



ISSUE #38



WWW.RUSTSPORTS.COM

🐦 @RUSTSPORTS

f /RUSTSPORTS

📷 /RUSTSPORTS

COUNTING STARS

Alpinestars are making helmets, really nice ones!

CLONE WARS

Honda's two CB1100s go head-to-head

THE 'STROM

Our V-Strom XT gets a serious adventure upgrade





Contents #38

FEATURES



12

HONDA CB1100

Looking for the smoothest, most versatile heritage model on the market? Maybe the Honda CB1100 is it. And if not this one, then how about this one? Double trouble...

22

BROC TICKLE

When the dream turns to a living nightmare...



38

SUPERTECH

Alpinestars are moving into the helmet market. RUST joined them in downtown Los Angeles and the Mojave high desert to see how their Supertech S-M10 rates



EXPLORE THE TRAIL BEYOND

Realise your true riding potential with the 2019 enduro range from Husqvarna Motorcycles. Go as far as you dare thanks to premium quality components, exceptional light weight, intelligent power and innovative technology. For a more intuitive riding experience, the TE 250i and TE 300i feature electronic fuel injection, delivering consistent performance across a wider range of altitudes and conditions.



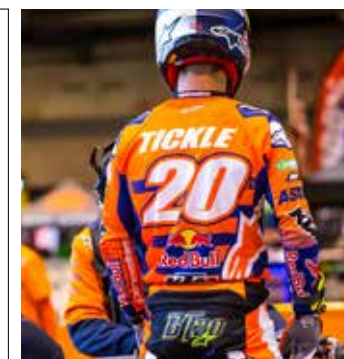
Contents #38

REGULARS

06

Editorial

Behind the scenes there's so much going on – which might explain the slimmer than usual edition before you...



08

Gallery

New York and California in July – what are the odds it would be raining in both locations?



34

Chris Evans

Our man in Paris takes a dive, physically (and breaks his finger) and metaphorically (yeah, the WR450F was a 60hp step too far!)

46

Stuff

Warren M. wants to share his love of Scotts' Steering Dampers



50

Long Term

JB – uncharacteristically – is cracking on with his modifications to the Suzuki V-Strom 650XT in readiness for the Rallye du Maroc



JUSTICE?



Broc Tickle is a nice guy, everyone says so (my man at Alpinestars, Jose, says he's the kind of guy you wish your sister would date). I met Broc, he's clean-cut, straight talking, clearly a hard-working man.

And Broc's been over ten years an AMA Pro. That means for ten years he's raced a 16-17 week supercross season, followed by a motocross season that's another 16-17 weeks or so. At best, Broc sees just September as his rest month, otherwise 11 months of the year he's racing and training non-stop. And, yeah, we should emphasize seven of those months are in the super-high-risk arena that is supercross.

Can you imagine then, being Broc? It's April 2018. You've worked your ass off for over a decade and this year you are at last reaping some reward, you've a contract with arguably the biggest team in the paddock and the results are coming – two fifths and a fourth, surely a podium finish is just around the corner (and a contract renewal)? Then your phone vibrates and there's an email, says it's from FIM Legal Department.

That email, from a suit in a far away land, stopped Broc's racing – his future – in its tracks. His drugs test had come back positive; he was suspended with immediate effect.

Broc knows he doesn't do drugs, how could this be? He immediately turned his kitchen cupboards inside out; he double-checked the ingredients on all his training supplements. Nothing.

But the FIM has him guilty until he can prove his innocence. And 16 weeks later he still hasn't had the hearing to do just that. KTM tore up his contract. He can't race – that means he can't work (in our language). And if he can't prove his innocence – in doping court cases, if the urine samples are positive, that's as good as case-closed – his suspension could be determined to be as long as four years. Career ending.

Broc's case isn't the first of its kind. Only two years ago we had that of James Stewart, and there have been plenty before. Read the reports on Stewart's, on that of others within our sport and without – and for every Lance Armstrong there seems to be a bunch of athletes who are tripped, shamed, seemingly through no fault of their own.

Please read our interview with Broc. Effectively he's facing the end of his career, for what – having sipped on a post-workout drink formula that contained an undisclosed stimulant (about the strength of a good cup of coffee)? Is he a cheat, a doper?

Clean athletes, clean sportsmen – yep, we all want to see that, dope testing is important. But is the law safe? Does the FIM really have a handle on what they're doing? Is this what we really set out to achieve?

Sometimes it's only when you meet the person, witness the pain, that you suddenly care. You know, Broc rides a motorcycle – just like you and me. If this was you now...?

JB



THE X-TRAINER

We love a good cross-discipline story here at RUST. So it's fair play to five-time GNCC champion Kailub Russell for taking on the AMA motocross paddock at Unadilla in early August. Russell has good backing in KTM USA, so he got a works 450SX, and after spending a little time with trainer Aldon Baker and teammate Marvin Musquin he got himself up to speed as much as he could. So how did he get on? How about sixth in Moto 1! Maybe it helped that it rained and the track turned to a quagmire (see photo), but for a woods rider that's super-impressive. He could have gone better still in Moto 2 but got wiped out by Justin Barcia at the start, losing his back brake. Even so, a great performance.

Image: Simon Cudby / KTM



HEAVEN

Sometimes unexpected gifts land in your lap. Thanks to Alpinestars, RUST found themselves in California this last month. And thanks to the awesome Ricardo at 3 Brothers KTM we found ourselves up at Hesperia track in the Mojave high desert – a long way from the woods and green lanes of Kent in the UK. It was 100°F when we set off but somehow the Englishman magicked-up some rain (the first in months) which cooled everything down and watered the track to perfection. Just a little bit of heaven....

Image: Olivier de Vaulx



DOUBLE TROUBLE

HONDA CB1100EX/RS

Honda brought the CB1100 to the market in 2013. Very nice it was too, a neat homage to their four-cylinder heritage – although it failed to illicit much excitement. So for 2017 Honda reassessed the market and came back with not one new CB1100 but two, which each attack the heritage market in far more defined way. CBs with attitude...?

Words & Images: Jon Bentman

I'm enjoying this bike too much. Warren's enjoying his too, and wearing the broadest smile to prove it. The daft thing is we're both lost and way behind schedule, so we should be stressing. But these Honda CB1100s have such a cool vibe and are purring along so sweetly they've melted any angst. Choking East End London traffic – not an issue, just gently thread your way through the gaps, no fuss, no nonsense. ▶

And when we finally get on the right road and hit the national speed limit signs, we open up the taps and the two CB11s fly. Not hyperspace fast, just old school roaring air-cooled four-cylinder four-stroke fast. Enough to drop any four-wheeler, but not so fast you fear for your life/sanity/license. And on a warm summers day, does it get any better than this?

SLEEPERS

The daft thing here is that as impressive as these two CB11s are, they seem almost invisible to the bike-buying public (here in the UK at least). All the talk in modern-retro (aka heritage) circles is about the twins and Scramblers – by BMW, Ducati and Triumph – yet these CB11s are clearly stunning bikes, boy do they deliver.

Now given they are seemingly invisible it is probably best we do a recap on just what they are. The first CB1100 of this ilk arrived in 2013 and was of course paying homage to the original CB750 (which dates back to 1969). The CB11 was entirely its own machine, not a parts-bin special where the motor from a sportier model has been detuned and kind of re-imagined (fake cylinder fining etc). No, the CB11 was a ground-up new-build in every facet, executed with the usual Honda thoroughness and attention to detail. Bearing in mind that first CB750 produced a claimed 68hp, then the 88hp of the CB11 really is quite staggeringly modest, especially given nearly five decades of technological advancement. Instead the CB11 is something of a torque-monster compared to the old bike, producing 68 as against 44lb-ft. Only really, in modern terms, even that isn't so much. And when we factor in a weight comparison – 226kg the CB750, 255kg the CB11 – you can see outright performance isn't the driver here. And that's just fine by us – and the rest of the



heritage scene – because, we've said the word already – yep, in the words of Dennis Denuto (see The Castle) it's the vibe (that matters).

