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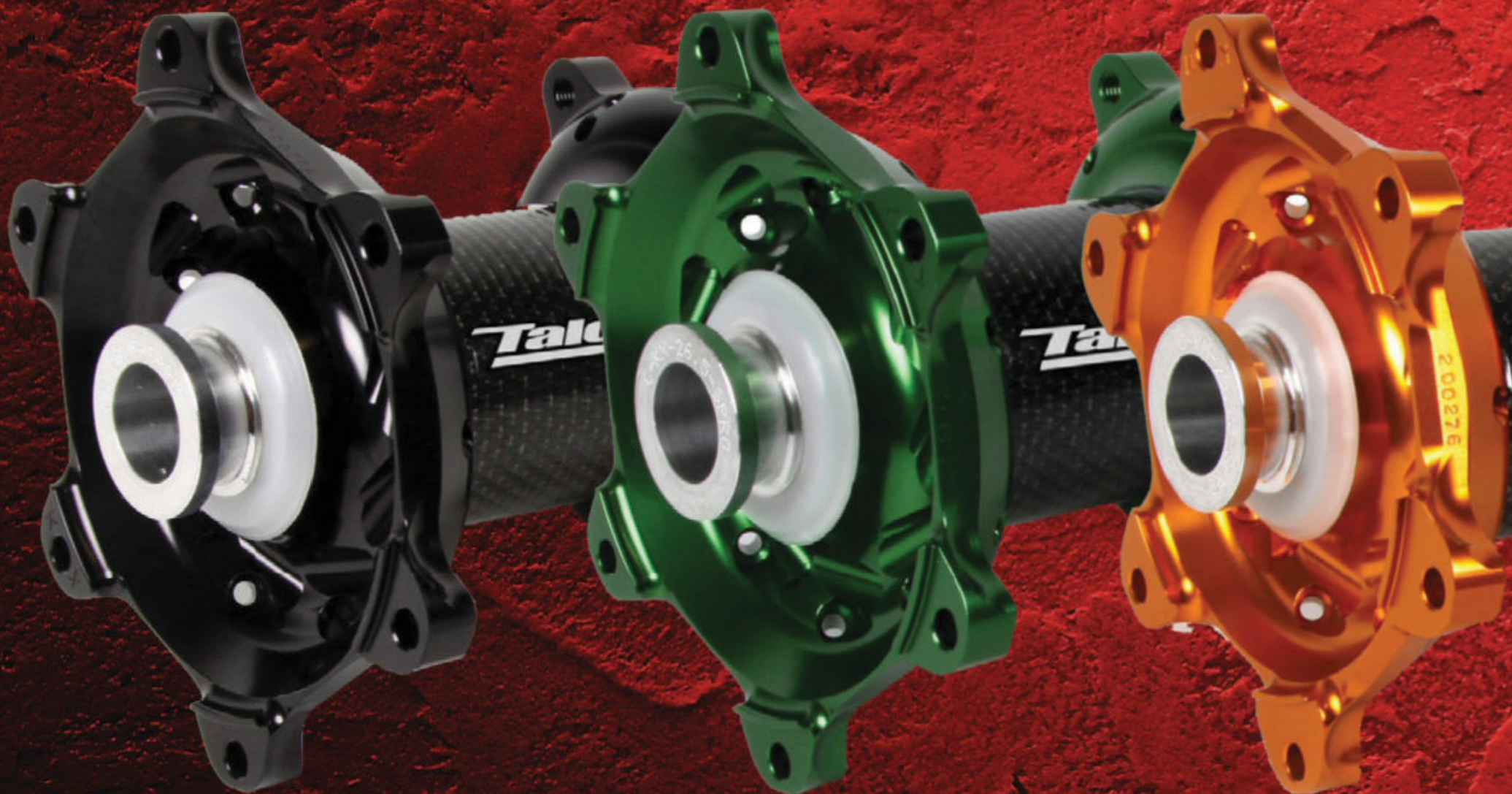


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of stages nearly two hours
before they predicted”*
TOBY PRICE



April 2020

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ADBMagazine

RINALDO EXPLAINS HIS GAMBLE



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STRONG HEAD GAME

FOR THIS ISSUE I interviewed all five Aussies who competed in the 2020 Dakar Rally. They all had an epic story to tell but I was unsure how I should approach my chat with Toby Price. I've known Toby since 2009 when he nearly knocked me over at the Australian Four-Day Enduro while piloting a Kawasaki KX450F. Since then, the likeable Aussie off-road freak has always found the time to stop for a chat whenever our paths crossed.

I was the first person to surf with him when he returned from his horrific neck injury and I actually ended up conducting an interview with him out on the water! Figured it was probably the only thing I could show him how to do. Despite what I would consider a pretty friendly relationship, I was still unsure how to pose the question about that fateful day when he attempted to save Paulo Goncalves' life.

To an ordinary man, experiencing something as horrific as Pricey did would shut them down, but Pricey is no ordinary man. When the conversation turned to that fateful day, Pricey was calm, respectful and enlightening. As you will read in the interview on page 42, Price found it hard to continue



WHAT PRICE WENT THROUGH IS TRULY HORRIFIC AND PROVIDING THAT LEVEL OF DETAIL REGARDING SOMETHING SO HORRIFIC IS UNHEALTHY

riding that day's stage. I can only imagine the games his head would have been playing on him.

To muster the mental and emotional strength to get back on your bike and twist the throttle as hard as you can is a credit to Price's determination and strong mindset. He went into more detail about what he thinks happened to Paulo, how hard it was waiting for the

helicopter to arrive, the feeling of helplessness and then the struggle of getting back on the bike.

But I didn't think it was appropriate to report everything out of respect for Paulo and also because what Price went through is truly horrific and providing that level of detail regarding something so horrific is unhealthy. The Aussies competing in the Africa Eco Race (page 16) went through similar depravations with serious accidents, lack of sleep and food shortages. If you want to know what it takes to have the mental fortitude of racers like Pricey, check out what Stephen Gall has to say about how riders prepare for race day mentally on page 34. Toby even gets a mention there.

In less sombre news, the Myrtleford Rally is locked in again for 2020! The ride will now be conducted in mid-September, so it looks like the surface should be a little less slippery than the snowy conditions we saw last year! Organisers have a bunch of awesome giveaways and, of course, more of that awesome alpine singletrack goodness. And, don't forget to stay the night and hit the afterparty, it's always a wild night!



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DIRT BIKE

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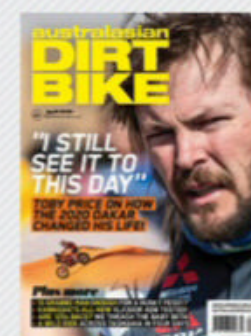
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ON THE COVER

The day that Paulo Goncalves died is one that Toby Price will never forget.

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CLOUT'S OUR MAN

LUKE MAKES HAY AS AUSSIE RANKS HIT BY INJURY

LUKE CLOUT LOOKS set to be our main man in the AMA Supercross Championship this year after getting the all-clear to race the remainder of the 250SX West series. Injuries have decimated the Aussie ranks, with Jett Lawrence and his older brother Hunter currently out of the running.

Hunter was due to make his American supercross debut for Geico Honda in the opening round of 250SX East in Tampa, Florida, but that's been further delayed as he recovers from shoulder surgery. Jett has until March 28 for his collarbone to heal before hostilities resume in the 250SX West championship in Seattle, Washington.

Penrite Honda's Clout was due to head home for the opening round of the MX Nationals, along with a number of other Aussie riders. But after an

impressive performance for second in the domestic supercross series riding a YZ450F for CDR Yamaha, Clout has lifted his game even further for his new team and was sitting seventh in 250SX West heading into the championship break.

The New South Welshman's best result on the CRF250F came in Oakland, where he finished fifth in the Main Event. "It makes sense to leave Luke in America, he's getting more comfortable each week on the 250," said Penrite Honda team boss Yarrive Konsky. "He is committed to the program here and we hope the momentum will pay off.

HOPED FOR

"We have a strong program back in Australia with Brett Metcalfe and Kyle Webster for motocross and will announce our full supercross program in the coming

months." Clout is rapt to be riding the full AMA series and admits it is more than he'd hoped for going into the season.

"I didn't know how this would go down. I was originally doing three or four rounds out of a van. This is my dream and I believe we will only get better. I will be home later this year to race the Australian Supercross Championship."

Yamaha rider Aaron Tanti raced the opening six rounds of 250SX West and was 14th in the championship when he returned home. The New South Welshman made five of the six Main Events, only failing to qualify for Anaheim 1 after crashing in his heat and Last Chance Qualifier. Tanti's best result was ninth in Oakland, not far behind Clout.

The Serco Yamaha team rider was positive about his short stint in the States, saying on Instagram: "Well

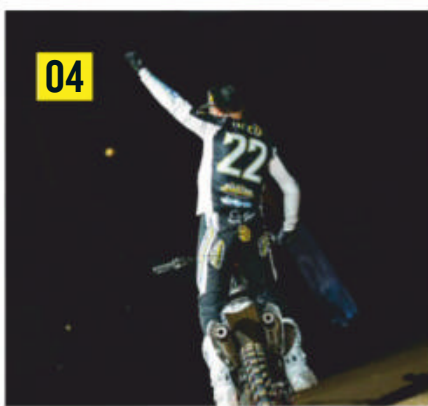
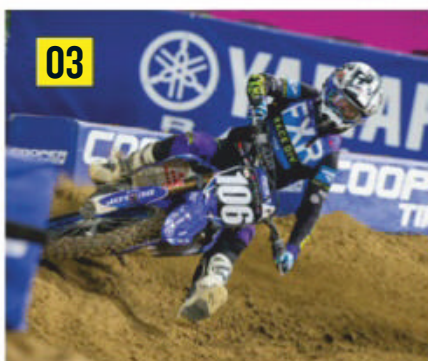
that's a wrap to my USA trip, competing in the first six rounds of the AMA Supercross Championship. Made five out of six Mains and scored a ninth overall so definitely ticked some goals for my first AMA Supercross races. Can't thank everyone who made this trip possible enough!"

Queenslander Jay Wilson raced five of the six opening 250SX West Coast rounds, the Yamalube Racing rider opting to miss St Louis to allow his body to recover from a small injury picked up during practice before A1. The 2018 Australian SX2 Champion was 16th overall after round six with a best finish of 11th in San Diego.

Jett was the talk of the industry following stand-out performances at the opening three rounds. Unfortunately, the Geico Honda rider crashed on the last lap of the A2 Main Event while battling for the lead with defending



Aaron Tanti recovered from a nervous start at the Anaheim 1 round



1. Clout has kept a cool head in the highly competitive 250SX class
2. Luke might be looking good for the injury-ravaged Geico team
3. Jay Wilson missed St Louis to recover from injury
4. Chad finished a disappointed 19th at the Tampa, Florida, round and was 19th in the points

champion Dylan Ferrandis. The 16-year-old had surgery on his broken collarbone to be healthy in time for Seattle.

Reed had a tough start to his final season as a pro. The 37-year-old entered the season with injured ribs from his crash at the Paris Supercross and has not looked himself on the bike. The Mountain Motorsports Honda rider was 19th in the 450SX championship after Tampa. Check out Reed's column on Page 31 for the inside scoop on his situation.

Yamaha's Ferrandis led 250SX West going into the break with three Main Event wins to his name. As the 450 class began its sweep of the country at Raymond James Stadium in Tampa, factory Kawasaki's Eli Tomac took over the lead of 450SX from Honda's Ken Roczen, but by only four points. Defending champion Cooper Webb is third, seven points behind Roczen.

Shane McElrath, Star Yamaha Racing, scored a dominant victory in the opening round of 250SX East at the same venue from Geico Honda's Chase Sexton and Jeremy Martin. Check out Hunter's column on page 32 for the latest on his medical dramas.



KTM ADDS NEW BLOOD

KTM ENDURO RACING Team has announced its line-up for the Australian Off-Road Championship after signing a young motocrosser. Not surprisingly, Daniel Milner is returning to defend his E2 championship but alongside him will be Mason Semmens, competing in E1.

At 28, Milner, has enjoyed a lengthy and storied career and this will be his fourth straight year with the factory KTM organisation as he climbs aboard another 450EXC-F, after starting last season on a 350. Semmens on the other hand, is just 18 and jumping into his first full season of off-road racing after making the transition from motocross.

Despite his relative inexperience, the Victorian impressed at Hattah last year, showing great off-road racing potential with a win in the Under-19 class during a season in which he raced both MXD and EJ for Davey Motorsports KTM and he will be attempting to lock down the E1 title at his first attempt. Both Semmens and Milner will also compete in the Australian Four-

Day Enduro and Hattah.

On the administrative side, former AORC rider Scott Keegan has been hired to take the role of team coordinator. Keegan will work closely with enduro legend Glenn Kearney, who holds the role of KTM Group motorsport manager in Australia, which also covers Husky.

Keegan said he was "super happy to be involved with the KTM Enduro Racing Team and to work with KTM Group this season".

Milner said: "I'm very excited for this season, being my fourth year with KERT and we're obviously on the new 2020 models ... I'll still be on the 450EXC-F and I am confident in the package we have put together for the new season. I am ready to go racing."

Semmens admitted it would be a massive learning year for him in the AORC and Four-Day. "I have done quite a few off-road races before and have always raced Hattah, so it's not completely new to me, but it will be an important year for my career and I am grateful for the opportunity," he said.

The season was due to get underway after this issue of ADB went to press, with the opening rounds of the AORC in Toowoomba, Queensland, on February 22-23.



AUSSIIES ENDURE ECO RACE



A HANDFUL OF crazy Australian riders and one Kiwi competed in the 11th Africa Eco Race. The event is an annual cross-country rally that retraces much of the path of the original Paris-Dakar. Over 12 gruelling stages, riders navigate more than 6500km across Morocco, Western Sahara and Mauritania before finishing in Dakar, Senegal.

Matt Sunderland (top right and middle) rode for the Lyndon Poskitt Racing team and finished seventh overall on his KTM, with a win on Stage 6. "I'm very grateful to have crossed the finish line," the Vancouver-based Victorian

said on Facebook.

"This race has so much history and to be able to not only compete but finish and claim seventh position is very humbling. It was a huge learning curve and a very technical and tough race with thousands of kilometres of technical riding and navigation."

Sunderland hopes to use the experience to compete in more rally raids around the world. "This is just the beginning for me so I look forward to taking on more races in the future."

Andrew Houlihan (above) from Albury, NSW, finished 21st overall with his best stage

result being 13th in Stage 7. Houlihan overcame life-threatening injuries sustained in the Hellas Rally in 2018 to compete. On Instagram, he said: "Two weeks of racing through Morocco, Mauritania and finishing in Dakar. I came with no expectations other than to finish safely. Towards the end of the race I started to cramp badly in my right hand and could hardly hang onto the bike."

Houlihan said the days were long and he, like every other rider, was running on very little sleep and food. "Every day at some stage I would ask myself, why am I doing this? There were some serious accidents,

riders stuck in the dunes for 24 hours. They call the Africa Eco Race, 'The Real Race To Dakar' for a reason."

Racing for the Desert Rose Race Team, Pete Caldwell (above) finished 36th overall, despite a somewhat serious crash. His best day's result were 11th in Stages 2 and 5. Also riding for Desert Rose, Kiwi Edward Lines finished 34th overall.

Italian Yamaha rider Alessandro Botturi won the event aboard his WR450F Rally. He claimed victory by almost four minutes over closest rival, Pal Anders Ullevalseter (KTM).



WILKSCH JOINS HUSKY

THE HUSQVARNA ENDURO Racing Team has revealed its line-up for the Australian Off-Road Championship with reigning E3 Champion Daniel 'Chucky' Sanders returning on the Husqvarna FE501 and new recruit Andy Wilksch representing the Austrian manufacturer in E2.

The Victorian pair will be mentored by Ben Grabham. The ADB tester has worked with Sanders for a number of years and hopes to continue to improve his results.

"We've got two exciting riders and I have a really good history with 'Chucky' that goes back to 2014. He won the AORC outright last year, so the goal is to go back-to-back with that, but he hasn't won an A4DE outright yet so we're working towards that as well. Andy has always been competitive and is very capable, so we are really excited to work with him this season," Grabbo said.

Sanders, 25, is excited about the new approach taken by the team and was comfortable with



his preparation leading in to the first rounds in Toowoomba, Qld. "I think we're in a good spot, other than some injuries coming into the

season, but I'm feeling good on the 2020 FE501 and we're making steps forward. I'm looking forward to starting the season off and ramping it up during the year."

For Wilksch, landing a ride with the HERT outfit is a dream come true and he hopes to capitalise on it. "I'm just excited for the opportunity to learn as much as I can from some top-level people and, hopefully, I can further my career on the Husqvarna FE450." Unfortunately, the former Sherco rider has landed in a world of hurt and was not expected to ride in Toowoomba. The 23-year-old fractured his lowest vertebra in a crash while practicing and was not expected to be ready to race until rounds three and four in Dungog, 14-15 March.

CESSNOCK TO HOST KMX FINAL



THE REBUILT CESSNOCK Motocross Club will host the NSW King of MX Final on 6-8 June. Boasting a new 40-gate start, the track has been significantly rebuilt over the summer to improve rider safety while encouraging close racing.

Motorcycling NSW CEO Dave Cooke is excited by the move from Nowra and says the growth of King of MX has forced organisers to secure new tracks. "Finding host venues for the final is actually very difficult, simply due to the size of the event.

"The King of MX has become so successful in its first two

years it has actually outgrown some of our venues as we need so much space for competitors and spectators. With the work Cessnock has put in over summer, they are now capable of pulling this off for us."

KMX qualifiers are still taking place around the state. By the time you read this, the Bega and Narrabri qualifiers will have been run but there is still the opportunity to qualify at Bathurst (14-15 March), Wagga Wagga (28-29 March), Lake Macquarie (18-19 April) or Dargle (9-10 May). Visit kingofmx.com.au for entry details.

TRI-NATIONS CUP COMES TO NATS

THE FIRST OCEANIA Junior Motocross Tri-Nations Cup will be held in Horsham, Vic, from 4-5 April. The countries competing will be Australia, New Zealand and France in teams with up to 10 riders aged between 13 and 17 riding 125cc bikes. It will be part of the racing at rounds one and two of the MX Nationals at Horsham, which has already hosted the JMX world titles.



SNODDY'S SPRINT

LYNDON SNODGRASS HAS won the Pro2 class at the opening round of the Full Gas Sprint Enduro Series for the Babbitts Kawasaki Off-Road team. The Victorian finished fourth outright while his veteran Aussie teammate, Josh Strang, finished fourth in Pro.

Defending champion Kailub Russell (KTM) won in convincing fashion over Ricky Russell (Husky) and Layne Michael.

Husqvarna rider Tayla Jones kicked off her Women's Pro class title defence with wins on both days over Becca Sheets.



YAMAHA PRICES FOR MY20

YAMAHA HAS ANNOUNCED the arrival of its 2020 off-road range, bringing with it the introduction of rideaway pricing. The revamped MY20 WR250F has a recommended retail price of \$12,545, with a recommended rideaway price of \$13,999.

The WR250F has inherited all the tech introduced on last year's YZ250F and WR450F, meaning you don't need a Power Tuner as wifi tuning is now possible via the Yamaha Power Tuner App.

You can read our test of the latest WR250F in our brilliant May issue, #488, which goes on sale on Monday, April 6.

The WR450F has an RRP of \$13,565, with a rideaway of \$15,199.

If you live in a state with rec reg provisions, the Yamaha YZ-FX range might be of interest to you. The 2020 YZ250FX will set you back \$12,647 (\$12,999 rideaway).



Its bigger brother, the YZ450FX is \$13,871 (\$14,199 rideaway). This price includes the lighting kit and horn.

The YZ-FX range is largely based on the YZ motocrossers but comes with enduro-specific features like a sidestand, softer suspension, engine tuning for off-road racing, an 18-inch rear wheel and O-ring chain.

VINTAGE ENDURO RETURNS

THE AUSTRALIAN THREE-DAY Vintage Enduro is returning after its successful debut last year. Vintage Enduro Riders Inc (VERi) is taking the event back to Blackwood, Vic, from 21-24 May. Hardworking VERi secretary and vinduro tragic Peter Drakeford has been hard at work with planning since the first event.

"I think everybody was pretty stunned and surprised in terms of how the event went so smoothly," he said. The A3VE will again have four primary classes: V1 (early trail/enduro models), V2 (open to 1979 models and older), V3 (open to all 1983 models and older) and V4, which accommodates 1987 models and earlier.

There are several support



classes, including VU for Under-40s riders, VW for women and VR, which is a non-competitive rally class. Any questions about eligibility of bikes for the event can be directed to eligibility@veriendo.com. Competition riders can register through Ridersnet, Motorcycling Australia's online licensing and events system. Non-competitive rally riders must complete an online form on VERi's website.

MAXXIS & PIRELLI RACE PROGRAMS



PIRELLI AND MAXXIS have announced tyre contingency programs. Pirelli fans can win a set of Scorpion MX32 tyres at rounds of the NSW East Coast MX Series and Sunshine State MX Championships if they take a win while using a set of hoops from the Scorpion MX range. All the rider has to do to win is take an image of the winning bike, prepare a brief race report and send it to Link Internationals' website to be approved so that the free tyres can be delivered.

Meanwhile, Maxxis is running

things a little differently. Calling its program Maxxis Money, the distributor has \$30,000 up for grabs that will be dished out depending on finishing positions. All a rider has to do is use Maxxis tyres and then come in either first or second to win cash at each round of the Sunshine State MX Titles, New South Wales' King of MX Titles or the Gippsland Motocross Series. Overall round winners can win a maximum of \$100 while second overall is good for \$50 max. The amounts will depend on the classes.

BOLTING HOME

HUSQVARNA FACTORY TEAM'S Billy Bolt blitzed his competition at the penultimate round of the Super Enduro World Championship in Hungary. The British rider won two of the three Main Events to collect the overall ahead of countryman Jonny Walker. Walker, riding for KTM, won the opening main but couldn't repeat his performance.

Bolt proved consistent and managed to walk away with the win and the championship lead with only one round remaining. "I came here wanting to show a new me," said Bolt. "I picked the right moments to attack and was able to win both races comfortably. We've got a healthy lead now heading into the final round in Poland, where hopefully we can take this world title."



Walker was positive about his result, saying he was happy with his progress. "I'd been waiting for a ride like I had in race one for a while now. Things just sort of clicked and came together and I was able to make it count for the win."

"It was brilliant to get a win under my belt again. Overall, it's been a strong night and I've again shown myself as one of the championship's strongest riders."

Third went to Walker's teammate Taddy Blazusiak, who'll be riding for Gas Gas in the WESS World Series. The Polish rider is second in the championship, 18-points behind Bolt but 17 points clear of Walker. Normally the fastest on the night, Blazusiak was disappointed with his performance.

READY TO RACE
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KTM 300 EXC TPI

KTM Factory Riders are continually shifting the boundaries of possibility. Their demands have resulted in a new generation of complete high-performance enduro machines that offer outstanding handling and agility, improved ease of use and efficient power delivery across the whole rev range. The new generation KTM 300 EXC TPI is a race-refined machine of the highest caliber, built to conquer every challenge in your journey to the top.

Please make no attempt to imitate the illustrated riding scenes, always wear protective clothing and observe the applicable provisions of the road traffic regulations! The illustrated vehicles may vary in selected details from the production models and some illustrations feature optional equipment available at additional cost.

KTM



Kowen
Forest
Ride



KOWEN AHEAD!

NEITHER FIRES, FLOODS nor pestilence can stop the 2020 Kowen Forest Ride. Despite catastrophic conflagrations that scorched the forests and farms around Canberra, claiming several lives, followed by downpours that flooded much of the east coast, the volunteers of the DSMRA have confirmed the pine plantation still stands. Which is good news for trailriders in the mood for endless singletrack.

The start to 2020 has been devastating for many communities and the guys at the DSMRA want to give you a break. So book a trip away to carve up over 100km of primo singey on 3-5 April.

On the outskirts of Queanbeyan, not far from

Canberra, the Kowen plantation provides an ideal platform for singletrack that's mostly dark loam, but with tree roots and rocks to keep you awake.

The forest remains closed for most of the year and is only open to riders on this occasion, so you'll get to experience what is some of the best singletrack in Oz.

LOOPS

The DSMRA cuts these trails by hand and they're all mad singletrack seekers so we reckon it's some of the best in the country. The Kowen Forest got over 200mm of rain in February, with more predicted for March, so conditions couldn't be better.

The tracks are divided into

three loops, varying in length and difficulty. Plus, there will be a beginners' loop and a demo track where you can test new KTM enduro models from Canberra Motorcycle Centre.

The camping area will have a selection of food vendors where you can pick up some grub and beers after a day on the bike. Saturday night will feature an FMX show by the Freestyle Kings and, as always, there will be the mega raffle in which you can win a host of gear. Plus, you could take home one of three major prizes, which this year are a KTM 500EXC-F for first, a KTM 300EXC for second and a SX-E5 electric bike for third — that's the new electric kids' bike that's perfect for keeping the politicians happy!

THE DETAILS

Cost: \$220

WHAT'S INCLUDED?

- Over 100km of marked trails
- Three loops, plus beginners' and demo tracks
- Camping
- A year's membership of the DSMRA
- Six-month subscription to *ADB*
- Free meal
- Saturday night entertainment by the Freestyle Kings
- One raffle entry for your chance to win one of three new KTMs plus a host of other prizes.

WHERE

- Kowen Forest, Queanbeyan

WHEN

3/4/5 April - Gates opening Friday afternoon so you can set-up your palatial campsite.

HOW TO REGISTER

dsmra.asn.au/kowen



WIN
THIS!



NIGHT RIDE

The DSMRA is excited to announce it is going to open the trails on the Friday at 7pm for a night ride! A quarter of one of the loops will be opened and lined with Halloween-style goodies like glow-in-the-dark skeletons and lit-up pumpkins to mark the way. The glow-in-the-dark stuff and reflective arrows will keep you from getting lost. The loop will close at 10pm and numbers will be limited to 300 nutters. Night-ride tickets are \$70 extra and the money will go towards buying 1000-lumen lights for the participants.



JUST1 MORE HILL!

US HARD-ENDURO junkies at ADB are introducing something new to Kowen this year, an extreme section where the first rider to make it will win a set of Just1 riding gear. This includes a Just1 jersey, pants and gloves, Just1 J12 helmet, AX0 Drone boots [no, they don't fly] and a pair of Scott Prospect goggles. The next nine riders to make it up will win a pair of Fury goggles — all thanks to our mates at Ficeda Accessories.

Top of the Goss

BITE-SIZED BANTER TO TAKE TO YOUR WATERING HOLE



HONDA NO GO

YOU SEE ALL the 250SX riders in this photo? Well, while they're good at signing autographs they aren't so good at staying out of hospital. Unfortunately they found themselves restricted to Texta training. Because there weren't any factory Geico Honda riders on the track, the team generously opened up the truck for fans to have a walk through. Hope they didn't leave any expensive Factory Connection suspension lying around.

BEATON & EVANS STEP-UP

FACTORY HUSQVARNA RIDER Jed Beaton has put his competitors on notice after a 7-2 result at the Hawkstone International in Britain in muddy conditions. It was Beaton's first race back since injuring himself mid-way through last year. Still in Europe and keeping a close eye on our Aussies, HRC Honda rider Mitch Evans showed he will be one of the front-runners in the MX1 class of the Motocross World Championship after winning the Superchampion race of the Internazionali d'Italia Motocross Championship, beating the likes of KTM's Tony Cairoli and HRC teammate Tim Gajser.



ROCZEN'S RED HAWK

HONDA'S KEN ROCZEN carved a red mohawk into his skull for the "military appreciation" round of AMA Supercross and it made him look very angry. Would you be game enough to run that knowing it's going to get flattened every time you put your helmet on?



LAWRENCE ON THE MIC

WHILE RECOVERING FROM his collarbone injury, Honda's Jett Lawrence jumped on the mic at San Diego to commentate for some of the heat-race action. And for a 16-year-old we think he did pretty damn good!





FACTORY HONDA REVEALED

AS THEY ALWAYS do around this time of the year, Honda has revealed what could be the platform for the 2021 Honda CRF450R. Tim Gajser's HRC CRF450RW looks all-new with a hydraulic clutch, central exhaust port, new subframe mounts, single muffler, BFR Showa fork (yeah, keep dreaming) and loads more. Just have a look for yourself! Don't expect any details on the 2021 production model for at least six months but the CRF450 is overdue for its next major overhaul.

GREEN AND WILKSCH KO'D

YAMAHA MOTOR AUSTRALIA would have got the fright of their lives when their number one off-road rider posted pix of his trip to the hospital sucking on the green whistle. Fortunately, Josh Green (right) was given the all-clear but the same can't be said for former Sherco star Andy Wilksch (far right) who signed with the Husqvarna Enduro Racing Team before apparently doing a number on his spine in training. We hope you're okay, Andy!



BINK GOES BANGER

FMX SUPERSTAR AND RIPPED unit Harry Bink looks to have traded his four-stroke for a two-stroke to perform his gnarly tricks. A smart man would say he's going to ride both but we can't imagine what kind of trickery he can pull with the lighter two-banger between his legs!



HIGLETT TO FMX?

OFF-ROAD WEAPON Fraser Higlett looks to be trading in his AORC career for one in FMX after he was told by Husqvarna that his services were no longer required. On his own Husky enduro the naturally-gifted rider flipped to dirt like it was nothing! While riding in the trees is dangerous, nothing compares with FMX but when you don't have the man watching your every move why not have a little fun?

By the Numbers

680

AMA Supercross Main Events when it reached San Diego.

6

The number of times Chad Reed has won at Qualcomm Stadium, San Diego.

6

Different riders have won the seven Main Events held at Petco Park, San Diego

39

Times the race has been to San Diego

1

The number of Main Event wins defending AMA SX Champ Cooper Webb has had this year.

Did you know?

Team HRC rider Ricky Brabec was the first American to win the Dakar Rally and the first Honda rider since 1989. Brabec debuted at Dakar in 2016, the year after our very own Toby Price debuted, and recorded a ninth. He has competed in every Dakar since but, aside from 2016, the only year he has finished was this year, when he only won one stage. He won the Baja 1000 and 500 in 2014 and the San Felipe 250.

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"Today was my first race in quite a while so I was easing myself back into it. I got off to a really bad start in race one and, with the heavy rain, it was a tough opening few laps. I managed to get into a rhythm and started moving forward. It was raining the whole time so it was a bit of a miserable moto, but it was good to be racing again."

Jed Beaton after the Hawkstone International

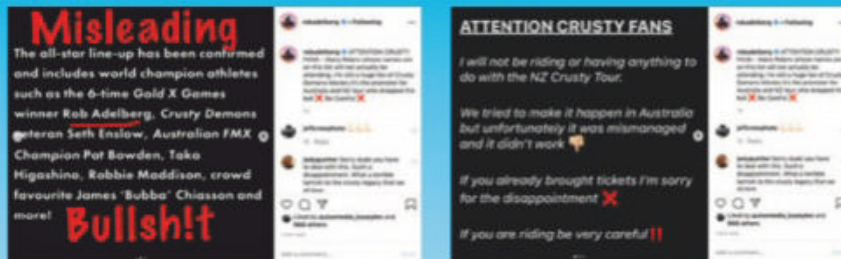
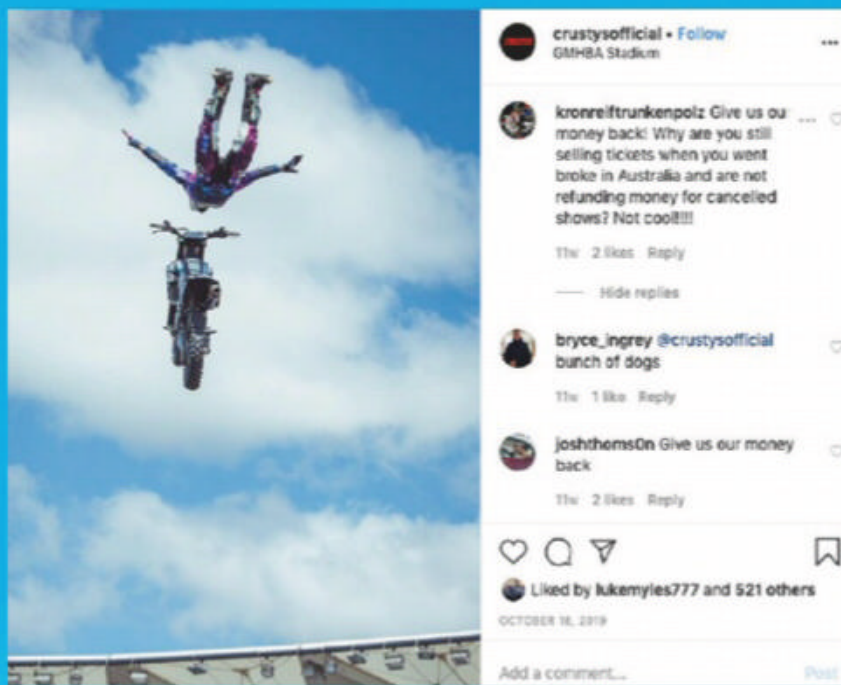
Without Fear of Failure

IT DOESN'T MATTER IF YOU'RE DAKAR CHAMPION TOBY PRICE OR THE OFFICE JUNIOR WE USED TO HAVE, THE FEAR OF FAILURE IS REAL

THE JIG IS UP!

