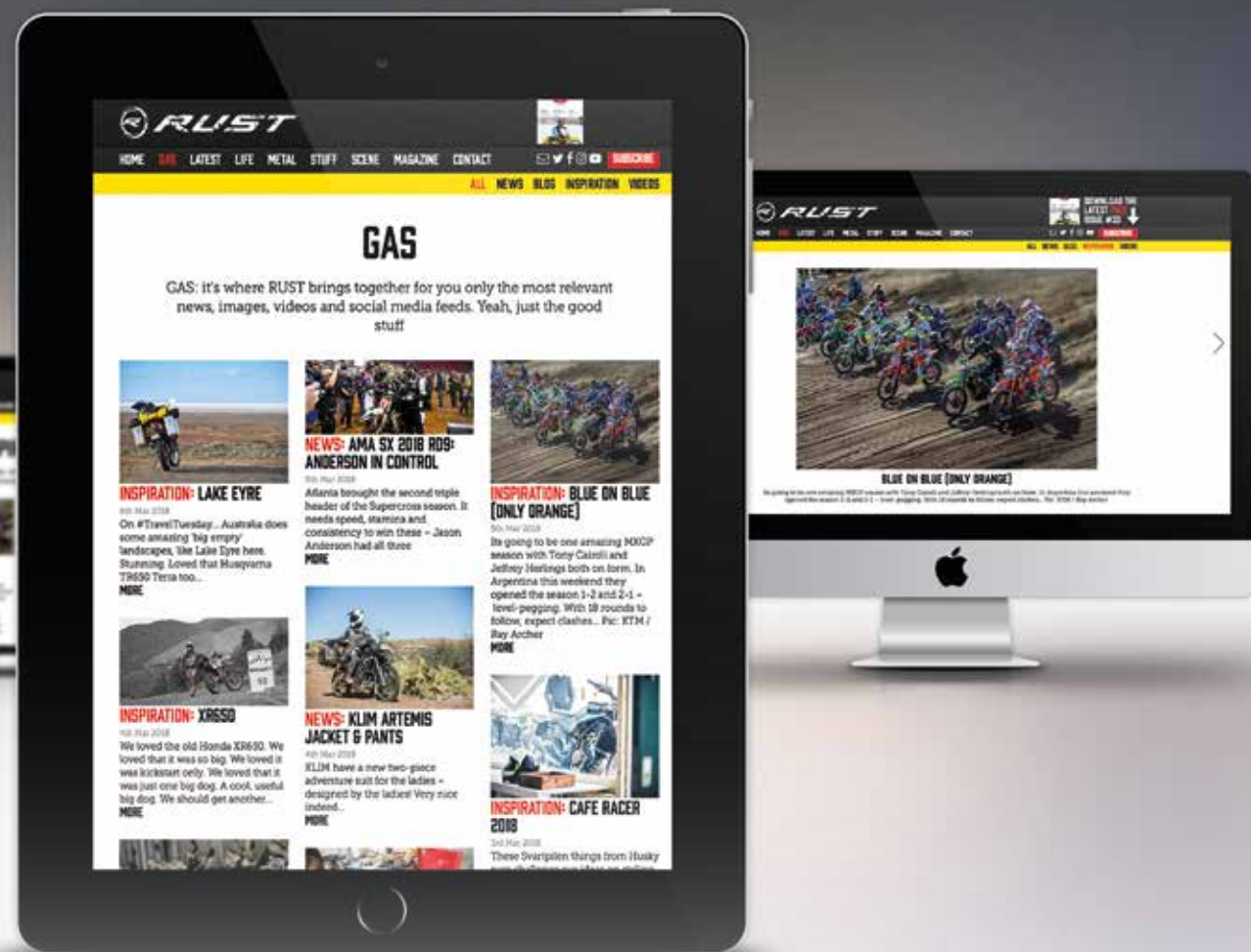
Jenna: My next goal is to work hard on the trials bike and hopefully try for the Aussie team within the next few years.