So the CB11 came to the market in 2013, and very nice it was too, applauded for having a very agreeable motor and fine handling (as long as you were not set on all-out road racing). Very Honda in that way. Only probably it was too nice, a very able roadster with a nod to the past, but arguably no one striking character trait, or vice for that matter. So it's taken this 2017 revamp of the CB11 – and splitting its DNA to create two styling/dynamic options – to give the model a bit of swagger, a bit of character – and a whole lot more appeal.

MELLOW YELLOW

You're first option is the CB1100EX – the yellow one – which pushes the CB1100 design even more stridently into the past. The cast wheels of the



▷

2013 bike are replaced with more period correct wire-spoke hoops, which are also close to period-correct in being 18-inchers in fairly modest widths (with just a 150-section tyre on the rear – the CB750 wore a 19"/18" combination and that rear tyre was a relatively skinny 4.00x18, say 100-110mm wide). The handlebars are high and wide the way they came back then while, like the tyres, the fuel tank would have been a bit of luxury back in the 70s, seeing as it has seamless welds and is quite curvaceous – in shape more resonant of Kawasaki's Z1 than the CB – but we're not complaining, it is indeed a thing of beauty. The exhaust system is also more period conscious, having been made shorter, and being a 4-into-2 is a little more correct than the bulky 4-into-1 fitted in 2013 (although the CB750 of course had a 4-into-4 exhaust, if you could describe it so). The exhaust is also emitting a little more of an emotive tune – still within legal limits, but



with muffler alterations there's more 'resonance' (Honda's word). As well there's been a lot more attention to detail, so the tail light looks properly 70s (did someone say 'Lucas?'), the saddle is ribbed (let's not go there), the brushed aluminium side panels and the chrome-plated indicators all speak of authentic 70s styling. For us, the EX is the epitome of the 1970s CB750.

BACK TO BLACK

Option two is the CB1100RS. Maybe that should be FS not RS, as in Freddie Spencer, as there's a fair dollop of 1980s AMA Superbike about this variation, bearing in mind Fast Freddie's CB750F racer graced American circuits in 1980-81 (incidentally we're talking the DOHC CB750/900Fs here, as against the SOHC motors of the '70s CBs). So, yes, with the RS we have cast wheels, fancy forks, fancy brakes (radially-mounted), a black-painted engine and straight bars. And those wheels are

modern 17-inchers, with fat 120- and 180- section tyres. And just like AMA Superbikes of the 1980s, the frame has seen something of a racer's cut and shut and bracing exercise, with a whole degree taken out of the fork rake (making the bike 5mm shorter). Again, so many details...

THE RIDE(S)

You can feel the shared DNA in the EX and RS, and given that the motor is in the same tune in both, you're getting a very similar ride – up to a point. What could we say? For up to 65% of the ride they feel the same – namely the response when you open the throttle and the engine characteristic and sound – it's smooth, almost plush in the way the power comes in, with no obvious power-step just one long linear response. After that, the chassis changes and, for sure, the different handlebar bends dramatically change the attitude and ride experience of each.

▷



Riding on the RS first, the feel was very much smooth, confident and strong. It's not aggressive and the bike's stature isn't overwhelming, being as much reminiscent of the diminutive CB400/4 (which came with similar flattish 'bars') as a mighty CB750 or CB900F. The seat height at 795mm makes for easy low-speed maneuvering. It's a relaxed ride, but you can tuck-in in a sportsman-like fashion when you want to kick along and with the sportier chassis set-up you can hang it out there a little longer than on the EX. It's a roadster still, but with a definite sporty flavor.

But in fact it's only when you jump on the EX that you realize just how much the RS is the racy one. On the EX the high handlebars, the lazier steering and those skinny-ish tyres create a far more chilled ride. And after at first rejecting such a setup (I'm a European bend-swinging café racer, not a US highways

cruiser) it really grows on you. There's a little bit of dirt bike 'chill' about such a ride, and given that in heritage-land we're not obsessed with speed, this vibe and this look start to make more and more sense.

As said, it's the same motor in both (in fact oil and air-cooled). And it's a great one. Velvety smooth, yet thanks to the exhaust tweaks, it makes a gruff howl and - just as with a rorty twin - there's fun to be had with giving the CB11s a handful of throttle. With modest 32mm throttle bodies, the PGM-FI fuelling system offers instant, smooth response while the gearbox is utterly unfussy - and unlike the earliest CBs, comes with a six-speed gearbox, so it's long-legged. And you have to like having a slipper clutch on board too, to smooth-out those moments when you downshift just one gear too many too soon. All this, and if you take the time to really look at it, you can see its



beautifully executed with subtle detail in the cases and the cylinder fins.

YES, WE LIKE!

So there is indeed a new 'old' vibe with the CB1100s. They're very different to all the other heritage models given the straight-four motor, but nonetheless authentic of the period and so just as valid. And while we don't want to say this, as in heritage land this virtue has no value, the CB1100s bring a serving of practicality - yep, you could go on a long tour on these bikes, they're not just for the cappuccino drinkers. In Europe, this puts us in mind of a mad blast down to the 24-hour race down at Bol d'Or as we did in the coupe d'endurance days. Such a trip (the length of France) could be a real pain on a lesser machine (ask Alex about the suspension on his Triumph) but the CB11s would eat up such a journey.



HONDA CB1100EX (RS IN BRACKETS)

SPECIFICATIONS

Engine: Oil- and air-cooled 16-valve DOHC four-cylinder four-stroke**Displacement:** 1140cc**Bore & stroke:** 73.5 x 67.2mm**Max Power:** 66kW (89bhp) @ 7500rpm**Max Torque:** 91.0Nm (68lb.ft) @ 5500rpm**Fueling:** PGM-FI, 32mm throttle bodies**Starter:** Electric**Transmission:** Six-speed gearbox, wet multiplate clutch**Frame:** Double steel cradle**Front suspension:** 41mm forks, preload adjustable (43mm forks, preload adjustable)**Rear suspension:** twin shocks, preload adjustable**Tyres:** 110/80-18 140/70-18 (120/70-17 180/55-17)**Wheels:** Wire spoke (cast alloy)**Brakes:** Front discs – 296(310)mm, four-piston Nissin (radially mounted) calipers – Rear disc 256mm, single piston caliper, ABS**Seat height:** 790mm (795mm)**Wheelbase:** 1490mm (1485mm)**Weight:** EX: 255kg (with oil and petrol) (RS: 252kg)**Fuel capacity:** 16.8 l**Colours (for 2018):** EX: pearl hawkseye blue / candy chromosphere red RS: digital silver metallic / graphite black**Contact:** www.honda.com**UK price:** £10,999 (£11,499)**US price:** \$12,199 (RS not listed)Bikes supplied by: www.clubmotolondon.co.uk - Thanks Nigel!

The CB11s can then foot it with the BMW RnineTs for having that extra bit of performance and substance – kind of super-heritage models. For character the Hondas and BMWs are as much chalk and cheese as they were in the 1970s, but both are honest to their marque and bring a rewarding ride experience. I (JB) get to ride a lot of classics (including CB750s and R90Ss) and unless those old bikes are fettled to within an inch of their lives they can be disappointing, and no question they need a keen mechanic for an owner.

Bikes like the CB1100s here bring back that 70s experience, rose-tint enhanced

by way of modern technology, so you can enjoy the period ride without the threat of breakdown or imminent rebuild. And given the quality and attention to detail brought to these CB1100s they're also to be respected and are certainly deserving of their place. Sometimes we use words like pastiche (very Kevin McCloud), or replica, and we're being demeaning. But when the engineers have done as thorough a job as they have here – and installed the fun factor, and yes, the vibe – then we give these heritage models full marks. So these CB1100s – yeah nicely done, very nicely done indeed. 🍷



*in conversation with...*

BROC TICKLE

Broc Tickle was on top of his world, a contract with the top team in US supercross, knocking on the door of podium finishes, in form and looking good for the season – and then he received an email from the FIM...

Interview: Jon Bentman

Images: KTM / Simon Cudby, Alpinestars / Olivier de Vaulx

2018

It's been fun last couple of years. I've made progress, I've had a couple of injuries, but when I came back I was always fighting for more, I would get a podium here and there, so it kept me on the radar, enough for KTM and I to start talking after my supercross podium in Toronto last year. And I signed after I got a third place at High Point in the outdoors, we negotiated a deal and that was a big opportunity for me, it was something I needed.