GRAHAM JARVIS ISN'T the world's greatest hard enduro rider and a video he posted on Instagram proves it. All those photos we see of Jarvis wheelying up this and jumping down that, all lies. In the video here he is, the five-time Erzberg winner and

six-time Romaniacs champ seen faking a wheelie for a photoshoot. His rear tyre buried up to the sprocket in sand and his front being kept aloft by some tricky clutch work, or maybe some fishing line attached to a crane ... We feel betrayed.



PRETTY CRUSTY EFFORT

THE CRUSTY DEMONS have fallen further from heaven with a series of shows that left audiences looking for the exit. In fact, the promoter seems to have done such a poor job that six-time X Games Gold medalist Rob Adelberg pulled the pin on all three stops of the New Zealand leg of the show after the disastrous Aussie tour, claiming "I will not be riding or having anything to do with the NZ Crusty tour. We tried to make it happen in Australia but unfortunately it was mismanaged and didn't work".

Reports emerged late last year that shows featured lengthy interviews with riders and minimal riding time. The promoters blamed poor weather conditions.

Even the security company claim to be short changed \$8000 by promoters and were on the receiving end of many disgruntled spectators abuse when they decided to unleash their frustration. As a result riders began pulling out and the promoter looked like going into insolvency.

As we went to print tickets were still being sold but it is unknown if the events will still go ahead.





CRAIG CRUCIFIED

DYLAN FERRANDIS GAVE Americans another reason, besides being French, to hate him when the reigning 250SX champ crashed into Christian Craig during the A2 Main Event. The collision sent Craig flying in what could have been a season-ending crash, but both riders were okay.

Ferrandis was abused online for weeks following the crash. Several high-profile American and Australian riders, including Jett Lawrence, stepped in to

defend the French rider but the American fans wouldn't let up. Even three rounds later at San Diego, Ferrandis was booed after winning the 250SX Main in dominant fashion. It's nothing new though, Ferrandis and countryman Marvin Musquin have always copped it from the Yanky crowd. Had it been an American who pulled the same move on Craig, the reaction would have been very different. The AMA gave Ferrandis a 12-month probation with a fine.

BAN BAN BANG!



JUSTIN BARCIA HAS never been kind to his dirtbikes. Ever since that video of him thrashing a Honda CR125 emerged on YouTube over a decade ago it's been clear this young man has no mechanical sympathy, earning himself a reputation as a clutch and bike destroyer.

His transition to four-strokes forced him to rethink his ways as he could no longer hold the throttle wide open while airing out a jump, the engine simply couldn't handle it. Now, it seems, his old ways have crept back and, at Oakland, his

pristine Yamaha YZ450F gave up the fight.

On the final lap of his heat race while holding a transfer spot, Barcia disappeared. Moments later he's seen pushing his Yamaha YZ450F to the pits while it pumps out white smoke. His mechanics managed to swap the engine in the 15 minutes between the heat race and the Last Chance Qualifier and he made it through to the Main, where he finished sixth overall.

Apparently that thing on the right is a valve from the blown engine. Old Bam Bam is back!

NO LOVE LOST

THE FRAGILE RELATIONSHIP between Ken Roczen and Cooper Webb took another hit at the Oakland round of AMA Supercross. Roczen was holding second with one lap remaining and Webb was three seconds behind.

However, Webb put on a charge and was on Roczen's rear wheel with a few corners remaining.

Roczen must have been feeling the pressure and over-jumped a triple before the final corner, opening the door

for Webb to dive up the inside. The two riders slammed into each other but it was Webb who rode away in front, snatching second from the German rider's grasp.

Roczen was seen limping off the track and later posted photos on Instagram of his badly swollen foot.

Luckily nothing was broken. The move was a repeat of Webb's brutal last-corner pass for the 450SX win in Arlington last year, though this time it was for second.



Your Shout

HAVE A RANT, ON US, COS WE'RE NICE LIKE THAT!



CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations, Wayne. You've won a Polisport Folding Bike Stand, valued at \$119, from Link International (linkint.com.au).

SEND IN YOUR LETTERS AND YOU COULD BE OUR NEXT WINNER!



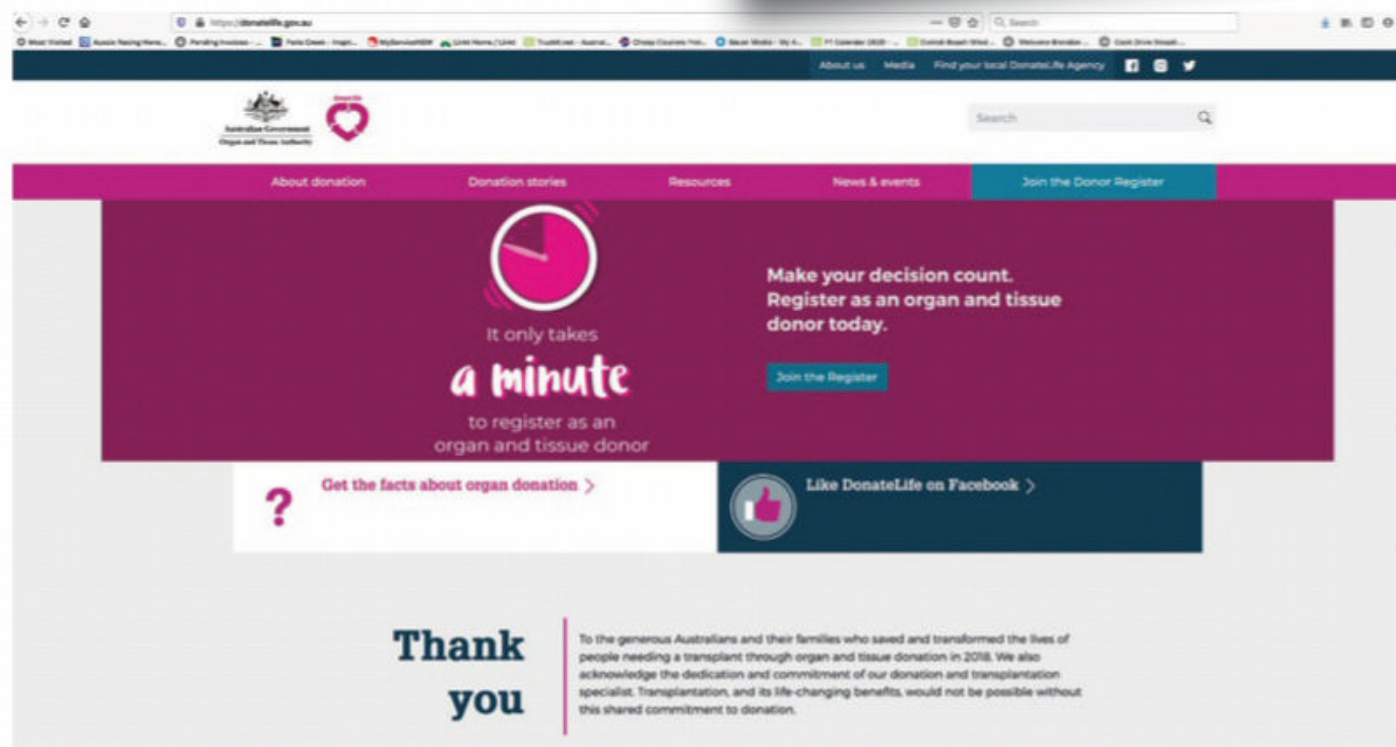
MOUTH OF THE MONTH

GIFT OF LIFE

While exercising at Hornsby Pool in November, 2017, I suffered a myocardial infarction (heart attack). I was lucky to make it to emergency and spent over three months in St Vincent's Hospital Sydney. I was 52, reasonably fit and healthy, and had no warning signs.

I came home with an LVAD (Left Ventricle Assistance device) which basically is an electric pump inserted inside the rib cavity attached to the heart with a connection to an external, rechargeable battery source.

The LVAD made it possible for me to return home to recover and I was placed on the heart transplant waiting list.



I was given a heart transplant in late March, 2018, and was one of 129 heart transplant recipients that year according to donatelife.gov.au.

My thoughts are always with my donor and their family.

Since the transplant I have worked hard to regain strength, stamina and mobility, learning how to eat and swallow again, dealing with ups and

downs and the side effects of immunosuppressant medication.

The statistics are not great for transplant recipients but I have gone back to part-time work as a motor mechanic, doing more hours as last year progressed.

What has this got to do with dirtbikes? Well, since I was a teenager, I have always enjoyed riding, fixing dirtbikes, riding

with mates, with a club and recently with my younger son, Sean. I own a 2012 Yamaha WR450F and am also doing up a YZ250W 1989 model when money allows. Sean, 14, is on a YZ85 BW.

Being able to ride again was one of my ambitions after the transplant, and in November I had the opportunity to have a ride with Sean around the enduro perimeter tracks



and the thumper circuit at Louee, near Mudgee, NSW.

There are many people to thank on my journey: my donor and their family, my wife and sons, family and friends, Hornsby Pool Lifeguards, ambulance staff, St Vincent's Hospital Sydney doctors and support staff and Hornsby Junior Dirt Bike Club.

The HJDBC and other sporting clubs show how people in the community

help each other; being part of the dirtbike community has given me some goals, with more yet to come.

My life has turned around, and I will always face new challenges, but I *will never give up*.

To be able to ride again was a great feeling. Something good has come out of someone's tragedy – I will be forever thankful to have been given a second chance. I am no

Toby Price, but the long-term enjoyment is there.

In the future I would like to start an event to acknowledge those donor families who have lost their loved ones.

I would like everyone to consider visiting the DonateLife website and registering as a donor, a simple process done online at: donatelife.gov.au. Other associations such as Australian Heart

and Lung Transplant Association or Transplant Australia are charities always looking for donations.

Wayne Broady

Wow, what a miracle Wayne! That is a really encouraging story. Stoked to hear you're back riding. We hope your letter encourages more people to register as donors to help save more lives.

PHOTO ARCHIVES

Hi guys, I love your mag. Been a huge fan for over 20 years. I was rapt with the article by Warren Jack on the "Victa Man" Ray Dole (right). In the article (ADB #479) my late father-in-law, Joe Bratby, was mentioned. He was another motorcycle nut who was out to improve and do the competitive best with what they had.

I was wondering if Ray could contact me as we have many photos, memories and questions on Joe's achievements from this era.

The family lost him unexpectedly on a fishing trip with his

mates and we have a lot to catch up on about his racing days and association with people like Ray. Thanks again to Warren and ADB for looking back on the old-school, diehard dirtbike riders from the past, and helping us to reunite would be unbelievable.

Graham Christie

Glad you enjoyed the story! There is a lot of history with our sport and Wazza loves nothing more than telling a tale of the good old days. We passed on your offer to Wazza and he'll get in touch with you and hopefully some of your questions can find their way to Ray.

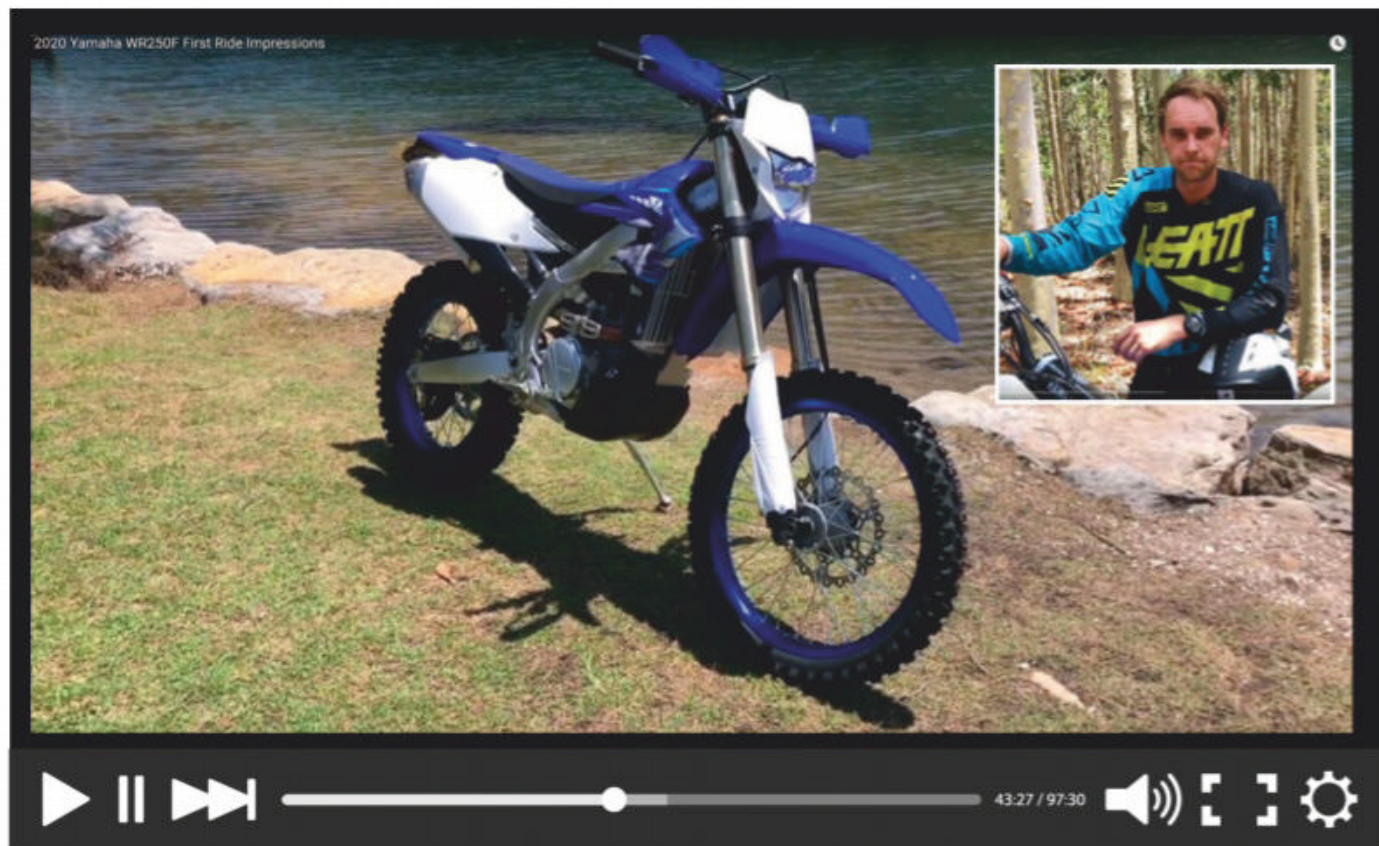


TYRE TIP

I just watched the video of the 2020 Yamaha WR250F you guys put on Facebook and Mitch Lees mentioned that the OEM tyres, (Metzeler Six Days) were not really up to par. I bought a new 2019 WR250F in October and it had Metzeler Six-Days Extremes on it. I am due for new tyres and was wondering if you guys have a couple of tyre selection choices for me.

I ride mainly rocky/dirt mix singletrack and 4WD tracks which can be muddy as hell or dry, dry dusty gravel. Any advice on some rubber choices would be much appreciated.

Love the mag by the way, you guys put out great content and I enjoy reading the reports/tips and advice you give. You should come out to Chesney Vale MX track (in-between Wangaratta and Benalla in



Vicco) and do some stories. Kawasaki rider Dylan Long rides there all the time and he is a weapon on a bike.

Peter O'Donohue

Hope you're enjoying your WR250F. They are an excellent bike. The tyres I'd run are Pirelli

Scorpions. I've had good experiences with the MX32, MX Extra and XC, but I think the MX32s are the best value for money in terms of longevity, performance and cost with the XC almost on par.

One thing I've found works best is actually to run the MX32 mid

soft on the front and MX32 mid hard on the rear. That way you get the most out of your tyres with the best traction.

Hope that helps, mate, and we'll have to come check out Chesney. I'll also add it to our list for the Action Station page of the mag. - Mitch Lees

WHAT DID I MISS?

www

1998 SUZUKI RMX250 FULL REBUILD: PT3 – FINAL REVEAL

The ADB 1998 Suzuki RMX250 rebuild project is finally finished! Tech Editor Mat Boyd has done an incredible job breathing new life into this old machine and we are stoked with how it turned out.

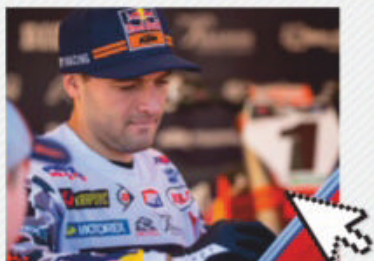
Watch the video at adbmag.com.au



FIRST THINGS FIRST EPISODE 01- COOPER WEBB

Hear from reigning AMA Supercross Champion Cooper Webb as he discusses how he got into moto.

Watch the video at adbmag.com.au



OFF OUR FACE POST OF THE MONTH

YAMAHA XT250 SERVICE

Servicing your bike when it's 40 degrees is not fun. Picked up some Amsoil Australia lubricant, so keen to see how it goes in the mighty old Yamaha XT250! Anyone still hitting trails on one of these things?

Wayne Higgs: One of the best old bikes around, loved the one I had and wish I never sold it.

Scott Boyce: I had one exactly the same, most reliable bike I ever had.

Daniel Hughes: Awesome bike. Had one I rode that much it wore the lobes of the cam. Miss that bike.

Shayne Stebbing: Good condition.



INSTAGRAM RAMBLINGS

@FRASERHIGLETT21:

Had a moment this morning and decided to crank a flip for the first time.



@JAYWILSON_6:

Wrong place, wrong time. Oakland was not our night. We got caught up trying to avoid another rider's crash and got stuck in a tuff block. Regardless of the result, we will take the lessons and get back to work.



ULTIMATE STOPPING POWER

RSI is a sinter metal compound was developed in MXGP and AMA Supercross and is currently used by the worlds best riders.

SI is a sinter metal compound with high thermal stability, so no fade, even under very extreme conditions, perfect for off-road and enduro use.

RACING	RSI	SINTERED
OFF-ROAD & ENDURO	SI	SINTERED
OFF-ROAD	HF	CERAMIC



**MADE IN
DENMARK**



Please make no attempt to imitate the illustrated riding scenes, always wear protective clothing and observe the applicable provisions of the road traffic regulations! The illustrated vehicles may vary in selected details from the production models and some illustrations feature optional equipment available at additional cost.



FC 450

THE SMART APPROACH HAS ARRIVED

In the challenging sport of motocross, the smart approach is always the most effective. A philosophy that pushes Husqvarna Motorcycles to develop innovative ways to stay in front. The latest range of 4-stroke motocross machines is an intelligent mix of premium lightweight components, smooth controllable power and outstanding on-track agility that ensure you are always one step ahead.





CHAD REED
STILL
BAD ARSE

I CAN'T BREATHE

REBROKEN RIBS WON'T HEEL

THE PAST MONTH on track has been a real struggle. When I am out there, I feel like I am breathing through a straw so, honestly, the racing side of things has not been fun for me and it came to the point where I had to sit out the Oakland round to try and heal.

I have been battling with this injury since Paris. While I had healed over the summer from the ribs I busted in Seattle I re-broke two of them in Paris and it has been a complete nightmare to come back from. I don't know if it is because the breaks were literally back-to-back, but I have been dealing with a lot of scar tissue and really struggling to get my full breath back.

Sitting out Oakland was disappointing. I always try to ride but, at 37 years of age, I had to take a step back and make a safe decision. For me it

is not about the end result as I am not racing for a title and I want to enjoy my race, get my lines right and feel like I am crushing it. When that happens I know it will be a good ride, something that I am proud of.

Off the bike is the complete opposite, it has been incredible, the reaction from the fans, sponsors, media and industry has made me proud and is the reason I am pushing so hard to get back to peak fitness.

My results at the moment

**THE RIBS I
RE-BROKE IN
PARIS HAVE BEEN
A COMPLETE
NIGHTMARE TO
COME BACK FROM**

don't reflect what I am capable of, which is frustrating. I know people are saying "he is getting old and retiring" but what they don't realise is that I am not stepping away because I feel like I am old and my time is up.

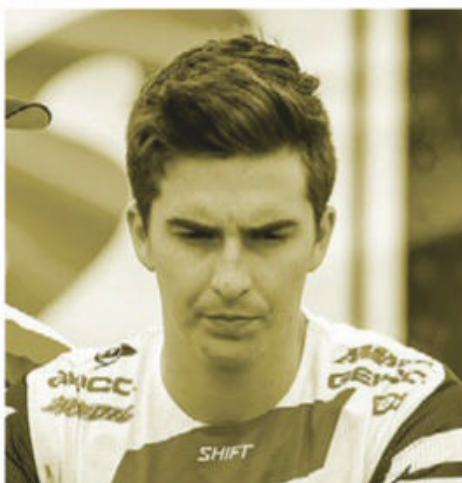
I am stepping away because I have found a passion that is higher than this and that has always been my goal. I honestly believe that if I come in healthy and in shape, the results are there. I can be in the top 10 and fighting for a place.

This final season is an emotional one for me, to race motorcycles in America at the highest level was a dream come true. I care so much about this sport; it has been a part of my life for so long so, while I am excited for next year, I know I will miss racing supercross. My passion for this sport will not just go away so I hope to remain involved in

some capacity if the right opportunity comes along.

A question I have been getting asked a lot lately is what I consider to be the biggest changes to the sport during my time. Supercross has changed a lot over the past 22 years but three things I think that had a big impact on the sport were when we went from racing two-strokes to four-strokes, the introduction of the holeshot button and, more recently, we are now seeing electronics come into play.

Finally, in wrapping up, I want to give a shout out to my incredible wife Ellie who has launched her podcast *Just Keep Talking*. It is a great insight into racing from another perspective and perfect for all you racing mums. Check it out at bit.ly/JustKeepTalking



**HUNTER
LAWRENCE**

**STRAIGHT
SHOOTER**



MORE HARD YARDS

DOC CONFINES HUNTER TO THE MTB

MOST OF YOU will have seen by now that I missed out on the first round of the 250SX East Coast series in Tampa, Florida. I'm super bummed to say it but the doctor just wasn't completely satisfied with my shoulder.

Doing the right thing right now for the long run is a hard decision but we're still working hard every day just to be 100 per cent to return to racing. I'm out in California at the moment with the fam. (Cynthia and Milo) training with Johnny O'Mara and my physio guy just by ourselves to be the best we can.

MTB every day and physio

also is tiring but worth it. This whole month has been a pretty boring one just because it's wake up, work and repeat in literally the same order haha! But it's all part of the hustle baby!

Been playing a bit of tennis also. While the in-laws were over in Florida visiting, we played tennis each afternoon and that was a good, active hobby.

Back in California with Johnny and our buddy Randy we play pickle ball!

Randy says it's like tennis but for old people hahaha! It's a smaller version of tennis with a hard ball and rectangular rackets. It's

**DOING THE RIGHT
THING RIGHT
NOW FOR THE
LONG RUN IS A
HARD DECISION**

really addictive and fun!

Last Friday we had a photoshoot with Geico Honda team sponsor Yoshimura, that was really cool. Yoshi has something in the works and I can't say much but be sure to keep an eye out for clothing aaand other new products.

Super stoked to be a part of that. Just recently had a VO2 max fitness test done just to check how we are looking physically and to see that the heart rate zones we are working are correct.

As of now we are looking really good and already at a good level, another month of building physically will have us at a very good level and it's really nice to see the hard work pay off in ways like that.

Stay tuned in the coming month to my social media page, @hunterlawrence, as we will be getting back on the bike very soon and have some good stuff coming. Until then guys, take it easy.



DEFEND YOUR VISION

NO SHORTCUTS

FURY.

The SCOTT Fury goggle is sure to shake things up. Shaped by innovation, technology and design, the Fury follows in the steps of our flagship goggle, the Prospect. Featuring our proven Lens Lock System, 3-layer face foam, no-slip silicone strap, and supporting all the same accessories as the Prospect, this goggle was developed to Defend Your Vision.

450 | SERIES



WWW.FICEDA.COM.AU





STEPHEN GALL

FIT AS A FIDDLE



If you're worrying about stuff at the gate, it's way too late

HEAD TURNER

YOU'RE ON YOUR OWN ON THIS ONE

THERE IS ONE element of race preparation that ultimately can only be taken care of by the rider themselves and that is mental preparation. Over the years, sports psychology has become just as important as physical training and preparation.

The rider must have the right thoughts in their head in order to perform to their maximum ability. Some riders tend to think about too much on race day, while others do not think about enough.

As a high-performance coach at the Motorcycling Australia AIS (Australian Institute of Sport) camps, I have found that there are hundreds of top riders with

different ideas and opinions on race-day psychology. There are, of course, some basic principles that can be employed by riders in order to mentally prepare the right way leading up to the event and during the race itself.

The day before a race, the riders will be thinking of many things during the build-up. They must trust that the mechanical preparation is exactly the way they want it and trust that their training has given them the right physical preparation.

If any of these aspects are wrong, the rider will begin to worry, their mental preparation will be upset and they will enter the race with doubts in their minds,

ultimately affecting their performance.

If a rider performed well in a previous round, then it is a good idea to think back to that round and try and analyse the things that worked and the things that didn't. Maybe they used certain riding techniques, or maybe they ate the wrong food the night before and lacked energy in the latter stages of a moto.

Maybe they worried too much on the morning of the race or maybe they felt too relaxed. They need to be able to eliminate the negatives and build on the positives in order to have a good state of mind.

When the rider arrives at the track their thoughts

really start to matter most. At this time they are surrounded by familiar faces to help build positive thoughts. The team should be positive and supportive and must avoid negativity to ensure they do not create a stressful environment for the rider. If the rider has had an argument with a partner or their parents, this can have a negative impact as they will carry anger into the race and lose focus.

The rider must also prepare for changing weather conditions. They must not talk themselves out of it or be intimidated by the conditions. They must not allow a small hiccup to disrupt their confidence and preparation.



WHEN THE RIDER ARRIVES AT THE TRACK THEIR THOUGHTS REALLY START TO MATTER MOST

The rider may not like riding in mud, but they need to talk themselves up and really motivate themselves to perform at their highest level.

Different people have different methods of motivation. Some riders like to go to the race with no problems whatsoever, while others will use their problems as motivation to try harder. Likewise, some people like to be completely relaxed while others like to be a little bit edgy and nervous and use that as motivation. The rider will put more energy into the overall build-up because they know that if the build-up is the same, the result will be the same. They are nervous, but completely focused and will

maintain that focus right throughout the weekend.

Another rider may be leading the series and will be a little more relaxed and laid back. He knows everything worked for him last time, so he will just do the same and let the result take care of itself. He doesn't worry or stress, he just goes about his business and enjoys the atmosphere of being at the track and being the series leader.

There are also riders who let the team handle their preparation. They don't want to think about anything but having fun on the race track. One of Australia's top off-road riders, Toby Price, really likes to enjoy himself at races. This is a certain type of psychology

that works for him.

So find out what works for you and practice thinking the right things in the lead-up and on the day of the race. Your performance will certainly benefit from it.

PRINCIPLES

There are four basic principles that can be employed to help your mental attitude and preparation:

01 Concentrate on what you can control, and not what you can't control. For example, you can't control the weather so there is no point worrying about whether it is going to rain or not.

What you *can* control is how you react to the changing conditions.

MAIN. Dylan Ferrandis is on probation for his move on Christian Craig but isn't letting that mess with his head
01. Todd Waters will use what worked mentally last year to go for another title
02. This year's Dakar certainly wasn't fun for Toby Price, see page 42
3. Adam Cianciarulo has gone into the 450SX class with the confidence to win



02 Keep it simple. Don't over-complicate things. Putting too much thought into certain things will just confuse you and distract you from the basic principles of racing.

03 Keep your head where your body is. Don't get ahead of yourself. Stay in the moment and forget about the past or the future. You can't change what has happened, or what will happen in the future, but you can act now!

04 Develop plans and routines. Stay organised and get into a routine.

This will help certain things become automatic and you will be putting less thought and effort into things that should take care of themselves.

BIG-BORE CLASSIC ENTRIES OPEN!



ON ANZAC DAY we'll pay our respects to fallen war heroes, but the very next day you can become a hero, when the world's first ADB Australian Big-Bore Classic champion is crowned on Sunday, 26 April, at Krusic's Ride Park, Victoria. This will never happen again [next year you can only become the second champion] so get your entries in now if you don't want to miss your chance at this once-in-a-

lifetime opportunity. Visit adbmag.com.au for entry details.

A natural-terrain motocross track is being prepped and primed at the vast Krusic's moto complex in sunny (but sometimes smokey) Gippsland for a huge day of racing. There are no crazy jumps where the swingarm might part ways with your big-bore classic machine, just wide-open corners, fast straights and

deep loamy soil. It'll be the perfect opportunity for enduro riders to bang 'bars with motocross die-hards on a track that levels the playing field for all.

For trailriders keen to test their skills on a motocross track this is the perfect event.

Classes for the Big-Bore Classic have been adjusted to accommodate even more riders after we were inundated with requests.

We figured if you want to try racing a 250F against a 480 we ain't going to stop ya! All the power to you, as long as you stay out of the way.

The 500cc two-stroke class is now open to 300cc-500cc bikes but this class will be the most popular, so get your entry in quick if you want to line up in this one.

We've opened up the 500F class to any bike capacity. So if you're confident enough to go



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THE DETAILS

Entry: \$90 per rider - \$150 for multiple-classes - visit adbmag.com.au for entry details.

Prizes: All riders get an ADB Big-Bore Classic class medallion with massive trophies for first, second and third in each class.

Format: All classes race four x four-lap motos

CLASSES:

- **500T** (300cc - 500cc)
- **500F** (any bike capacity)
- **Up to 300T**
- **Over-45 Years:** (any capacity)
- **C-Grade 500T** (any capacity two-stroke up to 500cc)
- **C-Grade 500F** (open to any capacity four-stroke)
- **C-Grade up to 300T**

Ultimate Big-Bore: Two, three-lap motos raced just five minutes apart. Riders must pre-enter this class, there is no qualifying. Open to any capacity.

This event is run under the benevolent eye of Australian Motorcyclist Association insurance and all riders will need one of its racing licenses. Get into it at www.motocross.asn.au

up against big-bores on your 250, go for it! The 300T class is open to any two-stroke up to 300cc and you can now race any capacity bike in the Over-45s class (the rider's age not the engine capacity).

C-Grade will be broken up into three classes: 500cc two-stroke and 500cc four-stroke are open to any capacity bike up to 500cc and a 300cc class is for bikes up to 300cc capacity.

ULTIMATE BIG BORE

The feature race is open to any rider on any capacity but riders must pre-enter. 250Fs will go up against 500cc two-strokes and the feature race winner will be decided over two, three-lap motos raced minutes apart. There'll be a five-minute re-set time from when the last rider crosses the line of the first moto until the gatedrop for

the second one, so no time for new rings. This race will decide who is the ultimate big-bore king (or queen)!

