



ISSUE #33



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SPORTS HERITAGE

Two Yamaha retros, two
very different rides

EXTREME PROVOCATION

Jonny & Taddy in
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Dirt track in fancy dress –
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TIME

We rush too much. We're encouraged to consume at a ridiculous pace. Whatever we're doing is news now, history tomorrow. No question, we need to slow down.

Yesterday was a special occasion. The moon was in eclipse, a 'super blue blood moon', which sounds interesting. Only we didn't see that in the UK – wrong part of the world. Still, it caused me to pause and just before bed I grabbed a pair of binoculars, went into a freezing back yard – tripping over the bike trailer, as you do – and gazed up. Some 223,068 miles overhead was this fantastic orb, lit so bright and so vivid given the crisp winter air. I could pick out in breathtaking detail craters, basins and somewhere in the dark areas I knew would be the Sea of Tranquility (such a beautiful name), where the astronauts first landed. The moon is there all the time, of course, but how often do we, do I, really look at it, really take notice, and appreciate it?

I've been feeling the same mood in my interactions with the motorcycling world. I want to slow down the rush. I want to study the details in my bike. I want to look at the places I ride, not just superficially but understanding the landscape, be it urban or country. The bike helps there. I absolutely despise the way cars isolate us from the world, we tear along never ending motorways (freeways) utterly cocooned with no time or consideration for this very moment. On the bike we're very much connected – so we should capitalize on that.

Talking to Jonny Walker and Taddy Blazusiak for their extreme enduro feature in this issue we got on to the matter of clutch control and feel for a bike. Both of them suddenly switched into a parallel universe, rapturously describing how these connections were made between their brain and their fingers, through their feet, how they felt for the energy in the bike, how they projected that into traversing the obstacle before them. Taddy mused over the thousands of miniscule observations and calculations that they subconsciously make, followed by decisions and reactions, where everything needs to happen just so, where everything must be second nature. And in that milli-second before they launch, feet-up, clutch biting, brakes holding, tyres gripping, rider crouching, eyes searching, it's all happening, a universe of connected energies and actions just there in that micro-moment.

We need to appreciate that. Not by watching slow-mo phone-videos on Facebook or YouTube, but by taking the time, watching, thinking, discussing, practicing. Appreciating.
Ride safe 🍀

JB



...FIRST YOU HAVE TO FINISH...

How was Dakar for you this year? Well, it kept us here at RUST entertained – riveted – that's for sure. An epic year, without a doubt. And kudos to Matthias Walkner for playing the cool hand and bringing it home for KTM one more time (their 17th on the trot). This image kind of says it all in one composition. Walkner there, alone, getting the job done. No undue flamboyance, no scintillating burst of speed, a professional at work somewhere near the end of the Earth...

Image: Red Bull Content Pool / Marcelo Maragni

GOLDEN BOY

Matthias Walkner has to be a favourite son in Mattighoffen. The 31-year-old Austrian has been with KTM as a test rider since 2004. In 2012 he won them the MX3 motocross world championship. In 2015 he converted to rallies and while its been a bumpy ride (DNF in Dakar 2015, then a broken femur in Dakar 2016) it all came together in 2017 as placed runner-up to Sam Sunderland in Dakar 2017 and came into this Dakar having won the final round of the 2017 FIM Cross Country World Championship (the Rallye du Maroc). We can't see him going anywhere else anytime soon – and in fact KTM have him signed up to 2020.

Image: Red Bull Content Pool / Marcelo Maragni





NO RISKS POLICY?

For all the racing that went on in the first week (and more) of this Dakar, Walkner mostly stayed away from it. He was never slow, just not reaching that little bit extra for stage-winning speed. As we've said before, it's kind of a Tour de France strategy, staying consistent, close to the front, but not too close. His one stage win was of course the killer-blow that came on Stage 10 when only he and Adrien Van Beveren got their navigation right (only Van Beveren never quite made it to the chequer). From there Walkner very professionally defended his substantial lead, sacrificing a little time every day to stay safe. In all, one super-deserving win. (Note: Not a race image this, but by heck it's a good one!)

Image: Red Bull Content Pool / Markus Berg

SPORT HERITAGE?

Yamaha have created a distinctive retro offering in their Sport Heritage range (also tagged Faster Sons). Some are scramblers, some are roadster come café racers. Yamaha are clearly approaching the sector from many angles. Here are two utterly opposing angles. Two 900cc Yamahas that are anything but brothers...

Words & images: JB & Alex Waters

YAMAHA SCR950

The SCR950 kind of leaves us flummoxed. It is the weirdest thing, first thought is pretty much 'no!', only it has something – maybe an air of familiarity – that stops us clean running away. There are little features, design nuances, to this bike that make you think somewhere in the R&D team there is at least one man who knows something about real motorcycles. So you kind of hang around.

It is one mad machine, though. We're used to seeing roadsters being converted into scramblers (like Triumph's Street Scrambler and Ducati's Desert Sled as seen in RUST #32) but has anyone before taken a cruiser and tried to make it into scrambler?

Thing is this bike comes from 2017 (and it's now 2018) and all sorts of experiments are going on as the mainstream bike manufacturers try to get a handle on the custom-bobber-hipster-scrambler-whatever-it-is movement. Race reps are history, adventure is the new touring (apparently) and so for the cool dude of today stripped-down retro things are the new black. Open face lids, beards and crap goggles are the go, even for mainstream bikers (just like when dads got into wearing cargo pants).





So we come back to the SCR950 and we're not put off. Perhaps it's that peanut tank – its paint puts us in mind of the old XT500. Perhaps it's the proper 60s style steel scrambler handlebars (big and ugly just like they used to be). Maybe it's the knobbly Bridgestones Trailwings and the silver-grey steel mudguards? Definitely, once you press the starter, it's the noise – for a fully compliant exhaust system it sounds lovely and throbby, even if aesthetically it looks like a matt-black painted dustbin. We're repelled by the SCR950 – but equally attracted to it.

It doesn't stop confounding, though. You sit on it and it's higher in the saddle than you first think (830mm)

and it's one firm saddle at that. Then the footpegs – well, they're just plain wrong, a road race type for some reason and right where you want to place your legs when sat stationary – boy, they annoy.

Then you pluck up the courage to ride off ('please don't let anyone see me') and you get the first whiff of real motorcycle. The motor is tuned just like Triumph's latest 900 twins with low power but big torque – heck, it's almost an identical match to the Street Scrambler at 53.5bhp and 79.5Nm, the latter maxing out at 3000rpm. The Triumph has a 270° crank to replicate the feel of a 90° vee-twin, but the Yamaha is a real vee-twin, with a 60° angle (there are probably balancer shafts in there somewhere, too). And so it

feels good. Character is lobbed at you by the bucket load, and it's a curious thing, when something starts to feel right it starts to look right, too. So you gradually let down your guard.

The ride position isn't bad. The bench seat is firm but its okay and the view forward with those crazy old handlebars, tall, but pulled back toward your lap, make you smile, and actually they're tall enough for a comfortable standing position if you were to go off-road (if...). The speedo unit is a bit odd, being black-bodied and digital, putting us in mind of those first-ever black screen digital (LED?) watches we all had back in the 70s, with the red numerals you needed to press a button to see. An

odd choice, but the simplicity is fine and at night actually it makes a pleasing glow!

The gearbox shifts sweetly, not that you need it so much given the vast amount of torque, and given a smooth road the SCR, with its belt drive, makes smooth comfortable progress. Despite the upright ride position there's no major windblast and so you perambulate in some relative comfort. There's only 110mm of travel in the piggy-back styled shocks (and 135mm in the 41mm forks), so you watch out for the bigger bumps (yeah, forget whoops and tabletops!). And the brakes – they're fitted with ABS but probably only for legislation's sake, the two

298mm discs with twin-piston calipers (one front one back) are pretty casual when it comes to the slowing.

And yet, the damn thing grows on you. It makes a great noise, rides like the most chilled-out sofa you ever thought of motorizing, and it gets up no-one's nose. You might say inoffensive, but it's actually enough of a looker to gain some curious glances. Yeah, for chilled-out riding it's rocking it.

Now I'm as skeptical as the next Slower Dad about this Sport Heritage thing and the Faster Sons guff (thankfully the cross bar pad that says exactly that had been removed from our bike) but somehow this SCR950 still found a way of making me smile. In fact the more I looked at it (and rode it) the more the quirky styling worked, I liked the shortened rear mudguard and cool round tail light, I liked the juxtapose of a small tank and wider engine (and airbox), I liked the skinny 19" front wheel sitting out there on raked-out shitty forks with rubber gaiters. It's doing that anti-thing, breaking all the rules, but nicely, almost quietly. So it does, in the final wash, get away with it. Damn it.

Like a lot of these new scramblers it is in fact an urban animal. It won't entirely shit itself if you take it into the country, or even down a country track (y'know one without tar-seal) but it won't be too flash and by heck you better go easy if you do. If you're thinking this might be an alternative to an adventure bike you're probably mistaken – or very adventurous indeed. It is then, something of a design affectation, in an age where affectation is increasingly the norm. Why not play at being a hip motorcycle dude for five miles of a Sunday morning (before you hit the cafe lattes and broadsheet papers – sorry iPad subscription there, eh!)? What's the harm? So enjoy yourself.

And in such context the SCR950 is okay. Yes, it's a bit fake (but a fake what – really, we can't quite pigeonhole it)



but it's also a bit honest, and we're not entirely sure it even takes itself seriously. And it succeeds in making us smile. Against all the odds. It's actually a nice gentle ride, and it's got a pretty damn good motor. And it's not just another Triumph Bonnie-street-scram-bob thing either (no offence).

Who'll buy it? Well, not us, clearly. But its quite possible the guy in question will be a laid-back dude, who really doesn't care for what you think, who's actually a good laugh to be around – and in any case has serious bikes for his serious days. Yeah, sometimes, some days, it pays not to take yourself too seriously, eh? It's a chill pill, that's what the SCR950 is.