I needed a change after four years at RCH, I had got a little stale and whatnot and wanting a change. RCH ended up not having a team for 2018 anyway, so it kind of worked in my favour. So heading into the 2018 season there were a lot of things moving around, having signed with KTM, with Alpinestars head-to-toe, and with Oakley – everything changed. ►





You couldn't beat the combo, and then being around Marvin, Zach and Jason during the week, training down at Aldon's – it was the dream.

I had literally signed my deal with KTM as soon as the outdoors was over, flew down to Florida and did a baseline test with Aldon (Baker – trainer to many a supercross star) and checked out some apartments in Florida. There were a lot of moving parts to sort what with boot camp starting down there at the end of October. But it was really good, I learned a lot.

I really enjoyed the bike when I got on it, although if I'm honest I kind of struggled a little bit when we got onto supercross (training). But obviously they (KTM) have the tools and the guys to make it right, so we made some changes and I started feeling comfortable. I didn't catch my stride until two or three weeks before Anaheim, but by Anaheim I knew I had put in the work and done what I needed to. It took me a lot longer to get where I wanted to, but it's supercross, it's never easy. And once I got a little confidence going things start to improve. Indy was awesome, I was in second place until three or four laps from the end when me and Dean Wilson came together, so I got fifth, which matched my best finish, then I got fourth in Seattle.

Then in April I was on my way to the flight to the Minneapolis Supercross when I got an email from the FIM legal department and I thought, what's this?

THE WORLD STOPS

It started there. Like a police citation, I knew didn't want to read it (what was it? Read the FIM press release below – Ed). I called the team right away and even thought about not getting on the plane and staying home. But I got on the plane and

WHO IS BROC TICKLE?

PROFESSION: Professional supercross and motocross racer

DATE OF BIRTH: 21 November 1989

HOMETOWN: Wilmington, North Carolina, USA

TURNED PRO: 2006

TITLES: 2011 West Coast Supercross Lites

2018 SX SEASON: 8th (missed final four races due to suspension)

TEAMS: Star Racing (2007-2010), Pro Circuit Kawasaki (2011-12) RCH Suzuki (2013-2017) Red Bull KTM Factory Racing (2018)



went down to press day on the Friday only to be pulled aside by John Gallagher (race director) and the guys from the FIM and they said you're not to be able to race this weekend so you might as well not do press. So I was like okay, I'm just going to fly home.

So I flew home Friday, hung out over the weekend, then Monday I got hold of a lab here in California and did a urine test and brought my supplements in to get tested. The testing of the supplements took a bit longer than I thought, but there were no answers there, I have no idea where the compound came from. My urine sample came back clean, too.

And since then it's been a matter of waiting for the next step to get there. We're close now – it has been a long time – but from the beginning once this process started I kind of accepted its going take a little more time than I want. But we're getting close to a hearing date and that'll be the next step, to go to the hearing and fight the case as good as I can. And hopefully get the minimal sentence.

I would never have expected this; it's like turning up for work on a Monday and somebody saying 'that's not your desk'. For me, it's been difficult, and I don't know what it is about the whole scenario – I don't feel like I did anything wrong, or anything intentionally, so for me I can sleep at night. On top of that I feel like I'm supposed to be in this situation. It sounds stupid, but I feel like although its probably the worst thing you could say that could happen for where I was and where things were going, I feel like this is where I'm supposed to be, and that feeling has relieved me and let me be.

Obviously there's been ups and downs with stress through this



▷ whole thing but I think the hardest part for me is where I was at, I'd been making so many gains, going in the direction I wanted to start the year at, and it was coming easy, I was getting to that place where I was ready to start climbing the podium. That's the hardest part for me to swallow, but at the same time I've the confidence that I can get back there, I have the state of mind to get back to that place.

MY LIFE

You know, I don't know what I would be doing without this – racing is my life. I got a PW50 when I was three, at Christmas, and ever since then my whole racing career has been progression, like I still feel I haven't got to my best. I feel like I'm that guy who always makes progress, I want more and I believe I can do better than what I've done, but at the same time I'm still making progress, it's not like I'm going backwards.

I wasn't good on 50s, or 60s, I made it to the amateur nationals but I wasn't good, just good enough to make it. And then when I got on a big bike I went to the next level, I showed up at an amateur national and I was fighting for wins (winning a Loretta Lynn's 250A title). Then I went to Millville in 2006 and got 11th in my first moto as a pro. I kind of struggled for my first couple of years but had a few decent enough rides to keep me around and then Mitch (Payton of Pro Circuit Kawasaki) saw something in me. When I signed that deal I knew I was going to win that championship (2011 West Coast SX Lites) that next year, I had that feeling, I'd already made my mind up that that was what was going to happen.

I struggled in the outdoors that year because I felt I'd accomplished something so big that I would never have imagined I would have done, and so I didn't reset and have another goal, so for that whole outdoor season ▷

THE FIM STATEMENT

Press Release April 14, 2018: The Fédération Internationale de Motocyclisme (FIM) has advised US Supercross rider Broc Tickle that he is provisionally suspended pursuant to Article 7.9 of the FIM Anti-doping Code. The decision to provisionally suspend Mr. Tickle was taken following the receipt of a report from the WADA accredited laboratory in Cologne indicating an Adverse Analytical Finding of 5-methylhexan-2-amine, a specified substance under Section 6 (Stimulants) of the 2018 FIM Prohibited List, in a urine sample collected from him at an in-competition test carried out by the FIM at the round of the Monster Energy AMA Supercross, an FIM World Championship held in San Diego, California, USA, on 10 February 2018.

Mr. Tickle has the right to request and attend the analysis of his B sample.

Mr. Broc Tickle is provisionally suspended with effect from 14 April 2018. He is therefore barred from participating in any Sports competition until further notice (Art. 10.12 of the FIM Anti-doping Code). Under Article 7.9.3.2 of the FIM Anti-doping Code, Mr. Tickle may request lifting of his provisional suspension.

Under the World Anti-Doping Code and the FIM Anti-Doping Code, the FIM is unable to provide any additional information at this time.

WATCH THE VIDEO





I struggled. And kind of struggled in supercross the next year in the 450 class, but then in the outdoors I got five or six podiums and fifth in this championship so always when I've got to the bottom I've pulled myself back up and made the best of the situation. I've always lived by 'don't give up, don't ever give up'.

Obviously here in the States, in supercross and motocross everyone works hard, every team is working hard to do better. The sport is true dedication, a day-in day-out thing that you have to put your body and mind to. It requires absolute focus, the focus has to be there because it is dangerous, obviously so, if you lose the focus there's a chance of you getting injured.

And despite ten-plus years racing supercross I still get nervous in going

through the transition from outdoors to supercross. That first supercross session after riding outdoors all summer – I'm scared. I am. But by the time the season comes around and you've got through the first couple of races, it seems normal. Supercross is tough here, there's a lot of competition and everyone is always pushing for more, and the talent is not getting any weaker. And even after ten-plus years it still has that special feeling.

It is unrelenting, too. I know the date I started training with Aldon, it was September 10. I didn't have a day off from then until I got my B sample results (April 14). And I've only taken one day off since then, doing stuff every day to stay active and keep myself sane.

Going from supercross to motocross and back again, it makes for a full year,



WHAT IS METHYLHEXANEAMINE?

Methylhexaneamine was placed on the WADA (World Anti-Doping Agency) Prohibited List in 2010 and is classed as a Non Specified Stimulant prohibited in-competition only. Note 'in-competition' there – it is permitted for use during training...

Originally intended for use as a nasal decongestant, methylhexaneamine has been marketed as a dietary supplement in combination with caffeine and other ingredients. Methylhexaneamine is also a constituent of geranium oil, sold as a component of nutritional supplements. It is described typically as a dietary supplement.

Methylhexaneamine also goes by the name DMAA and can be found in various supplements sold over the counter as an aid to training and fitness exercise. However, while it's often listed as an ingredient – and so athletes know to avoid that product – it's been also been found in supplements where it's not been listed. This situation has resulted in a number of athletes failing drug tests and receiving (undue?) suspensions.