In more good news, the ADB Australian Big Bore Classic has picked up backing with sponsorship from Alpinestars, O'Neal, Force Accessories, Fly Racing, LS2 Helmets and Local Legends Snacks, so the ADB staff won't go hungry.



TCX TERRAIN 3 BOOT

The new TCX Terrain 3 waterproof boots come in a colourway called Anthracite and they look as tough as the name, which is some sort of coal-like mineral, possibly. They are a multi-purpose trials and light adventure boot designed for technical riding where lightweight performance and tactile feedback are key. They look cool, the name is cool and you know that with TCX equipment they will be tops in comfort and durability.

PRICE: \$569

Link International, linkint.com.au
(07) 3382 5000



TALON C-F HUBS WITH EXCEL A60 RIMS

Talon claims its Pro Carbon hub is the world's lightest carbon-fibre composite one and it comes with a one-year warranty. While the Excel rim is made in Japan, the Bulldog heavy-duty spokes come from England. They have coloured, nickel-plated steel nipples and will fit most SX-SXF and EXC-EXCF model bikes.

PRICE: \$2095

John Titman Racing, jtr.com.au
(07) 3286 4862



M2R X4.5 PENRITE REPLICA

The Limited Edition M2R X4.5 Penrite helmet is a pro-level race lid and features a light and strong MIT Plus carbon, kevlar and fibreglass shell, coupled with a dual-density channelled EPS liner and X-HALO peak, which offers up to an additional 12% protection in the critical halo area. Being a limited edition, it's only available in limited quantities and comes in sizes XS to XXL.

PRICE: \$469.95

McLeod Accessories, mcleodaccessories.com.au
1300 300 191



SCOTT ETHIKA PROSPECT

Last month we brought you the Dean Lucas Signature model Prospect goggles and this month we're showing you the Ethika. Like all Prospect goggles they have NoSweat Face Foam, the Scott Lense Lock System, articulating outriggers and plenty more. But the coolest part is the red, white and black frame combined with classic Ethika graphics and 3D Ethika logo on the strap. Plus, you get a matching goggle bag, for free.

PRICES: \$159.95

Ficeda, ficeda.com.au
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NITE IZE - RUNOFF WATERPROOF WALLET

There's nothing more frustrating than a dead phone or soaked wallet when out trailriding. A zip-lock sandwich bag is a good option for keeping things dry but they aren't that durable and the zip lock can leak, so here's the Nite Ize bag made from trademarked RunOff material. With a size small enough to fit in your pocket or backpack, this wallet is perfect for keeping cash, cards and electronics safe from the elements. The wallet is versatile and features built-in attachment points and an integrated belt loop, making it convenient to clip on to anything.

PRICE: \$36.00

Zen Imports

Zenimports.com.au



R-WORKS FATBAR36

The R-Works Fatbar36 is Renthal's new, light motocross handlebar. It uses a bunch of cool new materials to produce a high-strength 'bar at the lowest possible weight. The R-Works Fatbar36 is 36% lighter than the standard 28mm-diameter Fatbar but apparently has the same strength. The handlebar tapers to 22mm at both ends and should feel the same as the standard Fatty.

PRICE: FATBAR36 handlebar \$369.95,

Tech handlebar mounts \$129.95

Cassons, cassons.com.au

(02) 8882 1900

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Always a good idea to butter up the officials



'I was going to get one of those Sherco 450s'



The sun's already up as riders start the first stage



Our Arabian **KNIGHTS**

DAKAR HAD IT ALL. WE CATCH UP WITH THE AUSSIES WHO TOOK ON THE BEAST AND CONQUERED IT

WORDS // MITCH LEES PHOTOS // ASO, RED BULL IMAGES, KTM IMAGES

Dakar has always been one of the toughest things you can do on two-wheels, but nothing could prepare the riders for this year's rally. The mental and physical torment dished out on the first Saudi Arabian event was like no other. Sadly, it claimed the lives of riders Paulo Goncalves and Edwin Straver while some of the Aussie contingent brave enough to tackle it were pushed to breaking point and have sworn never to return.

As we reported on deadline for our last issue, Ricky Brabec became

the first American to win and gave Honda its first victory since 1989. Brabec led the 12-stage rally from day three, securing victory by 16min 26sec from Husqvarna's Pablo Quintanilla.

Our own Toby Price rode to third for KTM, making it his fifth podium from six Dakars. But, Price will also be remembered for his honourable effort to save Goncalves' life on day seven. The incident took an immense toll on Price and, as you can read in our interview, it took massive courage for him just to finish the race. The two-time champ was defeated by 24min 6sec, most of

which can be attributed to losing a rear tyre during Stage 6.

For the record, Longreach's Rod Faggotter finished 13th overall. The privateer, riding with support from Yamaha Australia, had a solid run, placing as high as sixth in Stage 10. Victorian Ben Young was 58th in his second attempt at Dakar while Aussie rookies Trevor Wilson and Matthew Tisdall finished 76th and 96th respectively.

You should know all that by now, but what actually went down over 14 days racing in the Arabian desert? Take a ride with the Aussies who were there on the ground.



Toby Price

**PRO, 32, KTM FACTORY TEAM
THIRD PLACE**

How did it compare with Peru last year?

Peru was tough technically, being all sand dunes. For Saudi Arabia we expected the same conditions but by the time we got to the second week it was just wide-open, full-gas across flat plateaus and off-piste type things. It was point and shoot. You couldn't make up any time in the second week. Other than that, it was a good event.

So the speed made it stressful?

The navigation was still difficult but it was wide open. We got one roadbook that was 180km with only two cap headings for that whole distance. Just swinging off it wide open, which I enjoy, but when you've never seen the track before and you're just hoping they've marked the roadbook correctly it's a bit risky. Unfortunately, that risk came to life this Dakar. Hopefully some bits and pieces will change.

Brabec thought it was similar to Baja, do you agree?

All I can compare it to with back home was the speed. Our average was 122kmh on a stage (it was about 80kmh in Peru, according to Pricey) and coming into that blind makes it very straining on the mind. We were getting to the end of stages nearly two hours before they predicted. But, yeah, it was similar to Baja. It's gone away from the adventure side and it's now a sprint race.



Brabec reckons Monster Energy is better

Was it tougher by the end of the day?

You were still mentally drained because you were trying to process everything so damn quick but physically it didn't even feel like the muscles got sore over the entire rally. Not getting roadbooks the night before gave us three to four hours to rest at the end of a stage. It was still difficult but this year was a slightly easier ride on the body.

How'd it go getting the roadbooks in the morning?

I'd like to see it continue. It gives us a level playing field. But the roadbooks weren't marked perfectly for dangers. They've got to be precise with the marks next time.

So what happened with your tyre on day six?



Matthias Walkner and Pricey refuel in luxury



The bivouac near Jeddah before the start

“We were getting to the end of stages nearly two hours before they predicted”
TOBY PRICE

I just got unlucky. The mousse failed in the tyre. I was leading the day out and people were catching me so I wasn't going hard. Shorty pulled up three minutes after I'd stopped and I was already taking the wheel off because it [the mousse] was caught between the rim and the swingarm and chain. With Shorty's race being destroyed after those first couple of days he just gave his [wheel] to me. I didn't have to ask, he just gave it to me. It was crazy, not what I wanted and not what Shorty wanted.

So it was a team decision?

Nothing was even talked of. It was Shorty's decision. I don't think it was agreed with by some parties but it kept us in the race. Hopefully there's been no dramas behind the scenes in the office. I don't think he will have

to buy a beer again in Australia!

What happened on that fateful day when Paulo Goncalves lost his life?

We were at a 15-minute compulsory fuel stop and Paulo left five minutes in front of me. It didn't happen in front of me, so I don't know how it happened, but it was a blind crest with a real hardpack landing. It wasn't marked on the roadbook but it probably should have been with the speed we were doing.

I was the first one [to come] across it. To pull up and see what I saw isn't right to go into detail, but it wasn't pretty. I knew we were in a very bad situation. The only thing I could do was try and clear his airway because he wasn't breathing and he wasn't responding. He had no vital signs. I tried to tip him on his side to clear his mouth out because a lot of things



Goncalves had done 12 Dakars and will be missed

were coming out. It was a big reality check, a bit of chaos for me. It wasn't a pretty sight. I don't even remember the rest of Stage 7. I was in a daze and something I never thought I'd come across in my life. We know the risks and dangers but you think 'that will never happen to me'. I was there to try and do the best I could and do whatever I could. Unfortunately it wasn't enough. He was gone before I got there. I don't think it was a painful send out for him. He went out doing what he loved doing. But yeah, I still see it to this day.

Do you have to make any changes for next year?

If you take away my tyre incident, which cost me 20 minutes, and the roadbook [he copped a two-minute penalty after his roadbook tore in half on Stage 1], I was definitely in with a chance. A third place was the best we could salvage. I don't think there is anything I have to do different. He (Brabec) rode a smart race and that's what you've gotta do. Hats off to him, it's good for the race and good for the sport.

Hardest thing you've ever done?

The 2020 Dakar is one of the races I'd kinda like to forget a little bit. In saying that, it's still five podiums from six attempts. That's the only positive to come out of it. Day 7 with Paulo was a turning point and it was harder to continue on. To be the first one there and see everything go down and feel so helpless and not being able to do anything hit home pretty hard. I still tried to charge every day. I just wanted to get out of that one safely and in one piece.

“After we got going again, we nailed the navigation and, with the time they gave us back for being stopped, we ended up sixth and seventh”

ROD FAGGOTTER



Rod demonstrated the 'just one more' principal



The Drag'on WR450F was fitted with factory cams

Rod rode sensibly and scored some good stage times



Rod Faggotter

PRIVATEER, 43, YMA

13TH PLACE

How did it feel beating most of your old team?

It was definitely rewarding! But just satisfying to ride the whole race and place well and be healthy. The factory team were still good to me and helped a couple of times and were very happy for me.

How did this Dakar compare to the others?

Definitely a bit different in terrain and logistics. The first few days were very similar to the Morocco Rally. It was consistently cold with most mornings starting below five degrees and it never got hot. It also didn't rain so, in regards to temperature and rain, it was way better than South America.

Was it better or worse going it alone?

Better in nearly every way, except it cost me a lot of money instead of it being free and my bike wasn't as good power and speed wise as the factory Yamahas, understandably.

What do you think of Saudi?

The country, roads and infrastructure are mind-blowingly good! The people were all bloody good and very welcoming. I genuinely liked and appreciated racing there and wouldn't hesitate going back.

Anything crazy happen? Anything we wouldn't have known?

The biggest and saddest thing was definitely losing Paulo. I didn't know



him all that well and would just normally say hello to him. But he's been at it forever and a real stalwart athlete, exemplified by the day he replaced an engine mid-stage. Legend. On a more light-hearted note, seeing Andrew Short cruising the stage and then doing 100km of bitumen on Toby's old rim was funny.

On day 10 I stopped for an injured American guy named Garrett Poucher. I was actually at the base of the dune stopped for about 10sec with Adrian Metge (Sherco TVS), who had just flat landed off it to hard ground on a fully-fuelled rally bike. He was okay and just shaken but, next minute, Garrett crashed right beside and behind me. It was scary. But at least we were there and myself and Jamie McCanney (Yamaha Rally Team) were able to stop other riders crashing and running into him, especially as he ended up with back and pelvic injuries. Later that day, after Jamie and I got going again, we nailed the navigation that everyone struggled with and with the time they gave us back for being stopped [for Poucher] – we ended up sixth and seventh for the day. Good karma, maybe?



Trevor Wilson

**PRIVATEER, 29, GODSPEED
76TH PLACE**

How tough was the Original by Motul class compared with other races you've done?

It was a different level of focus, time management, body and bike preservation. Every day was calculating what components needed servicing, what preventative maintenance needed to be done and maintaining extreme attention to detail to ensure all mechanical work was done to perfection regardless of fatigue because the risk of a mechanical DNF is all too real. Other races the mechanical component was taken care of by the race being short enough for it all to be done before the event or by a race team. This one-stop-shop experience ["malle moto"] puts all the pressure on you as the racer to consider all likelihoods and be the jack of all trades, it was hard because you had to measure yourself each day, not go too fast and not going too slow, to give yourself enough time in the evening to service the bike. Everything was learning what is the right balance and being okay to be ruthless in time management and not waste a single minute.

Why is it harder?

Your day never stops from sunrise to late in the evening. There is no point where you can switch off, you are always doing one of three things, riding, sleeping or maintenance (of bike, body and resources). It's also harder because when you finish



There was more than just sand dunes in Saudi

riding an 800km day you then have a second challenge ahead of you, as you repair your body with nutrition, set up your tent, bedding, gels and bladders for the next morning, collecting your cold weather gear, riders' briefing, start position, refuel the bike. Then begins the process to strip the bike back to basics, drop the fluids and service it thoroughly. Often the servicing was done to the point where you needed to have confidence in your mind on the next day's stage that you had done everything possible to reduce the chance of a mechanical failure. My motto was leave no stone left unturned. If there was a nagging feeling I had to check something I did it, because my theory was it was easier to check it in the evening then mid-special stage.



Back on board, he's passed by one of the quad riders



The guy proceeds to fill in our Queensland hero

“If there was a niggling feeling I had to check something I did it, because my theory was it was easier to check it in the evening”

TREVOR WILSON

Trevor's Job List

START OF DAY:

1. Wake
2. Put sleeping gear packing cube #2 into 90L bag
3. Change compression clothing for Under Armour gear
4. Pack up tent
5. Change into riding gear
6. Put clothes in packing cube #1 and into 90L bag
7. Put empty duffle bag into 90L bag
8. Transport tent and 90L bag to Motul truck
9. Have breakfast.
10. Check bike and gear - Play dancing in the moonlight!
11. Enjoy the day!



END OF DAY:

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| • Arrive in bivouac | • Air filter |
| • Park bike on Motul mat | • Cooling system |
| • Put riding gear into a neat pile | • Install moto stand + change tyres |
| • Change into compression clothing + service riding gear | • Checks |
| • Add sachet to recovery drink + Eat Bar | • Clean + re-assemble |
| • Remove engine cover + all fairings | • Test ride |
| • Drop oil/replace | • Install roadbook + bike cover |

NIGHT PREPARATION

- Refill jacket
- Change out dirty socks, jersey, gloves, goggle lenses. Keep pants, jacket, boots.
- Setup tent + lay out riding gear (boots, socks, kneebraces, pants, armour, jersey, jacket, neckbrace, 'chief, helmet, gloves, goggles, bladders)
- Setup sleeping gear + bag to put everything in + put phone on charge
- Dinner + shower
- Sleep

What was the biggest challenge during the race?

It was mental. The physical riding and fatigue I felt confident with as I had trained full time leading up to Dakar and ran a business outside of training so was used to the constant grind each day. But the mental aspect was learning how to always be positive no matter the circumstances and, in this race, there was a lot to derail your focus with the deaths, crashes and risks of trucks and cars coming past and the knowledge that you're one mistake away from a crash requires a level of focus that used a little bit of adrenaline and pace to stay in the game but also allowed you to relax and not get worked up by difficult situations. It was all about balance, stepping back and picking your strategy and following it regardless of what people around you were doing.

Would you go again?

In this stage I wouldn't go again, as the deaths and risks associated felt quite real. I had an incredible time and it was one of the most memorable moments of my life but I think, for now, I'm happy with what I achieved. If I did it again there isn't anything I would do differently.

What did you think of Saudi Arabia for Dakar? Friendly or unsafe? Was it awesome, exciting riding or a little monotonous?

Saudi Arabia, terrain-wise, is a great continent for the race, it was friendly and felt safe. The riding was always exciting because Dakar has created its own ecosystem where, regardless of what country it's in, everyone within the organisation shares the same values of adventure and passion that Dakar stands for. The riding was as exciting as you wanted to make it, I had to ride a little slower because of the category I was in, to preserve the bike and body more, but I imagine the front runners would have had an awesome time holding it pinned across the desert plains!

Pablo Quintinella showed why
he is the Cross-Country Rallies
World Champion

*“From the start I told myself
that there was only one person
in that race and that was me”*
MATTHEW TISDALL



Putting up a tent was part of the deal for Originals



Kevin Benavides rides off into the sunrise



Matthew Tisdall

PRIVATEER, 49, BAS DAKAR

96TH PLACE

You've only been riding for six years, why take on Dakar?

I had watched Dakar on TV for years. Like the Tour de France which I had watched since I was at school, it just fascinated me. Possibly the endurance and the scale of the races. The thought of pushing yourself to your breaking point. But, unlike Le Tour, an ordinary person can do the Dakar. It also had the added element of high risk. The fine line between glory and calamity. A chance to look deep into yourself, to see if you are the real deal or a pretender.

I didn't know if I could get the skills to ride a moto off-road successfully so I did a Cape York tour on a Suzuki DR-Z400. I loved it. Off-road motorcycling combined speed, adrenalin, fear and the outdoors. The problem was I was already well into my 40s and the clock was ticking. As soon as I got back from Cape York I brought a CRF450X. Within a year I was racing Finke and Condo and had a plan to race the Australasian Safari. From there I competed in races like the Rallye du Maroc, Baja 1000, Moroccan Desert Challenge and the African Eco Race.

What has been the hardest part about learning how to race Dakar?

Over the last few years I had followed the slower guys at Dakar and researched those who finished at the back. That also gave me some positive feedback that it was possible. In many



Tisdall and BAS team boss Bart van der Velden



The Dutch team supported another eight riders

of those races before Dakar, I would often get to start the stage near the back of the pack. That unusually abated as the race went on and people re-joined the race after not finishing stages.

At Dakar, that was more acute because if you don't finish the previous days stage you are out of the official race [but now can continue in the Experience category]. Other races are not like that. No-one wants to be last. Aside from the competitive stuff, it's helpful to have people behind you if you have a problem or get lost. On several stages at Dakar I started last. If there were dunes, I could start to pick up some spots as I was faster than I was in the rocks. But from the start I told myself that there was only one person in that race and that was me.

I hadn't told many people that I was actually doing Dakar. Some of them who had seen me ride in the bush would have fallen off their chairs laughing on hearing that I was doing Dakar. I am a lot better at other things than riding dirtbikes, so I don't care what others think. I had a plan and a goal. Success in the goal itself was all that mattered. If I wasn't comfortable in the terrain or with the speed, I just slowed down. One fall can mean the race is over. Getting lost can mean the race is over. But my speed, or lack of it, meant that nearly every day I was under the pump to finish the stage before dark. I hated that.

I knew that the most likely cause of failure would be getting stuck in terrain I couldn't ride out of in the dark. I felt I could ride well into the night, stamina wise, but if I couldn't see, then I would be toast on some stages. Some days I packed my jacket for a night out. The organisers had told us that many of us would finish the sixth stage during the rest day. I packed my jacket that morning to do just that. I had extra batteries for my jacket and gloves. Thermals, plenty of food and water. I also had sleeping pills to assist my slumber.

How hard is it to hold the bike wedged and navigate?

Whenever I saw a downed rider or an abandoned bike I had mixed feelings. I would always ride by to make sure it wasn't one of my BAS teammates or friends. Before lunch on the first day one of my friends and a teammate had a crash and it was all over. I didn't see him again. Another day it was another teammate unconscious on the

“When I arrived at the start of the last Special and they told me it was cancelled, I cried into my helmet.”

MATTHEW TISDALL

ground with the medical people. Another day I saw Eric Straver's bike, with his boots and gear left with it. I thought that was odd and then I found out what had happened. I had had lunch with him on the day of the cancelled stage. This was my sixth international rally, so I had seen serious injuries and broken dreams before. But Dakar was different. The stakes were higher. Broken bones and bikes meant broken dreams. Dreams that had sometimes come at great financial cost. Much better riders than me who had tried multiple times to realise their dreams and had not made it. Some who have not managed to move on. I don't know why, but that bothered me. I told myself during the

race that it was my last. I was moving on. Now, I am not totally sure, but it's unlikely that I would risk so much on Dakar again.

Early in the race, I was surprised that I had my back against the wall so quickly. Paulo dying was terrible, but the extra rest day let me reset. I had picked up a cold and was worried that might be the flu. I spent half that day in bed, only getting up when my cabin mate made me go to lunch. The last big test was Stage 8. I knew I needed everything going right to get out of those dunes before dark. When I arrived at the start of the last Special and they told me it was cancelled, I cried into my helmet. I knew at that point that I could potentially finish the race.

It was Brabec's fifth start, with three of those ending in DNFs. His previous best result was a ninth in 2016



Could the average punter do what you did?

Everyone is different but, given the right set of circumstances, nearly anyone can finish Dakar. It takes cash, commitment, luck and smarts. If you aren't a pro, no one cares that much what your place is. They care if you finish.

You can greatly increase your chances of not dying and finishing if you minimise your risks. Take advice from people who know how it's done, but ultimately form your own plan and then stick to it. It's a very selfish and cash-hungry pursuit, so you need to make sure that you and those around you can tolerate that.



Long Hours

Matthew Tisdall spent 40 hours more on the timed stages than the winners but outlasted 60 of the bike riders.



Pricey took it easy after Paulo's death



Glad to get it over with after arriving at Qiddiya



Brabec heads for a kip during the marathon stage



Laia Sanz has ridden for Gas Gas before

Tisdall Talks Weaponry

I already had a KTM 500EXC with a rally kit on it, but I decided that I would invest in a new KTM 450 Rally Replica. To me, if you are going to invest the time and money to race something like that, you need the best machinery. Enduro bikes with kits strapped on can do the job, but there is less mechanical risk with something factory-built. I had the misfortune of having to be towed in my last race after the fuel pump gave up.

The RR has two pumps, so that wasn't going to be an issue. There had been some issues the previous year, including with Ben Young's bike, where people had problems with pumps and supposedly the fuel. RRs are also a lot more comfortable for the long liaisons and the Arabia race had some 900km days. GDP Group is my property services company.





Ben Young

**PRIVATEER, 48,
DUUST RALLY TEAM**

58TH PLACE

This was your second Dakar, how much harder or easier was Saudi Arabia than South America?

The 2020 edition was a little bit less challenging than those nasty sand dunes in Peru. The desert in Saudi had less sand dunes and they were nowhere near as difficult as Peru. I thought the race was a little bit too fast on some days and not challenging or technical enough.

What were some of the biggest challenges this year?

The biggest for me was the first week and the amount of rocks and riverbeds we were going through. That is definitely not my favourite terrain. That being said, while that was the most challenging thing, there was nothing that really challenged me to the limit. It was just a very long and hard race, as is expected from Dakar.



Michek Martin might have a motocross background



Toby didn't retain his #1 plate but he came close

Did anything crazy happen?

I had a few medium-size crashes. There's a good one floating around on social media but otherwise it was a fairly clean run.

Was getting the roadbooks the morning of the stage, better or worse?

The handing out of the maps in the morning is definitely a big advantage and gave us an extra few hours each night to get some more sleep. I think it also makes it more challenging for the professional outfits.

What's the allure to make you come back?

It's the hardest off-road race in the world and it's the ultimate challenge as an off-road biker. Saudi Arabia was an amazing place to race bikes. It has beautiful terrain and really hospitable people. **ADB**

Got something to say about this yarn?
 Let us know at adbmag@adbmag.com.au
 More images and info at adbmag.com.au

"I thought the race was a little bit too fast on some days and not challenging or technical enough"

BEN YOUNG



No, that's not an engine exploding



Saudi was Ben's second Dakar



Pricey got into the tyre-shredding action as well





DOMINATION

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GEOMAX MX33

WORDS // BEN GRABHAM PHOTOS // HUSQVARNA

Smooth operator

WITH THIS POWER COMES
GREAT RESPONSIBILITY

Growing up in the nineties, Husqvarna's TE610 four-stroke was an iconic bike for me. I was only 16 and weighed 50kg but I still had a fascination with Husqvarna's big daddy thumper.

At the Australian Four-Day Enduro, Husqvarna had a winning

streak of 10 years in the big-bore class. A lot of the guys on Huskies were riders I looked up to ... Aussie legends Jamie Cunningham and his late brother Ian, Kiwi GNCC champion Paul Whibley and fellow New Zealander, and world enduro champion, Stefan Merriman.

When I was big enough to swing off a big-bore, I was not riding for Husky, but I retained my

attraction to the class. I often raced E3 and had some great successes with them in the A4DE, AORC, Australasian Safari, Hattah and Finke. So you can understand my excitement when I learned I would be testing Husqvarna's latest FE501.

Husqvarna calls this 501 a new-generation model with the frame, carbon composite subframe, shock linkage, exhaust system,



There was a bit of choice at the launch



Carbon subframe is now two pieces and lighter



All this complexity and only 29kg



Versus Chuck's

One of the perks of working with Daniel Sanders is that, every now and then, I spin a few laps on his bike (Braico tested it in *ADB* #482). It's quite interesting to see the direction he went

compared to what is now available standard. Sanders' race bike is powerful but not that much more than a standard 2020.

The suspension is the area where Sander's race bike and the standard one are furthest apart. Choice Suspension has turned Sanders' WP Trax and 48 Cone Valve components into monsters that eat up anything in their path and that's no surprise.

I was more interested in the fact that

Sanders ran his rear-end a lot lower than the standard MY19. It actually felt similar in height to the latest FE501.

Other than these not-so-major differences, it is Sanders' preference in handlebar, seat and footpegs that also separate the two motorcycles. Just check out *The Dirt Kitchen* by Motology on YouTube to see what Sanders and the standard MY20 FE501 are capable of.

seat, bodywork and cylinder head all coming in for revision. It's the most expensive standard-model enduro you can buy at \$15,895 so I was keen to see how all that money translated to the great outdoors.

I was a fan of the reduced seat height (950mm) as soon as I threw a leg over it. Husqvarna engineers have lowered it by 20mm, 10mm in the perch itself and another 10mm in the linkage. This might not sound like much, but it gave me confidence that I was actually going to be in control of this bike.

This was even more evident when I was on a trail and needed to chuck a U-turn after hitting a dead end – getting my foot firmly planted for the quick change of direction was easy. At one point I found myself in a snotty creek bed with both feet down, paddling my way through the slippery rocks with no problem. I would have fallen over if the seat wasn't that bit lower.

Husqvarna has given the engine a lot of attention, especially to making it lighter (now 29.4kg) and more compact. The crankcase has been revised and shaved by 300g, the SOHC cylinder head is more compact, lowering the centre of gravity and cutting 500g.

Husqvarna's most powerful enduro engine comes with all the latest technology and the handlebar power map switch, which gives the rider access to two maps plus traction control, is one of my favourite features of this model.

In tight twisty terrain, I ran Map One (standard) which made the 501 easier to ride. Husqvarna says it has spent thousands of hours developing the latest maps, partly to make them more different and they've done a good job.

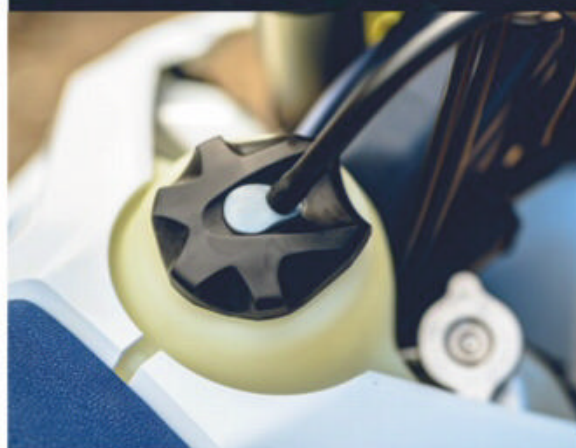
Map Two (aggressive) is definitely more explosive than the other one. I only used it in wide-open sections, where I wouldn't get much below fourth gear. I tried Traction Control with both maps but didn't really



Two-piece header is easier to remove



Brake hose now runs behind headlight shroud



Stock tank is 9L, with IMS offering a 12L one



Pro Taper handlebar and Magura clutch

There were a few big jumps but the Xplor handled the bigger hits without harsh bottoming



Husky worked hard to fix the Xplor 48 fork

need it as the terrain I was riding had decent traction. I'd like to test it on greasy grass or mud because that's where I think it would work.

REWORKED

The suspension at both ends has been heavily reworked. The WP Xplor 48mm fork felt smoother over all kinds of terrain. When trailriding, it feels super plush and soaks up everything.

On the grasstrack loop there were a few big jumps but the Xplor handled the bigger hits without any harsh bottoming. It is very

convenient having the rebound, compression and spring pre-load adjusters all on the top of the fork. I added one click of preload and that was my "sweet spot".

Out the back, the Xact shock features a new main piston and matches up nicely to the fork. It also feels smoother in action than previous models.

I have found the past few Husqvarnas had very settled rear-ends that gave great rear wheel traction and this model is no different, if anything I felt there was even more traction. Big-bore



Probably my favourite aspect of the latest 501 is its ease of use

thumpers can be a bit of a handful to setup and get turning in tighter corners but Husqvarna has improved this area a lot on the 501.

The new frame, that has increased longitudinal and torsional stiffness, does feel very stable but it's also very planted. The new cooling system features radiators mounted 12mm lower and I am sure this is part of the reason it turns so well and that the front-end grip has improved so much. It is not often I feel a new frame can work for clubman and pros, but this one could.

Probably my favourite aspect of the latest 501 is its ease of use. Considering this is a high-powered, big-bore, that is a bit of a surprise. I really am liking the direction Husqvarna has headed with the development of its enduro range, since it left the World Enduro Championship for WESS. I would rather see all the brands racing together, but I do like the more versatile, easier to ride nature that this 501 has. **ADB**

Got something to say about this yarn?
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Husqvarna FE501 SPEX

ENGINES

TYPE SOHC, four-valve
DISPLACEMENT 510.9cc
BORE & STROKE 95 x 72mm
COOLING Liquid
COMPRESSION RATIOS 12.75:1
FUEL METERING Keihin 42mm EFI
TANK CAPACITY 9.0L
TRANSMISSION Six-speed, constant-mesh
CLUTCH Magura hydraulic, wet multiplate

DIMENSIONS

WHEELBASE 1487mm
SEAT HEIGHT 950mm
GROUND CLEARANCE 360mm
WEIGHT 108.4kg without fuel

SUSPENSION

FRONT WP Xplor 48mm USD, 300mm travel
REAR WP Xact monoshock, 300mm travel

BRAKES

FRONT Magura twin-piston, 260mm wave
REAR Magura single-piston, 220mm wave

RUNNING GEAR

HANDLEBAR ProTaper alloy tapered
FRONT TYRE Metzeler Six Days, 90/90-21
REAR TYRE Metzeler Six Days, 140/80-18

PRICES & CONTACTS

RRP \$15,895
WEB husqvarna-motorcycles.com.au
PHONE 1800 644 771
WARRANTY Six months parts and labour

Who it suits

I rate this 501 very highly and consider it very versatile, but I do not recommend it for everyone. As easy as it is to handle, potential riders need to remember it is a 510cc enduro weapon. When you get tired you can't go grabbing fist fulls of throttle because you will find yourself in all kinds of trouble.

I believe riders over the 85kg mark will enjoy what the 501 has to offer, but anyone under that should lean towards something with a little less power. Gone are the days of a big-bore thumper feeling big to sit on. I sat on the 501 with my eyes shut and then went and did the same thing on the TE150i Husqvarna and couldn't tell the difference.

The main thing to consider is that with more power, comes higher speeds and harder braking, so make sure you are either really fit and strong, or have great throttle control.



WP built more stiffness into the frame



See how much lighter the cylinder head is?