With the event over the girls are busy discussing the race and swapping training tips. Ina and Amber have taken home 2nd and 3rd in the women's division. Ina getting in four laps in 3hrs 22:32 and Amber finishing three laps in 4hrs 15:35. Emma Broadbent taking first, completed 5 laps in 3hr 20:41 finishing easily in the top half of the overall racers.

With the afternoon shadows growing long, I take in the scene surrounding me. People milling around, covered in dust, dirt, oil and grease – and that is only the spectators. You can feel the atmosphere of pure joy everywhere.

Kids running to hug their mums and dads who have just finished the race. Parents helping load-up bikes. Riders laying flat out on the ground shattered, having given it all to the track. They have overcome rocks, dodged obstacles and mastered an epic hill-climb. Truly capturing the spirit of Australian enduro.





RUST YOU CAN'T STOP IT

Yes, **RUST** never sleeps, and when it comes to our website that means we've now created a whole new section dedicated to the here and now. We call it 'Gas'. Probably not the best name, on reflection. Anyway, here's what's in Gas:

NEWS: Easy one this. But it's not a RRS generalist bulk web feed, this is news curated by us to have maximum relevance to our audience. RUST News, if you like.

BLOG: Blogs and Vlogs. We're old school at RUST so this kind of stuff isn't natural for us, but this is the 21st century, so we're embracing the digital-social age as we must.

INSPIRATION: aka Pic of the Day. Our choice of the most inspirational image that day – and you'll see it can be of anything...

VIDEO: We've been shooting a fair bit over the years – you'll find it all on our RUST Sports YouTube channel – but the stuff we really like we'll embed on our website for easier viewing. And, 'going forwards', you'll see more and more (and hopefully even better) videos from RUST.

That's Gas, and as it's all about the here and now it'll be updated with new – good – stuff on a daily basis.

Enjoy!

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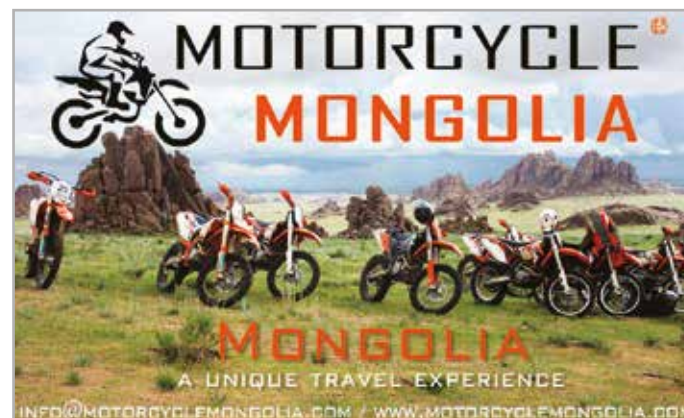
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THE THREE Rs

RIDE, RUN, ROUND-THE-WORLD

words & images: Andy Dukes

THE MARATHON RIDE

RUST has been following Brit desk-jockey-turned-adventurer

Andy Dukes as he's taken a year out from work, family and everything to take on his Big Ride – a round the world ride of a lifetime. Andy set off in March 2017 with the intention to ride six continents and to run a marathon in each. His story has unfolded in RUST issues 18,19,20, 22, 26 and 28. Now we catch up with Andy just as he's come home, journey complete. Question is: did he hit six from six? Did he see the world?



How time flies. The last time we caught up with Andy Dukes on The Marathon Ride was in late summer 2017 (Rust#28) where he was just about to arrive on the Australian stage of his round-the-world riding and marathon running odyssey. Well, he's already made it the 'long way' back home via the USA and is back at his desk in the UK, from where he brings us up to speed with his trip of a lifetime...

