

2018 HUSQVARNA LAUNCH

ISSUE #26

RUST



MOUNTAIN PEAKS

RUST NEW BOY TOM SAGAR TESTS THE 2018
HUSQVARNA TEi's IN BRITISH COLUMBIA, CANADA

OTHER FEATURES: SAND RAIDERS CLASSIC DAKAR EVENT &
ANDY DUKES DEPARTS FOR THE FAR EAST...

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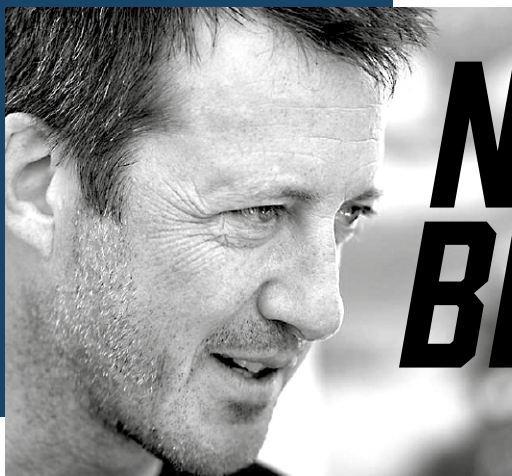
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NEW BLOOD

TO HAVE TOM SAGAR on board at RUST makes me very happy. I've always made a point in magazine bike testing to try and work with all levels of rider, so we get a balanced view. Recognising I'm something of a bottom feeder, that's typically meant working with higher beings, often national champions, many with international experience.

Tom brings that level to the RUST team. But what I like about Tom is that he's got an active inquiring mind and a very real sense of joy in the simple act of riding. Some, if not many, top racers are in it to win it. When they stop winning they stop riding. With Tom, he loves riding first and foremost – the winning flows from that. He's obviously broadly talented too, being able to foot it with the best in trials, in extreme and in enduro. And he's a little bit old school, he loves the craic, the brotherhood – happier, it would seem, to work out the back of a van with mates than out of a semi-trailer with a paid factory team. He likes it personal.

Don't ask me how we met Frenchman David Marvier. I think he found us, but we were on the hook the moment we saw a shot of his of a classic Honda

XL600LMF pushing its way through the Sahara. David has a love of the old stuff and some of the new hipster stuff too. The difference with David being that it's not about the looking, it's about the riding (*which he so beautifully captures in his photography*). In coming issues, through David's lens and words, we'll be able to better understand this retro scene (*all with a dirt bias*), because as much as the hipster movement gets knocked we can't deny their enthusiasm, their dedication – and heck, they love bikes too.

So I'm a very happy editor this issue, I've got two of the best providing the content, I've just got to make sure I don't cock it up in the translation to these pages.

Oh, and we have Andy Dukes back – or rather leaving – as he sets off on an adventure around the world on a GS. Andy's a bit like us, not an expert when it comes to the riding, far from it, but open-minded and willing to learn, which has to be the correct start point in all things.



TIME TRAVELLERS

David Marvier's tale of classic trail bikes racing through the Sahara (*starting on page 74*) is an inspiration. There's a clash of the historical periods going on, as the Sand Raiders ride through ancient desert, visiting medieval fortifications on dirt bikes from the 1980s – but for all that, and despite the whiff of re-enactment, this looks like a must-do event. And by heck, weren't trail bikes just so damn cool back then?

Image: David Marvier



I'M ON TOP OF THE WORLD, MA

We've been angling to bring Tom Sagar into the RUST fold since we started out, and we've got close, as regular readers will recall given past tests and features. But finally we dangled a carrot that Tom simply couldn't resist – a spectacular launch of Husky's latest in British Columbia, Canada. A dream location for a pretty dreamy bike. And did Tom enjoy the experience? Well, we think the smile says it all.

Image: Husqvarna

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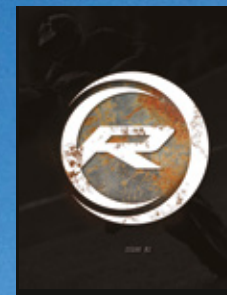
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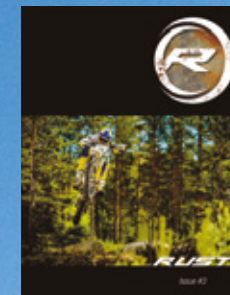
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Introduction to RUST Magazine. 2015 KTM 250EXC vs 2015 Yamaha WR250F shootout. Trail test of the Chinese made WK400 Trail and columns from Chris Evans, David Knight and Gary Freeman...



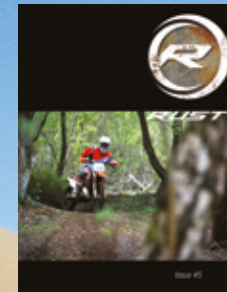
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The 2016 Beta and KTM model ranges tested. Warren visits the 2016 Motocross of Nations. Pitgirl rounds up the 2015 EWC Season, plus columns from Si Melber and Rick Kemp...



ISSUE #3
THE 2016 Husqvarna model launch. The KTM 250XC-F tested. The Suzuki V-Strom 650 and Pitgirl's analysis of the 2015 EWC Season. Columns from Chris Evans, Gary Freeman and Si Melber...



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Race test of 2015 250EXC and 2015 Husqvarna TE350 on the Grappe de Cyran. Testing the Honda CB500X Adventure. Pitgirl on beating the off-season blues and columns from JB and Gary Freeman...



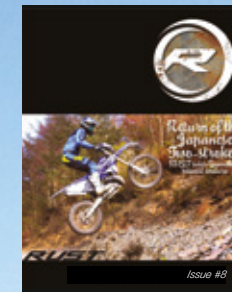
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JB's Instant Factory Set-Up – Suspension for the amateur rider. TRF main-men Mario Costa Sa and Greg Villalobos interviewed, plus columns from Rick Kemp and Si Melber...



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JB's first editorial. Interview with Jonny Walker. Dispatches – The TRF answers back. Profile of Patsy Quick, boss of Desert Rose Racing. RUST long-termers Pt1. Tested – Products for the Honda CRF250L. Gary Freeman column



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Interview with David Knight OBE. What happened to the KTM 690 Adventure? Dispatches – In praise of the Honda CRF250L. The Michelin Anakee Wild adventure tyre. Chris Evans...



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Yamaha's 'new' WR250 tested, the Royal Enfield Himalayan adventure bike, Iron Men – 3000 miles off-road on Harleys! The Adventure Motorcycling Handbook – 7th Edition.



ISSUE #9
Duel – Two riders, two KTMs, one title, Ivan Cervantes and Matt Phillips battle it out. The Yamaha IT490, 40 years on. Tested – Kit reviewed by Josh Snowden...



ISSUE #10
700KM on a KTM450EXC. Looking for Mexico with Thomas Wielecki. Tested – Warren and JB on the latest kit, plus a column by Chris Evans...