Dr. Pieter Cohen, Assistant Professor of Medicine at Harvard Medical School:

"Consumers need to be careful when taking supplements, especially pre-workout and weight-loss products. You can't always trust what's on the label. These hidden stimulants are drugs, not natural ingredients, and have no place in over-the-counter supplements."

The Science Of Sport, December 12, 2010: "Amazingly, research on the supplement industry has shown that up to 25% of nutritional supplements, including those from companies that do not sell steroids or pro-hormones, may contain undeclared steroids or pro-

hormones and stimulants which are banned by WADA. In other words, if a squad of 30 footballers all take the same supplement, 7 or 8 of them may be taking a banned substance inadvertently. These substances are not listed on the label, but they find their way into the bottle, as a result of what is non-existent control over the manufacture process of supplements. The sources of this contamination include the sourcing of the raw materials, the machinery and the packaging plants. The end result is that there is no such thing as a guaranteed safe supplement.

"A final word then is whether the banned list is too broad, too large? Should (methylhexaneamine), and many others, even be on the list? This has come up on this site before, when we interviewed Prof Bengt Kayser (Professor at the Faculty of Medicine University of Geneva) who was of the opinion that doping control would be more effective if the number of banned substances was cut right down, leaving only those that have a profound effect on performance and are unsafe. Given the probably very marginal effect of a substance like methylhexaneamine (it has never been fully tested for sport), and the potentially high risk of inadvertent use (with career ending implications for the player), this argument may well have merit."

US Anti-Doping Agency Athlete Advisory June 2011:

"The on-going problem of dietary supplement mislabelling continues to create a risky environment for athletes. Unfortunately, due to the current permissive regulations governing the supplement industry, USADA cannot give guarantees to athletes regarding which products are safe and free from contamination." ▶



▷ there's little or no rest and to do that for ten-plus years is quite something. But it becomes natural, a way of life, I don't what it is, if I become tired or whatever I can still get up and still go for a run in the morning, it feels normal. If I don't do it I feel like man, I'm losing it! This sport is not easy by any means, but all of us enjoy it, if you don't you're not going to do well.

People asked me this year, how much longer do you think you want to do this? And I don't really have an answer, but like most of us, it's until we're not enjoying it anymore. Obviously there are times when you'll not enjoy it, but it's only when you're completely over it do you call it quits. And the I feel the situation I'm in now is not the way I saw myself going out at all, so I can't accept calling this it, for good. So for me I'm mentally ready to keep going.

CHANGING GEARS

After that unrelenting routine, day after day, such intensity, dealing with the FIM, with Geneva, has been difficult, slow... The time zone difference makes it difficult, but the whole deal is tough, like 30 days ago they sent me an email to say I should have a hearing date set in the next 21 days, but its been 30 days or more, and until I see the FIM legal department ID pop up on my phone I won't know my hearing date. It's taken three months to get to this point now. But at least the suspension will start when it was issued at my last race, so it's not like it starts at the hearing date, so that gives me three months done. But as I understand

WHAT THEY SAID:

Jason Anderson (when interviewed by Racer X): "I know for him [Tickle] he would never, in his head, think to do something like this. And I'm with him every day. I know he has these supplements from GNC or whatever, we take electrolytes, stuff like that, but it's nothing ever in his head where he's like 'I'm gonna try and cheat.' I believe there should be testing, but at some point I'm just overwhelmed at what is going on, because a dude that's such a good dude, that's selfless, he tries, he's so good for our group and everything like that, for that to happen to him, it sucks. It really sucks."

Roger De Coster: "All these guys take some supplements and vitamins..."

"The benefit of taking that stuff (Methylhexanamine), I don't see where it is. It's not healthy. There is stuff on the banned list that can really benefit and help you, like focus substantially better or give you more energy, but from what I have been told and read on the Internet, this stuff is like drinking a cup of bad coffee."



as of now I could face up to a four-year penalty.

Dealing with the FIM isn't easy. We asked for the lab report documentation and it was like we were asking for the code for their house, they didn't really want to give it to us – and on top of that I had to pay for it! All you have to do is press print or copy to a file and send it to me in an email and its' right there... but I'm accepting how long the process is going to take.

I would hope my example makes an impact to change that, to see something of a logical system, 'Hey Broc, you had methylhexanamine in your system – you're out for four races.' Something like that – set in stone, there's a graph, a table, no need for communication, they just email back, 'there was this in your urine, you're out for six races. If you screen dirty again then you get double'. I'd like to see them work out a system that would be more logical for our sport. And on that side of things, I feel the right way would be to have someone here (in the US) who would handle things, who would know at all times what was going on. There are FIM guys who come here to the races, but you can't find out that much information from them, so it's difficult. But like I've said, I know I'm in this position for a reason and it's going to work out like it's supposed to.

There's a bit of faith and inner belief there. I think it's a combination of both, believing in myself, and keeping strong through this whole process, it's about doing things, staying busy, being around positive people, everything that is required to do so. And then on top of that growing up in a Christian household obviously my faith is strong and I believe I'm here in this situation for a reason so make the best of it and things will turn out the way they're supposed to. 🍀

OTHER CASES OF RIDERS RECEIVING DRUG-RELATED SUSPENSIONS:

2002: Motocrosser Josh Coppins tested positive for the stimulant pseudo-ephedrine (a result, he said, of taking taking a hay fever tablet). Coppins was given a suspended three-month ban.

2013: Road racer Anthony West failed a test for methylhexanamine (which he said he got from an energy drink). The FIM banned West for one month but WADA appealed the decision and West was given an 18-month ban.

2015: Motocrosser James Stewart tested positive for an amphetamine, Adderall, a banned substance made permissible if prescribed by a doctor (Therapeutic Use Exemption - TUE). Stewart didn't have a TUE in place at the time of being tested, but did gain one subsequently - he still received a 16-month suspension."



THE UNKNOWN FUTURE

RUST: At the time of publishing, four months (16 weeks) after issuing his suspension, the FIM have still not sat on the case, Broc is still awaiting his hearing.





THE SHOW MUST GO ON

Chris Evans has had an up and down month. He's found the one drawback with the Rekluse clutch (to his cost), sold his WR450, bought a Beta, and hit a significant technical snag. But at least proved that French health care is indeed *tres bien*



FINGER LICKIN' GOOD BAD

There're two things you're not allowed to do when you run off-road tours – break down or go to hospital. And though I say it myself, I was pretty proud of my record on that front. Since 1993 I've only broken down definitively once (a long time ago in Normandie when a broken chain took away a chunk of engine casing). And I only couldn't ride once when I had to take evasive action to avoid hitting a car head-on in the Pyrenees on a narrow bit of tarmac – he was right over on my side of the road and I had nowhere to go. Cue a deluge of emails starting: I remember in ... fortunately I don't...

Unfortunately, that record took a bit of a hit on the second day of my last trip before the summer break when I was following an esteemed client up a relatively steep slope. He laid the bike down and I stopped to avoid running him over. Normally this wouldn't have been a problem – except I was on my Yamaha with the Rekluse clutch. The bike started free-wheeling backwards, I grabbed the front brake, the front wheel started to slide, the bike continued to roll backwards, I fell over, somehow managing to catch my



middle finger between the brake lever and the handlebars. 'Ooh' I thought, 'my finger's hurting much more than it should'. Taking my glove off the reason for the pain was immediately obvious. A finger was at an improbable angle with the bone sticking out.

Happily, my guide Seb had come back to see why esteemed client hadn't arrived at the top of the climb. As he walked down to his bike I shouted up at him, 'I think you're going to need to ride my bike up as well...' He thought I was joking til I waved my finger at him. Seb bandaged my finger, I tried not to look and there followed a long walk up to a gravel track where I was able to mount the bike again and ride to the hospital. No van for me – the show



must go on and there were a load more esteemed clients waiting for fuel at the lunch stop...

A quick halt at the hotel to change gingerly out of my riding clothes and then a short walk to the hospital saw me arrive at casualty at 2pm precisely. The staff were just finishing their lunch break and didn't seem very interested in a bloke with a small bandage on the end of his finger. Once I'd announced that I thought it was an open fracture things speeded up a little, x-rays were done and a surgeon dropped by. I was given a choice of a general aesthetic and an overnight stay or a local that would have me walking out the front door directly after the operation.