It's hard to believe that this time last year I was sitting in this same chair in my cosy little office, literally crapping myself about the global overland journey that lay ahead – and how completely unprepared for it I was. And yet here I am, some 40,000 kilometres, 25 countries, five continents (not six!) and 10 months later, safely back home with no money and no job but enough memories to last a lifetime. I've seen so much I could write a book (I won't) and learnt a thing or two along the way, too much for a simple feature. So instead I'm condensing my experiences into little nuggets of traveller-wisdom so if any of you out there are planning a similar adventure, I'm hoping that you can benefit from reading about where I went wrong – and occasionally got it right...

SLOW DOWN BOY...

Not that I'm going to get this chance again... but if I ever did, then I would take a lot longer to do a ride of this magnitude. In hindsight, I guess it was a little ambitious to attempt to compete in six marathons on six continents – and ride to them all – but in the end I did five on five, so I'm pretty happy with that anyway, and the South American stage will just have to wait.

As a journalist my life revolves around deadlines (we need them to function – just ask editor JB) and true to form, I gave myself plenty of deadlines on this journey, which certainly made it a tad frenetic at times.

In brief, I left home last March, turned out of my drive and headed east, knowing that my first deadline would be at the end of May – the Kuala Lumpur marathon –



MY TRIP – MY WAY

I set out, as many do, to make a conventional circumnavigation, but it didn't work out like that – and I'm glad it didn't.

For the first leg, 18,000km across Europe and Asia (finishing in Kuala Lumpur) I rode a BMW F 800 GS Adventure. For the remaining continents, I organised 'local' bikes, which meant that I saved a fortune in shipping costs (and logistical issues). The added bonus of this is that it allowed me to pop home between stages and spend valuable time with my family – no one says you have to stay away for your whole trip after all.

So, thanks to the awesome BMW contacts around the world, I borrowed an F 800 GS Adventure in Australia for the Melbourne-Outback-Cairns journey; an R 1200 GS to explore

South Africa; another 800 GSA for the European (UK to Berlin Marathon) stage; and a 1200 LC for the LA to New York stage, via Las Vegas for the final 42km marathon.

Many would prefer to do the whole trip on one bike, but I didn't have several years for this journey or enough cash to stay on the road that long. I had fixed deadlines for all the marathons I was running and couldn't risk missing any of these because of a bike being stuck in customs or grounded in quarantine. I had less than a year to do this trip and this method worked perfectly for me, as well as making my budget go a lot further.



some 11 weeks, 18 countries and 18,000 kilometres in front of me. Following that was the Australian Outback marathon in July, the South African Mandela Marathon in August, Berlin (my 'European' marathon) in September and then Las Vegas, USA, in November. These deadlines meant that I had serious distances to cover and something to aim for each day, week and month; however I often wondered what I was missing by not taking an interesting looking turn, or staying an extra night in a crazy town or just pitching my tent and enjoying a rest day.

That said, how many of us can afford to take three or more years out of our lives to do a trip like this, because that's at least how long you'd need to really get a deep feel for most of the places you're passing through. When I look back at photos from countries like Iran, Bhutan, Laos and Vietnam, I'll never forget those tough miles and incredible people – but when I look back



THE TRIP IN NUMBERS

Cost: £25,000 (approx.)
Distance: 40,000km (25,000 miles)
Countries: 25
Marathons: 5 on 5 continents
Mechanical breakdowns: 0
Punctures: 0
Bribes paid: 0
Arrests: 1

to India, then you'd have to pay me a lot of money to stay a day longer than I did!

IT DOESN'T HAVE TO COST THE EARTH

I've just tallied up approximately what it cost me to do this round-the-world ride and it has come in at somewhere around the £25,000 mark. This includes all the equipment I needed to buy (apart from the bike and rider clothing), several flights home to my family, some extortionate shipping and logistical costs but also fuel, food and lodging. For sure, this is a lot of money when taken in isolation but I believe it's incredible value for money when you consider that you can actually ride around the world for the same amount you could lose in depreciation in a single year buying a posh car. To put this in perspective, a new Land Rover Discovery costs from £46,000 to £65,000 and that's before you've put any 'extras' on it. A decade ago, I handed back a company BMW X3 to my employers, spent £1800 on a beat-up 11-year-old Discovery and vowed to put the money I saved annually on company car tax into my travel fund. Fast forward 10 years and those yearly savings went a long way towards paying for this trip.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO DO IT ALL IN ONE GO...