Odi lock-on grips are a nice touch

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TRAIL TEST | 2020 KAWASAKI KLX300R

WORDS // MITCH LEES & BEC WILSON PHOTOS // BEC WILSON



Rear 240mm disc is above average



The KLX250 and 300 are built in Thailand



Subframe is steel and not removeable

Mid-cap • *Kawi* returns

KAWASAKI HAS RE-ENTERED THE 300cc TRAILBIKE CATEGORY, MINUS THE ADR BELLS AND WHISTLES

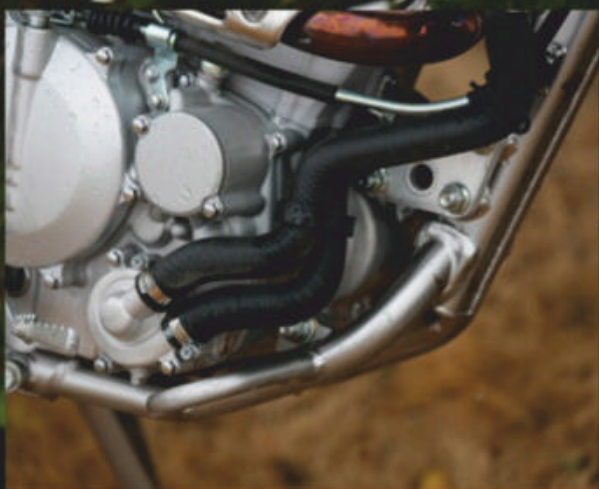
Not long ago Kawasaki was a major player in the enduro market with bikes like the KDX175, 200, 220, 400, 420 and 450, the KLX400R and the KLX650R, hell, they even had a trials bike and the KLX300 from 1996 to about 2008 in two versions (depending on where you lived in the world), but in the last decade the company seemingly lost interest. A focus on motocross saw it neglect what was a formidable enduro line-up and, despite our years of whinging, left us with an agricultural commuter known as the KLX250S, an outdated KLX450R, an adventure-oriented KLR650 and a handful of fun bikes.

The good news is that someone at Kawasaki Japan must be an avid *ADB* reader, because our moaning appears to have worked. In 2019/20, KHI has fronted with two 230s, a 300 and an updated KLX150BF, 250S and 450R, the latter three being cosmetic upgrades.

You may have noticed that nowadays we get excited about the smallest of things. This isn't because we're childish, although some may argue, it's because the glory days are gone when manufacturers could afford to experiment with all kinds of wacky designs. Nowadays, profit gets in the way of fun and if a manufacturer can't produce something that's cost effective, it doesn't get a run. When did accountants start running motorcycle companies?

So when Kawasaki released three new models in one year we were knocked off our seats. It meant an exciting period of testing and analysis. Not only did the bikes slot into an under-nourished market segment (mid-cap and entry-level) but they seemed, on paper, to be built well.

We tested the KLX230R (it's confusing but the 'R' means it can't be registered) in issue #484, and have the road-legal KLX230 slated for next month, but the jewel in Kawasaki's crown has been reserved for this issue. The KLX300R impressed us more than any bike has for some time. Not because it's the fastest, it's certainly not, or because it has the best handling, but because it's a purpose-built mid-cap trailbike and it nails that brief. Let me explain.



Casebar provides some protection for coolant pump



The KLX300 entered production in 1996



Quiet muffler is perfect for bringing in the cows

***It signs off like your
local council on a high-
rise building project but
the KLX-R isn't designed
for screaming***





Ergonomics aren't up with the KX450 on page 82



Shock is basic but survived the Editor



Soft suspension is fine for play riding

Kawasaki's KLX300R is powered by a proven 292cc version of the KLX250's DOHC, liquid-cooled engine. KHI mates this to a solid Keihin fuel-injection system that squirts fuel into a thumping 78mm bore. The end result is an engine that builds its revs like a diesel tractor rather than wastefully disposing of them like an SS ute on nitro.

The KLX300R possesses more torque than any other mid-cap enduro bike. Sure it signs off like your local council on a high-rise building project but the KLX-R isn't designed for screaming around a grasstrack (although we did try).

Gearing was spot on for the farm-like trailriding we pedalled it through. However, we also attempted some extreme enduro and we can reveal it did that more easily than the 450F enduro machine accompanying us. The slower-revving engine and well-spaced gear ratios (yes, all six of them) allowed us to flick between first and second as we bounced through dry creek beds and up steep pinches.

On one section of extreme, the trail requires you to build momentum over a few bike lengths before ascending a steep hill strewn with fallen trees. While the KLX300R didn't explode out of the blocks like the 450F did, it still built enough momentum to crest the hill without problems. The rear Geomax refused to break traction, unlike the 450F which was left trying to wheelie or break traction depending on when it wanted to spit

off the rider. More often than not, a mild-mannered, linear engine is of more value than an explosive, converted motocrosser. The KLX300R is not going to win any drag races but it will go anywhere your mates on more powerful bikes do and, in some cases, even further.

When out on the fire road the six-speed 'box was excellent. The first four gears were a little close but by the time I hit sixth I was doing well over the speed limit. But seeing as registration isn't available for the KLX300R top speed isn't necessarily that important.

SMOOTH OPERATOR

Seeing as how this bike isn't a full-blown enduro, Kawasaki opted for less-stiff suspension and, for the most part, this is a good thing. Don't forget, this is a trailbike, it's not designed to win the AORC so the more soft and forgiving the suspension is, the better. Kawasaki has employed a KYB 43mm USD fork with adjustable compression damping and a KYB monoshock with adjustable preload, compression and rebound damping.

Both ends offer 285mm of travel and, in case you're wondering where that sits, the Yamaha WR250F runs 310mm up front and 317mm out the back. So 285mm isn't bad and at no stage did I feel it needed more travel. We weren't sending it off big jumps but we did hit the odd erosion mound and it handled most of what we threw at it

with no major concerns.

The soft suspension ate up the hidden rocks and logs underneath the tussock and in the extreme enduro section the suspension sagged enough to allow me to comfortably get my feet on the ground no matter what position I found myself in. It didn't feel harsh but it also didn't feel like a pogo stick.

One area the suspension certainly isn't designed for is hard braking bumps and sharp, deep ruts. We had access to a well-used grasstrack with ruts you could lose your car in and on one particular off-camber, sharp rutted corner I nearly put the handlebar through my gut as I drove the fork travel into the ground and it unloaded like one of NASA's rockets.

The knifing action spat me out the high side of the rut and my feet came off the 'pegs in typical goon fashion, but I stayed upright. I made a mental note and when I came back round I started braking earlier so there wasn't as much pressure on the fork. The KLX300R then glided through with finesse and poise.

While it may mean riding slightly slower, you will benefit from avoiding big holes, hard braking and large braking bumps. Just back it off and cruise. Don't attempt to ride the front brake hard entering tight corners, you will come off second best.

The bike felt comfortable to stand up and steer with your legs and the agility, while a little top heavy (the seat height is 925mm just under the

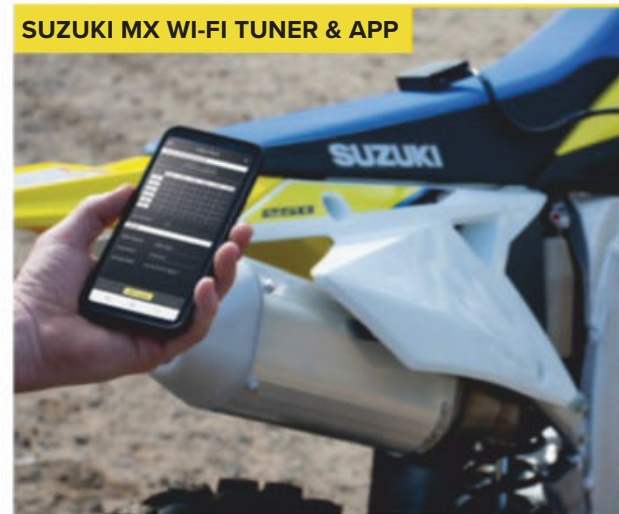


TAKE FULL CONTROL



The WiFi enabled 2020 RM-Z250 can be tuned using a phone app that changes the fuel and ignition mapping and performance of the motorcycle for various track conditions.

Suzuki's RM-Z250 and MX Tuner takes full control of the track.





A Woman's Whip

We got two girls to ride this bike, Bec Wilson and Jess Handebo. Both loved Kawasaki's KLX140L but were worried they would outgrow it too quickly. The next step up would be the 230 but what if they jumped to the 300?

At between 160 and 170cm Jess and Bec felt a little intimidated by the size of the 300R. It felt to them like a full-size dirtbike. Jess rides her partner's WR450F and with a little help starting, stopping and turning she is capable of ripping around a grasstrack. But to own a full-size bike was not their cup of tea.

They concluded that if you're already confident on a 230 and can hop logs, rocks and turn around without putting your feet down or you're tall and strong then the KLX300R will be fine. The power and handling are so easy to use it just comes down to dimensions. The clutch pull was light and didn't give them arm pump despite being a bigger donk than they're used to and the brakes felt just as strong and pulled the bike up just as quick as they're used to on the little bikes.

And with an electric start the girls weren't worried about having to get one leg on the ground while they kicked it over. They could start the bike with the stand down (a benefit of no ADR) and flick the stand up when they took off.

WR250F's 955mm) from a tall fuel tank, isn't drastically effected. The seat scallops out a fair bit from the fuel cap back, so getting your weight forward wasn't easy. It also means you sit in the bike not on top of it. But for trailriders who are happy to sit, it means your legs are closer to the ground and the seat is comfortable enough to park your arse on it all day.

The frame is a little more sparse then what we are used to seeing on enduro bikes but, for the cruisey riding we did, it remained stiff enough while still being able to flex when we twisted and popped it over logs, jumps and other obstacles. It might look like a cheap bit of gear but for the KLX's intended purpose, it will suffice.

Kawasaki isn't renowned for finishing its products with the best

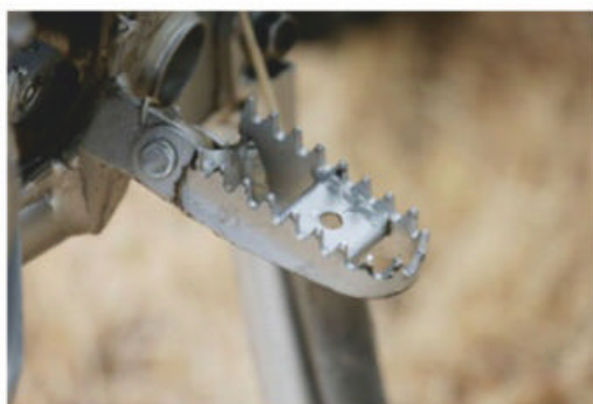
bits money can buy. We usually see customers with Kawasakis opt for aftermarket 'bars, levers, handgrips and exhausts and the KLX300R is no exception. The pipe is hard on the eye and it would have been nice to see Kawasaki contour the pipe like they did the swingarm (which looks and feels exceptional by the way).

In standard trim the KLX300R does not come with handguards or a bashplate, a decent handlebar or levers. For most trailriders the 'bar and levers will be fine until they're bent or broken but some aftermarket protection gear will need to be purchased, if you plan on crashing.

Like most modern enduro bikes the KLX300R is electric leg only, and for the few days we had testing it, the KLX300R battery and starter motor were up to the task. The KLX-R



Twin radiators make sure she won't boil



Footpegs will clear most of the mud



Preload adjustment needs a hammer and punch



Stock gearing is fine for the dirt



Levers and their perches look a bit fragile

Kawasaki KLX300R SPEX

ENGINE

TYPE DOHC, four-valve
DISPLACEMENT 292cc
BORE & STROKE 78.0 x 61.2mm
COOLING Liquid
COMPRESSION RATIO 11.1:1
FUEL METERING Keihin 34mm EFI
TANK CAPACITY 7.9L
TRANSMISSION Six-speed, constant-mesh
CLUTCH Cable-operated, wet multiplate

DIMENSIONS

WHEELBASE 1435mm
SEAT HEIGHT 925mm
GROUND CLEARANCE 305mm
WEIGHT 128kg wet

SUSPENSION

FRONT KYB spring-cartridge 43mm USD, 285mm
REAR KYB gas-oil monoshock, 285mm travel

BRAKES

FRONT Twin-piston caliper, 270mm wave
REAR Single-piston caliper, 240mm wave

RUNNING GEAR

HANDLEBAR Non-tapered steel, crossbrace
FRONT TYRE Dunlop Geomax MX52 80/100-21
REAR TYRE Dunlop Geomax MX52 100/100-18

PRICE & CONTACTS

PRICE \$7348 rideaway
WEB kawasaki.com.au
PHONE (02) 9684 2585
WARRANTY Six months

The four handlebar mounting positions mean the KLX300R can suit a variety of riders

pinches a bunch of DNA from its KX brothers with motocross-inspired graphics and plastics and the four handlebar mounting positions mean the KLX300R can suit a variety of rider heights.

Despite looking big, the fuel tank is only 7.9 litres which seems to be the going rate nowadays. We could easily get a day's trailriding on a tank but for rides in excess of 120km we suggest you carry some extra fuel.

We are a little bit bummed to see the KLX300R come to Australia without ADR compliance but, if the KLX250 and 230 are anything to go by then we're glad it didn't. The ADR

restrictions placed on some manufacturers are ridiculous and if KHI was to produce the 300 for registration it would be so loaded with junk no one would buy it (our feature on the KLX230 will explain the great lengths Kawasaki has to go to for registration. Not fair).

BITS AND PIECES

Instead this bike will have to be ridden by those with private property or riders who do most of their bush bashing at ride parks.

The KLX300R is the perfect trailbike for those wanting to cruise around after their kids or even bash

through some more technical terrain. The engine is a tractor and the suspension is incredibly plush. I for one wouldn't want a trailbike built any other way. But the most attractive feature is the price. For a little over \$7k you're getting a competent trailbike that will go most places a high-powered enduro bike twice the price will go. If you've got the space to ride it away from the boys in blue the KLX300R really does scream value for money. **ADB**



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ENDURO TEST | BETA RR125

WORDS // **GEOFF BRAICO** PHOTOS // **BETA AUSTRALIA**





BABY BETA

BRAICO CUTS LOOSE ON THE LITTLEST ITALIAN

As a fan of small-bores, I was pretty excited to ring the neck of a Beta RR125. Sure, you don't get out of corners or fly down straights as fast as you would on a bigger bike, but there is something about charging into a berm without shutting off that just seems to make everyone happy.

And let's be honest, have you ever met someone who doesn't appreciate the sound of a 125 wide open? Beta introduced the RR125 to its line-up in 2018 and it has made big changes since then.

For MY20, the 125 received a host of upgrades which came straight from the 2019 Racing models and Beta has squeezed a few extra ponies into this 94kg (dry) weapon. The machine has had the same revamp as the rest of the enduro range and it definitely looks the part.

I really like the sleek, slimline feel that you get when sitting on the new Betas and the 125 especially feels tiny.

Engine wise, the RR125 gets a new cylinder with modified exhaust port, exhaust port flange, power-valve system and a new pipe and silencer. All these changes create a broader, more torquey engine at low revs while also producing better top-end. Beta claims that these mods have increased the performance across the entire rev range, which makes the



Fork held up better on RR125 under brakes



The 125RR only needs a 120/80 on the rear



Beta's Patrick Lowry and Hamish Evans supervise

Beta RR125 SPEX

ENGINE

TYPE: Piston-port, reed-valve

DISPLACEMENT: 124.8cc

BORE/STROKE: 54 x 54.5mm

COOLING: Liquid

COMPRESSION RATIO: 15:1

FUELLING: Keihin PWK36

TANK CAPACITY: 9.5L

TRANSMISSION: Six-speed constant-mesh

CLUTCH: Magura hydraulic, wet multiplate

DIMENSIONS

WHEELBASE: 1477mm

SEAT HEIGHT: 930mm

CLEARANCE: 325mm

WEIGHT: 94kg dry

SUSPENSION

FRONT: ZF 48mm USD, 295mm travel

REAR: ZF gas-oil monoshock, 290mm

BRAKES

FRONT: Nissin twin-piston, 260mm wave

REAR: Nissin single-piston, 240mm wave

RUNNING GEAR

FRONT TYRE: Michelin Enduro, 90/90-21

REAR TYRE: Michelin Enduro, 120/90-18

PRICE & CONTACTS

RRP: \$11,495

WEB: betamotor.com.au

PHONE: (07) 5597 4335

*You have to be on the ball
with gearchanges but that
is just the 125 way of life*



You can change the power map on the fly



Shrouds emphasis Beta's weight-saving work



The 125 could probably run a 220mm rear disc



You have to buy the Racing if you want KYB fork



Has Braico lost weight or is it just the bike?



The factory went to work on the exhaust side of the combustion process to get more torque

bike much easier to ride. So, do all these mods actually work on the track? Short answer is yes. The RR125 is so much fun to ride and, sure, you have to be on the ball with the gearchanges to ensure you get the most out of the bike but that is just the 125 way of life. On the fast and flowy test loop at the Aussie Beta launch in Kyogle, you could keep your momentum up through the corners and remain in the sweet spot of the power.

Unlike a motocross 125, which can be super snappy and hard to ride, the Beta is very smooth and predictable and, as a result, it would suit a wide range of riders. A Junior who is stepping up from an 85 or someone who is learning would love this bike, especially with the luxury of electric start. I thought that it was a little overkill chucking an electric start on a 125, but it's handy.

The torque off the bottom was stronger than I was expecting and didn't require much clutch to get up and go. The Magura hydraulic lever's action is very smooth and super light so it's easy to give it hell out of a corner.

I thought the guys from Beta Australia had the test bike jetted spot-on as well so it was very crisp and revved out cleanly. The RR125 comes with a six-speed gearbox that works seamlessly, which is great because you are constantly giving the gearbox a workout.

It has a map switch on the top frame tube and, while some riders might want to play around with the Wet and

Dry maps, I would just leave it on Dry and have maximum power.

The suspension and handling of the 2020 range has been upgraded and I believe the 125 (and the 200 for that matter) are the pick of the bunch in terms of handling. The 48mm ZF open-chamber fork is a tad soft on the heavier bikes but on the 125 it feels pretty solid. Due to having less weight on it under brakes, the fork seems to hold up better than on, say, the big-bore four strokes so I found myself able to push the 125 into corners with good confidence.

All models have an external preload adjuster on top of the fork which gives the rider up to 10mm extra preload. I found that an extra 3-4mm from stock was my sweet spot on the 125 and it was plush and handled the rugged terrain at Kyogle pretty well.

NOT OUT OF SHAPE

The new ZF shock is predictable and keeps the rear wheel on the ground so you can get maximum drive. One thing I always find interesting on a small-bore bike is the fact that they don't deflect or get out of shape. I don't know whether it's a weight or power thing but if you have ever hopped on a 125 and had a bit of a go on it, you would notice that you rarely have out-of-shape or scary moments on them. Even on some of the sketchy, fast sections of the Kyogle test loop, I could keep the RR on the pipe and just power over the roots without worrying too much about the bike stepping out. I wish I could



There isn't any other bike IMO that offers the fun factor of a 125

feel like that on a big-bore. The thing I really enjoy about not just the Beta 125 but all 125s is how light they are on the track. Coming into a corner especially, they stop on a dime and you can switch lines so easily. I really liked how easy the RR125 is to manoeuvre around on the hills should you ever have dramas getting to the top. You don't realise how light the bike is until you have to skull drag it around the place.

The improved chassis and overall look of the 2020 Betas is a big step in the right direction and you feel very comfortable on the bikes as soon as you sit on them. The new handlebar is on the low side, which I prefer, and the flatter seat makes it easier to move around, which is great considering you spend most of your time swinging off the back.

They have done a great job making sure all the electrical components are tucked away nicely in the new composite subframe and the air filter access and fitting has been totally revamped and it is now idiot-proof. Kudos to Beta for that. The 9.5-litre tank ensures you can ride the little weapon all day too.

VERDICT

Sure, 125s may not be everyone's cup of tea. You have to be on the money with your throttle control, gearchanges and line selection. You have to make sure you carry good speed everywhere so you have plenty of momentum for whatever lies ahead.

But, in saying that, I feel there isn't any other bike that offers the fun factor of a 125. The sound, lightness and smiles that they bring is always a winner. The RR125 ticks all the boxes when it comes to the smile scale and I really enjoyed riding it.

The engine is smooth, predictable and produces decent torque, and having the bonus of electric start without a big weight penalty is a nice touch. It feels great on the track and the ZF suspension seems to suit the lighter bikes.

You really just cannot beat the sound of a 125. They may not be the fastest up the straights but they definitely sound the fastest and that is what really matters. **ADB**



Got something to say about this yarn?



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Beta Pay Attention

At the Beta world launch in Italy, I nearly got taken out of proceedings on the first lap. After spending the best part of two days getting to Tuscany, I was so excited to get out and ride the RR125. It was the first bike that I hopped on and I set off into the Italian countryside with a smile on my face.

I had heard about the slippery rocks but didn't really think about them being too much of a problem on the 125. I popped out onto the grassy hill at the top of the mountains and railed around it smiling the whole way. As I took the view in, I thought how good is this? However, I didn't see the singletrack drop away over a rock shelf and the little 125 spat me off and yard sailed me down the valley.

I hit the deck hard and slid for what felt like an eternity on my head. When I finally stopped tumbling, I got up to see the 125 literally sitting against a tree virtually upright and almost mocking me like "what are you doing, man?" Meanwhile, here I was with a shredded helmet, ripped jersey and pants, grazes from top to bottom with no idea what the hell just happened. Monza Imports would be furious.

I crawled back to the bike and lucky enough for me, nobody saw the crash so the 125 and I just kept that quiet. Moral of the story, don't take your eyes off Italian singletrack even on a 125!



There's plenty of room to pull the barrel



It's all about the noise with a 125, apparently

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Cloud control

WORDS // MAT BOYD PHOTOS // MITCH LEES

AUSTRIA GOES ALL SOFT ON THE LATEST HUSKIES



Spares kit bits makes this sort of thing easy



No internal changes, according to Husqvarna

The gap between the Husqvarna and KTM platforms is starting to widen, with the factory engineers moving to tune the Husqvarna suspension differently from the KTMs. As we found with the FC450 we tested last issue (#486), the WP components might be the same but you get a more comfy ride on the white bikes.

The move to plusher settings on the Husqvarnas is apparently to suit the type of riders buying these bikes over the Katos.

Apparently, Husky riders were complaining that the suspension was too harsh, not that we're judging or anything ...

Husky tells us there are no internal changes to the engine but the power delivery has definitely improved, so maybe it's just slightly different mapping along with the vented airbox cover and more aggressive throttle cam from the spares kit that make the big difference to the power. We took the FC250 for a spin around a private track in NSW to answer the big questions for you guys.

IS IT BETTER?

For most riders in Australia I reckon the bike is a big improvement. Faster riders might not be keen on the softer suspension but the majority of people buying FC250s are Juniors or people of club level so the suspension will suit them better and be much more forgiving than the old firm stuff.

DID THEY TAKE RISKS?

It's common knowledge that KTM and Husqvarna share the same production line in Austria. The two brands share much of their componentry, which means the company can cut deals with suppliers. This strategy might be cost-effective but it means that the two brands have been accused of producing essentially the same bikes, just one orange and the other white. We can't wait to see what this policy does to Pierer Mobility's latest acquisition, Gas Gas.

Husqvarna and KTM share the same engines, frames, suspensions, electronics, cooling systems, batteries, transmissions, hubs, fuel injection and components. Yes, Huskies run carbon composite subframes, different plastics, seatcovers, airboxes,

handlebars, brake rotors, rims and master cylinders, but that hasn't been enough to remove the slur that they are "white KTMs".

Changing the suspension settings for 2020 sets the two brands further apart for riders. The move carries risk for both Husqvarna and KTM because the settings can't please everyone, but I can see the gamble paying off for both.

WHAT ABOUT THE FORK?

My observation has been that the main buyers of Husqvarna motorcycles are not chasing supercross-hard suspension but are club-level riders or weekend warriors who want their suspension to move and absorb the bumps without being harsh or beating them up. Racers and young blokes tend to gravitate towards KTMs but, due to this year's

plusher suspension, I can see more riders looking to the Husky FCs.

This change has been achieved by switching the WP Xact 48 compression shim stack to make the fork softer from the mid-stroke onwards. WP eliminated free bleed in the mid-valve, increased bottoming resistance by raising the oil height and upped the recommended air pressure by 2psi to hold the fork higher in its stroke. Husqvarna has succeeded in reducing the mid-stroke harshness, smoothing out the action, improving front tyre contact and increasing the overall comfort.

WHO WILL LIKE IT?

Husqvarna's smoother fork will appeal to the majority but if you don't fit into the standard weight range or you're at the faster end of the racer spectrum

then you may find the fork too soft. Faster riders competing in pro-level motocross will find it too plush and will want it revalved, but a pro rider will have every aspect of their bike customized anyway. The average rider will find a comfortable setting here without having to ship their fork off for an expensive overhaul.

SHOCK AND AWE?

To get a balanced chassis I ran the rider sag at 105mm but I found my 90kg was too heavy for the shock spring and the valving was a little on the light side towards the bottom of the stroke. The shock was plush and smooth but if I hit any harsh bumps at speed the shock would get unsettled because it just didn't want to cope with my weight.

Ninety kilos is too heavy to be a 250cc



rider anyhow and at lower speeds I found the shock to work really well. If I was to race this bike I would opt for a shock with stiffer compression valving, slower rebound and a stiffer spring. For anyone who comes in below me on the scales of justice I feel confident to say you will not have a problem, but if you have any doubts about the spring, measure your free sag. If it isn't between 30mm and 40mm unloaded, you need a different one.

WHAT ABOUT THE DONK?

Husky tells us that the latest engine is the same as the 2019 one. That means no changes to the Pankl piston, crank, cams or anything. I'm guessing there was a mapping change as the MY20 revs more quickly and doesn't have the slight lag that the 2019 bike had. The MY20 engine accelerates quickly through the rev range and needs to be shifted up more rapidly. The aggressive power map really livens up the engine and the vented airbox cover adds a really nice power hit.

HOW'S IT GO, MATE?

The first thing I noticed about the FC250 was how far the engine revved. Some will rev a long way but stop making power about 1500 revs before the limiter. The Husky makes power right up to the limiter, meaning you need to rev it until the fat lady sings to get the most out of it.

The longer you can hang off shifting the faster the engine will go. Last year I felt you needed to run in the lower gears to get the Husky out of tight turns but this year the bottom end is strong right into a punchy mid-range, followed by a rocketing top-end. The engine has strong power right through the range rev which will satisfy riders from beginners to professional.

HOW'S THE GEARING?

I found when Husky introduced the 14-tooth sprocket the bike became a little sluggish off the bottom and you needed to use lower gears and more clutch to get the bike out of the tight turns. This made me feel like the gearing was way off, especially jumping from Japanese bikes. With the increased power, there is no longer a problem as the engine has enough torque to pull out of turns in any gear.



Shock should suit those in average weight range



Vented cover comes in the spares kit



Carbon composite subframe with highlights



The 14-tooth sprocket works fine now

Husky tells us that the latest engine is the same as the 2019 one



Husqvarna FC250 SPEX

ENGINE

TYPE DOHC, four-valve
DISPLACEMENT 249.9cc
BORE & STROKE 78 x 52.3mm
COOLING Liquid
COMPRESSION RATIO N/A
FUEL METERING Keihin 44mm EFI
TANK CAPACITY 7.5L
TRANSMISSION Five-speed, constant mesh
CLUTCH Magura hydraulic, wet multiplate

DIMENSIONS

WHEELBASE 1485mm
SEAT HEIGHT 950mm
GROUND CLEARANCE 370mm
CLAIMED WEIGHT 101kg without fuel

SUSPENSION

FRONT WP Xact 48 USD, 310mm travel
REAR WP Xact monoshock, 300mm travel

BRAKES

FRONT Brembo twin-piston, 260mm wave
REAR Brembo single-piston, 220mm wave

RUNNING GEAR

HANDLEBAR ProTaper alloy tapered
FRONT TYRE Dunlop Geomax MX3S, 80/100-21
REAR TYRE Dunlop Geomax MX3S, 120/80-19

PRICE & CONTACTS

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WARRANTY Three months parts only



Map switch really makes a difference now



Xact fork came in for a serious talking to

**You need to
rev it until the
fat lady sings
to get the most
out of it**

WHAT D'YA RATE?

THE WEIGHT The Husky is so light and effortless to throw around.

THE BRAKES The Brembo brakes with Galfer discs work really well and give a solid feel every lap.

MAP SWITCH While I spent most of my time on the more aggressive map, I did like the idea of being able to tone back the power if the track got dry and slippery or if I got worn out and started to get arm pump.

HANDLING The suspension gives a plush but planted feel and the front-end response is fantastic once you get the air pressures customized to what you like.

AIRBOX COVER The spares kit vented airbox cover really livens up the power right through the rev range.

OPTIONAL THROTTLE CAM By

switching to the more aggressive, black throttle cam in the spares kit the bike hits full throttle, quicker making the power much more aggressive.

WHAT D'YA HATE?

SEATCOVER The vinyl is rough enough to rip a hole in your backside.

CLUTCH MASTER CYLINDER The Brembo master cylinder used on the Katos gives a nicer feel.

STICKERS I think Husky must have fired its graphics designer because the graphics kit this year is way too plain.

VERDICT

The 2020 model FC250 is a step in the right direction for Husqvarna. The suspension is more user friendly and suits a much broader market. The power has improved and makes

riding the bike almost effortless as there is strong power right through the rev range.

For a novice or intermediate rider, I feel the bike is set up perfectly but for a rider wanting a little more you can fit the vented airbox cover, the larger throttle cam and select power map two and you instantly have a bike with a far more aggressive power curve that will tighten your sphincter when you crack the throttle.

The suspension is more like a hard enduro set-up so it is forgiving and easier to handle. Faster or heavier riders will find they want it stiffer but the majority of people buying this bike will feel like they are riding on clouds. **ADB**

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WORDS // **LEE HOGAN** PHOTOS // **MAX PETERS**

Tough Year

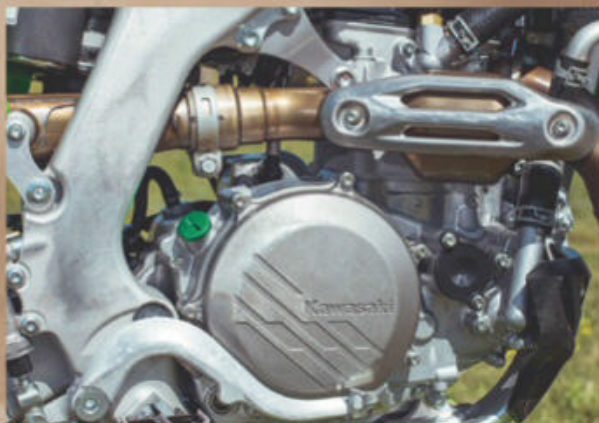
Despite its international 450MX shootout success, KX sales dropped 28.9 per cent to 512 nationally in a slow year for motocross sales across the board.

More green meanie

**LEE HOGAN TAKES THE
LATEST KX450 OUT OF TOWN**



Nissin provides brakes and hydraulic clutch



Finger-followers provide high rev limit



Aftermarket muffler will make it fly higher



Time to bring switchgear into the 21st century



Graphics and green sideplates are only changes

Kawasaki is the talk of the town in the 450 class after signing Adam Cianciarulo to ride with reigning AMA Pro Motocross champ Eli Tomac in the factory team. On debut, AC came up trumps against the favored Tomac at the Monster Energy Cup in Las Vegas.

Their fierce rivalry is easy to spot and, without a doubt, either could win the Main Event on any given weekend. Their weapon of choice, the KX450 is in the second year of its current evolution. A heavily-revised model was introduced for MY19 minus the F on the end of its name.

The bike saw improvements in almost every area and that threw it straight into the limelight, earning it the top spot in many shootouts abroad and a solid win in the ADB 450cc bunfight.

STICKING WITH IT

For this year, Kawasaki has stuck with the mantra “if it ain’t broke, don’t fix it,” so the 450 remains almost completely unchanged. A lot of manufacturers will make huge changes to their bikes and then spend the next few years refining the package to try to get things dialed in.

Things such as suspension valving, ignition mapping, shock linkage ratios, traction control settings etc. that seemed fine in testing somehow come up for “minor updates” in following models as the manufacturer tries to convince you that it’s made more changes than just new graphics.

This isn’t the case with the Kawasaki KX450 for 2020, as the graphics and green sideplates are the only things that got a look in. Literally everything else has remained the same. We can’t really blame Kawasaki’s engineers for taking the year off as they did such an incredible job with the MY19 model.

HOW’S IT GO, MATE?

I was extremely impressed when I tested it at Park4MX in Melbourne and I was equally as impressed when I tested the 2020 version at the Hastings Valley MCC recently on the Mornington Peninsula. It is a completely different track with nowhere near as much traction but higher speeds overall.