SPECIFICATION

YAMAHA SCR950

ENGINE: Air cooled SOHC four-valve 60° vee-twin four-stroke

DISPLACEMENT: 942cc

BORE & STROKE: 85.0 x 83.0mm

MAX POWER: 40kW (54bhp) @ 5500rpm

MAX TORQUE: 79.5Nm (59lb.ft) @ 3000rpm

FUELING: EFI

STARTER: Electric

TRANSMISSION: Five-speed gearbox, wet multiplate clutch

FRAME: Tubular double steel cradle

FRONT SUSPENSION: 41mm forks, 135mm travel

REAR SUSPENSION: Twin shocks, 110mm travel

TYRES: Bridgestone Trailwing 100/90-19, 140/80-17

WHEELS: wire-laced spoked wheels

BRAKES: Front disc 298mm twin-piston caliper, Rear disc 298mm, twin piston caliper, ABS

SEAT HEIGHT: 830mm

WHEELBASE: 1575mm

WEIGHT: 252kg (with oil and petrol)

FUEL CAPACITY: 13 l

COLOURS: charcoal silver / rapid red

CONTACT: www.yamaha-motor.com (.eu)

UK PRICE: £8849

US PRICE: \$8699

SECOND OPINION ALEX WATERS

Yamaha SCR950

My first impressions of the SCR aren't overly positive. It's just started raining in Epping Forest and I simply can't adjust to the forward positioning of the foot-pegs or the air cleaner on which I keep catching my right knee. It's all feels a bit heavy and slightly awkward after jumping off the Triumph Street Twin. Photos duly captured and it's time to head back into town and suddenly it all starts to click. The big twin has a lovely lazy surge of torque and the exhaust note is glorious. Chugging through the London traffic it tools along with a satisfying burble and I start to enjoy the comfort of the seat and well-damped suspension. The SCR is a capable cruiser-cum-scrambler which ticks most of the boxes if you're looking for a relaxing ride without worrying about speed or power. The low-down grunt of the engine wins me over in the end and with a few tweaks (that air cleaner would have to go) I could learn to love the big twin.





YAMAHA XSR900

With the XSR900 we jump about three or four decades forwards from where the SCR950 kind of sits. If the SCR950 puts us in mind of a late 1960s scrambler, the XSR900 has a sense of modern motocrosser about it. It's a street bike through and through, but a modern dirt bike rider would readily relate to it – and love it.

Like the SCR950, you are slightly muddled as to just what it is. The Sport Heritage styling is neither specifically contemporary nor historic. The three-cylinder motor is entirely modern in its tech, albeit triples have that 1970s thing about them given history like the Triumph Trident (racers) and Yamaha's own XS750/850s. And the whole chassis, from the alloy frame to the USD forks and monoshock rear is ultra-modern. But there's a definite – and likeable – twist to the styling. It takes the MT-09 (the base to this bike) and gives it a real retro stir. We loved the tank shape and design cues, and you'll notice the cool repeats of the three holes/circles motif (relating to the triple identity) throughout the chassis and bodywork.



Motocrossers would definitely relate to the fatbar handlebars and then to the distinctly sat-on rather than sit-in ride position. And its roomy cockpit: seat, 'bars and footrests all suit a taller rider nicely. And the motocross rider would definitely relate to the instantaneous power delivery, which feels immediate, much like a 450 'crossover does. It's a potent, playful package.

This test model came fitted with an optional Akrapovic exhaust – a brand often found in off-road – and so it played a nice melody, not too loud but attention-grabbing, so you're alert to the beast-within from the get-go. We started out in the sharpest, raciest of the three rider modes that you can choose from (simply called 'A') and it was lively. In the London traffic too lively, as it brings the power in hard and fast. Why was it too much? Well, this is no modestly-powered middleweight, it's clearly borrowing tech from its Big Bro, the R1, as this motor has the same crossplane-crank concept motor, and at 850cc it is

virtually three-quarters of an R1, and so it pumps, very easily, a claimed 115bhp – double that of the SCR950 and then some. So it's a very real hotrod of a bike when you want it to be, and especially in Mode A.

In Standard ride mode the whole plot is fortunately a lot more controllable and yet just as exciting as you're inclined to play with it more. The third mode, 'B', feels like a rain setting and it really lowers the whole game, maybe it's something like a learner restricted output too, because it feels drastically restrictive. For us Standard is just right.

There's so much joy in this bike, though. It feels alert and capable and reassuring. You're a sharper, keener rider on the XSR900. Snappier too, for like the SCR950 it attracts public attention – it is a bit of a looker, on the quiet.

This thing has modern brakes or nearly-modern, they look to be of the Sumitomo 'blue spot' four-piston caliper type we used to see on R1s



not ten or more years ago. They're powerful and for that reason it's nice to have the backup of ABS, especially on slick London-in-the-winter roads. Oh yes, and there's traction control, which could be very useful if you get carried away with Mode A. Ahh, and the suspension is really plush, being firm but not hard. Up to say 70-80mph you couldn't have a more comfortable ride. After that, like any naked bike you'll be fighting the windblast.

So the XSR900 takes this whole Sport Heritage and Faster Sons thing and combines it with all the advantages of the contemporary motorcycle to create another niche within a niche. This is the bike for the rider who wants a little of the retro cool but also wants the speed, efficiency – and excitement – of the modern high performance road bike. It looks good, goes good and sounds good.

And yes, we get it. Obviously it doesn't do dirt, but it makes street feel like dirt! So for us dirt riders it's 'the best of street' in a package that we can relate to. It has the visceral appeal of a 450 'crosser, almost the simplicity in use too, only with a cool kinda-retro look. For not much more than the price of a 450 'crosser it's a lot of bike.

SPECIFICATION

YAMAHA XSR900

ENGINE: Liquid-cooled four-valve DOHC three-cylinder four-stroke

DISPLACEMENT: 847cc

BORE & STROKE: 78.0 x 59.1mm

MAX POWER: 84.6kW (115bhp) @ 10,000rpm

MAX TORQUE: 87.5Nm (63lb.ft) @ 8500rpm

FUELING: EFI,

STARTER: Electric

TRANSMISSION: Six-speed gearbox, wet multiplate clutch

FRAME: Diamond-shaped, aluminium frame

FRONT SUSPENSION: 41mm USD forks, 137mm travel

REAR SUSPENSION: linkage type, 130mm travel

TYRES: 120/70-17 180/55-17

WHEELS: Cast alloy

BRAKES: Front disc 298mm, four-piston radially mounted caliper – Rear disc 245mm, single piston caliper, ABS

SEAT HEIGHT: 830mm

WHEELBASE: 1440mm

WEIGHT: 195kg (with oil and petrol)

Fuel capacity: 14 l

COLOURS: rock slate / garage metal

CONTACT: www.yamaha-motor.com (eu)

UK PRICE: £8699

US PRICE: \$9499



SECOND OPINION ALEX WATERS

Yamaha XSR900

My initial thoughts on the XSR couldn't be more different. Wow – this thing is an absolute weapon! Don't let the retro styling touches fool you, this is a genuinely quick street bike with the superb punchy triple borrowed from the MT-09. The result is an instant hit for me, with substance definitely winning out over style. Not that the XSR isn't a good-looking bike but the engine is just an absolute peach. If you add to that the quality of the finish with the aluminium tank strips and side panels you wonder how Yamaha are producing this bike for the price point – it's very nicely put together. Heading out of East London to the photo shoot location it scythes through the traffic like a warmed samurai sword through butter – grin factor 11! Yep, there is really very little to fault about the XSR, it would make a superb commuter with wide flat bars and excellent riding position and would equally be a very capable A-Road slayer at the weekend. I look forward to seeing how its smaller 700 sibling compares later in the year. 🇬🇧



**STUFF**

Premier Trophy Helmet

€ 269.00

Contact: www.premier.it

New bike – new kit. It follows, eh? So in keeping with the new long-term Triumph I went on the search for a lid that would hopefully combine retro looks with modern performance – and came across the Trophy from Premier. Premier were originally a US manufacturer who found favour with the likes of world champion road racer Phil Read back in the 1970s but are now designed and manufactured in Italy (rather like the Bell story). They offer a range of helmets from retro street and scrambler models through to thoroughly modern off-road and sports offerings.

Having one of those heads that sits between an L and XL depending on brand and style I opted for an L and while being a snug fit at first it felt like the right choice after a couple of days riding. With the squared-off chin bar (that mimics the style of the 70s Premiers) the Trophy is always going to feel close fitting in that area but it doesn't take too much getting used to.

The Trophy is nicely finished inside and out, with a plush faux-leather lining and a period-correct button-down visor and is light, weighing in at just 1290g. Despite this it still achieves a 4 out of 5 Sharp rating (Sharp being a British government run helmet testing facility), safety of course being the most important aspect of any lid. It also comes with a five-year warranty if you register your purchase online.

With some similarly styled retro lids being offered at some frankly ridiculous price points the Trophy comes in middle of the scale – reasonable coin for a very nice product. It wouldn't necessarily be my first choice for long distance touring but that's not what this model is designed for. For blatting round town and short Sunday afternoon blasts this is a sweet looking and well made helmet that looks so right with my Triumph. Happy days.

Alex Waters





Richa Bonneville Jacket

£199.99

Contact: www.richa.eu www.nevis.uk.com

When Alex turned up for the Scrambler test in his Richa Scrambler jacket I was kind of jealous. I really liked it, it's a great looking jacket but in the back of my mind I knew I didn't want it, short-cut jackets (bum-freezers) are just not for me. Generally, I like my lower back to be covered (I'm pretty sure that's an age thing). So when I discovered Richa made a similar but longer jacket (like, ahem, the Belstaff Trialsmaster), known as the Bonneville, I was in.

So I now have a Bonneville jacket, in green (although it's almost dark-brown, if you ask me). It features the same British Millerain waxed-cotton as the Scrambler, but with a cut and detailing that Sammy Miller would be proud to wear (and would have worn back in his heyday). What I like is that Richa have updated this classic with some modern features without sacrificing the classic (or is it vintage/heritage?) look. There's a waterproof and breathable membrane under that wax-cotton, then there's a removable quilted liner (for the cold days) and under the final checked lining you'll find a five-piece CE-approved set of armour (back, shoulders and elbows). I especially like that the armour

sits pretty well concealed, so the jacket can be worn casually, making the wearer look beefier but not grid-iron. Now Richa are a Belgian firm and this jacket is manufactured in Pakistan but it wears a small Union Jack on a breast pocket – one day I'll figure out why.