I know I've been lucky to wangle a year out to escape on this ride, but if a long trip's not possible due to financial or family commitments, then why not attempt a RTW journey over several years, or even longer? You could conceivably ride from Europe to Asia in a few weeks, then ship





▷ your bike home and return to work to raise more funds for the next stage of your travels. In Asia, with it becoming increasingly difficult (and expensive) to ride overland through certain countries on foreign registered bikes, there's definitely an argument for buying or hiring something locally and travelling as light as possible anyway. Australia and the USA have plenty of fly-ride options, as do South and North Africa (although not the huge bit in-between!). Who knows, maybe there's a great story there somewhere – 'around the world in 25 years on 25 bikes'?

YOU CAN DO IT ON ALMOST ANY BIKE

Don't get caught up with having to spend a fortune on a purpose-built adventure travel bike – the most important thing is to just get out there and start your journey. I met people on all kinds of bikes, from 'postie' mopeds to six-cylinder behemoths, and everything in-between. What unites us riders is that we've all taken the decision to go in the first place, and then found a way to make it happen. Every bike is a compromise and what's crucial is that you find one that fits you, because you're going to be glued to it for days, weeks and possibly months.

About the compromises: there were times when I was dangerously overheating (me, not the bike) in Asian traffic jams because I couldn't fit my panniers through the gaps in traffic, and I'd be yearning for a lightweight, nippy single-cylinder 'thumper'. But then I'd have 1000 kilometres or more to ride in places like the Australian outback, or boring, boring Texas, and I'd be so thankful of the high cruising speed, all-day comfort and long fuel range that a bike like the GS offers. Swings and roundabouts my friends, swings and roundabouts...

COULDN'T DO WITHOUT...

For sure, I met some motorcyclists on the road who had 'all the gear and no idea' but there were some items and accessories that

I found indispensable to my trip and well worth mentioning.

Airhawk Seat

I can't tell you how good this comfort seat is, with its dry flotation technology that minimizes numbness and painful pressure points on long rides. I don't have much natural padding on my backside so always suffer if I'm in the saddle for a while. But the Airhawk allowed me to just keep riding and I also used it underneath a towel as a pillow when camping, as well as on long-haul flights, because those economy class seats are just bad news for me. The Airhawk folds up to nothing when deflated but put some air in, strap it to your seat and it can literally double the distance you can ride.