The shortage of traction really highlighted the smooth, torquey power characteristics. You could just pull a higher gear and tractor your way around the corners.

The Kawasaki doesn’t make anywhere

near the highest horsepower in the class. In fact it’s close to 5hp down on the Honda, but the way the power is delivered is super impressive and very easy for anyone to use. The Kawasaki really comes into its own when the track becomes technical and slippery.

WHAT YA RATE?

HYDRAULIC CLUTCH It was a stroke of genius to fit the hydraulic clutch. The Nissin unit works amazingly well and, in my opinion, is the best hydraulic clutch on the market when it comes to overall feel and action. To me it almost has the feel of a cable clutch while being light as a feather to pull in. The engagement point is neither too narrow nor too wide, so you won’t find yourself accidentally stalling the bike in corners or nearly looping out with the slightest flick of the lever exiting corners. Overall, this is my favourite aspect of the KX and a terrific addition to the production machine.

ENGINE The motor is deceptive. It has an enormous amount of bottom-end torque, which makes it a huge amount of fun to ride. The bottom-end flows into an impressive and strong mid-range, before slightly tapering down at the top end ... which isn’t such a bad thing for a 450. This power delivery adds up to what a lot of people would call their ideal engine. You may wish for a bit more top-end to out-drag your mates down the straights, or get you up and over that monster jump a little bit easier. But, in reality, there’s only a very small percentage of the population who can deal with that kind of power and put it to good use on a motocross track. And if you have any lack of throttle control then that extra horsepower can get you in all kinds of trouble. Especially when the dreaded arm pump rears its ugly head. The engine is impressive and ticks all the boxes for 99% of riders. And, for the remaining 1%, it’s not difficult to find a few extra horsepower with some bolt-on parts such as an exhaust or ignition.

ERGONOMICS The ergos of the Kawasaki are lively, fun, flat, slim and team up very nicely with the engine to provide an overall package that will make you want to whip it off every jump and plough into those fluffy corners. The bike almost feels like a 250 on steroids. It is agile and enjoys its time in the air. The ultra-flat seat can actually have you climbing too far forward in corners if you aren’t careful. But once



The Recipe

- Showa 49mm spring/cartridge fork (Replacing finicky SFF air fork)
- Slimmer, more rigid chassis
- Redesigned plastics and seat
 - Redesigned airbox
- Slimmer and flatter seat profile for rider
 - Electric start
 - Nissin hydraulic clutch
- New top-end with finger-follower valve actuation
 - Bridge-box piston that was 17g lighter
 - A 44mm Keihin throttle body (up 1mm)

you get used to it you realise that you can't throw your weight too far forward when you sit down for corners or you'll end up sitting on the petrol cap.

FORK The 49mm Showa spring-cartridge fork is a huge improvement over the SFF air-spring unit. It works well in most conditions and, other than being sprung slightly on the light side, you will find that for most riders the fork will hold up nicely and do its job well. I found the action to be very plush and, provided I didn't brake too hard entering choppy corners, it would hold up okay. Weighing in at 82kg with riding gear on means that I'm not much heavier than the average 450 rider but I had to be careful not to over-charge a take-off ramp or braking zone for fear of the fork diving too far. A simple fix is to either go up a spring rate or have your favourite suspension tech weave their magic with a slightly more progressive valving spec that ramps up a tad more into the last part of the stroke. You don't want to lose the plush feeling in the initial part of the stroke, but a little bit more bottoming resistance will be nice for most riders over 75kg who sneak around the track at an intermediate-to-advanced level.

VERDICT

Kawasaki took us by surprise last year with a 450 that ticked all the boxes. It added electric start, got rid of the tricky air fork and became the first Japanese manufacturer to add a hydraulically-operated clutch to its production bike. For this year, KHI has quite rightly rested on its laurels in the hope that it will be enough to keep them in the hunt. **ADB**



Got something to say about this yarn?



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The engine is impressive and ticks all the boxes for 99% of riders

Kawasaki KX450 SPEX

ENGINE

TYPE DOHC, four-valve
DISPLACEMENT 449.0cc
BORE & STROKE 96 x 62.1mm
COOLING Liquid
COMPRESSION RATIO 12.5:1
FUEL METERING Keihin 44mm EFI
TANK CAPACITY 6.2L
TRANSMISSION Five-speed constant-mesh
CLUTCH Nissin hydraulic, wet multiplate

DIMENSIONS

WHEELBASE 1495mm
SEAT HEIGHT 955mm
GROUND CLEARANCE 340mm
WEIGHT 110.0kg wet

SUSPENSION

FRONT Showa 48mm spring-cartridge USD, 305mm
REAR Showa gas-oil monoshock, 307mm travel

BRAKES

FRONT Nissin twin-piston, 270mm wave disc
REAR Nissin single-piston, 250mm wave disc

RUNNING GEAR

HANDLEBAR Renthal Fatbar tapered alloy
FRONT TYRE Dunlop Geomax MX3S 80/100-21
REAR TYRE Dunlop Geomax MX3S 120/80-19

PRICE & CONTACTS

PRICE \$11,248 ride away
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WARRANTY None



Lee was happy with the in-flight service



Crossbrace is unusual in 450cc class



Dutch RHK sprocket is not standard



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Gasser's Golden Era

AS THE CURTAIN CLOSES ON
ANOTHER SPANISH OPERA,
WE TAKE A LOOK AT TWO
OF ITS BIGGEST STARS

When Black Toro Capital rode into Girona three years ago with 13 million Euro in its pocket to

save Gas Gas from foreign invasion, everyone thought its troubles were over. Production resumed with a much-improved EC range featuring KYB suspension, the clever EC Ranger was unveiled and Gasser won the FIM Trial-E Cup with an electric motor stuffed into one of its trials bikes.

The future looked good. But it soon became clear that Black Toro's pockets wouldn't stretch to the sort of money needed to develop the promised four-stroke range or even redesign the two-strokes to tuck the starter motor underneath, as Beta, Sherco and KTM/Husky had done. Black Toro expected the sort of financial returns that weren't coming and therefore sold 60 per cent of the business to KTM Industries AG last September.

KTM was renamed Pierer Mobility Group, with promises that Gas Gas production would continue in Spain, but just how much production beyond the trials and Torrot electric range remained unclear until KTM senior product manager off-road, Joachim Sauer, let slip in an interview at EICMA in November that future Gas Gas enduros would be built on the KTM/Husky platform, with WP suspension.

There were tears in the ADB office, because the EC250/300 has been a perfect balance of raw two-stroke power matched with an incredible chassis that was admired around the world. As we sat crying into our beers awaiting the belated arrival of 2020's last "all-Spanish" EC range, the boss set us to work comparing the two best bikes of the Black Toro Capital era.

The 2018 EC300 represented a new beginning for Gas Gas and it landed with a bang by winning that year's ADB 300T Enduro Shootout. The MY19 models were even better, with changes to the cylinder head and a tapered Neken handlebar. Gas Gas introduced GP versions to compete with KTM Six-Days, Sherco Factory and Beta Racing models and it gave us the EC Ranger 300, a watered-down



Ranger's handlebar is basic, non-tapered



Sidemounted starter motor was improved



Braktec calipers are cheaper than imports

Gas Gas EC Ranger

ENGINE

- TYPE Piston-port, V-Force 4 reed valve
- DISPLACEMENT 299.3cc
- BORE & STROKE 72 x 72mm
- COOLING Liquid
- COMPRESSION RATIO N/A
- FUEL METERING Keihin PWK 36mm
- TANK CAPACITY 10L
- TRANSMISSION Six-speed, constant-mesh
- CLUTCH Magura hydraulic, wet multiplate

DIMENSIONS

- WHEELBASE 1480mm
- SEAT HEIGHT 930mm
- GROUND CLEARANCE N/A
- WEIGHT 107kg dry

SUSPENSION

- FRONT KYB 46mm open-cartridge USD, 270mm travel
- REAR KYB monoshock, 300mm travel

BRAKES

- FRONT Braktec twin-piston caliper, 260mm NG disc
- REAR Braktec single-piston caliper, 220mm NG disc

RUNNING GEAR

- HANDLEBAR Gas Gas-branded alloy with crossbar
- FRONT TYRE Vee Rubber 90/90-21
- REAR TYRE Vee Rubber 120/90-18

PRICE & CONTACTS

- PRICE \$11,490
- WEB gasgasmotorcycles.com.au
- WARRANTY Six months parts and labour

The 2018 EC300 represented a new beginning for Gas Gas and it landed with a bang



EC300 that tapped into the same hard-enduro hybrid market as the Beta Xtrainer and KTM Freeride. You could see the Spaniards were trying hard on a limited budget.

I was lucky enough to call a 2019 Gas Gas EC300 my own for 12 months and during that time I also scored a few rides on the EC Ranger. The Ranger retails for \$1000 less than the EC300 and it's fairly obvious where Gasser saved that money. The Ranger doesn't get the 48mm KYB fork found on the EC300. Instead it features a lower-spec 46mm unit from the same company. Other changes included Spanish Braktec calipers instead of Nissins, a generic handlebar and a heavier lead-acid battery. The Ranger is 2kg up on the EC300, despite losing the kickstarter, but the 30mm lower seat is a godsend for the vertically challenged.

The Ranger engine room didn't escape untouched. Gas Gas fitted a Tecnigas muffler, a different cylinder, lower-compression head, Keihin PWK

36mm carburettor and a skinny expansion chamber to encourage bottom-end torque. The pipe does an amazing job of dulling down the power delivery – torque output is almost like an electric motor, but there is no top-end.

FIND YOUR NICHE

The Ranger was designed and built with hard enduro in mind, think Erzberg. Although it's heavier than the EC300, the lower seat height, softer suspension and detuned engine still make it more suitable.

At slow speeds through rough trails like a rocky creek bed, the Ranger's engine can be held low in the revs while still giving you enough punch to pop the front wheel over logs, rocks, or whatever you're trying to get up and over.

The EC300 will also do this without complaint but where the Ranger excels is the width of its low-down torque range. It's particularly helpful when

Same But Different

While both the EC and the EC Ranger forks are manufactured by KYB, the Ranger one is tuned to be plusher and more forgiving with a different spring rate and valving specs. It's also an open-cartridge design which can be argued is a better, more forgiving package for the average trailrider.

The EC fork is a closed-cartridge design, which is more complicated to service. These started out on motocross bikes as they were much more resistant to cavitation at high

fork travel speeds. These speeds are generally only seen in a competition setting and not so much in trailriding.

The EC300's 48mm-diameter fork legs are stronger and more rigid. There is less flex in the fork, which means the ride can become rougher, but they are more stable and predictable at high speeds in rough terrain. The 46mm fork of the Ranger is more flexible but gives a more forgiving ride at low speeds and is more rider friendly in a casual trailriding setting.

Tech Ed Mat Boyd



the ground is slippery and the rear wheel wants to keep breaking loose. The EC300 will rev up as soon as it loses traction while the Ranger is tuned to keep its composure. This difference between the power delivery of the Ranger and the EC300 is amazing. It's also why I'd recommend the Ranger to new riders. The engine doesn't need constant monitoring, like a disobedient teen, you can get away with sloppy throttle control and weak clutch fingers.

I didn't find the Braktec calipers compromised the Ranger's stopping power. I never found it lacking and, if I wasn't told, I probably wouldn't have known it had different brakes but colleague Ben Grabham, who had an EC Ranger as a long-term, didn't like them, even after changing the brake fluid (page 112).

Playing in the Ranger's favour is the softer suspension. Hard enduro is slow going so you don't necessarily need Chad Reed's supercross suspension. At

46mm, the KYB fork will flex more at high speed, the oil will heat up more quickly and it will probably put you in the hospital if you raced it at Finke.

Although not made for Finke, the suspenders are right at home in rough terrain and even though it's soft I never found the limit of the fork in the tight stuff. I only found myself wanting the 48mm set when the trail opened up or I found my way onto a sand motocross track (which I did).

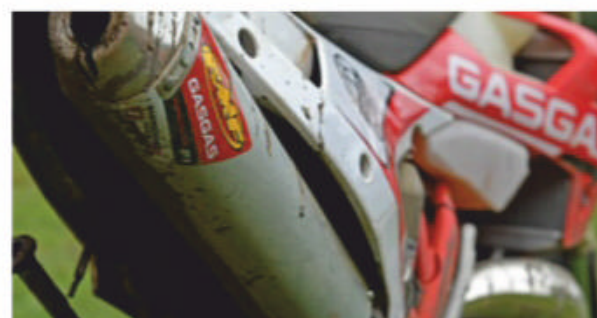
The shock is a standout performer in slow, slick terrain where there isn't much traction. It's somehow able to find traction where the stiffer EC300 can't. This is helpful just about everywhere, but in particular when you're trying to crawl up a rock face after crashing at the bottom, which I may or may not have done. Instead of turning around, I started traversing the rock face and the rear-end didn't kick out. Then as I rolled on the throttle and pointed north the Ranger just crawled up without any clutch abuse.



EC300 runs Neken handlebar and a map switch



Detailing on the bikes is something we will miss



The FMF muffler doesn't strangle this mill

Gas Gas EC300

ENGINE

TYPE Piston-port, V-Force 4 reed valve

DISPLACEMENT 299.3cc

BORE & STROKE 72 x 72mm

COOLING Liquid

COMPRESSION RATIO N/A

FUEL METERING Keihin PWK 38mm

TANK capacity 10L

TRANSMISSION Six-speed, constant-mesh

CLUTCH Magura hydraulic, wet multiplate

DIMENSIONS

WHEELBASE 1480mm

SEAT HEIGHT 960mm

GROUND CLEARANCE N/A

WEIGHT 105kg dry

SUSPENSION

FRONT KYB 48mm closed-cartridge USD, 300mm travel

REAR KYB monoshock, 330mm travel

BRAKES

FRONT Nissin twin-piston caliper, 260mm disc

REAR Nissin single-piston caliper, 220mm disc

RUNNING GEAR

HANDLEBAR Neken tapered alloy

FRONT TYRE Michelin Enduro Medium 90/90-21

REAR TYRE Michelin Enduro Medium 140/80-18

PRICE & CONTACTS

PRICE \$12,490

WEB gasgasmotorcycles.com.au

WARRANTY Six months parts and labour

COMPARO I EC RANGER VS EC300

The Ranger is more versatile than KTM's Freeride because it's built off a mainstream platform



It's unclear how much of MY21 EC will be built in Spain



The Ranger has shorter suspension, lower seat

The Ranger is somehow able to find traction where the stiffer EC300 can't

If you've read anything I wrote about the EC300 in the past three years, you'll already know how I feel about it. At its price point, the thing is hard to beat. Choosing between the Ranger and the EC300, I'd take the \$1000 hit and ride home on the EC300. Although it's become hugely popular to throw, drag, scratch and completely destroy a dirtbike under the guise of riding hard enduro, I prefer to ride mine, not drag it – call me old fashioned.

Don't get me wrong, I love tight, snotty singletrack and technical riding but I also like fast flowing trails and not spending six hours dragging my bike up a hill if I can avoid it. With this considered, the benefits of the Ranger are lost on me. I prefer the EC's 48mm fork and the wide, aggressive power of its untamed engine. And, at 196cm, I don't need a lowered seat. While the Ranger is the bike I'd take if I was going to race Wildwood, my usual trailride isn't as brutal and the EC300 is the better all-rounder.

The torque is still strong but the mid-range comes on a lot sooner and this is what will catch you out on loose, slippery surfaces if you aren't quick on the clutch. The top-end on each bike can't be compared. The Ranger pretty much doesn't have one while the EC300 absolutely screams up top. It's addictive and so much fun on fast flowing trails.

The stiffer fork is a jack of all trades. It's hard to find a situation where it doesn't perform well.

THE FUTURE

It's plush and forgiving at slow speed over the same terrain where the Ranger excels, but open it up around a grasstrack or through whooped singletrack and it stays planted and composed. It never feels out of shape and that makes the handling of the EC300 razor sharp. You can put it exactly where you want it. It just about steers itself through rutted turns.

It's the same story for the shock. In the 12 months of riding I did on the

2019 EC300 I only knocked a couple of clicks out of the low-speed compression damping, and that was only after Grabbo rode it. The rear-end doesn't kick when smashed into a square-edged bump and it doesn't wallow through whoops.

If the bean counters at Pierer Mobility have their way and take the easy route, next year's Gas Gas range could very well be red EXCs and Freerides. It's a sad prospect because the EC300 and Ranger 300 are great bikes, in fact the Spanish range is brilliant, but it's not all doom and gloom. At least the brand will still be around and if they are to be based on the current-generation KTM platform they'll no doubt be incredible bikes. The thing is they won't have that Spanish flavour that a lot of riders liked about Gas Gas. **ADB**

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WORDS & PHOTOS // OLLY MALONE

Coast to Coast

OLLY TRAVERSES TASMANIA
WITH 50 LOCALS AND
SURVIVES TO TELL THE TALE



All your fuel is included in the entry fee



"We need some real doctors, stat!"



Doctors on Doctors run into more problems

The best ride ever. That's what they call the St Helens to Strahan trailbike ride, a four-day adventure from St Helens on the east coast of Tasmania to Strahan on the wild west. It's a bold claim but let's look at the facts: 720km of Tasmania's best trails, military-like organisation of fuel stops, food, accommodation, transport and support, GPS guidance, exclusive access to some of Tasmania's most remote and untouched riding spots and two free beers every night. So what's the catch? You have to spend five days with 50 Tasmanians ...

The ambitious title started as a joke

between a group of mates who all thought their ride was the best ever. Some were based in the east, some central and others in the west. So they joined them all up to create a 720km route from St Helens to Strahan. This became the "best ride ever". But the concept originated before the clash of the Tassie trail bosses.

In 2006, after a few bourbons, event creator Andrew Gray whipped out a pen and drew a line from St Helens to Strahan on a map on the back of a phone book. It then took the team of locals with expert knowledge of all the different parts of the state to connect the dots, Ben Wilson to organise the lot and now, over a decade on, the ride is stronger than ever.

DAY 1

ST HELENS TO BRIDPORT

My flight to Launceston was delayed. Heavy fog blanketed Launceston and we couldn't take off until it cleared. Two hours behind schedule, the wheels touched down in Tassie and I was in a car with support driver Dale on my way to St Helens. Trailing behind was the Honda CRF450L which would be my steed for the four days.

Despite Dale's best efforts to make up the lost time, we missed the big departure procession down the main street of St Helens. I geared up and, after a quick introduction to my team, three locals who help map the route; Tommo, Craig and Chris, I threw a leg over the 450L and we were on our



The decommissioned Mt Paris Dam, built in 1936



Only one way across and that's through



Olly wasn't used to seeing water in creeks



Hard-working Tassie crew kept our bikes fuelled



Pieman River Barge, where the wild west begins



The mighty CRF450L didn't miss a beat



***Despite Dale's
best efforts to
make up the lost
time, we missed
the big departure
procession***



Trackside repairs after Tommo snapped a chain



The Deal

COST: \$1489

WHEN: 22-26 October, 2020

WHAT'S INCLUDED: Everything! Just bring your own bike and riding gear. Fuel, food, drinks accommodation, GPS route and transfers to the starting point and from Strahan after the ride are included in the entry fee.

WHERE: Starts in St Helens, finishes in Strahan, with bus back as far as Launceston and truck for the bikes.

HOW LONG: Four days of riding, one day to get home from Strahan.

The ride attracts 50-70 riders each year but in 2018 they added an adventure route for the latte lovers and a one-day, ironman-style St Helens-to-Strahan challenge. That's 800 kays of trails in less than 24 hours. Organiser Andrew Gray initially offered \$1000 to any group who could do the run in less than 24 hours. Four riders did and now it's a regular thing.

WEB: sthelenstostrahan.com.au

EMAIL: sthelenstostrahan@gmail.com

way to Strahan! The ride is designed to be tackled in teams.

When you register, you form your own group. There has to be at least one GPS per team and that way it breaks up the crowd, keeping dust and waiting time down.

Settling into the first hours of a four-day trailride you have to change your mindset. You aren't cutting Braico-style hot laps around the jizz rut, you need to pace yourself. We had 130-220km to cover each day and the last thing I wanted was to injure myself. You never know what they'll do to you in a Tasmanian hospital once they find out you're from the mainland.

A few hours into the ride we caught a group of Suzuki DR-Z400 riders who had called themselves "Doctors on Doctors" and were dressed accordingly. We managed to catch the trio despite starting an hour behind because one of them had crashed in a big way.

With no real doctors around, injured rider Eliot rode out one handed before being picked up and taken to hospital. The other two, Tim and Andrew, stayed with us.

I discovered I was wrong to assume they had called themselves the doctors simply because they were riding DR-Zs. Tim explained that during the application process he spent over an hour applying for the necessary AMA insurance on the Australian Medical Association website instead of the Australian Motorcycle Association one.

Eliot's crash wouldn't be the last problem the doctors would face on day one. Only 30 minutes down the trail, Andrew tipped over in a mud puddle and his bike wouldn't start. We tried everything to get it going but nothing worked and, eventually, Tim pulled out the tow rope and dragged his stranded mate out of the forest.

Tommo, Craig, Chris and I rode ahead to call the support truck but as we were triangulating our position, flying out of the bush came Andrew coasting down the 1.2km hill in what would become the world's longest clutch start attempt. His DR-Z coughed to life sounding like a 75-year-old pack-a-day smoker but it was running.

Given the distances we had to cover each day, the trails were pretty easy going. A mix of flowing fireroads and some narrower twin track but no tight singletrack, not on the first day at least.

The curse of the doctors struck again when Tommo's chain snapped while we were all charging up that long hill. Luckily these Tassie trailriders are well prepared with spare links and we were on our way in a matter of minutes.

The last section of the 170km day was sandy, whooped out singey. Not the Honda CRF450L's domain but it charged along without complaint. It was nearing six o'clock by the time we enter the section so I was feeling pretty smashed and was happy to make it to Bridport for the night stopover at about 7.30.

DAY 2

BRIDPORT TO GOWRIE PARK

This was when the fun really begun. The first section was a mad dash down the beach and the big Honda was in its element. Just getting onto the beach was hard work but, after smashing my way through a few kays of sand whoops, we emerged only to find there wasn't any beach, only a couple of metres of dry sand before huge sand dunes rose up overhead.

We had unfortunately timed our run to coincide with the biggest king tide to hit the area in years. I didn't know any different but the locals all told me that usually the beach is 50m wide and you can hold 110kmh.

Seven kays down the beach we caught up to the rest of the pack, who had stopped at a river crossing that was swollen thanks to the tide. It went against our instinct but the best way to cross was closest to the waves, because that was where the water was shallowest. I waited for a lull in the sets, clicked second and held the CRF450L pinned across the 15-metre-wide river mouth which was still as deep as the airbox. It was super sketchy but I made it across.

This river mouth is usually only a couple of inches deep. None of the locals had ever seen the beach underwater and the river so deep and wide. I just thought these blokes love riding their \$14,000 dirtbikes through saltwater three feet deep ... It was testament to how tough dirtbikes are.

We left the beach behind and headed up into the hills near Bellingham where there was less saltwater and more flowing trails. Craig led the charge and we weaved through the mountains at a pretty



This would be a criminal offence in NSW



The Tassie trio who showed Olly the way



Not an ideal position to be in



The scenery was beyond belief



Riding up a river, which used to be the fireroad

good pace, only stopping to turn around when we got lost, even though Craig had mapped the route!

One turnaround saw me drop the CRF450L and snap the front brake lever which made the remaining 100 or so kilometres of the day a bit hairy, especially given my rear brake pads were metal on metal by this point.

Despite the slow start to the day thanks to the unpredictable nature of Poseidon, the pace picked up throughout the day and by the time we made it to the night's stopover in Gowrie Park we had clocked over 220km.

DAY 3

GOWRIE PARK TO WARATAH

It rained all night and didn't stop as we geared up and left for our 130km ride. Luckily I'd had the bright idea to buy a thin rain jacket the night before the trip, a \$15 purchase that probably saved me from dying an early death. I was a little worried about what was in store for day three, especially after a full night of heavy rain, because I'd heard stories about how tough the day three hills were in the wet.

It must have got to my head because not even a kilometre into the day I put the big Honda down on an easy hill – I was in for a long day. The rain continued to fall as the kays ticked over and I was slipping all over the track, I just couldn't keep the bike in a straight line. I stopped to check my tyre pressures, 20psi ... that'd be why. In my rush to leave St Helens on the first day I never gave the bike a check over, which turns out was running MotoGP tyre pressures. I let out a few pounds and things got a lot better.

The trails we rode for the morning started life as access tracks once used for logging. Although they weren't tight singletrack, they were still tricky to navigate because of fallen branches that would put you on your arse if you weren't paying attention. The St Helens to Strahan crew have built a few bridges along the trails to make crossing some of the deep washouts a lot easier.

The bridges are made from shipping pallets nailed to logs and because the area gets a lot of rain and not much sunlight, they were covered in moss and slippery as ice. The longest bridge spanned a river about 10m wide. When we arrived someone had just fallen into the water when their bike slipped out from under them so the rest of us

decided to push our bikes across. Someone still almost lost their bike pushing it across.

The infamous clay hill I had heard so much about turned out to be an anticlimax. In past years' people have struggled to make it up the slippery little sucker which is littered with tree roots, but for some unknown reason there was a lot of grip and everyone got straight up. After this the trail got a lot tighter and we entered what was the most technical section of the ride. It wasn't anything too difficult but, compared to the flowing access trails we had been riding, it was much slower going. The trail was covered in rocks and full of mud holes that could drown your bike if you weren't careful.

We made it through but the rain continued to fall. To make things worse, the temperature was dropping to near arctic levels. Following our singletrack session we had a 30km road section to where we were staying for the night in Waratah. This was without a doubt the coldest 30 kays I've ridden in my life! It was six degrees and raining, in late October!

What the hell is going on Tasmania? It was character building, if nothing else. Most of us couldn't even undo our helmet straps when we arrived because our hands were so cold. But the fire inside the pub was roaring and everyone suffered the same bone-chilling experience, so it gave us something good to talk about.

Rider's briefing the night before the final day had a serious tone. I had heard all week about the dangers of the west coast. The main message was never turn your back on the west coast or you might just end up losing your bike, or worse.

DAY 4

WARATAH TO STRAHAN

Despite the semi-terrifying warnings, I was looking forward to day four the most. I had heard good things about the west and I was pumped to ride down the treacherous Ocean Beach. I'd been hearing all week about its perils.

A quick blast along the black top started our day's riding. It was freezing, I had no idea Tasmania got so bloody cold in spring. I've got no fat on me so my core body temperature was still borderline hypothermic from the day before but one of the locals, Chris, was kind enough to lend me his hi-vis mining jacket.



I bought a thin rain jacket the night before I left for the trip, a \$15 purchase that probably saved me from dying

After a few kays on the tar we turned onto a trail which never sees daylight, so you can imagine how slippery it was. We crossed a river at the bottom and things got a lot tougher on the way out. Some time ago the river burst its banks in severe flooding and decided it would rather flow down the access track.

This meant we essentially had to ride up a river to get out of the valley and after all the rain we'd had the past few days it was not easy going. There were railway sleepers hidden underneath the brown, turbulent water and any wrong step would see you and your bike drop into a hole.

It was the worst conditions any of the locals had ever seen, and some of them had done the ride every year since it started in 2006. The end of this trail marked the start of a long transport to the Pieman River Barge. Across the Pieman River was the start of the real Tassie West Coast and, in my books, the best section of the trip.

We made our way to the coast through a farm access road that was full of mud holes that caught a few riders off guard. Not the mighty Honda though! With so much inertia it ploughs through mud holes like an ice breaker through the Antarctic ice shelf! After smashing our way through countless puddles, the terrain opened up and I caught my first glimpse of the coast. It was looking rough and wild but against the bright green grass of the farm it looked unreal.

The farm track dropped us off north of Grandville Harbour and a few kilometres of flowing sand tracks guided us to the start of one of Tasmania's most famous 4WD routes, Climes Track, 20km of torture as some riders put it. Climes is a rocky track that links Granville Harbour and Trial Harbour. It's a fair workout on body and machine and a hotspot for flat tyres and dented rims.

My group made it without a single puncture and we fuelled up one last time before we attempted the most treacherous section of the ride, Ocean Beach. Four bikes were written off one year on Ocean Beach when a storm surge pushed riders up against the near vertical 20m sand dunes.

At the start of the ride the weather forecast didn't look good. Another king tide combined with 4m swells gave us little hope of riding the final section to Strahan on the beach. Plus, heavy rain in the area would mean the Henty and

Little Henty rivers would be raging, and we had to cross both! Only three times in the 12-year history of the event had riders made it across the two rivers. Getting down to Ocean Beach through Trial Harbour was easy enough and once on the sand it feels like you're on another planet.

Only a couple of kilometres down the beach is the mouth of the Little Henty. Despite its name, the Little Henty is usually the bigger of the two and on this day it was almost impassable. In previous years they have carried bikes across and that's what we did. Event regular Hayden left us little choice, we were crossing the river one way or another. At just over two metres tall it's hard to disagree with Hayden.

Four people to a bike we hauled 15 bikes across, not knowing if the Henty, 10km down the beach, would even be passable. With all the bikes across we blasted down the beach towards Strahan. Conditions were perfect. Despite the big seas, the waves were staying well away and it was sixth gear wide open until we arrived at the Henty River.

To our horror the Henty was wider and deeper than anyone had ever seen it. There looked like no way across. A few riders tried to cross at the mouth through the breaking waves but three of them drowned their machines.

But then out of nowhere appeared three locals on quad bikes. They had come from our direction but we had no idea how they'd got their quads across the river. We flagged them down for a chat and to our amazement they revealed a homemade inflatable raft which they use to cross the river.

These three legendary Tasmanians had no hesitation lending us their raft to get our stranded bikes and bodies across. It was an experience I'll never forget, pushing off from the riverbank with only some PVC pipe stretched between two inflatable tubes keeping me and my Honda from sinking to the depths of the river. Crossing the Henty was the final hurdle before we could blast down the last 15km to Strahan. Cold beers and a mega BBQ greeted us in Strahan and we were buzzing all night from our epic final day adventure. Yep, the best ride ever. **ADB**

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They were still tricky to navigate because of fallen branches that would put you on your arse if you weren't paying attention



Climies Track should be on your bucket list



Last fuel stop before our Ocean Beach blast



Waist deep if you're two metres tall like Hayden



A surprise boat ride thanks to some friendly locals



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The 2005 450RR was a sleeved-down version of Andy Caldecott's 660 (background) but it flew



WORDS & PHOTOS // MAX SULLIVAN

Quiet achiever

THIS CROW-EATER WAS ONE OF OUR FIRST DAKAR HEROES



Schwarz runs an excavation business in real life



The author flew our stickers to Spain

If you have ever had the privilege of meeting David Schwarz, you would appreciate the heading on this yarn. He is quietly spoken and does not say much but, when he does, it's worth listening to. David has a wealth of knowledge regarding motorcycles and off-road racing, with plenty of experience in enduro, desert races and rallies.

Although he won't start a conversation regarding his achievements, if you get the chance to ask some questions, he will open your eyes with more stories than you can poke a brake lever at. He's currently the team manager for the Husqvarna Desert Race Team, for which the two main riders last year were Jacob Smith and Sam Davie.

Managing his own excavation business in Lobethal, SA, as well as an off-road team keeps David pretty busy but he still saddles up in navigation rallies like the Condo 750 held at Easter. After all, Husky needs a representative in the Over-45s class.

Last year was the third season for the HDRT, with Smith switching from Honda and helping the team to a 1-3 in the Condo 750, a second at Finke, first at Yellow Mountain and first in the Sunraysia Safari. David picked up wins in the Over 45s at both Condo and Sunraysia, proving he still has what it takes.

What a lot of people don't know is that David was one of the first Australians to make an impression at the Dakar Rally after being invited by the KTM factory to ride in the 2005 event. Unlike today, there was no social media to publicize your achievements. There were magazine features, but they were shot with SLR cameras using slide film, not digital files. The only television coverage was on SBS. As such, only die-hard fans found out about who was in the race.

The Dakar Rally is tough on competitors and crews alike but talk to those who have been to Africa and then South America and you will always hear the same comment. Africa was tough.