ISSUE #11
2017 KTM model range tested. EnduroGP the new face of World Enduro by Pitgirl. Gary Freeman with more MX insight...



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Heritage – The BMW R nineT tested. Dispatches – Too light, too fast, too good looking? Travelling across the Alentejo region of Portugal on a KTM 450EXC...

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SWM returns! 10 reasons why you should buy a SuperTénéré. RUST do the Welsh – Part 1. Scott Prospect goggles, Chris Evans column and the first part of the Honda TLR project...



ISSUE #14
Yamaha WR450F finally tamed. SWM RS650R ridden and rated. RUST do the Welsh – Part 2. Knighter column - finally. July Behl adventure column. Alpinestars SX-1 knee guards...



ISSUE #15
2016 EnduroGP Round-Up. RUST did the Welsh! Finally... 2000km on the Road of Bones, Honda TLR 250 Project – Part 2, Gallery and Dispatches...



ISSUE #16
BMW R nineT Scrambler, Touratech's Adventure Country Tracks, Tom Sagar Profile, plus new models from Honda, KTM and Suzuki plus Galleries...



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ISSUE #18
2016 EICMA show from Milan, all the new models previewed, the Athens/Gibraltar Rally, A brief history of Acerbis and first report from Andy Dukes as he prepares for his RTW trip in 2017...



ISSUE #19
2017 Dakar race preview, the Wieleckis continue their search for America, Andy Dukes searches for the 'Perfect RTW Bike' and JB finds more nasty surprises on the Project TLR...



ISSUE #20
Part 2 of the 2017 Dakar preview, Part two of the Wieleckis US Odyssey, Andy Dukes is going solo RTW, Poole MCs Andy Sutton offers sage advice and Chris Evans is Dakar bound...



ISSUE #21
Exclusive first ride of Touratech's BMW R1200GS Rambler!!! 3 Plucky Brits tackle the Red Bull Sea to Sky, Warren M. takes on his first road book rally, and we test 100% goggles and the 6D ATR-1 helmet...



ISSUE #22
Is the new Sherco 300 SEF-R clubman friendly? RUST gets and exclusive ride on the Royal Enfield Himalayan, Andy Dukes gets some last-minute RTW tips, and we pick our fave clothing to keep us warm in winter...



ISSUE #23
Hawkstone Park, the first MX of the year, JB and Warren M. do round 1 of the R3 Rally Raid Series, the long term Husky TE300 and the WR 250F updated, products tested and part one of Best Western as six trail-mad Kiwis follow the Trans Am trail...



ISSUE #24
Forza Italia, is the Italian Enduro series the best in the world? We ride the new Fantic 250E Casa 4T. Best Western Part the six Kiwis continue their trip out West... RUST Products, a selection of trick parts, tried tested and rated...



ISSUE #25
We ride the new Gas Gas EC/EX 300 from the newly resurrected company. Portuguese trail heaven with Horizons Unlimited and updates on Chris Evans' WR250F and JB's now up-and-running Honda TLR250 trialler...

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2018 HUSQVARNA TE250/300i

RUST TECH

iHUSKY

Forks

KTM: WP Xplor 48mm USD
Husky: WP Xplor 48mm USD
(with additional tool-less
preload adjustment)

Note: the Husky forks get the same new outer fork tubes as the KTM for improved flex characteristics and less stiction.

Airbox

KTM: new airbox with sensor for FI, in aluminium subframe
Husky: own design (as was in 2017) housed in composite carbon fibre subframe, again with sensor for FI

Brakes

KTM: Brembo
Husky: Magura

Note: new manufacturer but same basic design: twin piston front caliper on 260mm disc, single-piston rear caliper on 220mm disc

WE KNOW THE score – fuel-injected two-strokes, as we learned in the RUST special on the 2018 KTMs. EMS – check. Dell’Orto 39mm throttle body – check. Oil tank and oil pump – check. It would be a shock if these were different to the KTM TPI models. So, here are the defining differences between the 2018 KTM EXC TPIs and 2018 Husqvarna TEis...



2018 HUSQVARNA TE250/300i

RUST TECH

Shock
KTM: WP PDS
Husky: WP DCC
(linkage)

Fuel Tank
KTM: 9-litres
Husky: 9.25-litres

Handlebars
KTM: Neken
Husky: Pro Taper

Triple Clamps
KTM: Forged,
22mm offset
Husky: CNC milled,
22mm offset

Tyres
KTM: Maxxis
Husky: Metzeler



2018 Husqvarna TE250i & TE300i World Launch

RUST TESTED

AIN'T NO MOUNTAIN HIGH ENOUGH



Tom Sagar – former European & British Enduro Champion – had never been to a world press launch and never tested bikes as a journalist, but as baptisms go it doesn't get much better than jetting over to British Columbia, Canada to test the new 2018 fuel-injected two-stroke Husqvarnas. Lucky Tom!

Words: Tom Sagar **Images:** Husqvarna

IT'S FAIR TO say that that Husqvarna have really pushed the boat out with the new 2018 models and to bring the press to one of the most stunning places in the world you could kind of guess this thing – fuel-injection – must be good. Yeah, Husqvarna really wanted to concentrate on the benefits of fuel injection at altitude, hence bringing us to a ski resort.

What can I say about the last few days? Husqvarna really found us the ultimate play ground, a full on ski resort with every kind of terrain possible and with a round of the Canadian cross country championship races being held there only three weeks previous it gave us chance to try the bikes in real conditions.



Top left: Fuel in the left oil in the right. Job Done. Top right: LED tail light. Above: Chunky alloy sump guard is available from the Husqvarna parts catalogue...



RUST TESTED




FUEL-INJECTION – IT'S NO CHOKE

So, on the morning of the test, as we arrived to see the bikes, I was fairly confident that Husqvarna had brought a bike that was right. Sat on the new bike, setting my levers, in normal two-stroke fashion I reached down for the choke. What choke? Of course – just push the button and it bursts into life. The first bike I threw my leg over was the TE250i which I've got to say I was immediately impressed with. This bike was super fun to ride as I entered the first wood section and started to get going. I instantly felt at home ducking and diving between the tight trees and eating up all the rocks and roots that faced me. The woods were pretty beat up from the Canadian race but the suspension – straight from the crate – seemed to take everything really well.



There's a fair bit of extra electronics that goes with the fuel-injection...

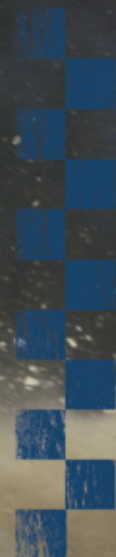


'Of course as you get higher up the championship ranks you get fussier and will look for every last *'marginal gain'*, but as a standard suspension setup it's very good...'