The performance of the Bonneville so far has been impressive, especially given the modest price point. It's snug and warm, ideal for winter riding, and was waterproof in an hour of rain. Arm length is good for 6'0" me (I wear the XL size), and I like the traditional corduroy collar and pop-stud pocket fasteners. It looks almost as snappy as the Scrambler but the extra bulk means it's not quite so edgy (but neither am I). One criticism, though: the waist belt buckle is a weak point and it has come undone twice without much provocation. This needs to be to a stronger specification.

Altogether I'm loving wearing this jacket. Like those TCX Fuel boots, it allows me to ride in comfort and with adequate protection but not look like a textile Teuton nor leathered-up weekend warrior (my alternative looks!).

JB

TCX Fuel Waterproof Boot

£199.99 / \$279.99

Contact: www.tcxboots.com www.nevis.uk.com

I've been looking for a low profile boot for a while. I have a garage full of armour-plated robo-boots, but what I've been needing is a pair of boots that I can wear like ordinary shoes, for those more casual rides, kind of a ride-to-work boot.

I thought my Alpinestars Tech-Ts might do, and they're close to what I need, but they're still a competition motorcycle boot and walking into someone's house or office they'll still raise an eyebrow or two.

Then along came TCX with this great boot from their Vintage Series. Sure, it's still more of a boot than a shoe, but it's super-stylish in that, yes, vintage way, and so they're definitely casual. I also very much like that this is a waterproof boot, that's a level of functionality that should come standard in a road boot. Also it's just so simple: full grain (oiled) leather, replaceable commando-type sole and a zip up the calf (protected by a flap on the inside to maintain the waterproofing).

The simplicity means you can walk around in all-day comfort. Obviously this means less crash protection – but, given the layering of the leather and the ankle-protecting soft inserts there's a lot more than if you rode in shoes or non-motorcycling boots. They look the part, but aren't ostentatious, especially work under jeans. So far I rate the comfort (almost zero break-in required), the feel (your foot isn't isolated from the controls) and the look (msart-casual?!); and after an hour in rain my feet were still dry. I'll check back in with a further used and abused report later.

JB





DAKAR™

Frenchman David Castera has been in Dakar man and boy, he's been a fan, a competitor, then Dakar's sporting director, now he's a competitor again – and he's got big plans for the future of rally...

Words: Chris Evans Images: Redbull content pool & DC Archive

MR DAKAR MAROC!

DAVID CASTERA



BIOGRAPHY

Age: 47 years old

Born: Bordeaux, France

DAKAR RESULTS:

1994: 8th (BMW R100GS)

1995: DNF (Yamaha XTZ850R)

1996: 11th / 1st experimental category (BMW F650 Funduro)

1997: 3rd (Yamaha XTZ850R)

2016: 7th (Peugeot 2008DKR, as co-driver to Cyril Despres)

2017: 3rd (Peugeot 3008DKR, as co-driver to Cyril Despres)

2018: 33rd (Peugeot 3008DKR, as co-driver to Cyril Despres)

Gilles Lalay Classic: won the final edition in 2001 by 8-seconds from Cyril Despres (David Knight was 5th), 2nd in 1999 and 1997 (Yamaha 250 all years)

Silk Way Rally 2016 & 17: 1st (Peugeot 2008 / 3008DKR, as co-driver to Cyril Despres)

ASO Sporting Director (Dakar Rally): 2006-2015

Few, if anybody has experienced, at first hand, as many different facets of the modern Dakar as David Castera. He's entered the event as a privateer bike entrant, raced it as a factory Yamaha rider aboard one of their mighty 850 twins, organised it for 10 years as the Dakar's Sporting Director and now at the age of 47 has raced it again for the third successive year as Cyril Despres' co-driver in one of the all-conquering Peugeots 3008 DKRs (they even led the car division after two stages before hitting a rock and losing a wheel, which put them out of the running). Now as Castera returns to France he is already working on the next chapter of his rally-raid career, as the new owner of the Rallye du Maroc...

BORN TO IT

"Although there's always a lot of luck in these things, given my background I suppose it isn't that surprising I ended up working in rally-raid. My father had a bike dealership in a small town in the south west of France and for three years, from 1983 to 1985, he was a mechanic on the BMW factory team, spanning for Hubert Auriol and Gaston Rahier. As a small boy I remember listening to the radio reports and I became fascinated by the whole adventure. I remember my dad coming back from a Dakar and saying to me: 'one day it will be you on one of those bikes'. In 1994 that dream came true when I entered as a privateer on a BMW flat twin prepared by myself and my dad. For a first attempt it didn't go too badly and I managed to finish in the top 10."

EIGHTH TO BE PRECISE. AN IMPRESSIVE DEBUT PERFORMANCE THAT SOON HAD THE FACTORY TEAMS KNOCKING ON HIS DOOR.

"Yamaha was the logical choice. They were heavily involved in rally raid and had a very professional team running 850 TDM engined prototypes and I ended up riding for them from 1995 through to 1998 as Stephane's (Peterhansel) support rider. He did all the winning but I nevertheless managed to finish on the podium in 1997. The bikes were very powerful and only someone with Stephane's talent was really able to exploit their

full potential. They handled surprisingly well considering they weighed almost 240 kilos full of fuel but they were pretty scary to ride. For sure I'd have been much more at home on the 450s they ride now. I remember Stephane saying to me that when you came to a washout you had accelerate into it rather than grab the brakes. Easier said than done..."

After the 1998 edition Yamaha decided to pull out, but rather than look for another factory ride Castera decided to 'get a real job'.

RIDER TO ORGANISER

"I wasn't a bad rally-raid rider but I wasn't right up there with the best, plus extreme enduro was getting very big in France with the Gilles Lalay Classic and so I decided to concentrate on that, which at least left me a little time to get a real job. I got three podiums in that race and managed to win the last ever edition in 2001 just in front of my now teammate Cyril Despres..."

When the Gilles Lalay Classic came to an end Castera moved into event organisation, running both the French enduro championship and their cross-country series. As a respected member of the enduro scene it was only natural for Dakar organisers ASO to approach him to look after their 'malle moto' entrants on the 2005 Dakar but few could have anticipated the promotion it would lead to the following year.



“The Sporting Director of the time injured himself in November, just before the 2006 edition and much to my surprise they offered me the job. I’ll happily admit now I was pretty nervous going into it. As Sporting Director you are responsible for the road book and are effectively No.2 in the organisation - there’s a huge amount of pressure. For that first edition it was even more stressful because I’d only done about a third of the reconnaissance. I was briefing the competitors in the evening on stages I’d never actually seen... But it all went surprisingly well. I’d learnt a lot already about event organisation with the French enduro championship and knew I had some ability in that department. I did the job for the next 10 years, overseeing the event’s migration from Africa to South America, which was a fantastic adventure.”

BACK TO THE TOOLS

The next logical step would have been for Castera to take over the top job and although he was widely tipped to do so, he instead took up the offer of co-driver to Dakar legend Cyril Despres in the brand new and soon to be all-conquering Peugeot Sport Team.

“It’s true that a lot of people were surprised when I announced I was leaving ASO and even more surprised when they found out what I was going to do instead. But what you have to understand is that you can’t be the Sporting Director of the Dakar without being 100% committed. I moved my wife and two children out to Argentina so that I could at least see them occasionally between making the road book, and after 10 years it was time for a change.”

“Many people were surprised that I accepted a job as a co-driver rather than as a driver but I had no particular track record in that department, whereas after making all those road books I certainly knew a

lot about navigation. I have always been interested in maps and the science of road books and so for me it was a logical choice and certainly not one I regret. It has been fantastic to work with such a professional, well-organised team and I’ve really enjoyed being part of it. Compared with a bike team, even one as professional as Yamaha’s, the means at your disposal in a top car team is absolutely unbelievable. In a factory bike team there’s one mechanic per bike, with a car you’ve got 20 per car! It’s a different world.”

REDEFINING RALLY

With Peugeot having a reputation for not staying in any one discipline for long, Castera hasn’t banked on the co-driving as a long-term position.

“I never had the feeling I would finish my career as a co-driver. In my heart of hearts I always knew that I would return to event organisation, so I’ve been looking around for an opportunity for a while. When the chance came up of buying out the Rallye du Maroc I leapt at it. Having seen rally raid from so many different angles I’m not short of ideas on how to make improvements.

“As far as the rally is concerned the most important innovation that I will introduce is separate routes for cars and bikes. When you’re a privateer bike rider it’s no fun looking over your shoulder the whole time, worrying about when the first factory car will be coming up behind you. And the stress of overtaking an amateur bike rider isn’t much fun for a car driver either. With the system I’ll put in place on the Rallye du Maroc that will be a thing of the past.”

CASTERA HASN’T FORGOTTEN HIS EN-DURO ROOTS EITHER...

“Another area I want to improve is access to rally raid for enduro riders. We’ll be



RALLYE DU MAROC 2018

RALLYE DU MAROC

And you!

RUST will be teaming up with David Castera and his rally organisation, ODC, for the build-up and the running of this classic event. We're planning to compete as well! No prizes for picking the classes Warren and JB will pick...

Now, it's early days so we're still hatching our plans (so we'll come back to you on those), but if you fancy a crack at this event – and remember it caters to all levels and abilities – here are the options:

Option 1: FIM rally class – join Matthias Walkner et al in the premier class, if you can handle it, for the final round of the Cross-Country Rallies World Championship (note: cars and bikes follow different courses)

Option 2: Enduro Cup – take your regular enduro bike, two sets of tyres and mousses, collect an electronic road book from the organisers and go (the organisers offer a full support package)

Option 3: Trail Desert Challenge – for adventure and trail bike riders, a course that's 50% tracks, 30% road and 20% 'off-piste' with a competition based on navigational accuracy, technical riding ability (different tracks for different skills levels) and other tests rather than speed. As per Enduro Cup, navigation is by electronic roadbook (a Tripy GPS) so no roadbook paper rolls to deal with...