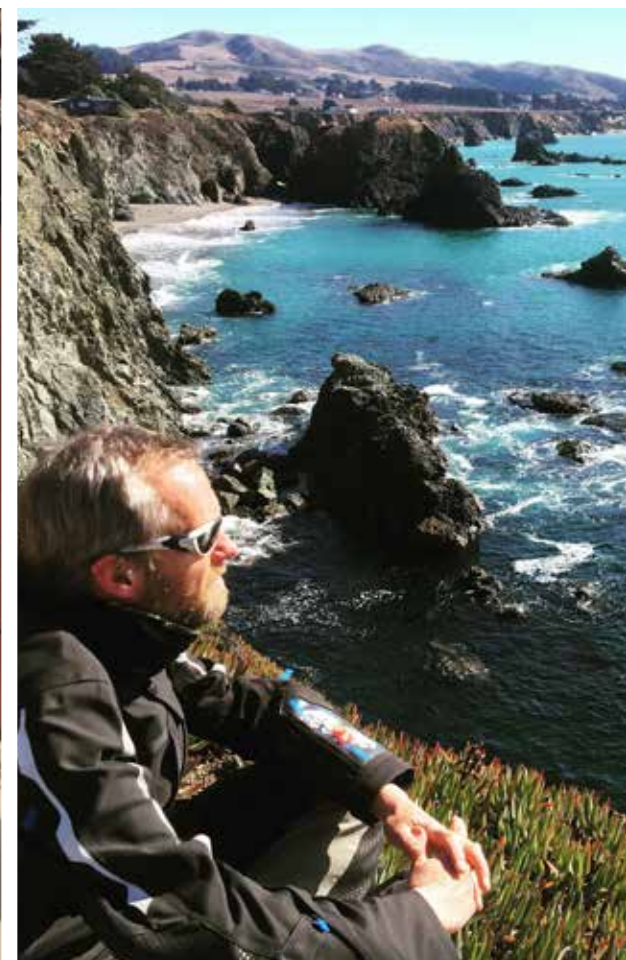
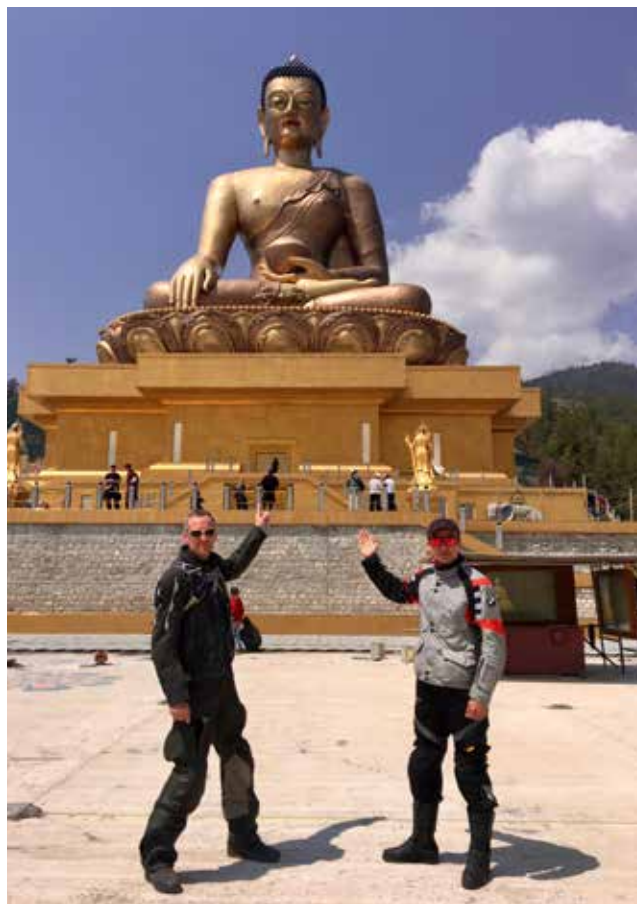
Cruz roll-up BMW toolkit

Having a bunch of pro-grade tools designed for BMW bikes and fitting in such a small roll-up pouch was a godsend, especially when putting the bike back together after it had been partly dismantled and crated for shipping. This RoadTech B1 toolkit also includes tools to deal with many of the non-standard fasteners that are found on BeeMers, such as female star bolts and hex keys. I couldn't have done without it – and not just me either, as it was used several times to help others in need.

Micro-start battery/mini tyre inflator

I wanted to camp as often as possible and get out into the back of beyond so having this small personal power supply gave me a lot of confidence. Small enough to fit in a large pocket, it was not only able to charge my electronics and be used as a torch inside a tent, but it is also capable of jump-starting a vehicle and – with the mini-compressor accessory – inflate your tyres after a puncture or if you've let the pressures down for off-road riding. For the space it takes up, it can save your arse, big time.

▷



SENA 10C Bluetooth camera and communication system

I spent a lot of money on a GoPro Hero5, but the SENSA was the camera I used most, simply because it was attached to my helmet and so easy to operate while on the move. I was able to quickly grab video whenever something interesting was happening, as well as take photos while simultaneously filming and not having to stop the bike to access my cameras. I never used its four-way intercom function or FM radio, but it was very good for Bluetooth-ing tunes and voice directions from my iPhone. The video quality is excellent and the photos are acceptable too.