The front forks were a little on the soft side but with the new WP Xplor fork you can change the preload on the spring simply by twisting an adjuster on the fork top, and this helps lift the front up slightly and makes the fork a little firmer. I did this on both the 250 and 300 and with that adjustment alone I would happily do any club race with this setup (*of course as you get higher up the championship ranks you get fussier and will look for every last 'marginal gain', but as a standard setup it's very good*). For 2018, the forks feature new outer tubes which Husqvarna say offer improved flex characteristics and reduced friction. A stiffer setting also provides extra sensitivity and improved bottoming resistance. It must all be to the good because I had no issues.

The rear of the bike seemed positive and planted. Not once over the day did I get kicked out of the seat and bearing in mind the bikes come stock with springs that are technically too light for my weight, I was impressed. No question, Husqvarna really have got the chassis working well. Not once did I feel like couldn't turn bike. As you'd expect though, when you ride both the 250 and 300 in the woods there is a noticeable difference, where the TE250i is an agile nimble bit of kit, fun to ride, the TE300i is definitely heavier and less nimble but this is all down to the inertia and characteristics of the engine, not weight.



INTO THIN AIR

As you can imagine if you are at a ski slope, then where better to check whether the bikes have enough power than racing full-chat up the ski slope? This must be the Canadian equivalent of a golf course motocross! So we hit some pretty steep slopes, on and off piste, and fair to say there is a significant power difference between the two bikes. With the resort being 1500 metres above sea level there was only one way and that was up, 2600 metres to the summit, and I can tell you it's not only bikes that need air after climbing to this altitude.

Husqvarna really wanted to prove that the bikes would still run well at altitude, which they do, but there is a noticeable power difference when you go high, around -20% I'd estimate, but the human body struggles with altitude so why should a bike be any different? Anecdote warning: I raced a European championship round in Italy on a Gas Gas EC250, with a carb, and where an enduro test went up the side of a mountain, up and up until I reached a gravel road, when I hit that road and opened the throttle nothing happened. It was like someone had put sock down the pipe. With the new fuel-injection this is far from the case, the bike still preformed well, so well that if you were racing you wouldn't immediately notice. And another thing I noticed after blasting up that ski slope, flat chat for maybe a minute or more, after not backing off and reaching the top the bike does not hunt for fuel, does not sound like its going to blow up. The Huskies tick over beautifully waiting obediently for their next blast. In two-stroke terms, this is quite a step forward. As fun as this was, for me, I would love to get a shot on the new TE's back home to see what these bikes are like at sea level, to see what the real power is.



2018 Husqvarna Launch – Tom Sagar in his element...
www.youtube.com/watch?v=sj_5xW_-x-L

Below left/bottom right: Husky have opted for Magura over Brembo this year...
Top right: Weight-saving Lithium Ion battery. Bottom left: Graphic says it all...




BRAKE TIME

As I left the top of the mountain I was able to rejoin the cross country loop (*from the race that was held here*) and got a chance to try the new Magura front and rear brakes which are new for '18. This is another big change for the brand and a slightly worrying one as the old Brembo brakes were awesome.

First feedback was positive, but as the day went on and it got hotter I did get a bit of fade from the front brake, albeit after a number of rolling endos and messing about for the camera, so I wouldn't completely write it off. The rear brake seemed very good but I didn't get it so hot as to see if it faded, too. One thing that caught my eye was the levers – clutch and front brake – looked the same and possibly could be the same, which would be handy if you carry such a thing in your tool bag.



A full-page photograph of a rider on a Husqvarna motorcycle performing a wheelie on a rocky ridge. The rider is wearing a yellow and black helmet, a grey and yellow jersey, and black pants with yellow accents. The motorcycle is white with blue and yellow graphics, including the Husqvarna logo. The background shows a vast landscape with green hills and distant mountains under a blue sky with scattered clouds. The rider is positioned in the center-right of the frame, leaning forward over the handlebars. The motorcycle is angled upwards, with the front wheel high in the air and the rear wheel on the ground. The terrain is rocky and uneven, with some sparse vegetation. The overall scene conveys a sense of adventure and off-road riding.

When I arrived back at test base, for a bike change, I noticed that, as with the KTM TPis – I hadn't used that much fuel. That fuel economy is quite something and it's allowed Husqvarna to slim the fuel tanks slightly, down from 10 to 9.25-litres. Looking around the bike everything is so neat and well thought out. It's neat the way the filler neck for the two-stroke oil tank is situated between the headstock and fuel tank, the tube then runs through the upper frame and down to the oil tank, which is situated above the throttle body. The 0.7 litre tank contains oil enough for about five full tanks of fuel, depending on riding conditions. Controlled by the EMS (*engine management system*), the oil pump delivers the ideal amount of oil according to the current rpm and engine load, reducing waste as well as excessive smoke from the exhaust. The average ratio achieved for fuel/oil is 80:1.

'The Huskies tick over beautifully waiting obediently for their next blast. In two-stroke terms, this is quite a step forward...'



THE POWERHOUSE & THE RACER

Where there is weight there is power – does that always hold true? – and with TE300i feeling heavier I was hoping for more power – and yes, it definitely has more power than the TE250i. I arrived at the same hill climb with both bikes, a near impossible beast of a climb, and where the TE250i had really struggled, and I had to ride it really hard to get anywhere near the top, the 300 simply pummelled it. And what a difference! The TE300i had loads more grunt and so was far easier to get up the hill, pulling gears much better. But really this is nothing out of the ordinary when it comes to these two capacities.

RUST's QUICK CHECK

| | 2017 TE250/300 | 2018 TE250/300i |
|-------------------|----------------|--|
| Fuelling: | Mikuni TMX38 | Synerject TPI/ Dell'Orto 39mm throttle body |
| Dry weight: | 102.2/102.4kg | 105.2/105.4kg |
| Seat height: | 960mm | 960mm |
| Fuel capacity: | 10 litres | 9.25 litres |
| Wheelbase: | 1495mm | 1495mm |
| Steering angle: | 63.5° | 63.5° |
| Ground clearance: | 370mm | 370mm |


Which brings us to that all-important question: 250 or 300? The TE250i is an awesome bike and definitely the more fun to ride in the woods, hands down, its smooth power from the bottom allows you to ride it hard no matter what level you are, an ideal race bike. But if you are a power man and love hill climbs, love extreme, then there's no debate, it's the TE300i all the way. Just don't underestimate the TE250i, it's still an awesome bit of kit.





This pic: Dash is basic but shows all the relevant information you'll need. Below left: Rear brake with all the add-ons. Below: Simple suspension adjustment



I still have to pick a winner, though. So I'll make it personal. For me, the TE300i is the ultimate racer, with plenty of power and it feels so much more rideable than the old two-strokes I grew up with. I felt like I could ride it harder and without getting the old demon arm pump. Yeah, the one thing you will notice with both of these bikes is that they're getting closer to four-strokes power wise – without the weight. Incredibly, smooth and easy to ride is the new two-stroke way, which in some ways leaves me a little nostalgic for the raucous blip of the throttle as we know it on a carb'd two-stroke. This is what two-strokes will be about from here on. This is the future. 