Option 4: Trail Desert Challenge classic – as for Option 3 but riding your pre-1990 classic bike instead!

Dates: October 3-9 (five days/stages)

Trivia: The Rallye Du Maroc was first run in 1934! Want to know more: www.rallymaroc.com

running an 'Enduro Cup' and I want to make it as easy as possible for enduro riders to come and try their hand at rally raid, as cheaply as possible. To this end we will have regular refuelling so that Enduro Cup participants don't have to spend a fortune on preparing their bike and we will also be giving them the option of using an electronic road book. This will simplify navigation for them, as well as saving them the time and expense of fitting a road book reader and trip meter. Basically they'll be able to turn up with their enduro bike and a couple of tyres and mousses and enter the race."

With his family's long involvement in rally raid David Castera is also particularly aware of the historical context of the discipline – something that is behind his third major innovation as far as the Rallye du Maroc is concerned.

"When rally raid first started back in the seventies the likes of Cyril Neveu were riding very lightly modified production

machines like XT500s and in Europe it was this that kicked off the enthusiasm for trailbikes. I want to complete the circle and bring trail bikes back to the bivouac by creating an event especially for them in parallel with the rally – the Trail Desert Challenge. The two events will have the same start and finish and a common marathon bivouac, as well as sharing logistical and medical support. While there'll be no stopwatch for the Trail Desert Challenge, as the name suggests, there will be a classification based on navigation and bike control, as well as various hard and easy options depending on rider ability. I reckon that these three elements combined; separate routes for the rally competitors, the Enduro Cup and the Trail Desert Challenge, plus a whole host of other details, will breathe new life into the discipline. At the moment I'm not quite sure what I'm more excited about, going off to race the Dakar or coming back to put the Rallye du Maroc together. But I do know I'm a lucky man..." 🍷





Back in late 2017 we tested the Street Scrambler from Triumph and I was quite simply blown away by it. Not because it's particularly fast or powerful (it's neither) but the latest 900cc twin from Hinckley is just such a gem of an engine. Oodles of torque off the bottom and a gorgeous exhaust note led to me thinking about getting one of my own. Triumph have nailed the idea of a bike that appeals to newbies and more experienced riders alike.

Words: Alex Waters **images:** Jon Bentman & Alex Waters



A month later my local Triumph dealer were offering an end of year deal that was just too good to be ignored. Now normally in the publishing world we like to borrow our long termers, but RUST isn't afraid to do things a little differently and that deal was one you just couldn't walk away from. Alas the deal wasn't on the Scrambler but its stablemate the Street Twin, which shares the same engine and many other characteristics.

I took an ST out for a test ride to check all was as I remembered and even on a freezing cold day in late December with snow and ice around it still put a grin on my face and so I decided to take the plunge. I just like the idea of something easy to jump on for a quick blast away from the tracks and trails.

The ST is the entry-level Hinckley modern classic and also clearly aimed at owners looking to customise their bike – Triumph themselves offer around 150 accessories for this model – and so I have some big plans for the little Twin.





Firstly, the suspension will probably benefit a makeover, as much like the Scrambler version it's a basic affair that threatens to spoil the overall experience – being underdamped and a little harsh. Really, it was the only thing we found to criticise with the Scrambler.

There are numerous upgrade options out there from the £600 Fox shocks on the Triumph options list (*cough*) to some slightly more affordable units. Following that I like the look of a bench seat to slightly raise the seat height, and possibly a tail tidy to compliment the seat. But we'll see. For now I'm choosing my riding days carefully, this being mid-winter it's dry days only...

Anyway, I think that will do for a start - watch this space! 🇬🇧





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IN CONVERSATION... **WITH TADDY BLAZUSIAK AND JONNY WALKER**

Taddy Blazusiak is back in hard enduro not even a year after retiring. Turns out he missed racing too much. Part of that might have been fuelled by his friendship and partnership with fellow hard enduro racer Jonny Walker. They've got to know each other a lot this last year, both living in Spain and training together. So we got them to sit down together and pick over each other's lives...

Transcription: JB

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



ON JARVIS...

Taddy: Okay, Jonny, your thoughts on Graham Jarvis in 30-seconds. Go!

Jonny: He's an animal! I respect him so much for doing what he's doing at his age. And he's never lacking in skills. Everywhere he goes he's good, no matter what track you go to he'll be good and if he has a shit day he's going to be third at the worst! His bike is not going to break or anything like that, he's always be there or thereabouts.

Taddy: I agree, he's an amazing guy. And the way he's improved his speed, and his bike set-up, everything, from a couple of years ago – that's impressive. When I beat him at Erzberg I was going so much faster that in all the technical stuff I didn't have to go fast because I was gaining so much time everywhere else, he had no chance. But he's improved over the years, and not being the youngest it's not so easy to learn new tricks. So yes, he's an animal. But if you would meet the guy off the track you'd never say he could go fast on a motorcycle or do anything really! But he puts the helmet on and goes into gear and no one knows how.

Jonny: I remember about five years ago I thought I'd have him sorted inside of about two years.

Taddy: And now you think he has another ten!?

Jonny: No, but he's got another two!

Taddy: You know he's just going to go and go and go, he'll not stop.

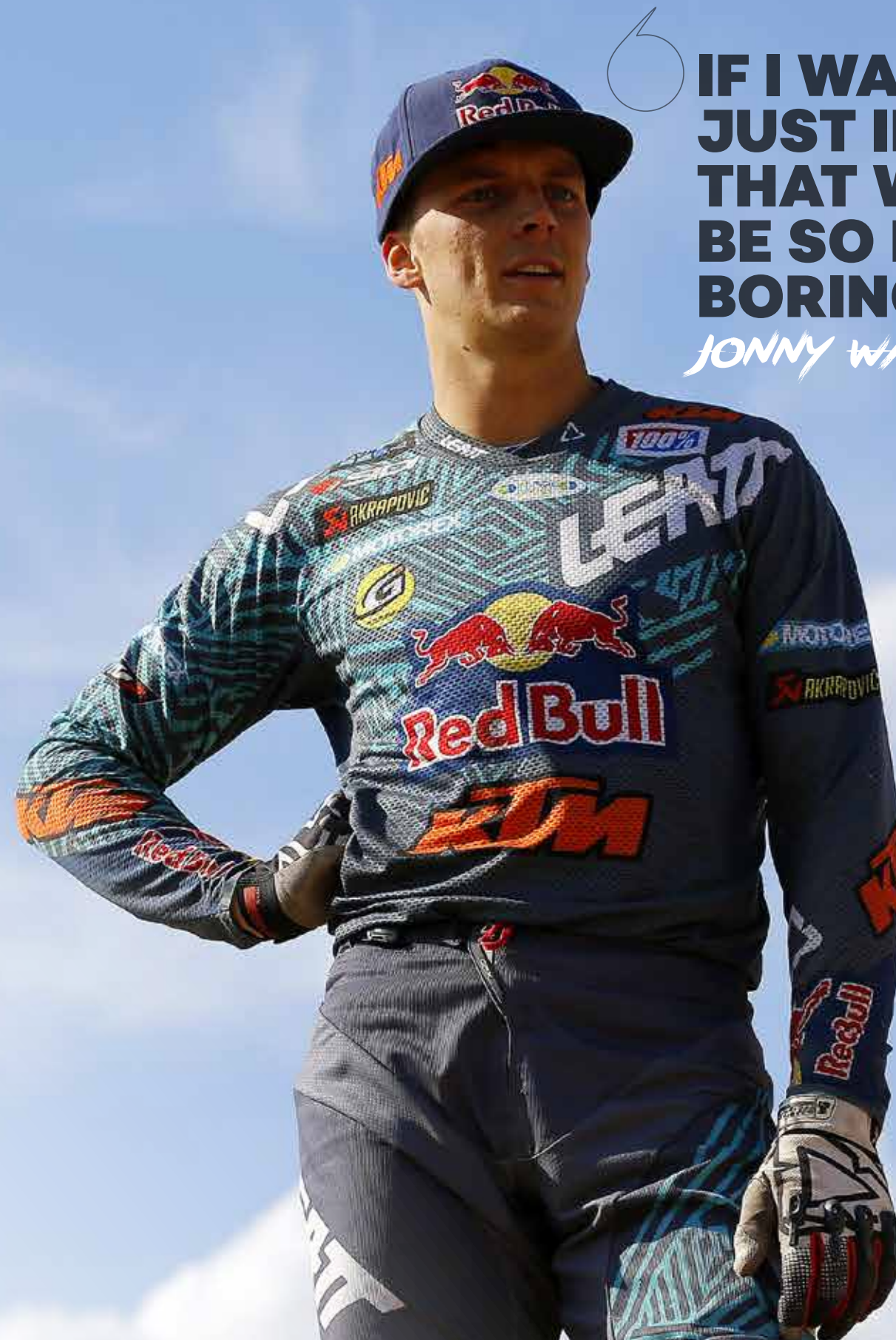
Jonny: Yeah, but that's because he's making good money. It's money that's keeping him going, he loves the money! But no, fair play, he loves riding.

Taddy: Because of the way he is – he's a nice guy – he's number one. The Man.

INDOOR OR OUTDOOR?

Jonny: I like to do them both, I enjoy the indoor and the outdoor and I enjoy it because I need the variation, I like to get onto the four-stroke and train with that. If I was doing just outdoors all the time I'd get bored, if I was doing just indoors I'd get bored, I don't know how you did it (just indoors) for five years, that would be so f*&@%g boring!

Taddy: Look, I was the right guy at the right time. The money helped to keep my focus, but yes it's hard to keep



IF I WAS DOING JUST INDOORS THAT WOULD BE SO F*&@%G BORING!

JONNY WALKER



doing the same thing. But indoor is so intense and if you don't do your motos for a week you are already falling back. Outdoor is different, you can always cross-train and get away with it. Indoors, if you don't do your motos and don't do the intensity it all goes out the window.

Jonny: But five years, you must have got bored?

Taddy: Yeah, in the end I tired of it big time. I could have lasted longer, maybe if I had committed to just the one side of the world, that would have helped. But no regrets, I was there at the right time and the money was amazing! But racing America through the summer and then going back to Europe and starting again just two weeks later, then finishing there in March and flying back to the States to start again in April, there was no time to stop, it was like a matter of pounding out motos non-stop. But that's how you get the focus, the intensity.