Wunderlich handlebar muffs

They ain't the prettiest but I wouldn't be without them on a global ride. If you can't keep your hands dry and warm then you're in trouble, and heated grips just don't work well enough for me. These waterproof muffs completely encase your gloves – whatever their size – meaning that no moisture or wind-chill can penetrate. Anyone who has ever tried to put wet gloves back on, for example at a fuel station, will know that as soon as the lining comes away, they're ruined. These all but eliminate that problem and make your gloves last a lot longer too.

Wunderlich screen spoiler

I had no idea what a big difference such a small piece of plastic can make. I'm a tall guy and frequently suffer from wind-buffeting but this bolt-on piece of German genius allowed me to sit co-cooned in still air on my F 800 GSA at around 75mph (120km/h), thus eliminating the need to even wear earplugs. An added bonus was that it also kept most of the nasty flying insects off your visor too. I forgot to pack this item for my USA stage of The Marathon Ride and I really missed it, as the wind roar increased, I felt colder and I had to frequently clean big bugs off my visor. Well worth the modest investment.

Keis heated clothing

If you've ever been really cold on a bike, there's just no way to get warm properly while riding, so you have to avoid getting chilled in the first place. Because I've very little body fat (due to the marathon running) I had to be really careful about this so invested in a heated jacket and gloves from Keis. Connect a cable to your bike's battery, simply plug-in and you're ready to go. With adjustable heat settings on the fly, the feeling of warmth flooding around the upper body, hands and feet is incredible. Let me tell you, there's no need to stop riding for winter if you use this kit – and I used it throughout Europe and even into Iran, in southern Australia and northern USA. When you're warm you can keep riding for much longer and your concentration levels remain high because you're not distracted by the shivers and shakes. A no-brainer, in my opinion.

Waterproof bags

These dry bags are indispensable for round-the-world travel, camping, canoeing or any kind of activity where you are living outdoors all of the time. I actually took two on this trip (one from SW-Motech and one from Touratech) and they kept all the kit inside dry, clean and secure, which is all you can ask really. They are not the easiest to lug through airports, but tie one on your pillion seat and they'll not only keep your kit moisture-free in the worst tropical storm, but also serve as a pretty decent backrest too.

Marmot Bolt tent

Apart from in Asia (which was dirt cheap) I camped wherever possible so having a decent tent was paramount. This excellent 2-person tent from Marmot weighs in at just over one kilo, can be erected in a few minutes and folds down to almost



QUICK QUESTIONS

Scariest place: American immigration, where I was detained for several hours and had my visa rejected because I had travelled through Iran.

Scariest situation: apart from the above, it was being confronted by a huge python while running in the Daintree Rainforest in Queensland, Australia. I was literally frozen on the spot, which is never a good thing when a snake is hanging above you from a tree.

Favourite place: Bhutan, for its outstanding natural beauty, great roads, chilled-out people and government policy of 'gross national happiness' used to determine well-being, rather than relying on GDP as a measure of success. How cool is that?

Least favourite place: India, because I got the dreaded 'Delhi Belly' (of course), was frequently run off the road by crazy drivers and was continually surrounded by crowds of people whenever I stopped the bike. But for all that, I now look back on it with fond memories.

Best food: probably Thai and Malaysian (there's a reason why people from these countries are fatter than your average Asian) although Aussie steaks and your typical South African braai come pretty close.

Worst food: American. And such huge portions too...

Couldn't do without: US\$, they work everywhere

Could do without: customs agents, port police, border fixers and everyone else who is 'on the take' and trying to squeeze you for some extra cash

Best things about being home again: sleeping in my own bed, enjoying Yorkshire tea, drinking real ale and realising how green and pleasant the UK is (a lot of the world is brown and arid)

What would you do differently next time: ditch the deadlines for sure

Advice to wannabee globetrotters: what are you waiting for? The biggest decision is deciding to go. The rest is easy.