TESTED



For those of you who don't know me, my name is Tom Sagar and I am a multiple European and British enduro champion. But it's not all been about enduros. I've come from trials, winning many youth and adult titles and also competing at youth European level riding against some of the current world's best. Starting at the age of eight, it's all been about bikes and having been brought up around the sport, watching my father compete in trials and enduros it was always going to be in my blood.

TOM SAGAR
WHO AM I?



I started my enduro career in 2004 competing in the expert class of the British championship while still riding some rounds of the youth world trials championship. After winning the 2004 BEC expert class this seemed like the path I was meant go down and by 2007 I found myself finishing third in the world junior enduro championship, making overall British champion and finishing runner up at Erzberg, behind the amazing Taddy Blazusiak. The 2008 season I would get to ride for the factory KTM world championship team and experience a full factory bike. After this everything clicked in to place with my riding, although bike and team issues – as every pro rider will know – mean you don't always achieve all your dreams. All the same, with a string of British titles and a European overall title, the odd ISDE gold medal (*riding for the British team*), as well as achieving top 10 results at the hardest trial in the world, the Scottish Six Day Trial – my all-time favourite event – I'm very satisfied with my race career. And now I have this opportunity! Can't complain...



THE 2018 HUSQVARNA ENDURO RANGE

2018 Husqvarna Enduro

Not many changes this year, apart from FI on the TE250i / TE300i

The changes common to the entire range:

- ★ New fork tubes and fork settings
- ★ Magura brake calipers & GSK discs
- ★ Pro Taper handlebars
- ★ New intake snorkels to the airboxes

2018 HUSQVARNA TX125



2018 HUSQVARNA TX150



2018 HUSQVARNA TE250/300i



RUST ENDURO

2018 HUSQVARNA FE250



2018 HUSQVARNA FE450



**2018 HUSQVARNA
FE350**



**2018 HUSQVARNA
FE501**





We're not keen on motorbikes as living room furniture, but actually this one has its merits



Husky can't move mountains, but they can shift tents



Desserts, Tom loves a dessert...

If you've ever wondered what a launch looks like from behind the scenes, well, let us show you. This was Tom's initiation...

TOM'S FIRST LAUNCH



Clean new bikes, perfectly aligned with stunning backdrop – and why not?



Ahh, the complimentary gift moment – this time, a rucksack, Tom's going to look sharp on the streets of Newtown (Powys)



Oliver wrestles with the impossible task of keeping the attention of a roomful of moto-journo's

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Well, hello!



Every launch needs canapés, dontcha know



The location and keen expressions suggest the dinner menu is about to be announced...



A fine display of male grooming and corporate clothing



Husky wanted Tom and the lads to fully understand the altitude thing. We think they got it



Usually the only love at a launch is between Dave and his reflection, but this looks promising...



Beer, of course...



Dave had gone a whole hour without making a Facebook post, so – straight off the bus – anything would do



Above: Last time Husky's media man Paolo Carrubba met Tom, Paolo was an EnduroGP photographer, Tom a works Farioli KTM rider. It's been a long time (*a decade in fact*)

Guilty as charged – the Husky development team

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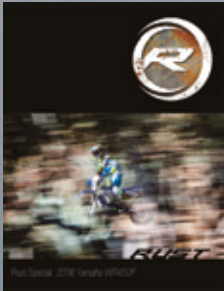
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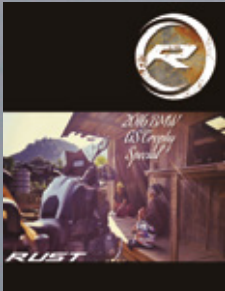
HONDA CRF1000L AFRICA TWIN SPECIAL EDITION
RUST gets the exclusive world's first test of the new Honda CRF100L Africa Twin!



HUSQVARNA 701 ENDURO/SM SPECIAL EDITION
Test of the new Husqvarna 701 Enduro and 701 Supermoto



YAMAHA WR450F SPECIAL EDITION
RUST tests the all-new Yamaha WR450F in the hills of Andalusia, Southern Spain...



2016 BMW GS TROPHY SPECIAL EDITION
RUST joins the GS Trophy riding across Northern Thailand on board the latest BMW R1200GS



2017 BETA RANGE SPECIAL EDITION
JB braved the heat and went to Beta's home town just outside Florence to test ride all the latest 2017 models...



MADAGASCAR SPECIAL EDITION
JB joins the Touratech United People of Adventure expedition to the island of Madagascar...



2017 HUSQVARNA SPECIAL EDITION
Full test of the 2017 Husqvarna model range, with New for 2017, some history and the final conclusions on JB's favourites...



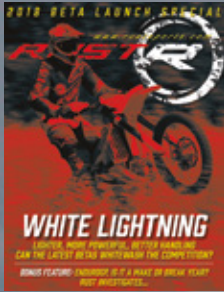
TOURATECH BMW R1200GS RAMBLER
First full test of Touratech's 200kg, 125hp Enduro R1200 GS Rambler in the Azores!



RUST TOURATECH AUSTRALIA SPECIAL
JB embarks on an adventure into The Outback and returns humbled by the experience...



RUST 2018 KTM LAUNCH SPECIAL
RUST rides the revolutionary new fuel-injected two-strokes from KTM... at the Erzberg!



RUST 2018 BETA LAUNCH SPECIAL
JB rides and rates the latest hot models from the 2018 Beta model range...



A ROLLERCOASTER RIDE OF EMOTIONS

Heck it's been a while, our man Dukes has long gone, heading to the Far East, but before he left he wrote this missive about his last-minute preparations for The Marathon Ride. Planning, he says, was never his strong point...

TALK ABOUT CUTTING it fine. It's the day before I'm due to leave family, friends, home and everything I know for the round-the-world trip of uncertainty and I'm sitting here in a mild state of panic waiting for the postman. You see my Carnet de Passage still hasn't arrived and I can't leave home until it gets here. Passport aside, it's probably the most important document I'll be carrying, because I can't get the bike into certain countries without it.

While I'm waiting for the postie and putting all of my blind faith in the Royal Mail, I'm rushing through a list of jobs I'd promised would be sorted weeks ago. I'm up ladders cleaning out leaves, moss and bird crap from gutters; I've filled the log-store to bursting; I've serviced the lawnmower ready for spring, and even shown my wife the particular sequence and technique necessary to get the old beast running.



THE MARATHON RIDE

RUST is following Andy Dukes as he takes a year-out from work, family, life and everything and sets out on his big ride – a Round The World trip of a lifetime. Andy will be setting off in March 2017 and along the way will look to run six marathons on six continents – running being another of his passions. Check out the previous instalments of his story in RUST 18, 19, 20 & 22...

RUST ADVENTURE

There's a strange, almost heavy atmosphere around the house. I keep catching my son's eye, but whatever needs saying remains unsaid. The dog's skulking about with her tail between her legs, and my daughter — who's just turned 18 — is doing her best to spend time with the family, despite the lure of her boyfriend, some new wheels and a seemingly endless number of party invites.