With 'the show must go on' mantra ringing in my ears I plumped for the latter option and just two hours after checking in I was on my way back to the hotel. We pay outrageous amounts of social security in France, many more times than in the UK for example, but just occasionally it seems worth the money. Six weeks later the pin is out, the finger's working again and I'm hoping very much to hang on to my finger nail...

GOODBYE WR, HELLO X-TRAINER

Things however haven't been all bad since I last wrote. The first bit of good news was that I managed to sell my Yamaha WR450 – the only dirt bike I've bought in the last 30 years that I haven't run a trip with. Don't get me wrong, in certain circumstances it's an amazing machine but just a bit too much for most of the riding I do. It's not an easy bike to sell either. If I was living in Australia – where it outsells every other model of motorcycle – I'm sure I would have off-loaded it with ease, but here in France it's not a popular model, so I was delighted to lose only €200 on the deal.

I was even more delighted when I picked up my brand-new Beta X-dresser 300 just a few days later



and went for an afternoon spin. As a riding experience it couldn't be more different from the big 450 – the major difference being I felt like I was riding it rather than the other way around. It's obviously early days yet but first impressions are that ergonomically it fits my slightly less than average dimensions to a T and feels surprisingly civilised. I was worried after so long on four-strokes that the two-stroke motor would feel rough and crude, but it's smooth and beautifully torqued. I rode straight to the steepest hill within half a fuel tank's range of the house and was amazed how easily the Beta went up it. I then had another go in a higher gear but the same speed and it grunted up there with no signs of bogging down.

I did however manage to fall off the thing a couple of times – something I was very much trying to avoid with my still bandaged finger. It could be that I wasn't used to riding on such a light bike – boy is it light – and didn't put enough weight over the front end, which washed out both times. It could be that I fell because it has been so dry here that the top soil has turned into a



thin layer of ball bearings. Or it could be that the fork isn't up to much... It's probably a combination of all three but as soon as I got back to the workshop I was pulling off the front end to start the first stage of fitting the Showa fork off a Honda CRF250.

NOT EASY AT ALL

This first stage entails removing the bottom yoke and giving it to your friendly local mechanic who puts it into a press to remove the stem which he then pops into a bottom yoke off a KTM EXC. It's supposed to be the easy bit. Except when my friendly local mechanic rang me I could tell just by the way he said hello that it wasn't proving to be easy at all. As it turned out it was proving to be impossible – for him at least. So Beta and KTM yokes and stems have gone off to the bloke who provided the fitting kit in the first place. He sounded very confident on the phone so I'm keeping my fingers crossed. I really loved my short ride on the Beta and am very much looking forward to using it when the trips start again in September. But I'd really much rather ride it with that reassuringly goldy looking Japanese fork... 🍷



ROAD BOOK ENDURO TOURS IN FRANCE DATES FOR 2019

27/28/29 MARCH	DORDOGNE
15/16/17 MAY	CANTAL
12/13/14 JUNE	LOZERIEN BIS
19/20/21 JUNE	PYRENEES
4/5/6 SEPT	CANTAL
18/19/20 SEPT	PYRENEES
23/24/25 OCT	TREFLE DU MORVAN
6/7/8 NOV	DORDOGNE
20/21/22 NOV	NORMANDIE



All trips are priced at £560 (payable to ABTA bonded and ATOL protected UK travel agency S&N Pickford). Price includes 3 days riding, 2 nights half-board accommodation, loan of road book and road book reader, support vehicle and driver, an opener and sweeper and a classy T-shirt. Please don't hesitate to contact us if you would like any further information.

Chris Evans, Sport Adventure,
15 Faye, 71550 Cussy en Morvan, France
Tel: 0033 662 487190
chris.evans@sport-adventure.com
www.sport-adventure.com



ALPINESTARS' SUPERTECH S-M10

'Supertech S-M10' – there's a clue there in the name. The '10' bit – just as with Alpinestars' Tech 10 boot, that number denotes top of the range. Alpinestars are entering the dirt bike helmet market at the top, with an all bells and whistles offering that's set to go head-to-head (of course) with the current market benchmarks such as the Bell Moto 9 Flex, Shoei VFX-W and Arai MX-V.

Words: Jon Bentman **Images:** Olivier de Vault/Alpinestars

Getting to this point hasn't been an overnight process. At the launch of the Supertech S-M10 at Milestone MX Park in California, Jeremy Appleton, head of Alpinestars' communications, explained the S-M10 is the result of a five-year development and testing process undertaken by their helmet specialists. Set against Alpinestars' goal to continually pioneer in moto-safety, it does then come with every conceivable top-drawer protection facet on the market today, plus a few more.

SO WHAT IS THE TECH?

THREE-LAYER SHELL

Carbon features, as you'd imagine. So we have a high-density carbon outer layer, then a unidirectional carbon composite layer and finally an aramid fibre layer. So it's super-strong, so strong it exceeds regulation standards by 41% for direct impacts and 48% for rotational acceleration—oblique impacts. There are four shell sizes too, so the helmet is always optimal for your head size.

And with carbon being a light material this all makes for a comparatively light shell – 1260 grams for a medium helmet. ▷



**VISOR RELEASE SYSTEM**

Another unique feature! Got to hand it to Alpinestars, the visor (peak) fitting is super-slick in the way it's integrated into the helmet and how the fitting points are flush fitting. So the exterior of the helmet is entirely flush with no possible snag points. But as well the visor retention system has been engineered to release once a certain load is exceeded, so as to avoid the possibility of potentially dangerous leveraging or rotation of the rider's head.

COLLARBONE PROTECTION

The bottom profile of the helmet is sculpted to clear the rider's collarbone while the section of the base pad immediately above this area is made of a flexible compound rubber section to further lessen the impact of any likely connection between helmet and collarbone in a crash. Further protection is afforded by the use of polypropylene on the inner chin bar, which allows a degree of lateral protection.

POST-CRASH SAFETY

In the event you do go for a big one, the S-M10 comes with ERS (so many acronyms!) – Emergency Release

**FOUR SECTION EPS LINER**

EPS – that's expanded polystyrene – is that energy absorption layer that we know is so important in reducing the forces that'll reach your head in a crash. In this instance Alpinestars have specified four densities of the EPS to suit the different zones around the helmet.

MIPS

MIPS – here we go again, that's Multi-Directional Impact Protection System – is fairly well known to us as it exists in competitors' top end helmets such as from Bell and 6D. Essentially it's a slip layer between the comfort lining and the

EPS, which allows the helmet to rotate very slightly on the head in an impact, thus reducing the acceleration stresses which lead to common brain injuries such as concussion. As a byproduct, Alpinestars have also found the system makes for a quieter helmet for the rider.

A-HEAD

Here Alpinestars have a totally unique feature. A-Head allows for micro-adjustment of the height and angle of the helmet on your head. Through an adjustable pad on the inner shell it's possible to raise or lower and to tilt the helmet according to the rider's preference.





System – which we should know allows the cheek pads to be removed by medical staff prior to removing the helmet. But to help further, the S-M10 is also 'Eject' compliant, allowing the Eject inflatable emergency removal system to be deployed – which is critical in spinal injury situations.

EXTREME COMFORT

Using heat mapping tests Alpinestars have worked hard on the ventilation system to optimize the flow of (hopefully) cooling air around the rider's head through the provision of multiple intake and exhaust ducts (guarded by wire gauze). This combined with a cool-max interior liner, plus channels in which to integrate your hydration system (and even a communications system) makes for optimal rider comfort. Oh, and they've even given the humble

strap a thought or two, at 26mm wide (an inch in old money) it's that little bit wider than most, so again more comfortable.

CRASH TEST DUMMY

SO, THAT'S THE TECH. WHAT ABOUT THE WEARING?

As an enduro and rally rider I have to say Milestone is not my bag and with the prospect of Ryan Villopoto and Broc Tickle for (fast) company it was no place for an old tree-dodger to plot about. Fortunately Alpinestars listened to my pleas and instead I enjoyed a brilliant four-hour trail ride in the Mojave high desert (like 4000ft high) near Lake Arrowhead, San Bernadino. My guide was Ricardo Barbosa, boss of 3 Brothers Racing (USA's top distributor of KTM's) and this is kind of his backyard, a place he's come to for decades. And given the

quality of trails, I'd love it as my backyard too.