Jonny: Yeah, it's hard to do both indoor and outdoor because they're totally different styles of riding. You've got your indoor races which are like

eight-minute sprints where you ride all-out, then outdoors you ride lazy on a bike as you try and save as much energy as you can.

ON BEING PROFESSIONAL RACERS...

Jonny: Nobody understands. They think you go racing, do a bit of training during the week, then lounge around. But it's hard work. I guess I used to think the same, I couldn't wait to be professional, do a bit of riding here and there, then f*ck around. But it's not like that, and this last year it's been a nightmare, and it puts a strain on my relationship with my girlfriend and with my family. You explain it to them but they don't – can't – understand. My mum says, 'just do this, don't worry about it!' It's hard for my girlfriend, too, I come home and she's like 'what's wrong?' And you're pissed off, because what? Your mechanic has put the wrong spindle in the bike for the last two months and your bike's been riding like shit! So yeah, it's hard on both of us. But my girlfriend loves it, and she likes coming to the track with us and



being a part of it. And telling me what I'm doing wrong, she loves that.

Taddy: Yeah, I noticed, she loves that part (laughs).

Jonny: She's like, 'you're going so slow over this log' and I'm like, 'I'm not!' Then I go faster and she says, 'I told you!' And then she'll do pit board at the enduros. She loves to pit board me and tell me what I'm doing wrong. It's a good thing, eh? What about your girlfriend?

Taddy: Yeah, it's hard to find the right person. But we've been together seven years and she's been a big part of what I've been doing over those seven years. To have her on my side is amazing, she's put in a lot of work and sacrificed quite a bit to be here with me. And it's been all about me, which is not easy for a relationship. And I'm hard on myself, which makes it tougher for

her. You see, for me it's really hard to disconnect, that's my worse trait, that's why I got so tired of racing – it's a good and a bad thing. You win, but you can't disconnect. I do a lot of stuff like jet skiing and shifter karts to relax, but everything is moto – race related in my life. I'd only go on short vacations with my girlfriend. I'd do my last hard workout on the Thursday, fly out Friday and be back for Monday, back to work. But we're all different; you have to find your own way. When I retired I did some catching up on the fun stuff, but to be honest I still enjoyed the riding. Once a racer, always a racer. It's something that makes us special and it's something that makes us weird at some point!

Jonny: Yeah, I get that. I've just been riding non-stop. It's good to have a break and chill out, but I haven't really it

done it this last year. My girlfriend likes holidays, she wants to go on holiday, but I said we'll go on holiday when we're winning – and we're not totally winning yet! When things are sorted and I'm back racing well, yes, we'll go on holiday – but not until then!

Taddy: You know, there is no guidebook for how to go through your career. Maybe you would never do what I did, I would maybe never have been who I was if I trained like you. You have to know what you're doing and make your own decisions. This is racing, it's so individual, some people train more and some people can stick to their own routine for years, you can't really say what's good and what's bad. It's such a difficult life you know; when you're a pro racer you have to find a way that makes sense for you, but always it's hard work.

ON WORKING TOGETHER...

Jonny: It's helped to train together. I don't think you've ever trained with anyone before, so no one has known what you're doing, everyone has been trying to catch you. But by riding together I feel we can bring the sport on some more, because it's two heads.

Taddy: Yeah, it's massive, you can improve so much faster if you ride with someone, and it just makes you ride harder, for sure there are benefits. Back in December 2016 when I was going to retire I didn't think I'd ride as much as I have this past year, and definitely I wouldn't have ridden so much if you hadn't been hanging around. I took two months off from riding and since then I've been riding constantly. It wasn't my plan to do it that way but it's cool that riding with you has brought the fun back into riding for me, that's the

biggest thing for me. When I was racing before I wanted to do things on my own but to be honest I think if you do it with an equally good rider you can both benefit.

Jonny: That's right, even though we're very different. Following you I can see you're a lot more aggressive than me. I try and pull a gear more than you, while you're way more aggressive. I try and ride chilled, maybe I don't actually try, I just ride chilled naturally, that's my thing. But we still do the same lap times. But if I try to ride like you, I can't!

Taddy: We're different styles for sure, and we ride different lines, too. If we're riding motocross we're hitting different lines, but like you say, at the end of the day the difference is very little. You say you ride chilled, but if I push you I can see you're riding on the limit, but you still look smooth even then.

Jonny: Yeah, I've heard that before. I can be riding on the limit and the team manager will think I'm riding lazy!

Taddy: Maybe it's a good thing because you're not using up so much energy, right? If I was critical I'd say for indoors you should bring some more intensity into it, but you can't really change your style. If you do you can mess it up and you don't want that.

Jonny: No, but I'm still learning from you.

Taddy: Yeah, but I'm not a coach, it's just like we're two pro riders riding together. I think we've been pretty much been doing what the supercross boys are doing in America. We're not on the same programme when it comes to physical training but we're riding together helping each other, and because the intensity is there when we

ride together we always push ourselves. And we've all had those days where we don't really feel like riding and if you were on your own you'd do a lazy moto and go like 'yeah, it's done' but then when we're together if I'm having a good day and pushing, after 20 minutes you're into it too. And the same for me.

ON TRIALS

Jonny: Do you like trials, Taddy?

Taddy: I wouldn't say 'like', but it got me to where I am. Trials is just not who I am. I was into trials because my dad was into it, my brother was into it and this is what we used to look like at the weekends. But for sure I wasn't a born trials rider and everybody knew that from day one. Too many sparks coming off! But if it weren't for trials I wouldn't be a successful indoor and hard enduro rider. Maybe I would have found another way to get into it but trials is an amazing background and you learn so much about bike control and clutch control and with my style that's so important, I guess that's why I'm still on one piece today, I have all those skills.

Jonny: I did trials too, but I always wanted to be a motocross rider, all my friends at home did motocross. So I bought a motocross bike and then literally hated trials from then on! I still did it but I was bored of it and then I just called it. My plan was to go motocross but I got kind of sidetracked. I did like a year of motocross, then some hare and hounds, and then did an enduro and then got into extreme enduro. I'd got into a team and the manager said 'you gotta do Erzberg'. I'd never heard of it,





never knew it. And a bit like you, I went – and now I'm here. But if I could be anything right now, I'd be a motocross rider!

FINALLY, A LITTLE ADVICE FOR THE REST OF US

Jonny: Practice the basics: bike control, clutch control, body positioning, that kind of thing. When I help at schools all the guys ever want to do is get over massive rocks – when they can't even ride around in circles. Even now I always practice the basics as it helps so much.

Taddy: Yep, keep the basic skills sharp. Where you get into trouble is where you forget the basics. And don't forget messing about, doing wheelies and stuff – that's not only fun, it's good for clutch control and all. To ride right you have to play right. 🇬🇧

MORE JONNY & TADDY

Check out RUST #30 for our feature on riding extreme with these two masters of the art.



BEFORE I WANTED TO DO THINGS ON MY OWN BUT TO BE HONEST IF YOU DO IT WITH AN EQUALLY GOOD RIDER YOU CAN BOTH BENEFIT.

TADDY
BLAZUSIAK

THE PALMARES (Y'KNOW – WINS)

TADDY

2016, 2015, 2014, 2013, 2012, 2011 SUPER
ENDURO WORLD CHAMPION
2013, 2012, 2011, 2010, 2009 AMA
ENDUROCROSS CHAMPION
2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011 WINNER RED
BULL ERZBERG RODEO

JONNY

2017 WINNER RED BULL MEGAWATT
2016 WINNER RED BULL MEGAWATT
2016, 2015 WINNER ALES TREM
2015 WINNER THE WALL
2015 WINNER HELL'S GATE
2015 WINNER THE TOUGH ONE
2015, 2013, 2012 WINNER RED BULL
ERZBERG RODEO
2015, 2014 WINNER RED BULL
ROMANIACS
2014 WINNER BATTLE OF VIKINGS
2013 WINNER RED BULL SEA TO SKY





CLUB MOTO

Modern city dwellers are coming up with new mobility solutions all the time: state-operated electric bicycles, tuk-tuk cycle taxis, all sorts. The concept of shared access vehicles has also been gaining ground, and now London has the first one for motorcyclists – this is Club Moto London

RUST is checking out the collection of new roadsters in an underground car park in Shoreditch in London's East End. BMW R nineTs sit alongside Ducati Monster 1200Ss, Triumph Bonneville and a bunch of Yamahas and even Harleys. A smorgasbord of the latest modern roadsters. And any one of them could be yours for as little as £72 a day for these are all part of a collection held by a new shared-access venture called Club Moto London.

"We've already been running a classic car club from here for 20 years," explains Club Moto's Nigel Case. "It's a shared access scheme where members can take out any of the cars whenever they like. For many it works better than actual ownership as classic cars are notoriously difficult to look after, they're hard work. So here members can come and enjoy a day or more driving the classic car of their dreams, then hand it back at the end, no ties! And next time try a different car."

"Now we've always had a couple of old Triumph motorcycles in our fleet, a Thruxton and a Bonneville, so it wasn't much of a leap to see that we could create a similar scheme for motorcyclists. We've been friends with Dutch and the guys at The Bike Shed (located just around the corner) for a couple of years, so we talked through the idea of making it a joint venture, and from February 2017 we've been building up Club Moto."

Club Moto isn't about classics though, unless you count modern classics, for its roster is made up of modern naked and retro-styled bikes, be they café racers, scramblers or just plain roadsters. It's possible to join Club Moto in one or two ways. One way is take a full membership starting at £840 which gives you 120 points to

spend on motorcycle rental. The bikes can be rented – and it's all inclusive of insurance – for between 12 and 20 points a day. So you can see you could have up to 10 days riding there. Alternatively, for a low start, £100 gets you membership and the insurance all sorted and you pay-as-you-go from there, paying anything from £90 to £140 a day's riding.