Through it all, my wife's been just brilliant, to the extent that I'm actually wondering if she's happy to see the back of me. She keeps coming back from work with more 'essentials' for me — medical supplies, toiletries and all kinds of packets of food that I know I'll never fit in my panniers. Being a doctor, she's also looked after my vaccinations, and nursed me through the after-effects of various nasty jabs and courses of protection against Yellow Fever, Hepatitis, Cholera, Rabies, Japanese Encephalitis, and a lot more.

She's had the neighbours around earlier today to witness the signing of various Wills and Power of Attorney documents, which she's super-efficiently organised in just a matter of days — in stark contrast to the carnage of my final preparations. You see, I've not actually packed anything on the bike yet because it's in a series of piles in three different rooms around the house and I know for sure that it won't all fit on the bike. So I've been procrastinating and spending hours just looking at it, before shutting the door and moving on to the next room — and the next pile — in the hope that it will somehow sort itself out without any input from me.

If I can offer just one piece of advice to prospective overlanders, it's to give yourself at least six months preparation time for a big trip, especially if you're naturally busy with family/work/sports commitments.



I gave myself just two months to throw myself full-time into this project and it's nowhere near enough. A good example of this came a couple of weeks ago when instead of celebrating my daughter's impending adulthood on a family day out to London, I found myself rushing around Kings Cross and Farringdon to pick up visas for India and Myanmar (at great expense from a dedicated agency) organising more photos for a second passport application before whizzing across town to the Iranian Consul to wait — behind 120 others — for the 'chance to apply' for the visa, despite already having filled in forms and paid the US\$ to get the required authorisation code from Tehran...

But you know what, it all came together on that day in London and I'm sure it will come good for me too. I'm hoping that by the time you read

this, I'll be several thousand clicks east of the Lincolnshire Wolds, from where I'm writing ridiculously early on a Sunday morning in March — because with every passing day I'm waking up earlier in a state of panic, excitement and fear, all rolled into one.

It sounds crazy but I feel like I've already been on a long journey just to get to this point — and I haven't even left yet. However, I'm sure that once I'm on the road, everything will settle down to a completely new and different pace of life. What will make a huge difference to me is knowing that people are following the journey and, hopefully, also thinking of planning one of their own. So, please read the blogs at www.themarathonride.com and send me a message or two. It'll be great to know you're there. And by the way, the Carnet arrived in the post, with one day to spare. Result!





SO WHAT'S HE TAKING?

I'VE TAKEN A lot of advice on equipment and packing, and I completely understand that lighter is better, and that there is only space for essentials. But what's the definition of essential? I've been looking at all those piles, knowing full well that at least 50 per cent has to stay at home, so I've had yet another 'cull'. Here's what I'm going to try and squeeze on the bike later today.

Right pannier

Cruz roll-up BMW toolkit, Wunderlich spindle tool, Micro-start anti-gravity battery/jump starter/mini tyre inflator Bead-Pro bead breakers, combo tyre lever and rear axle wrench, rim shields, ABRO radiator repair (*all by Adventure Spec*); Baja no-pinch tyre tool, gaffer tape, puncture repair kit, tie-down straps, multi-tool, head torch, brake and clutch levers, clutch cable, brake pads, small plastic funnel, chain lube, engine oil, selection of cable ties, inner tubes, Superglue, Epoxy metal repair compound, air filter, MSR fuel stove, pump, fuel bottle and small service kit, cooking equipment.

Left pannier

Mobile office including MacBook Air, Go-Pro Hero 5, SENA 10C Bluetooth camera and communication system (*Motohaus Powersports*), spare batteries and charger, extendable tripod, GorillaPod, portable battery for charging electronics, G-shock external hard drive, Rode mic, spare SD cards, food and water.

Small SW-Motech tank bag

Sterile first aid kit, portable speaker, cable lock, travellers' picture phrase book, maps, Motorrad Navigator 6, earplugs, sunglasses, munchies.

On the bike itself

Airhawk seat, Wunderlich handlebar muffs (*no heated grips — but will send back home once the temperature rises!*), Wunderlich screen spoiler, Tutoro chain oiler system, wiring for Navigator and Keis heated clothing, and Touratech extra bits...



In the dry bag (on the pillion seat)

Marmot sleeping bag, Thermarest sleeping mat, Marmot Bolt tent, Lifeventure antibacterial sleeping bag liner, Marmot inflatable pillow, OEX ultra-lite camping chair (*I'm told a chair is essential!*), Lifeventure umbrella, Higeat microfibre towels x 2, flip-flops, toiletries, underwear, BMW GS Pro summer gloves, Marmot Compressor Speed Hydration rucksack, Marmot running shirts and shorts, training shoes, selection of ultra-lightweight Marmot jackets to include waterproof, breathable, warmth, wind-stopper etc., trousers and cargo-pants/shorts, maps of future destinations including Iran, India, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia and South Africa, stuff sacks for sorting clean and dirty clothing



THE MARATHON RIDE

Andy's plan is to run six marathons on six continents, and ride to them all on a BMW F 800 GS Adventure. His first marathon is on 20 May, in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. In order to make it on time, he'll need to cross Holland, France, Germany, Czech Republic, Austria, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Turkey, Iran, UAE, India, Nepal, Bhutan, Myanmar and Thailand.

Afterwards, he'll island-hop across Indonesia, before negotiating a passage to Australia, where he'll ride to the heart of the country to compete in the Outback Marathon at the end of July. Then it's over to South Africa to ride around this amazing country as well as running in the Mandela Day Marathon in Pietermaritzburg, after which South America awaits.

He'll be reunited with the bike in Santiago or Buenos Aires depending on whether he's competing in marathons in Argentina or Ecuador. Either way, he'll ride north through Argentina, Chile, Peru, Ecuador, Colombia, Panama, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico and cross into the USA, where the Las Vegas Marathon awaits. After that, there's possibly Antarctica to sort and a European 'homecoming' at the BMW Berlin Marathon, but that's still work in progress right now...



RUST

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Visit www.rustsports.com for the latest video content, social media feeds and issues...