And boy was it hot up there, about 100°F (38°C), and with the altitude and possibly a little jet lag, it was a little uncomfortable for a sea-level living Brit. Fortunately the heat at least demonstrated the S-M10's excellent ventilation features which drive air through the mouth piece and via the inlets around the visor (peak) over the rider's scalp. Although I didn't use them for this trip I could appreciate that Alpinestars have also integrated channels within the liner and chin bar to take the tubes of a hydration system – a neat detail.

Unusual to this market sector, the visor (peak) is fixed in the one position, so there's no scope for personalization, but the angle and the length of the visor is well set so for 99% of users



so there should be solid satisfaction on the account. The aperture is good for any size of goggle (I wore Oakley Airbrakes, one of the biggest frames on the market) while still leaving space for airflow to the face. Despite the generous aperture, a relatively tall bridge across the chin bar meant my nose did not go unprotected from Ricardo's roost (when I could hang onto him). I liked that the nose protection is firmly molded too, so you don't accidentally displace it as you can on some helmets when settling your goggles. The lining is soft and for those who like audio aids to their riding the good news is that there's even a significant recess to allow the comfortable placement of speakers (and microphone).

Perhaps uniquely at this launch, I managed to properly impact test the helmet, when I twice washed the front





out in deep sand. Each time I made a neat pivot over the bars and on the first occasion I managed to even clout something hard (making a fair 'clang'). Now this is not exactly the ultimate test, but I'm happy to say the helmet stayed nicely in position and although there was some ringing in my ears from that first one, there was no undue damage to me or the helmet (save for a few scuffs on the latter).

After four hours I was still comfortable in the helmet – an aspect trail, rally and enduro riders will value. My photographer Olivier had fallen in love with his S-M10 too, and when Ricardo took a brief try in one (over his usual Shoei VFX-W) he was immediately impressed by the lightness and comfort.

And you know, if RV is happy to wear one – and he was seriously smoking it around Milestone on his Yamaha YZ-F – who am I to argue?

HEAD-TO-TOE

So there we have it, one extremely well-designed crash helmet – stylish too. And as said at the beginning of this story, it's coming at the top end of the market, joining the other super dirt helmets in the uppermost price range. Pricing is \$579/€649 for the solid colours, and \$649/€699 for the three 'Meta' colour options.

And with the Supertech S-M10, Alpinestars have completed what is now a head-to-toe pledge of support and protection for the dirt rider. From starting out as a boot manufacturer 55 years ago – and I was one kid who valued his Roger De Coster / Victory boots as schoolboy scrambler – you could argue Alpinestars have been very successful in their diversification. Only it's more a case of intensification, taking their ethos of best protection to every aspect of moto life. And with each step, it's always a quality outcome... 🍷



FIVE MINUTES WITH GABRIELE MAZZAROLO OWNER AND PRESIDENT OF ALPINESTARS

At last Alpinestars have a motorcycle helmet. A significant moment in time?

It's a new start, but one we started many years ago. As a company we have started many new projects over the years, with motocross boots in 1965, jumping into auto racing in 2002, and other categories now, but each with dedicated product development centres. So with five years in development I'm used to seeing and being a part of this product for a long time, so it feels like a normal product for us to have.

Was the helmet part of a desire to go head-to-toe in motocross apparel?

No, we only make products where we feel we can bring advancement to that category, and on that basis the helmet was a natural development for us. And that product is only ready after putting together a team and all the assets we needed to bring to the user a product that we feel is an advancement, not just another product.

So you'd say you're not led by the need to create specific product lines?

That's right, at Alpinestars we always want to make something that really works. Our designs come out of true performance, working with racers. For instance in the development of our motocross clothing



we've been experimenting with more stretchable materials for a long time, but we had to get to a point where the performance would satisfy riders like Jeffrey Herlings.

The new textiles you're using there are a significant breakthrough from the usual nylon pants for instance. This has come from your cycling involvement?

Our experience in other sports (such as cycling) has helped, but product development is really a dedicated process. Alpinestars is modeled on being a group of companies that are each truly dedicated to

their own specific category. So even within motorcycling, we have a motocross team, a road race team, etc. But certainly there is crossover, so the neck brace definitely benefitted from our starting in 1999 with the airbag. We've made a lot of studies since that time in the cause of injuries, and that research has helped in the development of the technologies behind the air bag, neck brace and body protection.

We understand you're working on bringing the airbag into the off-road arena, even motocross, probably very soon.

The goal when we started to make motorcycle apparel was to make motorcycling as close as possible to being as safe and comfortable as being in a car. So with the airbag, yes eventually we will bring the airbag into off-road, but only when it is ready. For us, our product development is always 100% performance based, then comes the styling, the graphics and so on, those are always the last things we put on our products – it's always 100% based on performance.

What about Gabriele Mazzarolo? What do you get out of Alpinestars?

I was a child when my father was making the first Alpinestars motocross boots – he wasn't a great fan of motocross, but he saw the opportunity of making a better boot and that boot became so popular with the racers of the time. So being around that environment I was born with a crazy passion for motorcycles and cars. And so I've grown up with the company, taking over ownership in 1993, and so I share the passion with the company, it's a perfect combination.



Scotts Performance Steering Stabilizer Sub Mount Option (Stabilizer Under Bars)

RRP: Price for Husky FE350: US \$489.95

Contact: www.scottsonline.com

WHAT IS A STEERING STABILIZER (DAMPER)?

The Scotts Steering Stabilizer (Damper) is a hydraulic damper that is fitted to your motorcycle at the centre of the steering head and is attached to the frame by way of a collar and stem which locks into the control arm of the damper. The damper uses a hydraulic oil filled chamber to dampen any sudden sweep of the handlebars away from centre until it reaches the end of the steering sweep where it becomes free as it returns to centre. There is no damping on the return to centre.

The main purpose of the damper is to reduce headshake at speed, especially in off-road bikes and to reduce the effects of a sudden impact and aggressive hits to the front wheel which try and pull the bike out of line.

WHY I CHOOSE SCOTTS PERFORMANCE?

Scotts Performance started in 1987 and has become synonymous with quality and experience. Years of producing high quality hydraulic stabilizers and their ability to consistently maintain very high levels of tolerances have made them the gold standard when choosing a steering damper. I have used them for over two decades and the build quality has always been excellent. These have all been subject to a few heavy crashes, been pelted with roost and rocks, have faced all types of weather conditions and besides a broken knob here or there (the ring around the low-speed adjuster mostly), or some cosmetic wear and tear, they have continued to operate flawlessly.

An annual oil change is recommended but, in most cases, not necessary, or not done by most owners. Longevity is a given and these dampers last.

OPTIONS

Scotts offer two mounting options, either on the bars or SUB mounted (Stabilizer Under Bars) that allows more room for GPS and other accessories. It also removes the risk of face planting into the on-the-bar option in a crash (that's something I learnt from personal experience many years ago). An added benefit to tall riders is the SUB mount also raises the bars by between 11-25 mm.

FITMENT AND ADJUSTMENT

Each Scotts damper comes designed specifically for your machine. Depending on the type of damper you've chosen there will be a variation to the fitting kit needed to mount the damper to your motorcycle. This means that you can swap the damper from one bike to another without having to purchase a second damper, simply by purchasing a mounting kit for the new bike.

Installing the new damper should typically take around 1-2 hours and a top-tip is to have help. Given the need to mount the collar to the frame you will need to remove the triple clamps and without help this can be tricky. If you don't have anyone to help then we suggest using a tie down to secure the front end and stop it from dropping out of the steering stem when you remove the triple clamps. In the majority of cases the dampers will need little, if any adjustment as delivered.