NO MARQUEES

The riding was tough but so were the conditions. Not even the KTM factory team had marquees in 2005. Washing bikes was impossible.

The "facilities" were archaic. You either squatted over a hole in the ground or were presented with an upright concrete pipe decorated with faeces around the rim. Showers, if available, were plywood temporary constructions with only cold water. There was no mobile reception, no live tracking of competitors and no Facebook.

In South America millions of fans lined the roads. In Africa you might be

lucky if the village chief and his wives stepped out of their hut to see what the noise was. The race was more about survival than presentation.

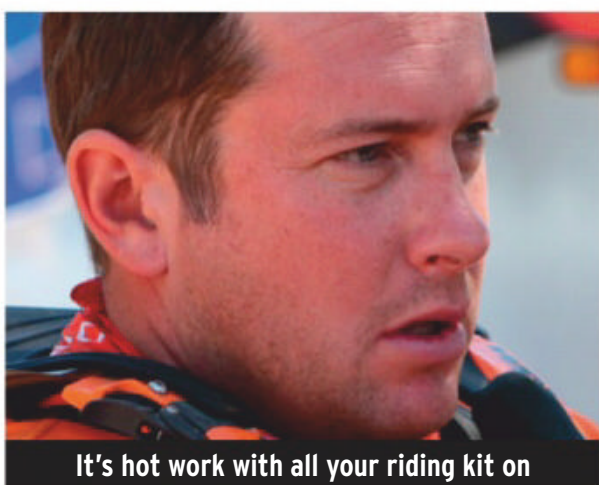
David was offered a ride in the 2005 event on a 450RR. KTM guns Fabrizio Meoni, Cyril Despres and Alfie Cox were aboard 710cc machines, while fellow South Australian Andy Caldecott was on a KTM 660 Rally. That year's Dakar started in Barcelona before competitors travelled by boat to Africa. From Tangier in Morocco, the race went south through the Western Sahara, Mauritania, Mali and finished at the famous pink lake (Lac Rose) outside of Dakar, the capital of Senegal. It was one of the toughest Dakars, with only 104 bikes finishing the 16-day race, out of 230 starters.

David not only completed the race but finished 37th outright and third in the 450cc class. Quite an achievement for someone who had only raced once outside Australia. To find out more, ADB cornered Schwarz to ask a few pithy questions.

ADB: David, where did your interest in motorcycles come from?

DS: My father always raced when I was growing up, so motorcycle riding was something I did from a young age. I started racing enduros in SA when I was a teenager. Then in my early 20s I heard about the Australasian Safari. The Safari became the goal.

Schwarz riding a Husaberg in the 2009 Australasian Safari, after production of the bikes had moved to Austria



It's hot work with all your riding kit on



This is the 2007 Safari on a KTM 660 Rally



David was seventh moto at Sunraysia last year

What year was your first Safari and how did that work out for you?

Finally in my late 20s the moons aligned and I had the opportunity to ride the Safari. The year was 2001 and the race ran from Alice Springs to Darwin. I rode a Yamaha WR250 of all things. I did alright and finished. It was a long way on a 250 [total 4426km, with 2605km of specials over 24 stages].

How many Safaris did you enter and did you have to wait for the sweep truck during any of them?

I rode 10 and finished 10. Who knows, that might be some sort of record!

You then went on to the most famous race of all, the Dakar. How did that come about?

I met Carlo De Gavardo during the 2003 Australasian Safari. In 2004 he invited me to ride a desert race in Chile. I rode a KTM 250SX two-stroke. I think that ride and my Australasian Safari rides made an impression. Next thing I know, KTM

is offering myself and Andy Caldecott rides in the 2005 Dakar.

You have raced Dakar on more than one occasion, tell us about that.

The 2005 from Barcelona to Dakar was my first one. In 2008 I went to Portugal to race the Dakar again but the event was cancelled [due to terrorist threats]. I ended up riding the Central Europe Rally that started in Hungary and finished in Romania. My third Dakar was in South America riding a Husaberg in 2012.

What would be your most memorable experience from racing?

My first Dakar in 2005 is certainly the most memorable. Unfortunately, for good and bad reasons. The marathon stage [over two days] was extremely tough, navigating through 770km of dunes in the Sahara Desert. At the end of the stage I was transported in a ute with an M16 mounted on it. As we drove off into the darkness, I started

thinking was I with the right people (there had been issues with rebel militia groups throughout Northern Africa)? Shit, maybe these are the bad guys ... I'm done! However after a nervous ride, I made it to the tent, hired by KTM and sat inside with Andy Caldecott, Cyril Despres, Marc Coma, Fabrizio Meoni, Alfie Cox, Jean Brucey and Giovanni Sala. It was surreal. Here I was, exhausted but living my dream. I had finally made it to the Dakar Rally. Not only that, I was sharing the marathon night with my heroes. The next day, Meoni crashed and died on the course. It was the second death in two days. Jose Manuel Perez had crashed several days earlier but died the day before Meoni. It really hit home, this is not just a race, you are riding to survive. **ADB**

 Got something to say about this yarn?
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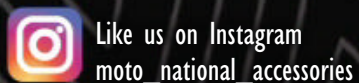
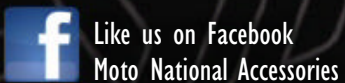
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Rinaldo's huge gamble

A 50/50 DECISION ONE DAY
OUT ENDS IN A GOLD MEDAL

WORDS // STEVE SOMMERFIELD PHOTOS // SOMMERFIELD & ESPN

X Games Gold Medals – they're not that easy to come by and it takes years of risking your life to get invited to the "olympics of action sports". While the results of last year's Minneapolis X Games are well known, the back story is almost unbelievable – how David Rinaldo stomped a trick considered impossible by most.

After a string of problems, broken bones, failures, fear and doubt, the Malakai Flip, a Backflip with a Body Varial in the middle, almost didn't see the light of day. "I was sitting in the changing rooms at an FMX show in Germany somewhere, listening to the other riders talking about the future of FMX and what the next new tricks would be," Rinaldo says.

"But it was when Antonio Navas laughed about trying a Body Varial Backflip and guys like Pat Bowden and co. were laughing in the background ... I sat there at that moment and thought to myself 'for sure, this is for me'."

For the non-FMX aficionados out there, until Carey Hart did it at Gravity Games in 2000, the idea of performing a Backflip was

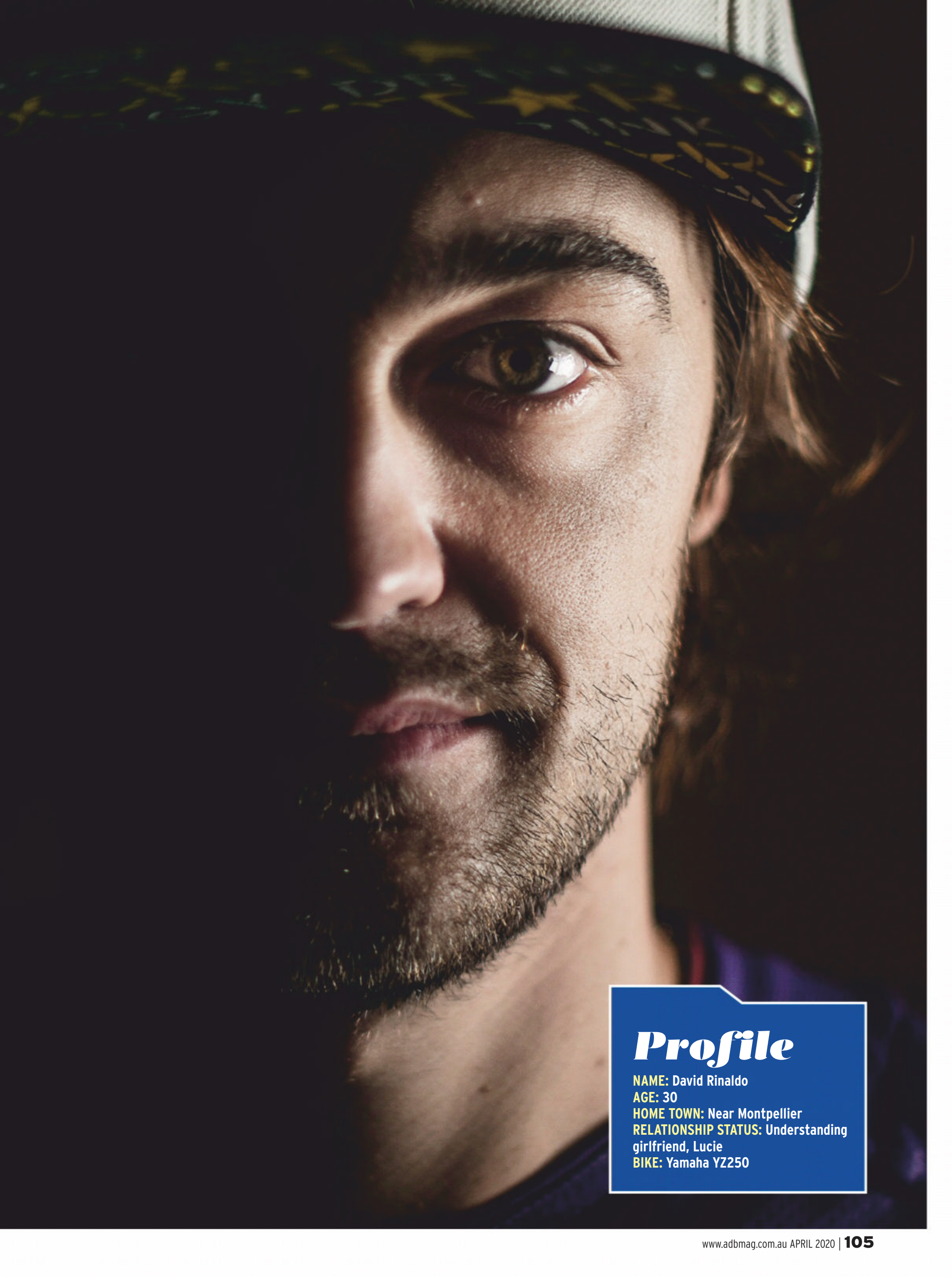
unthinkable. Then the next wave of technical tricks, Body Varials, where the rider let's go of the bike and spins around or above the bike like the Cali-Roll, Volt or Bundy, were being performed sporadically by only a handful of riders.

The concept of performing one of the most technical tricks while upside down in the space of about 2.5 seconds seems so absolutely ridiculous that any sane person would laugh it off as fantasy. For Rinaldo, it would consume his dreams and become a nightmare.

ONE WAY TO FIND OUT

Being somewhat secluded on his property in the Languedoc coastal region of southern France, David flew home directly from that show in Germany and decided there was only one way to figure out whether the trick was going to work, and that was by risking a beating in his foam pit.

While the first attempt was far from a success, with David ejecting and flailing through the air – he knew it was feasible. Even though he wasn't even close to landing it. "I knew it was possible, even after the first attempt. But I had shows and tours for four months, so I only practised once or twice through a week in the foam



Profile

NAME: David Rinaldo

AGE: 30

HOME TOWN: Near Montpellier

RELATIONSHIP STATUS: Understanding
girlfriend, Lucie

BIKE: Yamaha YZ250

pit and every time it was a little better,” David says.

It would take an agonising four months before David would even land his first Body Varial Backflip in the foam pit. Which doesn’t mean much, as it could have been a fluke, and there’s a big difference between jumping into foam and landing on the dirt on your head.

As a former world champion (2013) who has mastered some of the biggest tricks in the sport with undeniable style, Rinaldo’s credentials aren’t to be sneezed at. As soon as he landed the first Body Varial Backflip in the pit, he emailed the head-honcho of X Games moto division, Eric Perronard, a fellow-Frenchman who has dominated the industry in the Northern Hemisphere, with the good news.

The email read along the lines of: ‘I have a new trick, and if I want to land it, it will only be at X Games in Minneapolis’. No reply. Not a problem though, and remembering the Willy Watts’ drama from X Games 10 years before, when Willy claimed a new trick but did two Dead-Sailors, X Games has created more stringent requirements for invitations than simply saying you have a new trick.

Rinaldo returned to the foam pit, landed more and more times and decided it was time to take the new trick to his airbag landing (which is effectively using jumping castle material to produce a one-metre air cushion on top of a normal dirt landing. Not the safest option, but better than nothing).

“I landed it perfectly on my airbag landing and I knew X Games would be happier to see me on that and riding away. ‘I can show I landed the trick. This trick is real!’ I sent another email and waited. One, two, three weeks, nobody sent me an invite! I was kind of pissed,” Rinaldo exclaims.

“I decided that since only a few friends, my girlfriend [Lucie] and Eric Perronard, knew about this trick and I didn’t have an invite, that I’m just going to do more on the airbag just for me, not for anyone else. Of course, after six good ones, I crashed.”

It was only six weeks before X Games when Rinaldo crashed on the airbag which, despite being relatively safe,

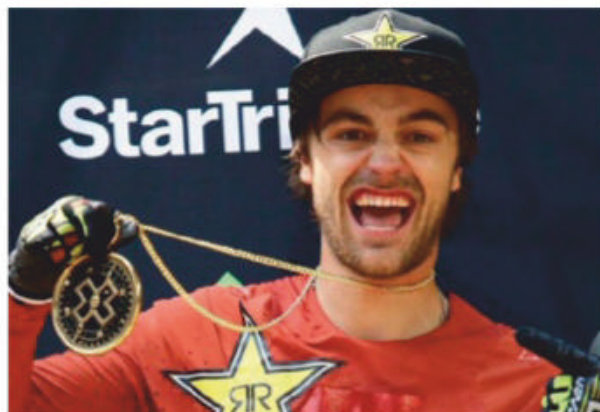
The idea of performing one of the most technical tricks while upside down seemed absolutely ridiculous





First time

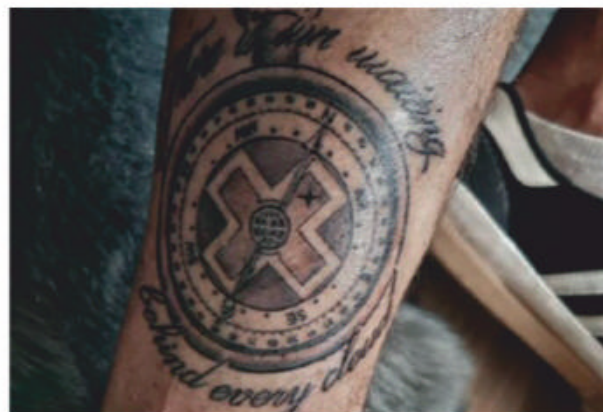
David Rinaldo had never won a medal at X Games before Minneapolis



Rinaldo was ecstatic with his gold medal



Lucie knows how to handle the great man



As an older rider he doesn't mind a bit of ink



Now his Hart Attack looks pretty mundane

can break bones. "I crashed on 7 June. On 12 June I was in for surgery. One hour before my surgery I heard 'bing bing' and I had my X Games invitation in my inbox! Shit! I decided to say nothing to nobody and simply believe I will be back on the bike soon and go to X Games to kick arse," he says.

"I don't know how, but after three weeks I was walking and after five I was back on the bike. My doctor did an awesome job."

BROKEN MIND

With only seven days until the biggest event of the year, with barely-mended bones and plenty of metalwork holding him together, David was risking it all by going back for more punishment in the foam pit.

"I was in the foam pit every day, morning and afternoon. Every day, my trick was perfect. The next, perfect. Every time I tried it. Perfect. With everything feeling so good, I then started to think about everything around X Games.

"If I land this trick, it will be perfect for me, perfect for my motivation, perfect for my sponsors, for the people who trusted in me and everything. But if you crash, it's going to hurt, everyone will be pissed, everyone will think you want to do a trick, but you can't. And I hate this. So, I started to stress and, by the end of the week, it was more or less impossible for me to land the trick in the foam pit."

And on the last day of training before X Games, David was even further away from landing the trick than those first few months when he was seeing if it was even possible. "I went home that afternoon, one day before flying out, crying and thinking there is no way I can go to X Games. I told Lucie, 'I can't do this. For what? A medal? Or crashing...? No, I'm not going'."

In the space of a week, David went from wondering whether he could even ride so soon after surgery, to absolutely nailing the trick for a few days and then to being overcome with fear. Travel day is upon David and Lucie, tickets have been booked for weeks, hotels, mechanic, bike and everything else he needs in America.

In the early morning, he decided to give it one more go. Unfortunately, the typically strong wind of southern France had reared its ugly head. "It was all or nothing at that point. I opened the foam pit up and said to Lucie: 'If I land on the bike, we will go to America. If I don't, we stay home.' Simple."

It was only one jump but he pulled the trick out perfectly, despite the strong wind, and landed on the bike. That was it. He won the 50/50 bet with himself and packed immediately, tearing his bike down to put the most important parts into his gearbags before heading off to the airport in the hope of creating history.



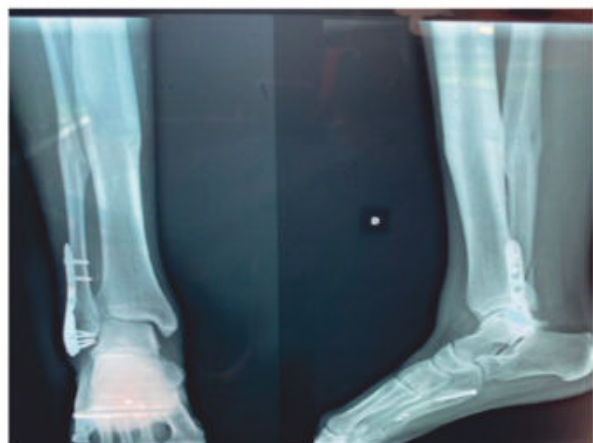
I decided to say nothing to nobody and simply believe I will be back on the bike soon



Back in action at Dirt Diggers In Germany



In the middle of the California Roll Body Varial



David was walking again after three weeks

It was a mental game that few could comprehend but on his first attempt in Minneapolis, Rinaldo wasn't about to go for a safe run on the first jump. He was only the second rider out for the FMX Best Trick competition, with riders coming after him such as the Australian multiple X Games FMX Best Trick winner Jacko Strong and fellow Aussie multiple medallist Rob Adelberg promising Front Flips, Rinaldo knew there was no second chances.

He rolled into the Super Kicker on his first attempt, pulled back on the Backflip, reached back to the seat and spun a California Roll Body Varial while completely upside down and landed it, barely holding on. But it was enough to stick the landing and be swamped by fellow competitors who had just witnessed history.

After scoring a 94.00, which many believed to be far too low for something so impossible, it was still enough to win Best Trick. In doing so, David became the first European FMX rider to win an X Games Gold Medal in FMX Best Trick.

So what now? "For the moment, I don't really know what to do," he says. My first plan was to go to X Games and simply do my best. Prove to

myself that I'm able to land this trick. If I won a medal, I just want to be happy.

"I find myself already thinking about different goals and I have some ideas in my head and I know I can make them happen. But it's just too early. Maybe in a few months, I have a few tricks in my mind, that I can go back to X Games again for another medal. Especially in Freestyle because I'm not normally a Best Trick rider.

"I'm 30 years old and I'm only competing against myself. I'm not a rookie anymore and I have nothing to prove to anybody. I don't care now. I just have fun on the bike and also I have the motivation. I still want to push it and I'm still chasing the dream.

"I live for my family. I live to ride my dirt bike. If I don't have these two, it makes no sense to be here! Retirement is no option for me. I will ride my bike until my last day."

MALAKAI FLIP

This is a critical point in his career. He has created a new trick which is so technical and so risky that he's able to cash-in. If he wants too. He could join the biggest FMX tours around the world, performing this trick every night to sold out crowds and for big money. But it doesn't seem like the plan.

"My plan was only to ever do it at X Games," he says. "But, I did do a show in Europe onto an airbag landing and I did the trick fully but just crashed on the airbag because it was too soft and threw me off the bike.

"I just want to keep this trick special. It's real and I want to show to everybody it's technically and mentally difficult. I will do it again, but only when I want to do it. Not for the money, not for the fans. Only when I feel it."

Hard to believe, but when sponsors, fans and everyone in the industry is looking for the next big thing and David Rinaldo has it he's still all about simply riding his dirtbike and doing what feels good. And that's exactly why riders are drawn to Freestyle in the first place. **ADB**



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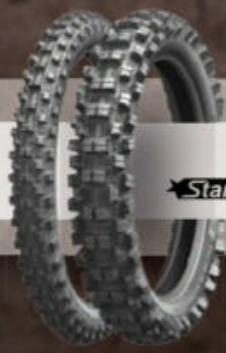
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Looking for a little inspiration when it comes to choosing a new bike? We've got specs and prices of every new dirt and ADV model on the market. Most of the prices are even for this year and Yamaha's are now rideaway, which means no last-minute extra costs.



EC RANGER RIDES INTO THE SUNSET

EARLY RECALL FOR 300 AS KTM TAKES THE REIGNS

I HAVE TO say I am not having a very good run hanging on to long-term test bikes. My arm injury at the end of 2018 cut short my time with the Sherco 500SEF Factory and now I find myself in a similar situation with the Gas Gas EC Ranger 300, despite my giant-killing efforts at Wildwood.

At least this time it's not my fault. In September, KTM bought 60 per cent of Gas Gas and, because of that, a new range of Gasser enduros are expected with the same WP-built frames and suspension as Kato and Husky.

No one can really tell me when we can expect to see this new Gas Gas range, but right now the only person who's put any miles on one is Laia Sanz in the Dakar Rally, and that was a resprayed KTM 450RR.

I was about to fire the Ranger back up after a few weeks off over Christmas when I received a phone call from Australian distributor Urban Moto Imports saying that they had decided to sell the Ranger I was riding. As most ADB long-term test bikes get put through their paces for at least six months, I was not expecting

this phone call at all.

After I got over the initial shock, I asked UMI if KTM Australia had already taken over control, as the majority of people were expecting. The answer was "no, we are just clearing all the current Gas Gas range to make room for the new ones".

Whether this was true or not, my time with the Ranger was coming to an end.

EXTREME ACTION

So I'll reflect on the few months I had it. Ninety per cent of the riding I did on the Ranger was on extreme/hard enduro terrain, mainly because I was getting ready for the Wildwood Rock in Sunbury, Vic. During all this riding, I found the Ranger a very solid package for a rider of my size (178cm and 83kg).

The lowish seat worked a treat when I was bulldogging my way through nasty terrain with my feet down. Gas Gas uses a mid-spec KYB fork and a high-end KYB shock. Both are set up extremely soft and work really well in low-speed, technical terrain. Both ends gave me great traction and feel over loose, stony ground.

The area of the Ranger I would definitely need to improve if I was to keep it any longer, is the brakes. Both front and rear Braktec calipers require way too much effort to get any kind of decent stopping power on the NG wave discs.

I did get a slight improvement when I changed the standard brake fluid to Castrol React, but not enough to make me completely satisfied. The Ranger is built to a price, so some of the components are not as good as the EC300's.

My only major success with tweaking the Ranger was fixing the tall gearing. After digging around in my sprocket box I found a 52-tooth cog from an old Husky that was the right pattern, which gave me an extra four teeth on the back for Wildwood.

I did not get to ride the Ranger for months as planned, but at least I got to experience this cool motorcycle for a few. I believe it could easily go head to head with any motorcycle in the hard enduro playbike class, including KTM's own Freeride 250, but I don't suppose that's going to happen.

Ben Grabham

I found the Ranger a very solid package for a rider of my size



GAS GAS EC RANGER 300

RRP

\$11,490

WARRANTY

Six months parts and labour

DISTRIBUTOR

Gas Gas Motorcycles Australia

INTERNET

gasgasmotorcycles.com.au

SO FAR...

HOURS

17

MODS THIS MONTH

None

MODS NEXT MONTH

New owner



MAIN. Grabbo demonstrates one of the benefits of taller gearing – monster wheelies despite skinny expansion chamber

ABOVE. Practicing for Wildwood Rock before KTM decided to switch Taddy Blazusiak to a Gasser for the WESS Enduro World Championship, just when Ben was getting really good

BETA 'ROUND THE BUSH

OLLY VENTURES BACK INTO THE WATAGANS

OUR FIRST RIDE of the new year, and only my second one on the Beta RR480 long-term, took us back to our old stopping ground in the Watagans. Last time we rode in the area it was 42 degrees, dry as a bone and we had to make a quick exit after we heard on the radio that nearby fires were out of control.

Some parts of the forest were the driest I've seen in the 15 years I've been riding there. Bog holes under thick rainforest canopies that normally look like they could contain dinosaur bones were completely dry.

But as the drought made its presence felt across most of Australia, some areas of NSW copped a bucketing in a two-day downpour that saw 200mm fall on the Watagans. If only this rain was more widespread, because there are people who need it a lot more than dirtbike riders on the Central Coast.

NO DUST

Thanks to the sporadic rain, the conditions were the best we've had in months. Dust was almost non-existent and the soil was nice and tacky. It was a great ride for gauging how the Beta performs in stock trim, and where I could make changes to suit my riding.

Straight away, I can say without any hesitation that I won't be touching the engine. I didn't expect to have to change anything in that



department, after all it's a 480 ... but this ride just confirmed it. It's very easy to use the torque on offer, it doesn't come on abruptly, in Wet mode at least ... and it's a very forgiving unit, especially given its size. Some four-strokes flame out the second revs get too low but I'm able to lug the Beta down low, almost like a two-stroke.

I made a dog's breakfast of one climb but was saved by the Beta's easy-going engine. When I approached the bottom of the rocky hill I didn't know which line to take and I almost came to a stop.

It completely stuffed Mitch's approach and he stalled behind me but the Beta kept on lugging and, once I picked a line, I wound on the throttle and the bike picked up pace like I was on a flat fireroad - I should mention it has fresh Pirelli Scorpion tyres which helps. The rocks didn't seem to bother the bike either, it

stayed true to its line and all I had to do was twist the throttle - a benefit of large four-strokes I guess.

An area I do want to improve is the suspension, in particular the fork. The ZF Sachs 48mm unit is set-up for trail comfort and it nails that brief. It's comfortable riding over rough terrain but once you turn things up you start to find its limits. Hard braking upsets the balance as the front dives more than I'd like and through whoop sections the bike can wallow.

ADB Tech Editor Mat Boyd tells me there are a few things we can do to try to fix this without completely rebuilding the internals. The fork has a pre-load adjuster on the top and that will be the first thing we adjust. Adding pre-load will keep the fork higher in the stroke but it will also change the geometry of the bike so we'll need to adjust the shock preload to match.

Digital Editor Olly Malone



BETA RR480

RRP

\$13,995

WARRANTY

Six months, parts & labour

DISTRIBUTOR

Beta Australia

INTERNET

betamotor.com.au

SO FAR

HOURS:

4

MODS THIS MONTH:

None

MODS NEXT MONTH:

Adjust fork pre-load



MAIN. Clearing logs is no issue for this Italian enduro masterpiece

1. Regulator/rectifier hangs out the front on the headstem for cooling

2. Olly is about to hit the ZF Sachs fork preload adjuster, but in a nice way

**BETA
RR480**

*I made a dog's breakfast
of one climb but was
saved by the Beta's
easy-going engine*



Y'Z THIS HAPPENING?

BRAICO FINALLY WAKES FROM HIS DROUGHT HIBERNATION

WELL I'VE HAD the YZ125X for a little over a month or so and, to be honest, with all the stupidly hot days and miserable conditions, the motivation to ride has been at a big fat zero. Even with the new YZ in my possession, it's been extremely difficult to throw a leg over it because, let's be honest, who wants to ride in dust all day?

I took a few weeks off from the bike with the hope that the rains would come and, wouldn't you know it, one glorious Thursday in mid-January, the heavens opened and provided some much-needed water. The downpour across the state was welcome in many areas after the recent fires and it was awesome to see the ground get some relief.

With the rain came primo conditions and I loaded the YZ-X up and headed to a track I know that is awesome after some rain. As soon as I took off around the loop, I had a smile from ear to ear and I did not stop smiling all day.

The YZ-X is so damn fun to ride and, with the track being sandy and on the faster side, it formed up awesome and I wanted to ride the wheels off that thing all day. The power is pretty nice actually, it's very useable and broad and once I dropped the clip on the needle from the second to the third groove to richen the bike up for the sand, it was on like Donkey Kong.

I wanted to hit every berm



and rut as fast as I could and the moisture in the ground held everything together. I went from having no motivation to ride, to not wanting to stop!

MELLOW ENGINE

Back to the engine. It is a tad mellow off the bottom for what I am chasing, so with the help of Yamaha Australia and the GYTR parts range, we are going to trick up the engine and get a few extra ponies out of it. I'm very excited to say the least.

I'm impressed with the handling of the little wasp straight off the showroom floor. The KYB fork is firm enough for me to be able to push hard through some pretty rough sections yet plush enough to soak up small

tree roots. Same goes for the shock.

The bike feels really balanced and I don't know if it's a small-bore thing or not but you can ride the bike wide open and it seems to float across the bumps and doesn't deflect like bigger displacement bikes do. You feel like a hero out there revving the bike as hard as you can and the sweet, sweet music of that 125 exhaust never gets old.

The plan for the next month or so is to get the GYTR parts on the bike and get it ready to have some fun racing. Pipe, silencer, ignition, reed valve - there really are so many options when it comes to getting the most out of a 125.

Enduro Editor Geoff Braico



YAMAHA YZ125X

RRP

\$10,949 rideaway including
rec reg lighting kit

WARRANTY

Three months parts only

DISTRIBUTOR

Yamaha Motors Australia

INTERNET

yamaha-motor.com.au

SO FAR

HOURS

9

MODS THIS MONTH

None

MODS NEXT MONTH

GYTR parts



MAIN. The drought means there's heaps of leaf litter lying around, and koalas
1. Braico shows off his new baby
2. The rut king serves up more goodness for his Instagram fans

YAMAHA
YZ
125X

The YZ-X is so damn fun to ride and, with the track being sandy and on the faster side, it formed up awesome

HONDA
CRF
450L



DOG FIGHT

THE CRF450L HAS TO FIGHT FOR HIS MASTER'S ATTENTION

THERE'S BEEN QUITE a bitter rivalry brewing in the Clubbman's shed for the last couple of weeks. After being top dog for six months or so, the Honda CRF450L long-termers has been playing second fiddle to a new pup in the kennel: a Ténéré 700.

Of course, I'm well known for being partial to the Ténéré breed, so the new dog has been getting all the love, and the dear old 'Red Dog' has been sulking in the corner ... until I finally threw a leash on my faithful friend and we hit the park for some good old fashioned playtime.

But we had to wait for the flames to subside and the smoke to clear after all the bushfire madness of the New Year before we could ease back into it with one of the most well-known dualsport runs on the north-west side of Sydney: Wisemans Ferry to St Albans, then Wollombi and the Watagans before heading home down the Old Pacific Highway. It's a cruisy but solid day run with a bit of everything thrown in and I've done it three times in recent months on the CRF, but this was the first time the majority of the run from St Albans to Wollombi has been thoroughly coated in charcoal.

While the tar run at the start

and finish of the loop can get a little tedious on the 450L, the red rooster sure is fun on the dirt, and particularly when you get up into the Watagans and can start diving deeper into the forest sections. On a 450 single, you don't need to fear tight trails or gnarly terrain and whether or not you might need to turn around to get back out again - as you do on a large-capacity multi-cylinder bike. As I've said before, the Honda LX Enduro Kit's FMF exhaust system and Vortex X10 ECU really has transformed the way the 450L performs in the bush by making the power delivery stronger, cleaner and just way more fun (We Recommend, Page 124).

LITTLE TEDIOUS

I still get that smile on my dial like I did when I rode the bike around the block for the first time with the kit installed.

I reckon it's important that you feel good when you're riding your dirtbike, and I feel good riding the 450L. I've been wondering, though, how many owners are out there.

I've seen a few around, including at the DSMRA Kowen Forest Ride and Watagan Trailbike Rally last year, but you certainly don't see stacks of them on the trails. At least I haven't.

Recent sales stats released by the Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries suggest there were 397 sold in 2019, compared with 258 in the latter part of 2018 after the bike's introduction to the Australian market. They're not huge numbers, especially when you consider Yamaha sold a whopping 1206 WR450Fs last year and KTM sold 837 300EXCs, while Suzuki managed to shift 613 DRZ-400s. Even the CRF250L sold more for Honda, at 603 units not including the Rally version.