To view any of these videos just click on the link below the thumbnail to go direct to the Rust Sports youtube channel...


www.youtube.com/watch?v=CX1l8s3xA98

JB RIDES THE LATEST 2018 MODELS FROM BETA

JB finds the latest Betas to be lighter, more powerful and easier to use. Which must makes them better. Shouldn't it? Read the feature to find out...


www.youtube.com/watch?v=z6KdM5w8GWO

2018 KTM 250/300 EXC TPI FUEL-INJECTED TWO STROKES

Jochi Sauer KTM of-road product development manager explains the story behind the development of these revolutionary two-strokes...


www.youtube.com/watch?v=4v6loSJl4jM

2018 KTM 250/300 EXC TPI FUEL-INJECTED TWO STROKES

Ride along with JB on the latest KTM TPI machines and hear his verdict on these Euro Stage 4 compliant motorcycles...


www.youtube.com/watch?v=8516kr_og58

NEW FOR 2018 GAS GAS EC300 RIDDEN AND RATED IN GIRONA

JB rides the latest offering from the recently resurrected Gas Gas company with new frame and suspension and many more upgrades...


www.youtube.com/watch?v=SEjSqECe6sA

FIRST RIDE OF THE BRAND NEW FANTIC 250 CASA

JB takes a spin aboard the new 250 Casa from Fantic and speaks to Dean Clements the UK Fantic importer about future plans and other new models...


www.youtube.com/watch?v=ul7_ebar560

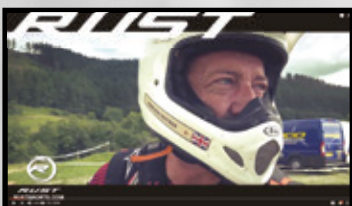
WE GET TO RIDE THE 2017 SHERCO 300 SEF-R

Join JB for a ride on board the Sherco 300 SEF-R to find out if the EnduroGP winning model is actually clubman friendly or a bit of a handful...


www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Sy-azHjAKM

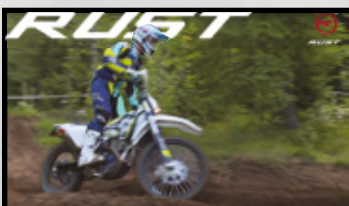
THE FINAL ROUND OF THE 2016 R3 RALLY RAID CHAMPIONSHIP

Our intrepid reporter Warren M. tackles the last round of the R3 championship in Portugal, and finds the Algarve a little moister than usual...


www.youtube.com/watch?v=xH0E2Ra1TL4

2016 Welsh Two Day Enduro THE MOVIE – RUST rode the Welsh and lived to tell the tale...

just. The trials and the tribulations all here, in glorious colour. Enjoy...


www.youtube.com/watch?v=7_EGuengt3s

2017 HUSQVARNA Range Launch

The 2017 Husqvarna enduro bikes, ridden and rated by RUST's Jon Bentman... Check out the 2017 Husqvarna Special Edition at rustsports.com.


www.youtube.com/watch?v=RwK49cZ4yvs

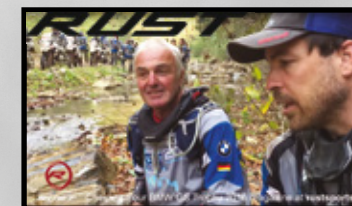
2017 BETA Range Launch

The 2017 Beta enduro bikes, ridden and rated by RUST's Jon Bentman... Check out the full review in the 2017 Beta Special Edition at rustsports.com.


www.youtube.com/watch?v=a0K02x9reLQ

2017 KTM Range Launch

Warren Malschinger and Josh Snowden go to Portugal to ride the extensively redesigned 2017 KTM enduro range...


www.youtube.com/watch?v=mVYqp3biTnc

2016 BMW GS TROPHY THAILAND

Montage of scenes from the South-East Asia GS Trophy featuring comments from Kurt Yaeger, Tom Wolf and our man Jon Bentman...


www.youtube.com/watch?v=HQBn2qbfp0Y

THE TRAIL RIDERS FELLOWSHIP

Read the story behind the ethos of the Trail Riders Fellowship in RUST Magazine Issue 5 available FREE on the website www.rustsports.com


www.youtube.com/watch?v=L8ePyI2E4M

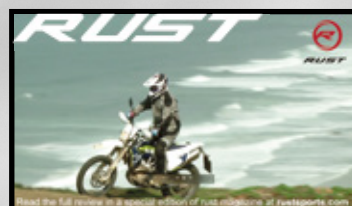
2016 V-STROM 650XT

Seve Hackett explains the revisions to the Suzuki 650 V-Strom in order to make it more suitable for all-out adventure riding...


www.youtube.com/watch?v=yriJw_FU910

2016 YAMAHA WR450F

JB tests the new Yamaha WR450F in the hills of Andalusia and finds that it's packing some heat and demands a good deal of respect...


www.youtube.com/watch?v=8l54XQQYoPo

2016 HUSQVARNA 701

Testing the new Husky 701 Enduro and the 701 Supermoto on the road and on the track...


www.youtube.com/watch?v=9oHMTpB0RNW

2016 HONDA AFRICA TWIN

Exclusive first test of the new Honda CRF1000L Africa Twin... Read the story in the RUST Magazine Special Edition at www.rustsports.com


www.youtube.com/watch?v=ntK07l63tuA

HONDA CB500X ADVENTURE

Jon gets an exclusive ride on the Rally Raid Products latest adaptation of the CB500X for the adventure riders out there...

DESERT RAIDS

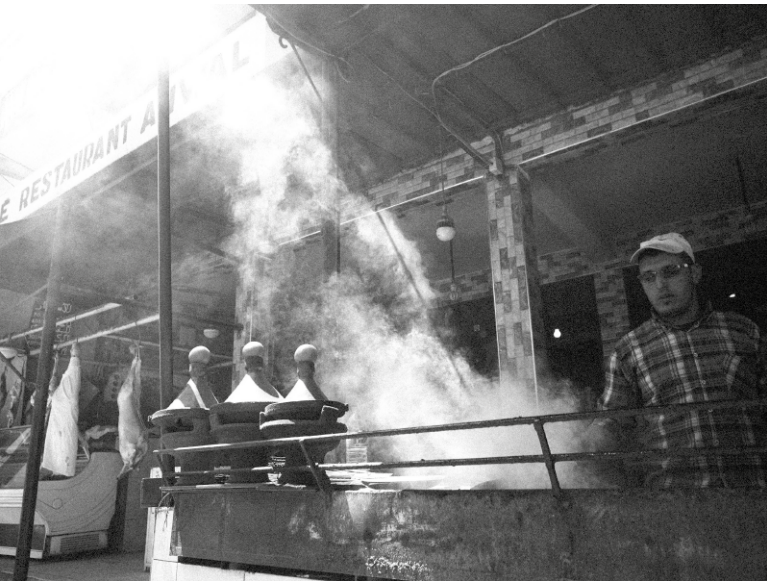
Words & images:
David Marvier

Nostalgia has never been so popular and interpreted so widely in so many facets of life. It was only a matter of time, then, before we not only wanted to revisit the heroics of rally raids of the past, but to re-enact them too. And so we have Sand Raiders, a rally that pays wonderful homage to Dakar's fantastic past...

DESERT SONS

THIS IS A sporty trip, one of endurance, tackling tricky tracks, where everyone helps, waits for his group, where we can taste the local culinary specialties and where we completely enjoy the true feeling of freedom which has become so scarce in our western world. And this trip, Sand Raiders, is open to everyone with a love for vintage motorcycles (*scrambler or trail*) and epic riding.

At the start of every stage a road-book, a GPS, a beacon and survival food kits are issued to all riders. With the starting point digitally connected to the finish, the participants, who typically bunch into groups of five or six – usually on the basis of affinities and/or mother tongue – set off. Each running to their own rhythm. The groups sometimes languish, while new ones can form on the trail, according to the levels of each, or due to mechanical troubles, errors of navigation and so on.