▷ nothing. It was just large enough for me, my sleeping bag, roll mat, rider equipment and bags. Furthermore, it never leaked and still looks like new even after nearly a year's worth of abuse. Don't try to save money by buying a cheap tent, sleeping bag or roll mat because a decent night's sleep is priceless when daily riding conditions are long and tough.

EnduroGuard rider gear

This adventure touring suit ain't cheap but like most things in motorcycling, you get what you pay for and BMW Motorrad has certainly come up trumps here because the quality is outstanding. I've lived in this suit for nine months and while it doesn't smell too good, it's never let in any water, has been incredibly comfortable and robust, and is showing no signs of wear and tear. In truth, it was too heavy and hot to wear in the tropics, but I was so glad of its warmth, protection and weather-beating qualities in the rest of the world. One suit can't do everything perfectly, but the EnduroGuard came pretty close I can tell you.

WHAT I COULD HAVE LEFT AT HOME?

It's easy to say this now but there is a long list of items I carried around the world but never used. However, if circumstances had been different, they could have become ab-

solutely indispensable to the trip's continuation, but I was fortunate in that I didn't have any mechanical breakdowns, punctures or serious crashes. Put another way, the BMW GS bikes I rode never let me down, used any oil or had any parts that needed replacing. Here's the list anyway.

Spindle tool, Bead-Pro bead breakers, tyre levers, axle wrench, rim shields, radiator repair, Baja no-pinch tyre tool, puncture repair kit, brake and clutch levers, clutch cable, brake pads, engine oil, spare inner tubes, epoxy metal repair compound, air filter, sterile first aid kit, cable lock, camping chair, umbrella.

WOULD I DO IT AGAIN?

In an instant! I've got a feeling it's going to be quite tough to adapt to 'normal' life again, whatever that is, but there's no doubt that a RTW journey is life-changing. I began this trip with a healthy thirst for travel and put my faith in the BMW GS I was riding and in friends and contacts in various places along the route, whom I could ask for help if I needed. And you know what, it worked!

There were so many things that could have gone wrong, but they didn't, even though I now know for sure that I couldn't have done it without the kindness of strangers. But when I look at the big map of the world in my kitchen — decorated with photos and red pins from the UK all the way to Indonesia, through Australia and Africa and America — I feel a great sense of pride in the journey I've made.

Make no mistake, riding a motorcycle around the world is physically and mentally exhausting, and this takes its toll as the months go by. The marathons would have been a hell of a lot easier in my mid-twenties than at the tender age of 47, but I completed them all and in pretty good times too. I might never run competitively again, but I know I'll always ride. 🇬🇧



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Talk to up to 16 rider for a range up to 8 km (min. of 5 rider) with SENA's MESH-Technology. Additionally you can pair your 30K up to 3 other headsets via Bluetooth 4.1. It supports Audio Multitasking, Advanced Noise Control, Universal Intercom, FM Radio and much more.



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20S EVO

The SENA 20S EVO helps you enjoy your ride to the fullest by keeping you in touch with up to eight of your buddies, up to 1.2 miles away.

IMAGE: One from JB's archives here. Old mate Dave Willet getting skittish on a YZ125 at Leeds Castle back in 2010. Just plain good fun.

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Thanks: Luke Plummer and Carli Smith at Motocom and Amy Cahill at Polaris for arranging the most fun launch JB's had in a long time (and for the video shooting plus squeals and laughter from the co-driver's seat); to Michelle Linnane in Melbourne for extreme patience in waiting for her article to be published (good work too), oops, same goes for the awesome Mr Stillwell vendor of magic carpets to the stars. And lastly to one Travis Pastrana for dealing with JB's inane questioning with such good humour and even offering a backstage pass (that's not a euphemism is it?) at the upcoming Nitro tour – and something more for our subscribers, too (stay tuned)...

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