What's holding the CRF450L back? The 1000km oil change interval sure is stuck in the craw of many potential buyers, I believe, but the other factor has to be the price. With an RRP of \$12,990, the 450L is up there in enduro bike territory but it's a machine that's clearly more trailbike than a WR-F or EXC. The inclusion of the LX Enduro Kit for buyers paying recommended retail - a \$2600 bonus - must have helped sales late last year but, in this day and age when everyone knows every dollar counts, there are going to be some sweet deals being done on 450Ls at dealers right now and it doesn't look good for a Rally version of the bigger bike coming here, despite Honda's success in the Dakar.

Adventure Editor Andrew Clubb



HONDA CRF450L

RRP

\$12,990

WARRANTY

12 months, unlimited kilometres

DISTRIBUTOR

Honda Australia

INTERNET

hondampe.com.au

SO FAR

HOURS:

79

MODS THIS MONTH

Oil change, fastener check

MODS NEXT MONTH

Unifilter foam element, SM Pro wheels with cush-drive rear hub



MAIN. Freshly-recovered from his latest rib injury, Clubby prepares for A2-watching

1. Ash played havoc with the pristine state of our Honda long-termers
2. It's a race against time to see who's first with a bigger tank than Nomad's

This was the first time the majority of the run from St Albans to Wollombi has been coated in charcoal

TUNING TIME

BOYDY TWIDDLES THE CLICKERS BEFORE OPENING UP THE FORK

OVER THE PAST month I didn't get as much seat time on the Husky as I had planned. Some family time away over Christmas sitting on a beach with my feet up meant I was away from the saddle for a few weeks and when I returned I managed to give myself a neck injury training for CrossFit in my garage gym.

A trip to the hospital for some scans ruled out any kind of serious damage, but I was prescribed some rest to allow the inflammation to settle before I could get back into training and throw my leg over the bike again. Now the injury has settled and I can actually turn my head without excruciating pain. So, I am back on the bike and have been fiddling with some suspension settings.

I am yet to change any internal settings on the Husky suspension, instead I am trying to sort out how I would like the bike setup before I dive into the internals. I have found that once I have got the bike into some faster, rougher terrain that I am running the compression and rebound clickers on the fork both seven turns out and have increased the air pressure to 146 psi so

the front-end will hold up on steep downhill braking sections.

For slower, tighter tracks I will most likely reduce the pressure but for faster tracks I am enjoying a little more. In saying that I am still running less air pressure than standard and I really like the fact that the air fork gives you the option of changing the spring rate quickly with an air pump. Spring forks would need complete disassembly to produce the same result.

MORE PRESSURE

I have changed the rear suspension slightly as well. I found the rear-end was travelling a long way through the stroke at high speeds, which meant the rear could feel a little unsettled in the whoops.

To fix it, I have set the compression and rebound adjusters at 13 clicks out and have changed the rider sag from 106mm to 105mm. I have even toyed with the idea of trying 103mm but I'm waiting for a day at the track to give it a go.

I am also starting to think about changing the rear spring to a 45N/mm unit to better



handle my 90kg weight. I am happy with the way the Husky is handling right now and I feel comfortable with it but if I can make it even better then why not?

This next part I am really happy to report. The FMF silencer along with the vented airbox cover have really made the Husky power snap. If you're not after aggressive power then I wouldn't suggest going this route but what I have also done to really make the power pop is fit the larger throttle cam that comes in the spares kit.

Being larger, this throttle cam needs less wrist twisting so the throttle butterfly reaches the wide-open position with less effort. These three modifications, along with putting the bike in the aggressive power mode, make the Husky 350 a small but powerful weapon.

I have just had a new graphics kit from Kustom MX and seatcover from Topline Upholstery turn up ready for me to fit so next month I'll show you guys how that turns out as well as I'll be giving the bike a service and a good run over with a spanner to make sure everything is still in good running order.

Technical Editor Mat Boyd



HUSQVARNA FC350

RRP

\$12,795

WARRANTY

Three months parts only

DISTRIBUTOR

Husqvarna Motorcycles

INTERNET

husqvarna-motorcycles.com.au

SO FAR

HOURS

6

MODS THIS MONTH:

Suspension tuning, throttle cam

MODS NEXT MONTH:

Graphics kit, seatcover, service



MAIN. Boydy uses Softly exclusively to keep his Fly gear whiter than white

1. The black throttle cam gives the more rapid response of the two
2. Consider swapping out this sideplate for dusty or muddy conditions
3. A stiffer spring may be coming to match the extra air in the front

To make it pop, I fitted the larger throttle cam

HUSKY
FC
350





DOUBLE DOWN

HITTING A DOUBLE WITH A RUN UP IS EASY BUT LAUNCHING IT FROM A ROLLER ISN'T

SEAT BOUNCING A DOUBLE isn't for the inexperienced so when they throw a roller in a corner right before the double the risk level goes up again. This tricky little section at the Wollongong round of the Australian Supercross Championship provided riders with two options: go real wide in the berm and attempt to triple out or cut the corner tight, roll the first jump and double out.

We bumped into supercross weapon Lawson Bopping before the Main Event and he said the triple wasn't really an option as it was slower and no guarantee you'd clear it, so everyone was rolling the first and then doubling. But plenty of the backmarkers still struggled clearing this section because, according to Lawson, their technique just wasn't quite right.

1 DOWN

Ensuring you clear the double is all about

the roll in. If you lose traction with the rear wheel or wash the front while you roll the single you will be out of shape to clear the double. Keep your wheels on the ground as you roll the single. You may need to do this by absorbing the upward force of the bike with your knees. Try not to look down at your front guard, instead look at the take-off ramp.

2 SIT BOY

Once the front wheel has begun descending the back side of the roller, transition to the seat.

You will need as much power as possible to the ground to clear the double so by sitting you will help the rear wheel get traction. As soon as your weight is on the seat and both wheels are on the down side of the roller, wind the power on strong but linearly, make sure you don't spin up or wheelie.

3 STAY

With both wheels heading in the right direction, continue to accelerate through the transition and into the up-ramp. As you sink into the seat and compress the shock, accelerate harder. You will need to measure how much throttle you will need to clear the obstacle. This just takes plenty of practice.

4 DROP

Once the wheels have left the up-ramp, back off the throttle and unweight the seat, but don't chop the gas entirely. This will help flatten out the bike and drop the front wheel so you get that low front wheel swagger as well.

Spot your landing and get ready to drop the hammer.

5 UP

As you approach the landing ramp you



need to make sure your wheels are parallel to the ramp. If you land with a bias to the front or the back your drive and balance will be out if you get on the throttle too hard.

Make sure you are standing again, with bent knees to absorb the impact. You also want to be forward on the bike, trailing a little throttle to absorb the impact of landing through the rear wheel.

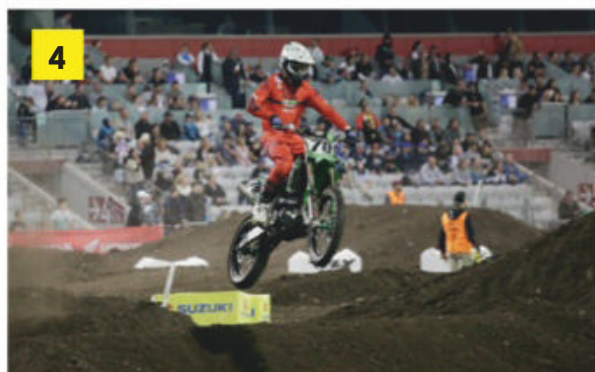
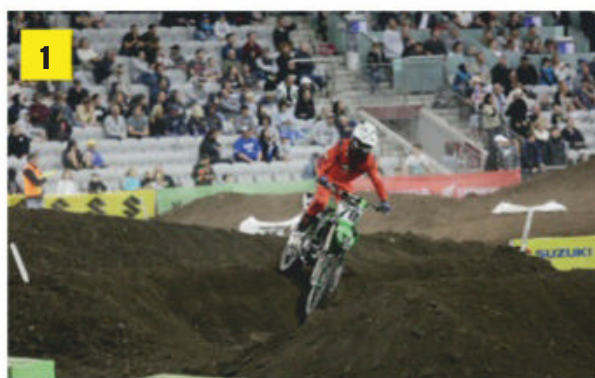
6 FETCH

As you feel your wheels hit the ground, transition your body back to the seated position for extra traction.

Gripping the bike with your body, get over the front of the bike and accelerate hard into the straight or corner.

Remember the key to a roller followed by a double is how you set it up before the roller and then in the transition.

SX Weapon Lawson Bopping



THE BIG TRIPLE

While tripling this section may be more entertaining for spectators it is much slower because the berm is too far back. When assessing what to do in tricky corners like this it is important to take all things into consideration, not just how far you can jump and if you will make it. It seems odd, but sometimes a double is actually faster than a triple. It's also important to assess if either option could impede the other. For example, with this section, those rolling it from the inside and doubling could easily take away the triple line and make you have to roll and double anyway, which not only leaves your inside open but means you will have to travel extra distance for no reason.



WHO'S IT FOR

SKILL SET

If you can't jump, don't try this. It is for expert-level riders only.

GENRE

Supercross and the odd motocross section.

PRACTICE

Practice by finding a section that you can roll and then single out. Without the pressure of clearing a down ramp you can focus on the roll and transition.

STRENGTH & HEIGHT

Lawson is tall and guys like G.O.A.T. Ricky Carmichael are short so it doesn't really matter what size you are.

WIDOW POTENTIAL

High. Anything related to supercross is.

BRAGGING RIGHTS

The roll and double isn't as good to watch as a big triple but, in this case, the pros far outweigh the cons, and the pros do the roll and double!

CLICK 'N' RIDE INDICATORS

IF YOU'RE SICK and tired of busting the stock blinkers on your trail or enduro bike, Click 'N' Ride removable indicators are a product that will definitely pique your interest.

What makes them different to run-of-the-mill OEM indicators? A couple of things: they're smaller and more compact than the majority of standard indicators. And they're quickly removable, meaning you can simply un-click them from their mounting sockets when you're riding in the bush.

These flashers are second-generation units featuring quality Phillips LEDs and a more durable mounting system.

WE RATE

COMPACT These indicators are compact, being way smaller and better tucked in than the stockers on the Honda CRF450L we fitted them to.

BRIGHT Even though the size is smaller, the Phillips LEDs are bright, so no need to worry about other road users not being able to see your signals.

DUST SEALS A good inclusion, as dust and moisture could easily clog up the 'click' action.

UNCCLICK 'EM These indicators are so easy to remove: just turn and pull them out. They're small enough to stash in your bumbag or backpack but Click 'N' Ride even offers a storage pouch.

RESISTORS Some bikes will need LED resistors wired into the leads to the indicators to get them to flash correctly. The CRF450L needed them at the back. Click 'N' Ride offers them.

DURABLE The Click 'N' Ride indicators have withstood over 1000km of abuse and have come through with flying colours. Due to the rear-guard design I had to mount the rear sockets to the plate hanger and, as they were out in the breeze, I feared they would be smashed by rocks and trail trash but



they've withstood the pounding. **WEBSITE** The clicknride.com.au website deserves a mention: it's full of excellent product and technical info.

DON'T RATE

INSTALLATION Putting the Click 'N' Ride indicators on the CRF450L was more involved than anticipated. Small brackets had to be made for the front indicators to mount them to the headlight surround, while the dual rear guards meant I had to mounting them to the rego plate hanger. The units come with bullet wiring connectors while the 450L uses multi-pin connectors, so there was a fair bit of mucking about with wire strippers and a crimping tool.

VERDICT

These Click 'N' Ride indicators have delivered as promised and are a good fit for the CRF450L and the dualsport riding I've been doing on it. I use the bike on the streets and certainly don't want to attract attention from the boys in blue by riding a dirtbike without indicators. But then when I want to have a solid snot-fest session on singletrack, the Click 'N' Rides can be removed and safely tucked in my backpack. At \$149 for a set of four, they're more expensive than cheap accessory indicators, but these are not cheap rubbish.

ADV Ed Andrew Clubb

GET IT HERE

BILL

Indicators \$149.95 (four pack), resistors \$14.95 (pair), pouch \$12.95

BROWSER

clicknride.com.au

BLOWER

(02) 6430 8616

HONDA LX ENDURO KIT

IF YOU RIDE a Honda CRF450L, you need to have the Honda LX Enduro Kit. Simple. As. That. Why? Because the kit, which includes a complete FMF exhaust system with Megabomb header and Q4 muffler, Vortex X10 ECU and SK Designs graphics kit, unleashes the beast within the 450L and absolutely transforms the engine.

WE RATE

INSTALL Fitting the kit is straight forward, with a couple of caveats: 1). Getting the oxygen sensor off the stock header meant grinding out the end of a ring spanner so we could slip it over the sensor wiring and undo it; 2). The ECU mount has more than a few fiddly little spacers and washers, so pay close attention to where they come from and where they go when you fit the Vortex.

WEIGHT The Q4 muffler weighs in at 2.673kg, which is 3.3kg less than the stocker. Gotta love that. Oh, and it looks a zillion bucks better.

MAPS The Vortex comes pre-programmed with 10 maps, four of which are specific to the 450L in LX spec: full FMF system and open airbox lid. We've made the Best Trail Power and Traction/Enduro maps our friends for both trail and dualsport riding.

PERFORMANCE With the kit fitted, the 450L's performance is transformed, delivering cleaner response and stronger power everywhere, with none of the lean running of the stock bike. While there's no question there's more power, both the Best Trail and Traction/Enduro maps also



deliver more tractable and rideable power than standard.

DON'T RATE

SELECTING MAPS The Vortex ECU is under the seat and tucked in tight behind the Nomad Tanks 11-litre fuel cell on our bike. Changing maps is fiddly, requiring the rubber sleeve that holds the ECU to be removed, so fitting a Vortex map switch is the go.

FUEL ECONOMY With the big change in performance comes a big change in fuel economy. Before fitting the kit, the 450L delivered better than 22km/l when trailriding, and 18-19km/l when hitting singletrack. Now it's around 18km/l for trailriding and 15-16km/l.

GRAPHICS We have KMX graphics on our 450L, so didn't fit the supplied SK Designs graphics. They do look tame, which is not like SK.

PRICE \$2600 is a lot of coin.

VERDICT

Is the LX Enduro Kit worth it? Yes. Once you try it, you will never go back. It's a big ask, even for the red brigade, and especially when you've splashed out \$12,990 on the bike. Honda has been offering the LX Enduro Kit as a retail bonus when you pay full price for the 450L, so getting in on that deal might help soothe the pain!

Clubby

GET IT HERE

BILL

\$2600

BROWSER

motorcycles.honda.com.au

BLOWERS

1300 146 632

BELL MOTO-9 MIPS



BELL HELMETS OUGHT to know how to design a good lid, they've been doing it since Adam was a boy. The Moto-9 was already a legend of the dirtbike world and the addition of MIPS has stepped it up a notch, thanks to the improved safety.

The design and structure of the 2020 Moto-9 is unchanged from last year but Bell has given the range a new look with fresh colours. Slipping into the Moto-9 it feels like one of the most comfortable helmets on the market and it's packed with features.

WE RATE



MIPS This is a feature designed to reduce rotational forces on your brain. It is a slip-plane between the padding and the EPS liner so that if you hit the deck, the helmet has a few centimetres of rotational movement before it starts transferring the impact to your brain.

MAGNETO The way Bell has used magnets in the Moto-9 range is brilliant, more brands should copy it. It's quick to install the cheekpads if you take them out for a wash and the chinstrap end snaps into place so it doesn't flap about when you're riding.

STYLE Bell has stepped up its game in the graphics department for this year. All the designs are fresh and will make your head stand out from the crowd.

COMFORT The big winner for me with the Moto-9 is the comfort. Bell packed the thing with padding so there are no pressure points.

DON'T RATE



PEAK The peak doesn't have a centre mount, only two side ones, and the thing has a habit of dropping if you don't crank the side mounts up real tight. Heat also softens the peak so if you leave it in your gearbag on a hot day it will warp.

VENTING The Moto-9 is not as breathable as some other helmets but it's only noticeable on hot days.

VERDICT

There is something about this Bell Moto-9 MIPS lid that has me reaching for it every time we go for a ride. The 2020 version is unchanged apart from the paint job, but it didn't need much apart from a fix for the peak. Long days on the bike are made easier thanks to how comfortable it is, and small features like the magnetic chinstrap end and cheekpads make it a very easy helmet to live with. If I had to make one criticism, it is that the Moto-9 is not as breathable as some other helmets. It's only noticeable on hot days but it's not enough of an issue to make you run for something else.

Olly Malone

GET IT HERE

BILL

\$649.95

BROWSER

cassons.com.au

BLOWER

(02) 8882 1900

ENDURISTAN LUGGAGE



I'VE USED A few brands of adventure bike luggage over the years but this is the first time I've tried Enduristan, which is Swiss. It's been available in Australia for a while, but has recently been undergoing a push thanks to the efforts of the new owners of the importing agency, Motorcycle Adventure Products.

M.A.P. supplied a selection of Enduristan gear to use on our Honda CRF450L long-term that included a Tornado 2 Pack Sack small duffle bag, XS Base Pack tailbag, Tool Roll and a Lyndon's Organiser.

WE RATE



QUALITY Hey, this gear is Swiss, so like anything that comes from the land of the cuckoo clock and Toblerone, it's quality. No question the materials used are good and attention to detail is high.

DURABLE The Tornado 2S (small size) and XS Base Pack are made from 1000D material that is strong and made to last, and also waterproof. I've had the XS Base Pack strapped onto the CRF450L and there's not even a hint of any wear in the points where it sits against the rack.

DESIGN Enduristan puts plenty of thought into its designs. The Tornado 2S has an inside zipper pocket and multiple inner mesh pockets while, on the outside, there's two rows of cargo loops and a handy carry handle. Both the Tornado 2S and XS Base pack have red liners to make searching for stuff easier, while both have roll-over and clasp enclosures, to avoid having zippers that

can get hampered by dust or mud. The Tool Roll packs flat, rather than rolling up – and it's a surprise just how much you can get in it.

COLOUR Most of the Enduristan range is black, so you can move it from bike to bike, without causing a colourway catastrophe, if that matters to you.

PRICE The Enduristan gear is competitively priced, no question, for the quality.

DON'T RATE



TOP OPENINGS A few other luggage brands are moving to dual-end openings on their duffle bags, which are handy when you want to reach wetgear or stash thermals.

LENGTH If the Tool Roll

VERDICT

This is good stuff. It's well designed, made to last and is priced competitively. And I'm stoked that the Tornado 2S was not only the perfect size to strap across the 450L's B&B Off-Road rack, but it also fits perfectly on the pillion seat of my new Ténéré 700 and mounts to the four stock fixing points with the Tornado's soft-loop Rok Straps. Excellent!

Clubby

GET IT HERE

BILL

Tornado 2 Pack Sack (small) \$99,

XS Base Pack 6.5 \$79,

Tool Roll \$59, Lyndon's Organiser

\$59, Inferno Heat Shield \$40

BROWSER

motorcycleadventure.com.au

BLOWER

1300 898 560

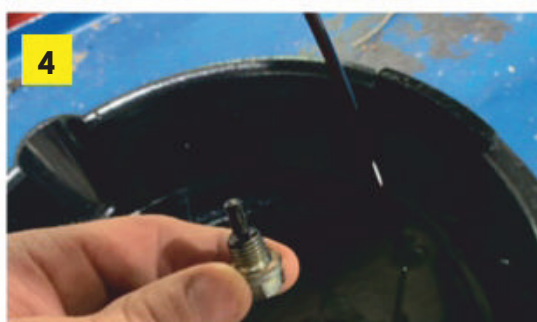
CHANGING HUSKY ENGINE OIL

THERE'S MORE THAN ONE FILTER IN THIS ONE



TOOLS

SPANNERS, SOCKETS, RATCHET,
PLIERS, SCREWDRIVER, DRAIN
TRAY, BIKESTAND, T-BARS



THE HUSQVARNA FE350 has a magnetic sump plug and an oil screen as well as an oil filter. There are also a few Allen-head plugs in the bottom of the engine that might look like sump plugs but aren't and shouldn't be removed.

For this reason I have seen people make all kinds of mistakes when changing the oil on their 350s. The best one was a guy who removed the oil pump cover looking for a filter. For this reason we've decided to give you a run down on how to do the job properly.

1 HOIST AWAY

You will need full access to the bottom of the engine, so put the bike up on a hoist or use the sidestand, but make sure there is someone to hold the bike when you are loosening the bolts or you could end up covered in oil with a bike on top of you.

2 SKIDPLATE

Remove the skidplate/bashplate so you have clear access to the sump plug. Some bashplates have cut outs for the plug but they always end up full of oil. For the sake of loosening a few extra bolts and two minutes work I prefer to remove the 'plate and give it a wash while I'm there anyway.

3 DRAIN TRAY

Place a drain tray under the bike and remove the sump plug from the rear of the engine. The plug is the 13mm hex head bolt with a copper washer fitted to it.

4 REMOVE SIDE PLUG

While the oil is draining out, take a 13mm socket and ratchet and remove the plug from the side of the engine behind the gearlever.

5 REMOVE SCREEN

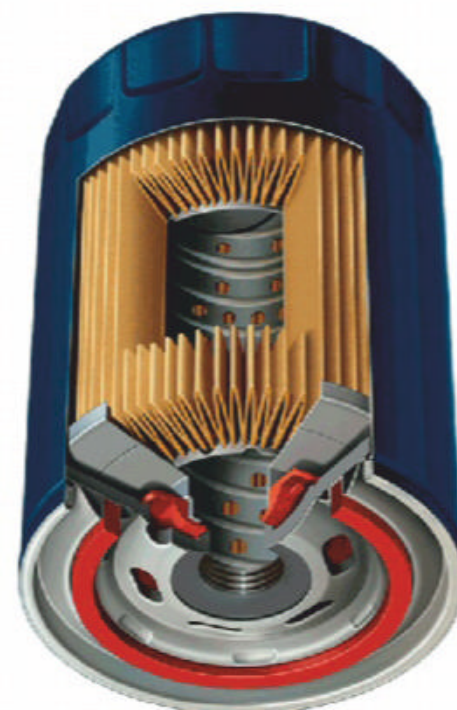
Behind this plug is an oil screen. Pull it out. You may need a screwdriver or long-nose pliers, but be gentle as it is only plastic.

6 FILTER

Next undo the 8mm bolts from the oil filter cover and remove the filter. This filter can be difficult to grab and pull out as it is a tight fit, so you may need pliers or a small screwdriver.

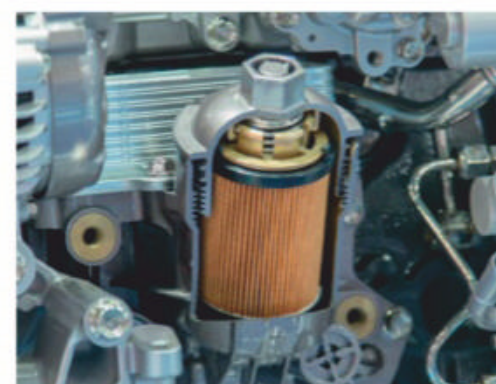
7 WASH PARTS

While the oil is draining, wash all the parts and then dry them. Fit new O-rings and washers and apply grease to the O-rings so they don't pinch or tear on their way in.



HOW AN OIL FILTER WORKS

The oil pump moves the lubricant directly to the filter housing. The oil is forced under pressure through the filter before it returns to the engine to lubricate the moving parts. The surface of the filter is usually ribbed to create a larger surface area to catch foreign material. Filters can be made from paper and fibre or from a metal screen. The paper/fibre type is more widely used today as it is much better for filtering the oil. Oil filters need to be changed regularly as they can become blocked or clogged with junk which will in turn reduce the effectiveness of the lubrication system and can result in severe engine damage. If the filter is fitted backwards, it won't clean the oil and/or it will block the flow of oil to the internal organs of our engine.



turn the page>>



8 CLEAN HOUSING

Give the inside of the oil filter housing a good clean and wipe it out with a clean rag to make sure there is no foreign material left in there.

9 NEW FILTER

Fit the new oil filter and then fit and tighten the cover. Make sure that the rubber lip on the oil filter is facing inwards, as getting this wrong can cause catastrophic engine damage.

10 TIGHTEN PLUG

Gently tighten the sump plug and then refit the oil screen. Fit the screen by hand and do the cap up gently using your fingers to make sure it is seated correctly before tightening. This screen can easily get cocked sideways and damaged when tightening it.

11 FRESH OIL

Fill the engine with fresh oil. Make sure to use the grade and amount specified by the manufacturer, then tighten the filler cap.

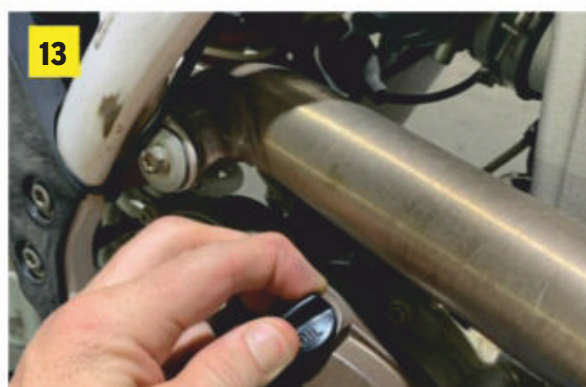
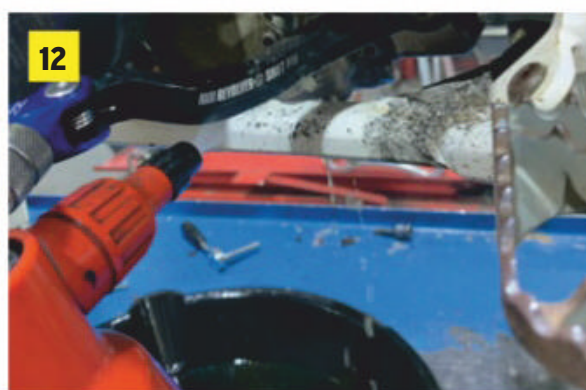
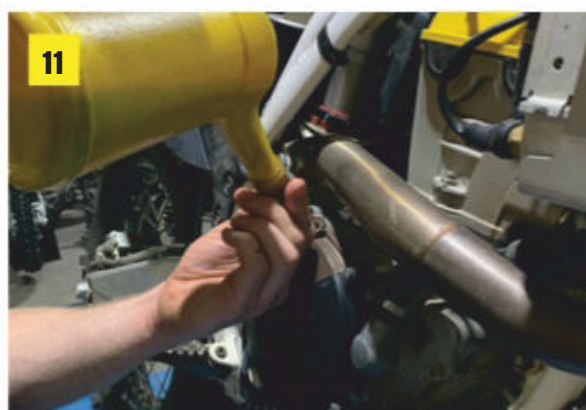
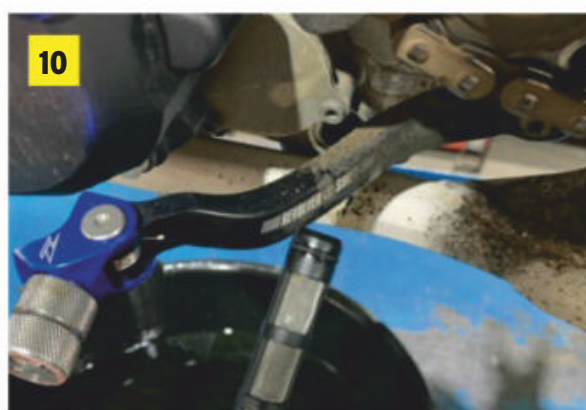
12 WIPE DOWN ENGINE

Clean any oil off the engine. If you do not do this, oil can drip off or collect dust and make it look like you've got an oil leak.

13 CHECK LEVEL

Start the engine and run it for a few minutes. Then turn the bike off and, after letting it sit for a minute, check the oil level and adjust as required. Check for leaks around the sump plug, filter and oil screen before refitting the skidplate.

Technical Editor Mat Boyd



BEWARE

Fitting any of these parts incorrectly can result in oil leaks or loss of pressure, which can lead to serious engine damage or failure.

TIPS

DO'S

- 1 Always apply grease to the O-rings before fitting.
- 2 Replace the oil filter when changing the lubricant.
- 3 Always following the manufacturer's recommendations when buying oil.

DON'TS

- 1 Over-tighten the sump plug.
- 2 Force any bolts or plugs that are tight or not turning properly.
- 3 Re-use copper sump plug washers, they are very cheap to replace.

RACE PROVEN

*When it comes to racing no compromises are made to achieve the ultimate goal.
Akrapovič exhaust systems have the very same standards when it comes to
performance, durability, innovation and sound – no compromises, on or off the track.
Exhaust systems meet FIM noise limits.*



Exhaust System for
HONDA CRF 450 R



**CHEAP
TRIX**

CUTTING STAND

TROUBLE

You've been chainsawing up fallen branches for your trailriding and camping weekend in the bush but the bending over is killing your back.

TRIK

Grab a couple of heavy-duty, three-litre plastic storage crates from the hardware, cable tie them together, cover with a piece of flat timber and a square bit at one end with a V-shaped notch cut into it to locate the branch. You can hold it down with your suitably toe-capped boot.

DIFFICULTY

★ ★ ★

TIME

30 MINS

COST

\$6

TOOLS

CRATES, CABLE TIES,
FLAT TIMBER, SCREWS,
WASHERS



ANTI-RATTLE

TROUBLE

The headlights on adventure bikes are often mounted on soft rubber seals so that the headlight can be easily adjusted. This is great on the road but when you hit the dirt the headlight shakes around.

TRIK

Take a small piece of high-density foam and jam it in between the headlight and the fairing. Make sure it is really tight. This will stop the headlight shaking around and keep the beam focused.

DIFFICULTY

★ ★

TIME

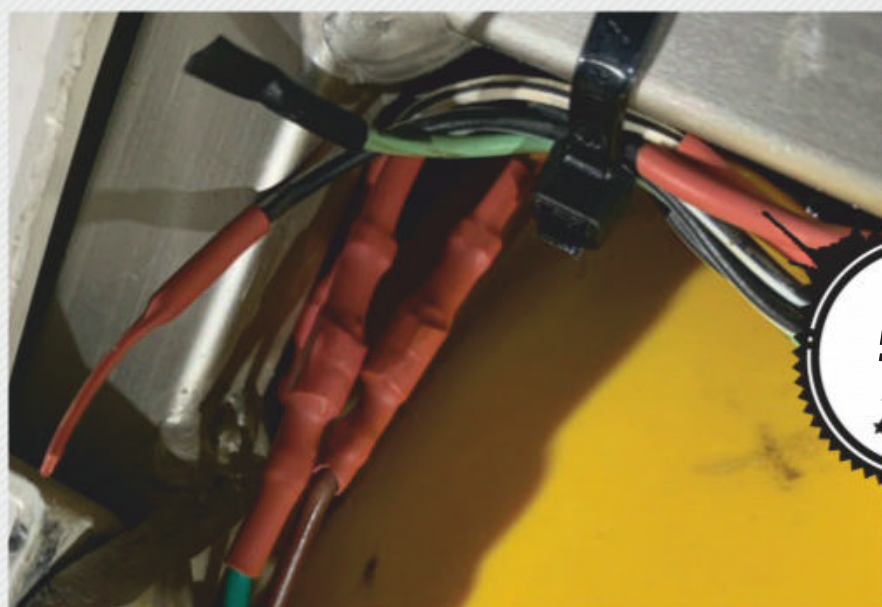
2 MINS

COST

\$2

TOOLS

SCISSORS,
HIGH-DENSITY FOAM



**FREE
TRIX**

STAY CONNECTED

TROUBLE

Nearly all trailbikes have bullet wiring connectors under the seat or elsewhere that can be easily bumped and unplugged when you are removing the seat, tank or air filter. Bikes with tight wiring harnesses are notorious for this.

TRIK

Place some spare shrink tubing over the connector and shrink it into place. This will keep the connector not only tight but dry and crud-free. If you want to unplug the connector you just slice the tubing off carefully with a hobby knife.