"The scheme works for Londoners as bike ownership in the Capital can be problematic. Insurance is high and storage and security is a real issue. As well, modern bikes are not cheap, up to say £15,000 – so there's a fair amount of depreciation to consider. So the cost of the scheme represents fair value. As well you're not restricted to one bike, you can choose from the fleet we have here. For some it's a perfect alternative to ownership, and for some of our members it's a great way to thoroughly test a bike to see if they want to buy one later."

While the bikes are kept in storage, the actual customer interface happens at The Bike Shed, one of London's most innovative motorcycle venues, which while involved in the hipster bike culture is fairly broadly orientated, and while offering a seven-days-a-week location for pick-up and drop-off for Club Moto also of course has a great restaurant and bar, plus shop, a barber and interesting bike displays. It's a destination in itself. And, by the way, become a member of the Bike Shed MC and you get a substantial discount on Club Moto's rates.

It's a cool scheme and – do the math – it's great value. 🍷

CONTACTS

www.clubmotolondon.co.uk
www.thebikeshed.cc

FROZEN

Winter and snow seem to preclude the idea of fun motorcycling. But Snow Quake, now in its third edition, shows that just ain't true...

words & images: David Marvier

The word 'inappropriate' resonates. Nothing here makes sense. A Harley-Davidson road bike sits next to a Vespa scooter, both wear competition number plates – and both feature studded tyres. The riders are similarly a varied bunch: fluoro 80s motocrosser sits next to fur-clad Wolverine figure next to MotoGP racer next to Shoreditch hipster. Inappropriate? Or just eclectic? This is – it couldn't be anything else – Snow Quake. ▶



Snow Quake was first created in 2016 by Sideburn, the well-known alternative motorcycle English magazine. It's a direct evolution of their Dirt Quake concept, a crazy flat track race held at King's Lynn Arena (in the UK), where similarly theatrically dressed riders guide similarly inappropriate machines around a speedway track in something of a fantasy-grunge form of the Wacky Races (y'know, the 1968 Hanna-Barbera cartoon).







“THE PADDOCK IS A PROPER MELTING POT, MOTOCROSSERS FROM THE 80S AND 90S SIDE BY SIDE WITH BRAND NEW CUSTOMS, THEN SOME TRAIL BIKES AND EVEN HARLEY-DAVIDSONS”

Snow Quake swaps dirt for ice and the English motherland for high Italian Alps – and the freezing Ice Rosa Ring in Riva Valdobbia. It's also trading the traditional oval format for a real off-road track design with big and small curves going left and right as well as up and down. The event is now international on every level being mainly organised by the NorthOne Television (UK) and Deus Ex Machina Milan (Italy) who have turned the event into a real TV show. Di Traverso (a flat track school run by Marco Belli in Italy) helps with the race management, providing marshals, security, advice, etc.

The racing is divided in three different classes: Inappropriate road bikes (mopeds, scooters, everything else), Vintage bikes (old enduro, off-rovers, flat trackers, trial) and Snow Pro (framer racebikes). Entry costs just €65, so you can see there are simply no barriers to participation.

Wedge between snowy mountains, the paddock is a proper melting pot. Motocross motorcycles from the 80s and 90s, like Yamaha YZ250 or Honda CR500 stand side-by-side with brand new customs like the amazing Yamaha build by Italian custom specialists Garage OMT, then 70s vintage Suzuki RMs, then some trail bikes – we even spot a Gauloises blue Yamaha XT600 Ténéré, a machine of direct heritage to the 1980s Dakar rallies. Harley-Davidson was there (officially)

▷ **“GIOVANNI BUSSEI WAS FLASH ON THE TRACK EVEN FLASHIER OFF WITH HIS IMPRESSIVE BEARD AND HAIR IN THE STYLE OF WOLVERINE, NOT TO MENTION HIS RACE SUIT WITH TASSELS AND FLAMES”**

with road bike based flat trackers, prepared for guests and journalists. We also saw a stunt Honda CBR and of course a range of scooters. The only commonality being the spikes on the tyres, and long mudguards for the front and the rear wheels to (notionally) protect the riders in a fall.

And while the racing isn't part of any official championship, and even if it's welcoming every kind of rider with every kind of skill, some true pro riders nonetheless showed real talent on the track. Most obviously, Giovanni Bussei who was flash on the track, even-flashier off with his impressive beard and hair in the style of Wolverine. That's before we mention his race/paddock attire of Alpinestars motocross boots, a very long and warm army coat and a rather ostentatious leather racing suit featuring tassels, fur and golden flames over the arms – it's as well he can ride so well. The flamboyant Bussei is of course a former professional racer, having spent time in World Superbike and Supermotard since the middle of the 1990s. Indeed, at Snow Quake he didn't take prisoners, winning the headline event with elegance (great riding) and (sartorial) style.

Yeah, Wolverine won. Which is exactly the kind of thing Snow Quake is about.



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20

KTM 200EXC

In RUST #32 we looked in detail at the engine and performance parts that went into Warren M.'s ultimate 200EXC build. This issue we're looking at the chassis package. Buckle in and hold on to your wallets, it's gonna be another wild ride...

words: Warren Malschinger images: Jon Bentman



200

ERGONOMICS

Getting the ergonomics right is a major part of making a bike work for you. Too many riders make do with the standard set up unaware life could be so much better. Our JB wrote an excellent set-up article in RUST #5 and that's well worth reading as a precursor to this story.

1 ARE YOU SEATED COMFORTABLY?

So, good ergos not only improves your body positioning when it comes to standing attack or seated cornering, but it also makes the transition from seated to standing easier, thereby saving vital energy that should be best conserved over a long ride. A raised (or lowered) seat is the logical first step here. For the 200EXC build I replaced the stock seat with a high seat option from the KTM Powerparts catalogue (20mm higher) to suit my 1.83m bod.

2 FOOT MASSAGE?

Moving your footpegs can also help. Only I left the footpegs in the standard position on the 200 rather than pushing them down by 5mm, as I did on my Husky TE300. The 200's cockpit just seemed a little more 'open' to me than that of the

TE300, and after questioning myself why, I realised that the smaller fuel tank on the 200 altered the ergonomics just enough to make me more comfortable with the footpegs where they were.

3 BAR NONE

I fitted Renthal Twinwall 996 bars (a perennial favourite – this bend works for me on everything!) in the mid position. I was keen to try Fasst Company's Flexx handlebar but again we had some timing issues so I'll hopefully be able to test these out in the future. Where the Twinwalls provide excellent rigidity and strength the Flexx bars are made to a different ethos, reducing rigidity and vibration and as a result they are said to reduce fatigue and arm pump. Look out for a future review on these.

4 MORE LEVER

I extended the stock rear brake lever step plate out by about 10mm. I like the rear brake step plate a little further forward (big feet). I find that this stops me inadvertently dabbing the back brake and improves the feel on the pedal as I'm able to use the extreme boot end to activate the brake. This is very personal and quirky faff but it's a really big help to me.



200

SUSPENSION & HANDLING

No question, suspension is probably the most significant change that can be made to a dirt bike in terms of increasing performance. The bike technically doesn't go any faster, only it does because with great suspension you ride faster, more comfortably.

1 THE A-KIT

I didn't mess around here. With the forks I had the stock set-up enhanced with a Stillwell Performance (USA) open cartridge A-kit and the stock shock I swapped out for a WP Trax PDS from Fatcat Suspension (UK).

For those of you that have read my reviews, you'll know that I've had Alan and his team at Stillwell Performance (in Arizona) work wonders in tuning the 4CS forks on my TE300. I have enjoyed the bike immensely and have had two years of pleasure-filled riding thanks to the upgrade. So you'll not be surprised to find I had Alan and his team also fit their A-Kit suspension tuning package to a set of 2016 XC-W forks which I have on the 200.

Of course this service is far from cheap (A-Kit for forks and shock will set you back \$2895) but it gets you as close to factory suspension as you can manage. The fork uppers are Kashima coated, the lowers get DLC (diamond-like coating) even the springs are polished for the most friction-free suspension action you can imagine. As well you get SP's Pro valve pistons and of course a revalve and spring set according to your weight, ability and riding conditions.

The WP Trax shock, too, is virtually a pro-spec piece of kit. Supplied by Martin Craven at FatCat Suspension in the UK, it too has been optimised to my weight, speed etc.



I could make an assessment of the suspension set-up here (yeah, I'm 100% impressed, love it!) but I'll let Pedro's words at the end of this feature speak the truth.

2 BEST WHEELS

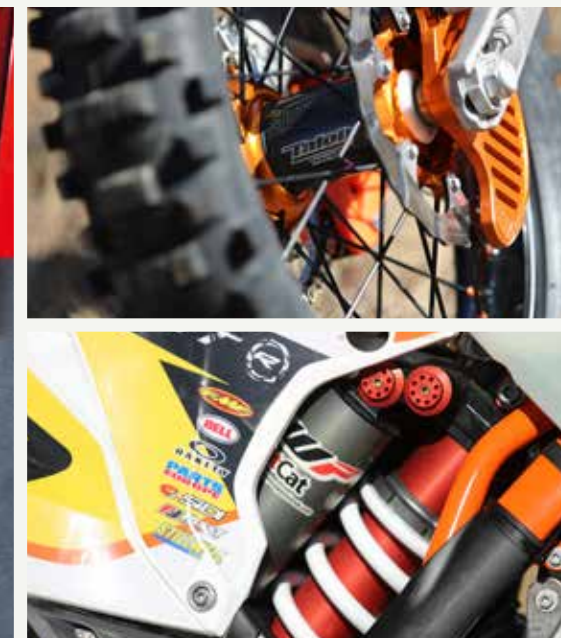
KTM make nice wheels, but a spare set with tyres and mousses ready to go is never a bad thing. And actually when you're serious about your riding like me (and as the pro's attest) it's good to have the best kit under you. While I have the excellent Haan wheels on my TE300, on the 200 I wanted to try British firm Talon's super-light Carbon hubs paired with Excel A60 rims and laced with carbon steel spokes. They're a unique offering with the carbon hub centre bonded to a billet aluminium outer ring to lace the spokes to. Lighter wheels are always an advantage as being unsprung mass any weight saving here makes a big difference. But lightness is useless if there's no strength – and these Talon wheels have strength. They got a real bashing at the Tref, where there was a lot of rock work but the rims never dented and both still run true.