**ADJUSTABILITY AND FUNCTIONALITY**

The Scotts dampers offer three separate and isolated highly adjustable tuning features that is unique to Scotts. These allow high speed, low speed and sweep adjustments to be made to the damper to suit rider preference and riding conditions:

1. LOW-SPEED DAMPING ADJUSTER:

Low speed adjustment can be adjusted on the fly via the left-hand dial on the face of the damper. This controls the tension you feel when turning the bars. The hydraulic fluid acts in a similar fashion to the oil and spring in your forks. When the dial on the low speed damping is backed out all the way (anti-clockwise) you will feel very little resistance at all on the bars, however, even with the high-speed dampening dialled out the bike will feel more stable – even if you can't feel the effect on the handlebars. As you progressively dial-in the low speed damping (clockwise) the resistance will become more pronounced as your turn the bars away from centre and will free up on full sweep as it returns to centre.

Typical low-speed adjustments: for loose sand and mud, a higher setting (clockwise), for tighter woods and turns, less low-speed damping is preferred.

2. HIGH-SPEED DAMPING ADJUSTER:

This is the right-hand dial on the face under the black cap – it's a flat screw – unless you purchase the high-speed dial accessory from Scotts to allow on-the-go adjustment.

The high-speed circuit absorbs the sharp unexpected hits to the front wheel that try and pull it out of line. The independent high-speed chamber is in my opinion the one of the best features of the Scotts damper. The high-speed adjustments are not measured in clicks and can be pretty sensitive and should be adjusted at 1/8th turn at a time. Not dialling in enough high-speed dampening will lessen one of the best benefits of this damper but you have to be careful to not dial in too much either or it will limit steering response time. Conversely, Scotts warn NOT to adjust the high-speed damping more than three full turns from the full stiff position either. I have added the high-speed dial



(accessory) to my damper which replaces the screw-adjust and have found this helpful in keeping the damper dialled-in to my liking and can highly recommend this as part of your purchase, especially if you are a skilled rider.

3. SWEEP ADJUSTER AND RETURN TO CENTRE:

The sweep adjuster (located on each the side of the damper) adjusts the amount of steering sweep that will be affected by the damper before becoming free. You can control the sweep by making quarter point turns on the adjuster to select where the damper will stop damping and becomes free at the end of the sweep. The 'no-dampening return to centre' feature is a key component that sets the Scotts apart from its competitors. The settings range from 34 degrees (off-road) to full 90 degrees (on-road). I set my sweep at either the recommended 44° for off-road use or at 34° in certain circumstances but otherwise I leave this adjustment alone. Follow the manual for more details.

THE BENEFITS

The number of mainly off-road bikes I have ridden over the years with and without a Scotts Steering Stabilizer has made me realise that although the damper will have a greater effect on a bike prone to headshake it does improve overall stability on any bike. The safety net that it provides from those unexpected deflections off roots and rocks has saved my bacon more times than I care to remember. Yes, at around \$450 it's a big investment but, given its longevity, ability to be transferred (for a relatively small cost for the fitting kit) from one bike to another then it could be considered as a primary safety feature for your bike. It also has, I've found, other benefits such as saving you from arm pump and lowering fatigue on longer hard-pack rides. And for us over-50s who still like to 'push it' a little, even when our strength is waning, I promise that the health preservation features these units provide will grow in value more and more each year.

Warren Malschinger



SUZUKI

LONG TERMER

PART TWO

V-STROM 650XT

With a plan to compete in the adventure class at the Rallye du Maroc in October, it's been workshop time for the Suzuki V-Strom XT as JB strengthens its defences...

Words & Images: JB

Time flies. As I write this I have just six weeks to the start of the Trail Desert Challenge, so I've got to keep up the pace on preparations for the Suzuki V-Strom 650XT. Good news is that with this bike being so popular, all the parts I need are available off the shelf. Which leaves just the matter of testing, to make sure it all works and will stay together – and of course getting in some practice (bike time) for myself.

So, in the name of being competition ready here's what I've fitted so far.

SW-MOTECH BASH PLATE

With an under-slung exhaust, no lower frame rails and the oil filter hanging right

THE STORY SO FAR

JB has an entry in the adventure category of the Ralle du Maroc for this October – called the www.traildesertchallenge.com (TDA) if you'd like to check it out. Having selected a Suzuki V-Strom 650XT as his ride, in the weeks before the competition he's going to be working on bike setup – added adventure protection needed – and making all the necessary plans. Then come the end of September it'll be a case of bike rides and ferry rides to get to Morocco. Then slip-on the event's competition sticker kit, and compete. Then reverse to return home again, hopefully all within two weeks.





out the front of the motor, a decent bash (sump) plate is right on the top of the list of must haves.

The SW-Motech engine guard does the job handsomely. Fitting is a matter of removing the under-engine plastic cowl (a purely aesthetic item) then fitting the two under engine brackets supplied by SW-Motech (one of which requires temporary removal of the sidestand – so I lent the bike against a wall for this part, a paddock stand would have been a better idea) and two brackets that angle off the front of the engine. In all there are eight fasteners for the guard and as always with these things the best modus is to fit everything up loose until you have the plate properly located then tighten into place. I was super-careful on this, using my Teng Tools torque wrench and some thread lock to make sure everything was just right. And I was



glad I did, first ride off road I skidded over an unexpected rock step and belted the guard – and all was just fine.

SW-MOTECH CRASHBARS

These are a sturdy item for sure. I hope I never need them, but there again I hope they do their job well if I do, as there's a weight penalty with all this protection, so we want that weight to bring something of a reward.

Again these are a doddle to fit, with the main fixing points being connected to the engine-frame bolts on either side of the V-Strom's alloy beam frame. SW-Motech supply longer bolts for this job and the only trick I could see was to make sure you didn't remove all the bolts at one time (you could imagine the engine falling on the floor!). Again I set up each side loosely and connected the joining bar at the front before torqueing it all down. A very simple job.

SW-MOTECH GEAR LEVER

The standard gear lever looks like an obvious victim in a fall, so swapping this out for one with a folding-end was essential. As with all this SW-Motech kit, this is a nicely made component and I like that the length is adjustable (handy when you're a size 12 boot, like me). I only wish these guys made a folding brake lever too. I can't find one anywhere, so it looks like I'll just have to take my chances there.

SW-MOTECH EVO FOOTRESTS

There's no going anywhere off-road on the standard rubber-top footrests. Again SW-Motech have the answer with these Evo pegs which offer a serrated base peg plus a removable rubber top for comfortable road riding. They're not as aggressive as normal enduro pegs, but they suit the cross-over nature of the V-Strom perfectly.

Even more useful is that these are extremely adjustable for height, for forward and back position as well as





JB'S TOP FIVE OBSERVATIONS

WORKSHOP TIME

1 DEFINITELY WORK SLOW AND CAREFULLY, when bolting-on an assembly the best policy is to put it together loose to start with, leaving room to wiggle things into place, only tighten up when everything is right and there's no undue stress on any one fastener.

2 A GOOD TORQUE WRENCH IS INVALUABLE; where a supplier supplies torque settings, use them! Liquid thread lock is peace of mind, but apply only as the manufacturer suggests, typically one drop is enough, don't dip or slather the thread in the stuff!

3 INSTRUCTIONS ARE A NIGHTMARE, probably as much for the author as the reader. Even the easiest procedure can read super-complicated, so don't get fazed. Take the assembly and dry assemble it before putting it on the bike – you'll find things go together easier than you think and most probably how you put it together instinctively is exactly as the instructions have been trying to tell you...

4 EVERYTHING HAS ITS PRICE. And we don't mean money. You add protection – you add weight. There's no best tyre – a knobbly will be worse than the OEM on the road, but great off-road, and it won't last as long. Add a kickstand footplate and the bike won't fall over in the dirt, but the footplate will stick out and maybe snag your boot...

5 IN EVERY WORKSHOP SESSION YOU WILL HIT A WALL. Something won't fit or won't come undone. Do not fight it, try not to get frustrated. Typically there is a solution, you're just missing a vital clue. So leave it, have a cup of tea or a beer, then come back and look at it again. Still no luck – call a friend. Just don't go at with the hammer.



angle (36 possible positions). And this has brought a big reward, for in picking the lowest setting I now have something like 15mm extra legroom. Which makes standing (as well as sitting) much more comfortable. It also automatically brings the brake and gear levers up into a better position for standing riding with motocross boots (in fact I have to readjust the gear lever back down as it's now too high!).

Proper enduro guys will be shocked at just how heavy these pegs are (no pain no gain) but the weight is low and hey, this is adventure!