DESERT SONS

ADVENTURE, SUPPORTED...

And while it's a real adventure, there are sweep vehicles and other assistance there to guarantee that it won't end too badly! The logistics are impressive, and the number of support vehicles involved makes it look like a real competition: one heavy duty truck for the transport of luggage, food, water, beers and stricken motorcycles; one 4x4 truck from Dakar; one pick-up for mechanical assistance; one 4x4 Toyota Land Cruiser for press; one 4x4 Land Cruiser for the medical crew; one 4x4 Land Cruiser for the boss, as well as two motorcycles for the press, *(one of which I've used for three years now – a regular Suzuki DR600, great bike only missing an electric starter, alas!)*.

RUST HERITAGE





The medical team is led by an orthopaedic surgeon and traumatologist, and his wife who is a psychologist and neuropsychologist, expert in trauma injuries. They are assisted by another Spanish doctor. Very reactive, they travel in their 4x4, with SatNav, GPS and radio.

Safety is a really crucial aspect. Every participant gets a beacon. It's connected by satellite to the organising team, allowing the boss to know exactly where is every rider is, through the live feed to his tablet, such is modern technology we have this even in the middle of the desert! The whole raid is also checked in real time by a remote observer based in Spain. This instrument also allows the riders to be in contact at any time with the mechanics, the doctors, but also to warn the organisation in case of late, but safe, arrival. The rescue helicopter of the Moroccan army is the last option in an emergency.



SAND RAIDERS**WHAT IS IT?**

Sandraiders is a rally raid directly inspired by the first experiments of Thierry Sabine in North Africa and particularly the first Paris-Dakar rallies in the 1980s. It caters to historic/classic dirt bikes of the 'correct period' (*the regulations loosely permit trail bikes and 'scramblers' built pre-1997*) but in essence we're talking Yamaha's Ténéré, Suzuki's DR600, Honda's Africa Twin – not to mention the ubiquitous XRs – and pretty much any other big old trail bikes. All make their way to Morocco at the end of April for this epic journey in time. Respect, conviviality, friendship, and pleasure are the key drivers of this revival of the glorious years of the rally raids in Africa. Sandraiders is then not especially a competition and so not one for budding rally hotshots with the new Dakar Rally as their end goal.

SAND RAIDERS**WHO RUNS IT?**

Pep Segura, the boss, is a Catalan and a former Paris-Dakar entrant. He participated in the 2013 Dakar riding in a big truck 4x4 which is now used as an assistance vehicle for this rally. Fascinated from an early age by off-road, he first rode motocross, then drove in car rallies, principally in the championships of Catalonia and Spain, driving such wonders as the Golf Oettinger 1 then Mitsubishi Evo VII, VIII and IX. He also participated in African raids, such as the Panafrica, then finally the Dakar. Pep knows Morocco like the back of his hand. For years he's organised 4x4 trips there via his company Soloraid, based in Igualada, Spain.



DESERT SONS

On the mechanical side, Pep surrounds himself with true McGyvers. Two guys capable of repairing a clutch in the desert, capable of welding a crankcase – bare-chested – wearing just sunglasses for protection. A permanent smile on their lips, a great conviviality – and a fresh beer never too far from reach. One is riding a motorcycle for rapid deployment, the other in a pick-up with the heavy equipment. They are reactive and very effective. They operate all day long dealing with the breakdowns then help the participants with the daily mechanical repairs at the end of each stage, sometimes till late at night. The machines of course being of a certain age, and mileage, and are being subject to really tough use, so you can imagine the rate of attrition. But those mechanics, yeah, *'tireless'* barely does them justice.



RUST HERITAGE



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Everything is designed to ensure the riders enjoy their journey to the max. Indeed, the Soloraids team even pick up the riders' equipment and motorcycles in Europe a few weeks before the departure, and bring everything back, taking care of the boring customs formalities and of numerous kilometres separating us from Morocco's tracks. The participants just need to jump on a plane with a little cabin luggage, to arrive fresh for the first stage.

Pep is surrounded by extraordinary efficient staff, hand-picked every one. Often voluntary and present since the first steps of the raid, they give everything to make the machine well oiled without affecting the adventurous nature. There is no strict rule, everyone there is responsible for himself and common sense remains the best team member. They work night and day, sleep little, smile a lot and support the riders without demur. Without them and their hard work, before, during and after the event, nothing would be workable.



DESERT SONS

EXTREME SPORTS



DESERT SONS

TO THE PISTE!

The trip is constantly evolving and every year Pep, during his solitary reconnoitres, discovers new tracks, new routes, new horizons. Needless to say, Morocco abounds in luxurious and varied terrain. This year the rally started in Fes, the famous imperial city, heading into the Atlas

RUST HERITAGE

mountains following what was a fresh and rainy stage. Tracks alternated between fast trails and muddy traps and the forests of cedars on the Atlas Mountains were simply magnificent. Very quickly, the stress of Western life dissipated to give space to an intense concentration which riding on these tracks requires at all times.



DESERT SONS



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Then the rally changed character again as heading south, after crossing the Atlas, it crossed the plateau of Rekkam and wheels touched sand for the first time. Here, everything is very very dry, even Martian sometimes. It's goodbye to rain and fresh winds, a hot sun blazes unrelentingly despite the spring season. Around Merzouga, at the doorstep to the desert, we met Sebastien Loeb training with the Peugeot sport team, a helicopter 'opening the road' in front of him. We were impressed by the abundance of their equipment, Loeb's impressive driving, but also their friendliness, a very nice team which was delighted to share some anecdotes with us. In the end we are all led by the same passion even if the purpose is not really the same.

DESERT SONS

RUST HERITAGE



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The road-book took the rally, during the third stage, into a large canyon where the track wound up on slippery stony trails. Suddenly the riding became a little more acrobatic. Personally, my thin trials experience served me enormously. We crossed small, lost villages made with brown dirt (*adobe*) where people's lives depend on rudimentary farming. It was as if we've stepped back in time, centuries. The children, sometimes very small, played in the shade of date palms. They were delighted to greet us. Even there, caution and respect are the main thought. Throttle down.

The following stage passed through the mythical '*forbidden track*' used by those famous raids during the 80s. Rocks sometimes make way for small dunes and fesh-fesh zones (*very soft and deep sand*). The experienced riders floated, full gas, over the worst while others found themselves buried, axle-deep. It was in these moments that the words '*solidarity*' and '*commitment*' took on their true meaning!



DESERT SONS

RUST HERITAGE



.....
"The stages in these dunes are a unique
experience for whoever rides there for
the very first time. These heavy bikes
from the 80s suffer..."
.....