3 BRAKE LIKE BATMAN

If you want to ride fast you'll need to stop fast too, so again this is a no-compromise set-up. I've gone for Braking's Batfly discs front and rear. The front is a 270mm oversize disc kit (that comes with caliper relocation bracket and CM46 brake pads). The rear is the stock 220mm diameter. The tech behind the Batflys is they have grooves on both surfaces of the disc, but offset so one side's groove alternates with the others. This, Braking says, improves heat dissipation and gives better progression in the brake performance. For me they're a great never-fade set-up.

4 DAMPER (steering damper – not the unleavened loaf)

My (and the large majority of riders') preference when it comes to fitting a steering damper is Scotts Performance – they are the gold standard. I opted for the rubber-damped under-bar mount and stabiliser. I typically use the KTM PHDS clamps that raise the bars anyway so the BRP (Billet Racing Products) rubber sub-mount kit simply replaces the



PHDS without affecting the bar height. like the sub-mount for many reasons but the main one is to protect my face! I face-planted a top-mount some 10 years back and now I know better.

Fitting is not easy – you'll need the help of a mate or two if like me you drop the steering stem with forks and wheel in place – but take your time and it's all quite straight forward. I fitted an oversize adjuster and cable guide to finish off the setup. This helps keep things tidy and stops the cable chaffing (and eventually) wearing away the casing of the damper. The oversize adjuster allows you to make adjustments while riding rather than having to stop and use the screw type adjuster that comes stock.

Not everyone likes a damper, they're not cheap and of course the bike runs perfectly well without one. But in riding rallies and long distance enduros these are long days and typically over faster terrain, so I value the added security the damper brings (less chance of swapping – tank slappers) and the energy saving that comes from not fighting the handlebars is always worthwhile.



200

PROTECTION

We all know the importance of being properly protected... I'm sure I'm not alone on this one – being caught with your pants down in the middle of nowhere (so to speak). Broken levers, smashed pipe, broken engine casing, mangled brake rotors or calipers is not a place anyone of us wants to be. Avoiding those race-ending mishaps or simply ensuring that your not re-enacting MacGyver out on the trail is the reason I reject the 'penny wise and pound foolish' approach to protection.

If a breakdown can be avoided – then I'm going to do my best to do so.

Here's my tRUSTed protection package. It remains pretty constant on all of our race bikes – once you find something that works stick with it.

1 THE NO-FAIL OPTION

It's always and only ARC for me when it comes to levers. These babies are pretty pricey if you look at them in comparison to a set of OEM or similar levers. At around £100 a set you need to take a deep breath when you reach for your wallet, but – and this is a very big but – they are lifetime guaranteed. Since I switched to using them I have never had the need to replace a single lever on any bike – ever. So if I do a little math and multiply the number of offs I've had in a year (loads) and factor at least a 40% chance of breaking a lever (I'm being very generous here – ask JB, when I get off I like to do so in spectacular fashion) I would go through at least three to four sets of levers in a season at say £20 each. That's almost a payback of the cost of the ARC levers in a single season (or in my case it would be way less). Of course this doesn't take into account the faff, shipping and potential MacGyver antics out on the trail.

So for me this is a sensible and safe option to not ever having to carry spare levers again, ever. I chose the memlon composite option, the fit and feel is excellent – the peace of mind sublime. If you don't believe me then check out nearly every top motocross rider's handlebars and you'll see that the majority of them sport ARC levers.

2 ARE YOU MAN OR MOOSE?

For a maximum protection bash plate I spec'd the Moose Eline carbon fibre skid plate. More often than not I'm a P3 carbon products bloke but they don't make a full cover skid plate for the 200 so I went for the Moose Racing alternative. Given that it didn't make it in time for the Tref (I put in the order too late!) I had no choice but to use the stock aluminium one which (of course) worked just fine but I did have my concerns given the rocky terrain and the fact that the stock plate offered no protection to either the engine or clutch casings.

3 PIPE AND SLIPPERS

Damn, it's still not fitted yet (not ordered yet, for that matter) but when it is, the 200 will be wearing a P3 carbon pipe guard. I've dinged too many expansion chambers in my time not to want to put this on the 200 at the earliest opportunity!

4 BAT PROTECTION SOCIETY

For rear brake disc protection I fit Bullet Proof Designs' shark-fin. I love this product, again a trusted piece of kit, its comparatively light (7.9oz) and as it uses the stock brake carrier its really easy to install. The fin is made from a single billet of 6061 aluminium for max strength and rigidity and comes with a lifetime guarantee – the chaps at BPD will replace the entire guard if you damage it. I would love to see them make a front disc guard to fit an oversize 270mm front brake rotor...



5 MORE GUARDS
Another great product: BPD's swingarm guard. This unique bit of kit removes the weak point on the KTM swinging arm where the chain guide mounts to it. This is a design weak point as the stock guard has a tendency to snap if hit by a rock or other hard obstacle. The BPD guard's leading edge helps deflect the impacts and reinforces KTM's dual chain guide mounts. Used in conjunction with a TM Design Works Factory Edition 2 chain guide, it's a combo all the top pro's use. BPD also manufactures industry-leading radiator guards that are well worth checking out – they are sleek, light and easy to fit. These will be an addition in due course to the 200 although already fitted to our TE300 long term and my FE350 rally bike.

For now I've been using a set of orange rigid radiator fins from KTM's PowerParts catalogue and (just for a little bling) added the KTM factory sticker kit to the fins. I think that they look really sweet.

6 FOR WHEN YOU NEED A LITTLE HELP...
...lift straps! Giant Loop's lift straps are always handy to have to pull you out of a sticky situation. I

love these things, they're tough and super easy to install. They're made from nylon webbing and have a tacky and comfortable rubber handle. Lift handles or pull straps are so often overlooked but I really like having them on my rides all the time. For the price, this product is a no brainer. Check out the Giant loop range of products – from adventure gear to racing products they carry a load of cool stuff.

7 HAND JOB
Gotta have hand guards. I've had to switch brands lately – Fastway no longer make the flak shields so I switched to the Moose Racing roost guards as an alternative and, post Tref, I'm really satisfied with them. They are pretty big – which is what I look for in a hand guard, but I don't like the wrap around variety and personally steer well clear of them. It may just be me, but they change the characteristics of the handling and the feel of the bars too much for my liking. Anyway with a proper aluminium throttle tube and the ARC levers I don't see any purpose for them as long as the roost guards' rigidity is solid. The Moose Racing roost guards were easy to fit and I was pleased to have found an alternative to the flak shields.

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200

PEDRO'S VERDICT



■ *Pedro Matos is a former racer and owner/guide at Horizons Adventures.*

Warrens made a lot of modifications to this 200EXC and it would be easy to judge it as simply a lot of bling. But it isn't, each modification has been made to either improve performance or as insurance against damage. It's one man's preferences and maybe we'd not all make the same choices or go to the same lengths, but that doesn't stop the end result from being a noticeable improvement over the stock bike.

And what I like is this 200 is so easy to ride, it's easy to boss, seems to totally dismiss trail carnage like it's not there and as a race bike, it makes you faster. But I think the standout feature is the suspension, which is simply marvellous. It gives you so much confidence – almost too much!

What I like is the suspension allows you to really pin the throttle, to give it 100% confident in the knowledge you won't get any unwanted surprises. It's stable and sticks to a line, but if you want to change your line you can do this so quick and accurately just by weighting of the foot pegs.

I've always said in enduro you need strong arms and a strong body, but with this suspension, well, it's like cheating! I could have done with this suspension a few years ago when I was racing seriously, it would have changed my results for sure, it is without a doubt the best suspension I have ever tried.

I like the steering damper as well, that's something I'd consider for my 350EXC-F as it really works and I like with the adjuster you can change it for the different conditions as you arrive at them. Great brakes, too – strong with good feel.

I think the overall goal is for a rider – especially a racer – is to feel like Superman on his bike, to feel confident and in control. And that's the feeling with this 200. Very nice indeed! 🍷

USEFUL CONTACTS:

ARC Memlon composite levers – www.cghimports.com
 Moose roost guards & carbon skid plate by Eline – www.partseurope.eu
 P3 carbon pipe guard and skid plate – www.p3carbon.com
 Swingarm guard and disc protection – www.bulletproofdesigns.com
 Chain guide – www.tmdesignworks.com
 Pull straps www.giantloopmoto.com
 Wheels – www.talon-eng.co.uk
 Scotts steering stabiliser – www.scottsonline.com



KYRGYZSTAN

the 'stan you never knew

Central Asia has become a popular destination for super-adventurous adventure riders. But Kyrgyzstan has been overlooked by many, until now...

words: Ryan Heath images: Mick McDonald

It is fair to say that when I told people I was travelling to Kyrgyzstan the most common reaction was, “you’re going where?” I think there was an assumption that any place that ended with ‘stan’ was not a travel destination of choice.

Travel bookshops are not bursting with Kyrgyzstan books or city destination guides to Bishkek or Osh. However despite its non-existent reputation as a travel destination it is where Mick and I found ourselves about to lead our first 14-day motorcycle tour in Central Asia.

Formerly part of the Soviet Union, Kyrgyzstan gained its independence in 1991. It is a small landlocked nation that forms part of the Silk Road. Oh, and it is absolutely spectacular! The scenery defies description. Think 6500m (19,000ft) snow capped peaks, blue alpine lakes, lush green valleys dotted with yurts, glacier fed streams, and welcoming locals.

OSH-KOSH

Our starting location was Osh, Kyrgyzstan’s second city, sitting amid the lush Ferghana valley. Given that a large part of the country is mountainous, this valley is the country’s breadbasket. It also boasts one of the largest bazaars in Central Asia.