R&G RADIATOR GUARD

A quick look under the fairing revealed a fairly handsome radiator with no protection. You can't go riding gravel like that. The guard from R&G is a neat super-easy to fit grill. Probably went on in five minutes flat, the trickiest bit being feeding the mini cable ties into place. It's peace of mind having that guard there.

BARKBUSTERS HAND GUARDS

I had Barkbusters on the Husky TE650 I rode in Australia in 2016 and

they really impressed me with the build quality and the fit, so I was keen to spec them again for this job.

But I need to back-up a bit here. First off, I'm retaining the stock bars. I looked to replace them, but given the limitation on the control cable lengths there was little wriggle room. As well, finding off-road bars with enough straight length to accommodate all the controls and switches was proving difficult. And finally, having tried riding the V-Strom with the bars rotated forward I was getting a fairly decent ride position in any case – and they look pretty decent quality. So, I've decided – leave as is!

That's also put the Barkbusters in pole position as choice of hand guard as these ones are custom made for the V-Strom so all the fixings properly clear all the brake lines, banjos, clamps etc. It's a close-fit, but everything fits sweetly and I'm much happier knowing the levers and controls are protected by that aluminium bar – again when you've got the best part of 230 kilos driving into the ground components live levers and brake reservoirs need good protection.

R&G KICKSTAND SHOE

Yep, the V-Strom needed this. There's no centrestand (it's an optional extra – which I'd probably have for long ▶



WATCH THE VIDEO



**THANKS TO**

Suzuki GB www.bikes.suzuki.co.uk
Motohaus for SW-Motech

www.sw-motech.com

R&G (for R&G and Barkbuster parts)

www.rg-racing.com

Metzeler for the Karoo Streets

www.metzeler.com

term ownership) and the kickstand has a small foot that would be decidedly marginal in soft terrain. The shoe by R&G effectively doubles the footprint of the kickstand so hopefully we should be okay in anything up to (but not including) fesh-fesh!

METZELER KAROO STREETS

Now tyres are an area of much debate. My choice here has been partly determined by the need (want?) to ride to and from Morocco and to compete in the event all on the one set of tyres. With probably 6000km to cover that's on the very limit of what a set of regular dirt-biased adventure tyres can do. Note here that I also want decent street performance, I don't like the idea of sliding down wet tarmac because a distance-oriented tyre lacked grip at a crucial moment.

So I've come up with these – Metzeler Karoo Streets. I've ridden a lot on Karoo 3s, the pukka off-road adventure tyres, which are great, but I'm not sure they'll last the distance, whereas this lower-knob profile version of the same tyre offers that extra mileage – albeit with the trade-off of less aggressive knobs for the off-road (yeah, avoid mud).

I'm not absolutely certain they're the right choice, so I'm going to test them as much as I can in the UK before committing to them for the event. It might just be, that with the V-Strom being a 650, not a power-crazy 1200, that it could do the whole tour on Karoo 3s (anybody got experience of this?), which of course would be my first choice. But hey, these Streets are proving great so far. They're much quieter on the tar seal, and were very secure in the wet, and riding hard pack dry trails they were pretty impressive (even on road pressures). In all, they're a great compromise for the Adventure bike rider who only dabbles occasionally off-road. But will they do the job I want?

WHAT'S NEXT?

Workshop time is over – it's trail time. There's been just the one trail ride so far, just an hour or so on said hard pack trails, and all was good. A little fine-tuning might be in order. I have some SW-Motech 15mm bar risers (not too tall) and if the control cables and hoses permit I think I'll try these on the next ride to see if this optimizes comfort for standing. And having rolled the bars a little too far forward I think I can bring these bar a smidge at the same time.

I've entered a preparatory competition, too. The Adventure Cannonball Salisbury Weekender (here in the UK), which in mid-August should give me plenty of time on trails, while practicing roadbook reading at the same time. That should be a great shakedown. And being a camping weekend it should be a great social too, offering time to meet and learn from other adventure riders.

Yep, gotta stay on the gas. Morocco and the Trail Desert Challenge is fast approaching! 🇲🇦



JB'S MOROCCO KIT

Ahh, yes, that tricky little issue of personal riding kit. The intention here was to pick budget kit, keep the spend low. The problem is you suffer for performance when you take that avenue. And with an Autumnal road ride from the UK to Morocco to undertake, followed by probably very warm days at the rally, then I need maximum versatility from my kit – and I struggled to find that at a lower price. So here's what's been selected so far...

SCOTT Dualraid DP jacket and pants

Confession here – this came from RUST's existing kit locker! I actually had a set of budget kit sent to me, but the weight and lack of ventilation meant it was only suitable for the ride down, and would have been too hot for the rally itself, as good as it was for the price point. So while looking for an alternative, Warren confessed to having this brand new kit from Scott waiting to be used (he's out of action at the moment with a shoulder reconstruction).

No wonder he was hiding it, this kit is perfect for this job as it combines maximum versatility with the minimum of weight and bulk. It's not cheap – in the UK the jacket is £400, the pants £280 – but that's still a peg or two down from the usual high-end adventure offerings.

I like the lack of weight, the jacket weighing 2.2kg and the pants just 1.4kg. Yet there's

adequate options with the zip-in linings to maintain decent warmth if needed. If it gets brutal I can always slip my ultra lightweight Alpinestars Hurricane jacket and pants over the top.

There's decent protection given the 500D (dernier) Polyamide fabric used, while airflow can be managed very efficiently using a combination of zippered vents and flaps held by magnets. I rode in this kit on a UK-hot sunny day (about 26°C) and it worked a treat. For Morocco what I might do is strip out the existing body armour and wear underneath something like a Forcefield armoured undershirt, just to maximize the protection should the terrain turn extreme.

In all this is impressively spec'd kit and definitely a first-choice for my preferred kind of riding (80/20 dirt/road).

Bell MX-9 Adventure MIPS-equipped

This is actually a well-priced helmet, selling for under £200 in the UK. Point being, it's polycarbonate construction not fiberglass or carbon. So it's a bit heavier, but that aside the spec is all very good. I like that its MIPS-equipped, like my Moto 9, and I like that the lining can be removed and washed. And there are ready-made recesses for speakers (for communications). The aperture comfortably accommodates my Scott Prospects, so after road riding down using the visor, I can quickly convert the helmet to full off-road with goggles. So far, after a three-hour first ride I can report very good comfort and it's pretty quiet too. And like the Scott suit, it looks smart.

Boots/gloves

I'm still working on my options here. We'll sort these by the next installment.



NEXT ISSUE

COMING YOUR WAY IN RUST #39:

In conversation with...

CHRIS BIRCH

Family before fame

**STILLWELL'S SUSPENSION
SMARTS**

Tuning for terrain

HUSKY FE350

Less haste more speed

AND MUCH MUCH MORE



Contacts

RUST SPORTS LTD

www.rustsports.com

Warwick House

The Grange

St. Peter Port

Guernsey

GY1 2PY

Editor: Jonathan Bentman

editor@rustsports.com

Designer: Rich Page

Commercial Manager: James Linane

james.linane@rustsports.com

Managing Director: Warren Malschinger

Contributors: Alan Stillwell (USA), Chris Evans (UK/FR)

Thanks - A huge thank you to Nigel at Club Moto in London (www.clubmotolondon.co.uk) for the loan of the two Honda CB1100s, and thanks also to Iain Baker at Honda UK for the green light on that; to Jeremy Appleton and Ashley Jung at Alpinestars for organising the US trip, to Ricardo Barbosa of 3 Bros Racing (www.3brosktm.com) for the awesome trail ride in the Mojave high desert and to Olivier de Vaulx for the great company and sweet photography; thanks also to Dan Sagar at the Fabulous Biker Boys together with Motohaus/SW-Motech for the adventure protection kit, to Harley Stephens at Holeshoot PR and Salvo Penissi at Metzeler for the Karoo Street tyres, to Michael Aylwin at Holeshoot PR (again!) and R&G for the R&G and Barkbuster kit – all great people and excellent stuff.

Copyright: RUST Sports Ltd. All rights reserved.

Reproduction of any part of RUST is prohibited without the express permission of RUST Sports Ltd.