DESERT SONS

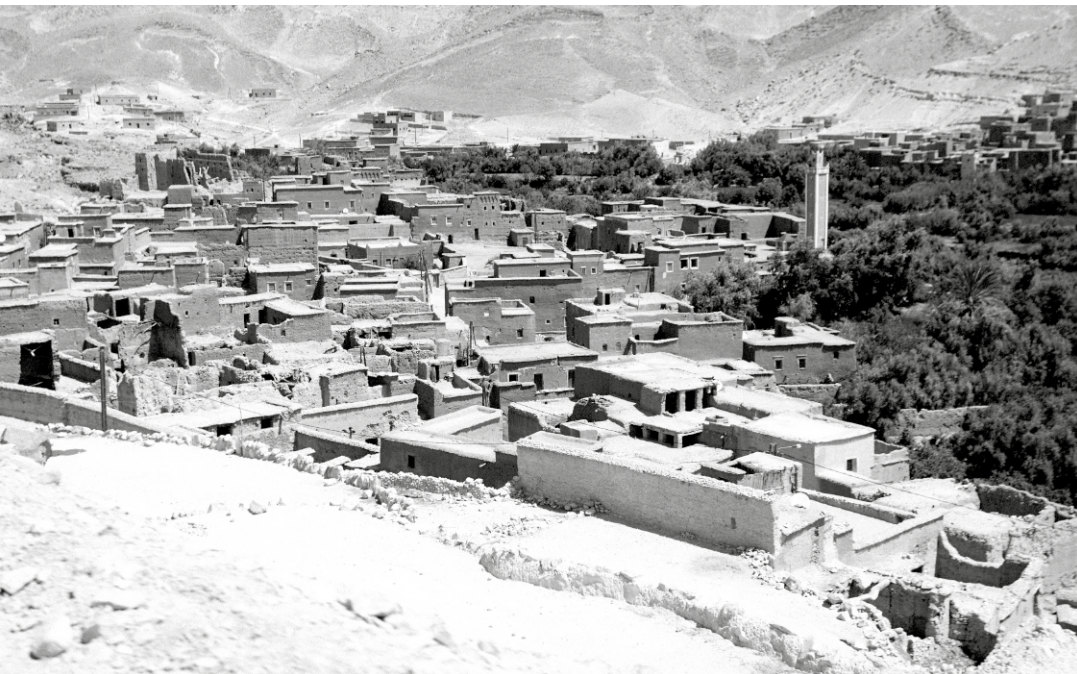


RUST HERITAGE

INTO THE DUNES

Even the last 25km left no respite. Motorcycles ran into a chaotic sea of sand before finally heading to the finish. The finish of this long stage was then, majestic. After so many kilometres travelled on an immense and arid plateau, the enormity of the never-ending dunes of the true Sahara faced us. A battlefield of contrasts between pinks and oranges. The riders admired them, enjoying a well deserved rest in the camp at the Erg Chebbi, an adventurers' den.

The stages in these dunes are a unique experience for whoever rides there for the very first time. The heavy bikes from the 80s suffer. Engines warm and consume oil. Motorcycles bury themselves, the riders fall and quickly lose energy – in particular those who do not have an electric starter! The riding, very technical, is truly testing on a terrain which turns out to be more hazardous than we first imagine.



DESERT SONS

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The wind shapes the dunes, one side easy the other side steep, which can cause vertiginous falls if the rash rider doesn't stop at the very top to check his way. To climb these mountains requires real strategy and a very good ground reading. The task is sometimes more complicated by the sun coming from behind, killing correct apprehension of the relief, or with a too dusty mask... And, the orientation can be quite tricky due to the curves we make to climb the dunes. And the heat is... tenacious?! In brief, in these roller coasters, the human body and the mechanics of the machines are pushed to their limit. But the pleasure of surfing on untouched sand is huge. It's quite similar to the sensations felt by a freeriding skier in powder snow.



DESERT SONS



EXTRAORDINARY SKIES

The Sahara offers its best moments at sunrise and sunset. In the morning the sand is firmer, the atmosphere is fresher, helping the rider. The light, coloured with a thousand tints of red and orange, is beautiful, almost biblical. Every year, the participants wait for these magic moments. After sunset is just as fantastic – running away from the smothering heat of a bedroom, I spent an extraordinary night under the stars gazing upon the Milky Way and the entire night sky. Freed of light pollution, only in the desert can we appreciate such a breath-taking show.

The next day, the last off-road stage of the trip allowed us to play in a few last small dunes, to cross cheerfully *(now)* some fesh-fesh before heading to Ouarzazate via the famous Lake Iriki *(completely, and always, dried up)*.



DESERT SONS

RUST HERITAGE

.....
'After so many kilometres travelled on
an immense and arid plateau, the
enormity of the never-ending dunes
of the true Sahara faced us...'
.....

DESERT SONS

And finally having said our farewells to tracks and to desert, we took the road to Marrakech. A sinuous road of asphalt, passing by the famous village of AïtBenAdou which is sight for sore eyes, especially those of the resting riders and their machines. This stage of transition is appreciated by everybody. It allows us to still dream a little before returning to 'normality'.

In Sand Raiders we can relive a fantastic past, we can experience some of what our fathers or older brothers might have experienced. We can appreciate and adore their machines. But now, as then, the magnificence of the landscapes, the welcome and the gastronomy of the locals, make Morocco a very exotic and dreamy destination, just a few wings beats from Europe. We must return.





SAND RAIDERS - THE ROUTE

Stage 1: Fez-Rekkam 250km

A ride through the rocky mountains of the High Atlas followed by more stony going on the Rekkam Plateau. Finish at a bivouac camp.

Stage 2: Rekkam-Belle Etoile 180km

From stony tracks into sand and deep sand at Erg Chebbi. Finish at a luxury 'haimas' camp.

Stage 3: Belle Etoile-Ali El Cojo 80km

A day in the famous Dakar dunes (guided by Jordi Acarons) finishing at hostel/hotel with pool to cool off!

Stage 4: Ali El Cojo-Forbidden Track 270km

A mixed long-distance day with dunes, fesh-fesh and stony trails. Finish at bivouac.

Stage 5: Forbidden Track-Naji, Erg Chigaga 260km

A ride across an 'endless plateau' passing through the caravan city of Zagora, before reaching more sandy desert. Finish at a hiamas.

Stage 6: Naji, Erg Chigaga-Ouarzazate 150km

A last trip across sandy desert, then across a dry lake bed before hitting the stony trails again. Finish at a hotel.

Stage 7: Ouarzazate-Marrakech 250km

'The route of the Kasbahs' a road route through the High Atlas to Marrakech. Finish at a hotel.



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Thanks to:

Fionn Griffiths at Husqvarna UK for easing Tom through his first launch – and what a launch! David Marvier for finding us and the inspiration he brings (*cue: eBay search, classic trail*) and, personally, to Direct Line Insurance for their brilliant claims department, they've saved the editor's bacon.

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June is (sorry, was) Welsh Two Day Enduro time, the UK's biggest enduro with 500 entries taking on the traditional big lap (150-mile, 250km course). The W2D is also an annual runout for these strange creatures – sidecars. Rare beasts on the trail, let alone on the roads...



Image: JB