Our first day of the tour saw us introducing our riders to the fleet of Yamaha XT600 and 660 Ténérés, the perfect bike for the rugged conditions to be experienced in Kyrgyzstan. With bikes fired up and the two support vehicles packed with lunch supplies we headed out from the Hotel Classic into the traffic of downtown Osh. We travelled southeast towards the Tajikistan border and began the ascent to the 2389m peak of Chyrych Pass. We stopped at the top and were greeted by smiling locals, happy to pose for photos (tourists being a new phenomenon here). We dropped down into the valley and through the town of Gulcha. Stopping beside



ABOUT KYRGYZSTAN



It’s a stan, surrounded by stans. While China rests along its long eastern border, Kazakhstan is to its north, Uzbekistan is to its west and Tajikistan to its south. Deeply landlocked it’s to be found about 1000km north of India and about 7000km east of Istanbul, (European) Turkey. So, it’s Central Asian and located on the historic Silk Route. At around 200,000sq.km it’s a little smaller than the UK (242,000sq.km) but a good deal more mountainous.

The population is around 6 million and the people are largely of Turkic origin (a broad demographic, which includes peoples from afar as Turkey and China – the Kyrgyz mostly coming from southern Siberia) and of Islamic religion. Having been taken into the Russian Empire in 1876, Kyrgyzstan became an independent state with the end of the Soviet Union in 1991.



a raging glacial fed river we enjoyed our first 'Compass' lunch.

After the sedate nature of the paved roads in the morning, our return trip to Osh was strictly dirt. On a path we had discovered 12 months earlier on the reconnaissance trip, we rode alongside the Kurshab River through incredible canyons and along twisting paths. The amazing scenery unfolded as we traversed the canyon and crossed narrow bridges over the raging torrent below. Slowly the canyon widened into the fertile Ferghana valley and our return to Osh. It was a great first day!

KYRGYZ HOMESTAY

Osh city traffic chaos met us early the next day as we left the city and ascended towards Jalal-Abad. After leaving the bitumen (and the liberal traffic rules) we hit the dirt again

for an afternoon of unparalleled beauty. We climbed the 3000m Kaldama Pass via a series of switchbacks overlooking green summer pastures surrounded by snow-capped peaks.

Suddenly the heat and traffic chaos was a world away. It seemed like we were the only people in the world as we slowly snaked our way to the top of the pass.

From the viewpoint of the support vehicle it was a fantastic panorama to watch 14 motorcycles twisting up the rocky path to the summit. The views from the top were breathtaking and not just because of the altitude.

A taste of Kyrgyz hospitality greeted us for the evening as we overnighed at our homestay in Kazarman. Our host, Baktygul, provided a warm bed and a fine local meal for the group. It was a

rare privilege to get a glimpse of a real local family in a real home, rather than a ubiquitous hotel room.

The next day continued to set the bar high for jaw-dropping scenery. The support vehicle rarely got past second gear as we kept stopping for one great photo after another. After breakfast we climbed a 2600m pass, in fact we spent most of the day at 2000m, crossing another 2800m pass in the afternoon. It was twisties for most of the day with sheer 1000m drops into the valley below.

All day we were greeted by smiling children who lived in the yurt camps located in the summer pastures (known as Jailoos). It was a special day and I spent most of it sitting behind the wheel smiling at the scenery. It seemed to get better and better as the day unfolded.

33 PARROTS...

So far the scenery had delivered in spades, and the next day, it went up another notch. Another 2000m pass and we were greeted by the snow-covered panorama of the Bashy Range, part of the mighty Tien Shan Range that borders China. We hit the dirt again and travelled through small towns.

Before we settled in for the evening, at the impossibly beautifully located yurt camp of Tash Rabat, we visited the magnificent 15th Century Caravanserai used by Silk Road traders.

In remarkable condition this monument sheltered a collection of traders and their animals over the ages. It sits at about 3500m and is half buried in the hillside. The sunset at the yurt camp was without comparison. The last rays of the day illuminated the 'Dragon's Teeth' (seracs)

that towered above the camp. We were bathed in a cascade of colours, brilliant blues, deep browns and lush greens. A photographer's dream!

The 33 Parrots Pass, so called because the Russian word for fear sounds much like parrot in English, will linger long in our memories. The gravel road stretched upward, the summit obscured from view as we started the ascent. The switchbacks were severe, the path turning back on itself, nearly 180 degrees, a total of, well, 33 times. I dropped the Toyota into granddaddy low gear and slowly climbed to the top.

Sitting at an altitude of just over 3000m, Song Kol is the largest body of fresh water in Kyrgyzstan. Our yurt camp sat lakeside and we celebrated our arrival with soft cheese, hard crackers and smooth red wine. The sunset over the lake was spectacular; the sun dropping behind the clouds and the lake changing colour. Wild horses ran across the horizon as the sun finally dipped behind the lake. Later in the evening our hosts lit a fire as we told stories and bonded over shots of Vodka and our mechanic's homebrew of a distillation of 27 plants! As we finally retired to our yurts for the evening we were pleased to discover the wooden stoves had been lit making our accommodation warm and inviting.

Leaving Song Kol, and traversing a pass of over 3460m with stunning views into the valley below, we stopped atop the pass where winter snow still sat roadside. Here some were inclined to carve messages into the snow and take photos, others – clearly less mature – engaged in a snowball fight.

Leaving the mountains it was now all about the lakes. We reached the shores of Issyk Kol, the second highest alpine lake in the world. The name means 'warm lake', so

named as even though it is surrounded by snow capped peaks it never freezes.

As we rode alongside the lake in the afternoon we passed small beach resorts. Inflatable rings, beach umbrellas and children splashing in the water suddenly replaced the yurt camps and alpine peaks of the last week.

The next day we were off the bikes but the adventure did not stop. Early in the morning we boarded two former Russian army trucks that transported us to the stunning alpine valley of Altyn Arashan.



It was only a short 14km trip, but took over two hours given the steep and rocky terrain. The trucks bounced over enormous boulders, while hugging a path with steep drops down to a raging, freezing river below.

Once we arrived at our yurt camp for the evening, some chose to hike the surrounding hills, while others indulged in the more relaxing option of the hot springs. We dropped into the warm pool to ease our muscles still twitching from the truck trip. In the evening we were treated to a rainbow and then the sound of thunder, emanating in the mountains that border



China and reverberating down the valley. Our yurts kept us warm in the evening.

...AND SEVEN BULLS

Our next riding day saw us travelling up the canyon of Jeti-Orghuz. We parked the bikes in front of the 'seven bulls' an outstanding natural rock formation. Most could only count five bulls, but who wants to be a critic in such a beautiful location?

The highlight of the next day was an eagle hunting display. Nursaltan, our 21-year-old eagle wrangler, comes from a long line of eagle handlers. The display is much more than just a show for the tourists. It is an intrinsic link to the days of Genghis Khan where the practice of eagle hunting is thought to have originated. Nursaltan firstly allowed us to slip on a heavy-duty glove then placed the eagle on our arms. It is heavy, and big, and looks even bigger when it spreads its wings. After capturing the moment on cameras and iPhones, the eagle swooped into action.

Our intrepid young handler took the eagle up into the hills and it was released to seek and pounce on an old fox skin, all dramatic and quite harmless. But then, a live rabbit was placed on the ground and jumped about as the eagle lined it up from a great height. He dropped on the unsuspecting animal, spread his wings and sat patiently. The young handler then intervened, disentangling the rabbit from the talons, and letting it hop away, somewhat shaken. So no animals were hurt in the making of this demonstration!

The following morning we were off again, riding along the shore of Issyk Kol, winding our way slowly to the capital Bishkek. As the crew prepared lunch the group wandered through petroglyphs (rock carvings) dating from 1500BC.

Our hotel that night was in an impossibly beautiful location. The Oson Hotel sits deep in the Chychkan Gorge alongside the glacier fed roaring Chychkan River. We proved to be the tourist attraction when we arrived, greeted by an enthusiastic group of locals who snapped photos of our bikes and us. This was the reaction all over the country when our group of 14 motorcycles arrived in any village. We proved to be rare sight in this country that has yet to be touched by mainstream tourism.

WALNUT GROVE!

Our penultimate day saw us riding along the shores of Toktogul Lake and the banks of the mighty Naryn River through a barren landscape of red-walled canyons and valleys. This proved to be yet again a completely different landscape to that we have experienced thus far.

We descended into the Ferghana Valley and rode alongside the Uzbek border fence, running the gauntlet of corrupt police with well-hidden speed cameras before ascending to the cool climes of Arslanbob. This almost 100% Uzbek populated village is home to the world's last remaining relic walnut grove.

Our final homestay was a rare delight. We shared a meal with our Uzbek hosts and spent the night in their home before our trip to the walnut grove. We all climbed into ancient Russian built UAZ 4x4s and bumped and ground up the stony path to the grove, then walked to a panoramic point overlooking the valley and the soaring surrounding mountains.

Later we visited some waterfalls where the locals gather under the spray to cool down on hot afternoons. The path to the falls is surrounded by a local market and fair. You could buy colourful jewellery,



▷ water pistols, and fruit. You could also test your strength on a punching bag, throw darts at balloons, or climb a rope ladder.

It was amazing to finish the trip with a true local experience. Although the mountains and valleys are spectacular the true beauty of this country is in its people. At first glance they seem quiet and reserved but after spending some time they reveal themselves to be welcoming and hospitable. They are proud of their country, and rightfully so.

We finished our trip by riding back into Osh late in the afternoon on day 14. The trip had exceeded expectations both in terms of the natural beauty and the people. This country is yet to be ‘discovered’ but based upon our experiences, it will not take long.

We are lucky at Compass Expeditions to travel to some amazing destinations but the raw beauty of this country still left us in awe. In a world where Lonely Planet has a guidebook for every location – except Kyrgyzstan – this country remains wild, rugged and undiscovered. It is an epic destination in every sense of the word. And there is no better way to explore this country, it’s mountains, it’s switchbacks and it’s people, than from the seat of a motorcycle! 🇰🇬

ABOUT COMPASS EXPEDITIONS

Based in Australia, created in 2007 by four adventure-enthusiast mates who had in 2005 ridden London to Vladivostok. Having started with five bikes and a Toyota Landcruiser and a tour to Patagonia, they now operate tours in 40 countries across four continents and also offer training, bike rental and self-guided tour options.

For more information see:

<https://www.compassexpeditions.com>

For further details about the **Compass Expeditions Kyrgyzstan Explorer tour** see: <http://www.compassexpeditions.com/tours/kyrgyzstan-explorer/>





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