DIFFICULTY

★ ★

TIME

5 MINS

COST

ZERO

TOOLS

SHRINK TUBING



FLOPPY FIX

TROUBLE

Kickstarters often wear. This causes rattling, but the problem that is most annoying is when the wear causes it to fold back too far so that your foot slips off when you try to start the bike.

TRIK

Pull the kickstarter apart and weld extra metal to the tab that is supposed to stop the thing from folding back beyond 90 degrees. Once you have welded extra metal to it you can file it down to the exact angle needed.

DIFFICULTY

★ ★ ★ ★

TIME

20 MINS

COST

ZERO IF YOU HAVE A
WELDER

TOOLS

WELDER, GRINDER,
FILES



SETTING THE BENCHMARK FOR MX COACHING



Lee HOGAN @LEEHOGAN_BCP



THE JUMP TO LITES SPEED



THERE'S A DEFINITE point where some say a boy becomes a man; where the title of adult may be appropriate. In the dirtbike world, that point is when a young ripper transitions onto a full-size bike. But everybody is different and the time to move up cannot be the same for every rider.

So what factors must be considered when deciding whether or not to transition to the larger machines? There are many specific factors that can determine when a younger rider makes his leap to the big bikes. However there are some general factors we can go over that will apply to the majority of riders.

SKILL

It's a fact that skill levels will differ between riders, especially in the early years. Some kids will naturally take to riding while others may have to gain confidence or some experience before they are comfortable on a bike.

Therefore, as a kid approaches the stage where a move to a big bike isn't out of the question, his skill level and comfort on a bike become an important factor in deciding when the big step should happen.

SIZE

Often the move from a fun bike to an adult-sized machine is determined by a child's size, as in when they have their teenage growth spurt. We have all seen those freaks of nature who reach their full height at 13 and obviously they will be more inclined to make the leap up than the small whippersnappers.

However, it's important to remember that just because a kid is big, doesn't mean he needs to step up to the biggest bike on the market straight away, such as a 500. Likewise, if the ability is there, a smaller guy shouldn't be restricted to 250s and 350s. Remember Glenn Kearney (inset) is a small bloke who made a living racing 500s. Then again, not everyone possesses GK's skill level.

AGE/RACING CLASSES

For the racers out there, class limits on age and machinery can dictate when they step up. This point is pretty self-explanatory.

If a teenager is outgrowing his 85cc (Supermini as it is sometimes known) class, it might be best for him to head up to Junior Lites or an Outright Lites class where he has the opportunity to race a 250F motocrosser.

Racing classes can also be determined by ages. Therefore, similarly, if a kid has reached the age limit for his class, such as U13s, he will need to step up to the next age group.

UPGRADE

After years of shredding the guts out of a little 125, an upgrade becomes a necessity. Often the timing of that directs buyers towards a bike that'll last long into the future.

Therefore, for an early teenager a full-size bike will be guaranteed to last them for longer than another fun bike.

BUDGET

Financial situations often dictate when and, often, how a kid makes the step up to a full-size bike. Whether the child saves the money or the parents fork out the dosh, budget comes into it regardless. Families may also wait until a birthday or Christmas to buy such an expensive gift.

WHERE

Where you ride and its effect on when a child takes the step up is definitely under-stated. For example, a kid in the Blue Mountains will have very different riding conditions than a rider out west on the expansive desert plains.

Similarly, some locations are better for motocross racing and others for enduro. As such the bike step up may depend on the type of terrain you intend to ride on.



IN THEIR ELEMENT

IT'S A BIG year for O'Neal. Its 50th anniversary has inspired the company to new heights in designs and products, especially in the youth department. A standout product is the O'Neal Element gear. With five vibrant colourways and birthday-worthy pricing, this product is sure to be a hit with youngsters.

Jersey: \$24.99

Pants: \$69-79

FUN BIKES TOP SALES

FUN BIKES TOPPED

the Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries (FCAI) figures for last year, with its off-road category headed by five fun bikes with engines no bigger than 110cc. This is no surprise as fun bikes routinely top the overall off-road sales figures, thanks to the large number of next-generation riders coming up through the ranks. However when analysing the finer details, interesting trends begin to emerge.

Top spot in the fun bike category is a battle between Yamaha and Honda, with Yamaha represented by its two 50cc bikes, the PW50 and TTR50E, while Honda pins its hopes on the CRF50F. As these three bikes are competing for the attention of kids looking to try dirtbikes, the market is huge. For example, for 2019 the CRF50F sold 2052 units. Compare that to the 1206 sales of the biggest-selling enduro bike, the Yamaha WRF450F, and the dominance of the fun bike is clear. Granted, the CRF50F is much cheaper than the WRF450F, but the latter is more profitable for dealers.

In 2018, the CRF50F took top spot in the fun bike category from the PW50 and TTR50-E. Last year, the order changed slightly after the resurgence of two 110cc bikes. The CRF50 and PW50 maintained their spots but the TTR50E was bumped from third to fifth by the Honda CRF110F (24.2% increase) and Kawasaki KLX110 (29.5%). The CRF110F sales could be further boosted by the addition of fuel injection for this year. Meanwhile, the KLX110 benefitted from the publicity surrounding news that its older brother, the KLX140, was getting an overhaul. The top-10 selling fun bikes for the calendar year were as follows:

Honda CRF50: 2052 sales

Yamaha PW50: 1983 sales

Honda CRF110F: 1847 sales

Kawasaki KLX110: 1613 sales

Yamaha TTR50E: 1562 sales

Yamaha TTR110E: 1102 sales

Honda CRF125FB: 714 sales

Honda CRF125F: 479 sales

Kawasaki KLX140: 465 sales

Yamaha TTR125E/LWE: 423 sales



HONDA CRF110F

THE HONDA CRF110F had a stellar year on the Australian market in 2019, with sales jumping 24.2 per cent when most bikes went down. According to the FCAI figures, the 110F was third overall in dirtbike sales behind two other fun bikes (see separate yarn on left) but what's changed? Why the big jump? The credit lies in the 2019 CRF110F's new engine. For 2020 it gets Keihin EFI, allowing for more linear power and responsiveness while keeping mum and dad happy with reduced petrol consumption.

Around that engine, Honda wrapped a new twin-spar frame. The gearbox is still a four-speed, semi-automatic clutch unit but it's proving to be a potent combination. At a price of \$3548, the value is definitely there too.



TRACK CHECK



FOR THIS ISSUE, Track Check is moving out of NSW for the better weather up in Queensland. Calling itself the Sunshine State's own motorcycling facility, Queensland Moto Park's (QMP) quality location and expansive riding areas make the complex one of the largest facilities in Australia.

QMP is an hour's drive south of Brisbane and about the same heading west from the Gold Coast. Once arriving, riders are presented with enough variety for the whole family to enjoy.

For the motocross kids, there is a Peewee track, Mini Junior MX and a Junior Lites track. Once doing laps on the motocross tracks gets old, there is 50km of enduro trails to ride on as well. A good majority of the trails are designated as being easy or medium in difficulty, perfect for up and coming enduro stars.

BETTER THAN EVER

2016 – 2019 KTM 450 SX-F
FRAME:

The KTM has a central backbone, double cradle chromoly frame with a removable subframe.

ENGINE:

The KTM uses a single-overhead cam design with four titanium valves. The engine is liquid cooled and uses electronic fuel injection.

FORK:

The 48mm WP AER air fork has adjustable compression and rebound damping as well as an adjustable air spring.

BRAKES:

On the front and rear are Brembo floating calipers with single wave disc.

WEIGHT:

The KTM comes in at a claimed wet weight of 105kg.

ONCE UPON A time, the 450SX-F was a blister-tearing, arm stretcher but KTM has done very well over the years to tame it and make it more rideable. Don't take that the wrong way, it is not slower.

It is just more forgiving and much easier for an intermediate rider to handle than it was. There is still enough torque and horsepower to impress even the pickiest professional riders.

The suspension is set up to race. It can be a little on the hard side for a novice or recreational rider but the intent of these bikes is to go racing at a high level so if you're buying one to putt around a paddock then I'm afraid you're taking it out of its comfort zone. It would be like buying a Ferrari to herd sheep.

Mechanically, the KTMs are more reliable than they were and just as trouble-free as any other brand. In the past, European bikes were known to be unreliable and this

misconception seems to have stuck with Kato over the years, with a certain crowd of haters trying to keep the rumor alive.

These guys are usually people who have never ridden one or had a mate that owned one back in the '90s. You won't find many guys riding around on a current KTM SX-F and complaining about it.

MORE EXPENSIVE

Unfortunately what is true is that parts are more expensive, especially if you need to dive into stuff like gearbox components, clutches or crankshafts. Even after-market companies put the prices up on their parts for KTMs, just because the genuine options are far more expensive.

Of course this is not the case with every single genuine or after-market part, but it is the case with many. I've had several diehard KTM fans over the years try and challenge my view on this and I have been happy to prove them wrong. I

have even had to prove my point to a few KTM dealers who thought I was making it up.

In its defense, KTM doesn't make low-quality parts for its motorcycles so if you want to replace anything then you will need to pay for the quality. So if you don't want to be spending a fortune on new bits as soon as you've bought a second-hand 450SX-F there's a few things to look out for.

Make sure the bike starts easily and idles well, without blowing smoke or any rattles. The engines are strong but the piston and rings do wear out from time to time, causing low compression and smoky exhaust fumes.

Check all the frame and wheel bearings, especially the swingarm ones. Ride the bike and make sure the clutch is not slipping and the bike selects all cogs smoothly, without jumping out of gear. A transmission issue can be rather costly.

Technical Editor Mat Boyd

NEW

2016 \$11,995
2017 \$12,495
2018 \$12,695
2019 \$12,995

SECOND HAND

2016 \$6800 - \$8100
2017 \$7600 - \$9000
2018 \$8550 - \$10,150
2019 \$9150 - \$10,900

Prices according to redbook.com.au

MARKET EQUIVALENT


16 – 19

Suzuki RM-Z 450
\$6650 - \$9850


16 – 19

Yamaha YZ450F
\$6600 - \$10,600


16 -19

Honda CRF450R
\$6450 - \$10,300


16 – 19

Kawasaki KX450
\$6400 - \$10,000

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FUEL ★ TANKS

KTM 690 ENDURO

- 18 LITRES

(TOTAL OF 30 LITRES WITH ORIGINAL TANK)

COLOURS:
CLEAR, ORANGE & BLACK

SUITS:
E & R MODELS, 2014 - 2018

▶ \$998.00



HONDA AFRICA TWIN

- 30 LITRES

COLOURS:
CLEAR, BLACK & WHITE
SUITS:
HONDA CRF1000

▶ \$1140.00

HUSQVARNA 701

- 17.5 LITRES

(TOTAL OF 30 LITRES APPROX.)

COLOURS:
CLEAR & BLACK

▶ \$1058.00



SUZUKI DR650SE

- 30 LITRES

COLOURS:
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FITTINGS:
CAP, 2 TAPS & CROSSBRACE

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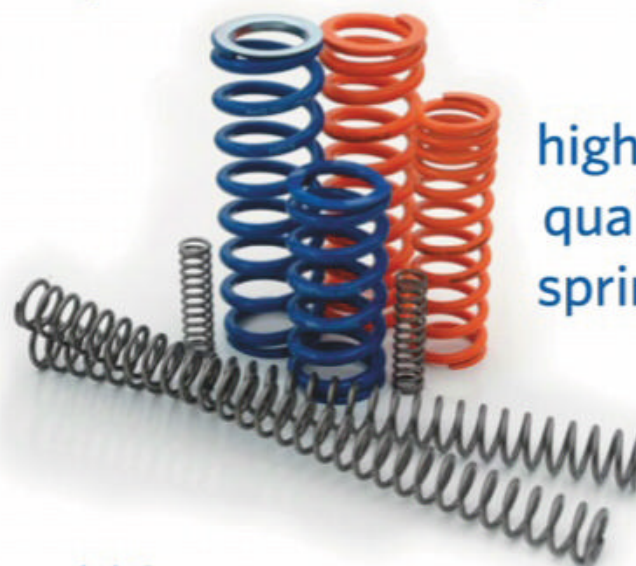
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THE RIDER

LUKE CLOUT

Yarrive and I have worked together twice before. The first time was when I returned from the US as an Under-19 amateur and the second time was when I returned from the US after competing in the SX2 class in 2016 and filled in for the injured Jimmy Decotis. I know how well his team is run so I was excited to return to Honda.

I feel I am a better rider than I was when I raced with him three years ago. I have learnt a lot and I owe that to riders like Justin Brayton, Chad Reed, Jason Anderson and Brett Metcalfe. Those guys have achieved so much overseas and they have elevated all of us by competing in the Australian championships.

Coming to the US to take on the world's best is next level

and I want to do the best I can. I'm glad to have Aaron here [Clout's brother is spinning spanners for him], he's always got my back, we work well together, which is so important, and we both want to achieve the best results we can.

I was pretty surprised at how much better the CRF250R was from when I used to race them. Obviously, it was a bit of an adjustment going from one of

the most powerful 450s to a 250 but I got comfortable pretty quick and it was easier than I expected.

The first 250 I rode was Chris Blose's and that set up was different to mine so we adjusted the suspension and looked for more power. I am so used to more power so it's just been a big change. I am enjoying it though, it's been lots of fun.



Easiest part is knowing what he likes, I can generally set up his entire bike without asking him anything. The confidence that he has in me and the bike is just there, so it makes it really easy. There aren't any challenges working with Luke, we work really well together. I love working with him and supporting him through all of this.

THE MANAGER

YARRIVE KONSKY

I have followed Luke since he was racing on 60s. He is a very determined rider and I admire that. He has an unwavering desire to win and be the best and he is extremely focused.

In 2012 he returned to Australia and we provided him with some support through one of our satellite programs. Instantly he showed Australia how much he had learnt overseas. I was impressed from the first moment he hit the track. Again he returned to our program in 2016 and I've always appreciated Luke's tenacity and skill on a motorcycle. Throughout last year, talks between management at Honda and I took place regarding our 2020 program. It was decided that we would increase our presence in motocross from one rider. We had several riders reach out but when Luke called, I had no doubt that he would be the best fit. This happened before the Australian Supercross Championship had started and, within one hour of our initial talk, we had come to a verbal agreement.

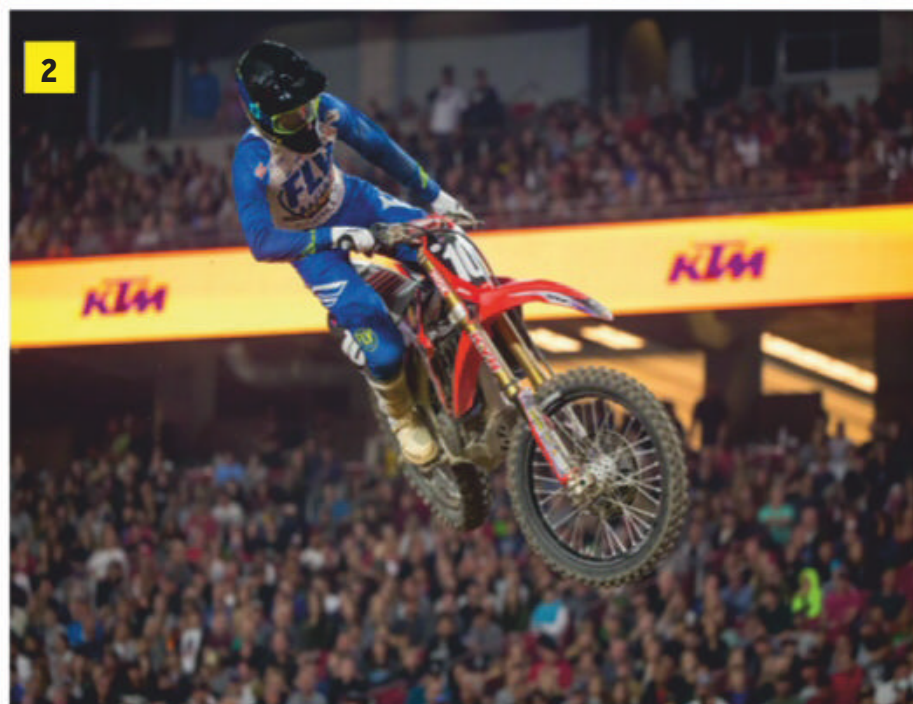
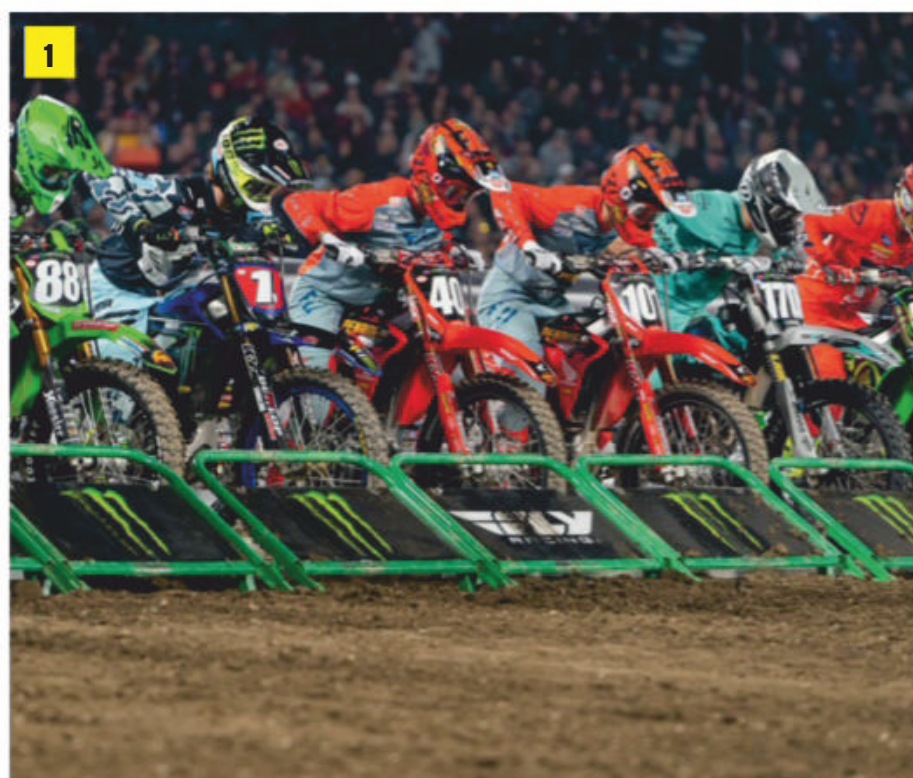
He's a controlled, aggressive rider with a desire to succeed. He will buy into something first and then decide if he likes it. He is raw, hungry and exciting to watch. We will surround him with the best people to help him reach his full potential.

Racing in the US is something I have wanted to do forever and now it's happening with Luke. I truly can't believe it. Our plan is to do our best and see where we can finish against the best teams and riders.

THE MECHANIC

AARON CLOUT

Luke likes used 'grips on his bike, he doesn't like the feel of new ones so we'd rather put 'grips that have been on for three or so rounds for him to race on. He doesn't really do anything else that's weird. Actually he also runs his engine stop switch and engine start switch on the opposite sides to manufacture spec.



5 THINGS YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT LUKE CLOUT

1 Clout finished second in last year's Aussie MX1 and SX1 championships.

2 He won his first SX1 Australian Supercross final last year and posted the fastest qualifying lap, in the final round of supercross at Marvel Stadium in Melbourne.

3 Clout rode a CRF250R for less than a month before the AMA kicked off at Anaheim.

4 It's been nearly four years since Clout raced a 250F.

5 Clout was the leading Aussie in SX2 West after Glendale, with Jett Lawrence injured.

1. It's hard to tell Texan Mitchell Oldenburg (#40) apart from Clout as they line-up together at A1

2. Clout improved during the course of the three Main Events at Glendale, going 13/12/8

3. Must be hard finding O-rings in the team's B-double transporter



ZACK'S SURPRISE PACK

WHY'D YA BUY IT?

I had a 2015 KTM 85SX that I rode into the ground so I decided I needed an upgrade. My oldies said that they were open to any manufacturer, so we went looking around, but it was the Yamaha that really caught my eye. I'm not sure whether it was the blue rims or the completely redesigned engine and suspension set up, but I was hooked. Since I was little I'd watched my brother grow up on Yamahas and I guess that played a part. As

well as that, going to races every man and his dog had either a KTM or a Kawasaki so I thought I'd be different.

WHAT YA DONE TO IT?

Straight off the bat it was easily the smoothest bike I've ridden. The power delivery was pretty mint from bottom to top, but a set of VForce 4 reeds pushed it even further. It's got all of the bling parts you could ever need, including a Hinson clutch and Pro Taper Wyndham blue handlebar.

It's had some port work

done and a carburetor re-jet. It's had all the suspension done by ATR Suspension Services in Caboolture. The bike rips from top to bottom and is easily one of the most competitive bikes in the 85cc class.

HOW'S IT GO?

The thing was amazing from the get go. It handles so good and loves it when you give her the berries. It's been so reliable, I've had it for over a year now and I haven't had a problem with it. It coped with anything I threw at it and is

still the mintest bike I've ridden. When I first rode it I felt like I'd been on it my whole life, it was so easy to get used to.

Being the odd one out, as opposed to your KTMs and Huskies, it felt nice to be able to put the outlier on top.

I'm a bit heavy on it and it still pulls like it did it when I was smaller.

A couple of mods and the thing was outright crazy, it made the limits of my riding get pushed further and further each weekend.



RATE IT?

I would recommend the YZ85 to any rider from novice to someone trying to make it in racing. The combination of the smooth but responsive power with the great handling is a package I couldn't find on any other 85. It is so easy to get used to, and can bring a smile to anyone's face. It makes riding the most fun it possibly could be and is a serious contender for the 85cc championships throughout Australia. As well as that, Yamaha hasn't changed the cosmetic side of its 85 for a few years, meaning buying parts and personalising it is much easier than any other bike.

with Mitch Lees



THE BASICS

WHAT

2018 Yamaha YZ85

WHO

Zack Kerlin

WHERE FROM

Northstar Yamaha, Brisbane

HOW MUCH

\$7500

5 THINGS YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT ZACK

1 Zack is 14 and hails from Burpengary East, a Brisbane suburb.

2 He's already missed two seasons with leg injuries, the first involving a spiral fractured tibia and fibula and the second being a snapped femur and cracked collarbone.

3 He is sponsored by Misled Crew, a clothing brand.

4 Zack races with his older brother Mitch, who competes in Senior MX2.

5 He has silencers made by Fat Pipes Custom Exhausts.

MAIN. Is that Zack's older brother, Mitch, getting ready to load up his gear and YZ250F for another race?

1. ATR Suspension Services in Caboolture were put in charge of setting up the YZ85 so that Zack could do this sort of thing

2. He liked the idea of racing an 85cc machine that was not orange, green or white

3. Zack's racing has been interrupted by major injuries

BIKES FROM THE DAYS WHEN DINOSAURS ROAMED THE PITS

THE RMX RETURNS



With the arrival of the Suzuki RMX450Z for 2010, the cut-throat 450cc enduro class has another contender

INTO THE FOLD

WORDS & PICS: JOHAN AHLBERG



The bikes at Suzuki had been getting pretty tired of answering "I don't know" to one question in particular – "When will the RM-Z450 get a headlight and starter motor?" With the announcement in August, 2009, that Suzuki has indeed made an enduro out of their fire-breathing, championship-winning, fuel-injected motocrosser, Suzuki's start across the world breathed a collective sigh of relief – they had an answer, and it looked good on paper.

The reason the question was so often asked is because the motocrosser's good balance, quality chassis feel and broad engine seemed like a formula for something designed to do it all.

That appears to be exactly what Suzuki has done – added lights, electric start and some minor modifications to create another 450-class enduro. Here's what our first ride on a European-spec bike in a wet and cold Sweden unearthed.

SHARING THE POWER

The RMX450Z is a tried-and-true, but shares plenty with the RM-Z450 motocrosser. It bears more than a passing resemblance to, starting with the RM-Z's 1000cc DOHC, 443cc, EFI four-cylinder engine. Suzuki have tuned the engine for enduro use by modifying the intake tract and revising the cam profiles. The result is an increase in low- and mid-range power at the expense of a little peak horsepower and engine responsiveness. The five-speed gearbox runs wider gear ratios to suit the broader applications it will encounter in its new life: scaling steep trails and forcing high-speed open terrain. A constant reservoir tank has also appeared, with a no-fuel filter cap (replaces screws, not an engine protection plate because the rocks out of harm's way).

Electric start is now mandatory in the enduro class (even though most actual enduro racers ditch the button set-up to save weight), so the Suzuki RMX450Z packs an electric starter, powered by a centrally located battery. To charge the battery and power the RMX450Z's lights, a larger magneto generator is fitted.

So how is it to ride? First impressions on a wet and greasy test loop were that the engine is very smooth and easy to use, either by grunting along in the low basement, or changing the mixture like a wounded bull. The bike has enough power to suit racers, but it is still smooth and predictable, and seems aimed at the backslider as much as any other group of riders.

After first impressions, the Suzuki seems to fit in somewhere between the Kawasaki and the Honda as far as the competition goes, not as hard-nosed as the KTR and Mussons machines, but right up a trail rider's singleness.

TIGHT LINES

The aluminium alloy belt-clip frame, employing both cast and extruded sections, is very similar to the RM-Z's, as is the aluminium alloy swingarm. According to the figures, the wheelbase is a little shorter for the RMX450Z (1480mm) than the RM-Z450 (1495mm).

RM-Z pilots will recognise the suspension, with an adjustable Showa fork combining with a Showa piggyback rear-end-style fully adjustable

THE BASICS

WHAT
Suzuki RMX450Z
WHEN
February, 2010 (#365)
PURPOSE
Enduro
HOW MUCH
\$1790



ABOVE. The RMX450 came in at \$11,790 and went up only \$200 in March, 2011. The ADR version of 2015 was a better buy at \$12,490

THE RMX450Z ENDURO

was a new model, but shared a lot with the RM-Z450 motocrosser. The engine had been tamed down somewhat, with modifications to the inlet tract, revised camshaft profiles and wider gear ratios. Naturally it also had lights and an electric start.

The changes to the DOHC engine resulted in a low-end and mid-range power increase with the loss of a little peak output and responsiveness compared to its MX sibling. The test was carried out in Sweden on a wet day in muddy conditions on an enduro loop and a sandy MX track.

First impressions were that the engine was very smooth

and easy to use, either grunting along at low revs or charging towards the redline. It was smooth and predictable but had enough power to suit racers.

The aluminium alloy, twin-spar frame had cast and extruded sections and the alloy swingarm was 15mm shorter than the RM-Z one for a 1480mm wheelbase.

LEVER TRAVEL

The shock was a fully-adjustable Showa matched with an adjustable Showa fork with softer springs than the motocrosser that were better suited to bush work. For trailriders it was deemed to be plush and ride-all-day comfortable.

The tank held only 6.2 litres, not a lot for the bush but the EFI would help with economy, claimed dry weight was 123.5kg and the RMX carried a six-month warranty.

Our testers were happy with the brakes although it was noted that the brake lever on the test bike had longer than the usual amount of travel. Clutch pull was light, the bike turned easily and ergonomics were pretty well identical to the RM-Z motocrosser with a good riding position.

Instrumentation was a compact unit between the headlight and handlebar that offered two modes, Standard and Sport. Sport was the simpler of the two with a timer, tripmeter, average

speed and tyre diameter correction. The integrated tyre diameter calculator allowed fine tuning of the speed and distance displays.

The Standard mode was more suited to road work, with a clock, two tripmeters, voltmeter and a low-fuel warning light.

The only downside of the RMX450Z as far as us Aussies were concerned was its lack of ADR compliance, meaning its use was restricted unless the owner lived in Tasmania or Victoria and could make use of recreational registration.

This situation wasn't remedied until 2015 when the bike was already a bit long in the tooth.

Heritage Editor Warren Jack

POUR IN THE PASSION

AS USED BY THE **BCP LEE HOGAN HONDA RACING TEAM**



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Setting your sag is the simplest, most overlooked adjustment that you can make to drastically improve the handling of your bike. It's also the most important step in setting up your suspension. Slacker makes it a simple one man job so now you can make it part of your regular bike prep and your bike will always be on point.

Patent No. - 9,021,872

MOTOOL
<http://motoool.co>

TALKING POINT

WHAT HAPPENED BACK THEN...

Scott Staines wrote in to tell us about his ISDE gearbag being stolen after the 1989 event in Germany. He lost his headlight with riding number and all his team riding gear.

Larry from Blacktown wrote in saying he wanted to be a motocross superstar with 10 bikes and 25 custom-painted helmets and girls who liked resting in the back of his van. He then admitted he didn't have a bike so asked ADB to send him one with free stickers and jerseys. ADB's answer? "Get stuffed you useless little jerk".

At the Canberra Supercross, a nameless Victorian Yamaha rider thought he was going to miss his race so he shot through the pit marshalling area just in time to get the five-second board. Before anyone could do anything the gate dropped and he was away ... in the 80cc minibike race, and he didn't even get the holeshot.

After 14 years riding for Kawasaki, Eddie Warren defected to KTM Australia.

Melbourne's Moomba Festival Supercross offered a total of \$60,000 prizemoney.

Jeff Leisk kicked off his 1990 season with finishes of first, second and fifth at the Beaucaire Supercup in France, beating Eric Geboers by eight points.

FlashBack

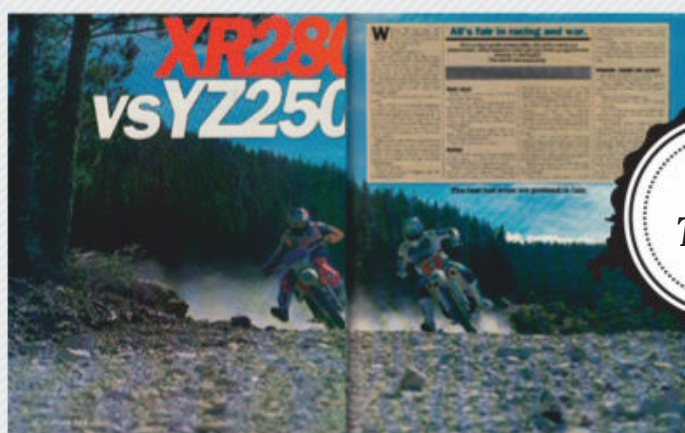
APRIL 1990 // **ISSUE # 127** // 80 PAGES // \$4.25

A MAN WAS charged over an alleged plan to fire-bomb Federal Parliament, tram pay dispute talks broke down in Melbourne resulting in 250 trams blockading the city, cricketer Allan Border was honoured in the Australia Day Honours, Carmen Lawrence became the Premier of WA and Australia's first female state leader and Bob Hawke was re-elected Prime Minister for a fourth term. In sport, John McEnroe was thrown out of the Australian Open, Win Percy and Alan Grice won the Bathurst 1000 in a Holden Commodore and Sweden won both the ISDE World and Junior Trophies on home soil.

ON THE COVER:

How could a bored-out four-stroke enduro possibly challenge a YZ250 in the bush? We didn't know but we tried anyway.





ALL'S FAIR IN RACING AND WAR

THE POINT OF this "test" was to see what differences there were between a motocrosser ridden in the bush and a trailbike designed for the bush. The test said that the Honda was a bit like Clark Kent but the 280cc XRs Only kit made it closer to Superman, while the YZ was him. Naturally enough, the Yamaha was fast and quick with no room for error while the Honda did things with authority but gave the rider time to react. The close-ratio gearbox of the Yam was best in tight bush, the Honda superior in open going. The Honda front suspension was too soft but the front brake was better, as was the steering in the tight. The XR was the better all-rounder and with the XRs Only engine and suspension was \$5415 while a YZ250A was \$5400. A no-brainer really, \$15 more for a bike that could be used in a wider variety of riding areas.



URBAN COWBOY

KAWASAKI GOT CAUGHT up in the Paris Dakar replica frenzy when it released the Tengai 650 but, in many ways, it was just a KLR650 with a fairing and plastics that added weight, and different suspension that reduced travel and ground clearance. Weight was up 6kg to 159kg, mainly due to the fairing and headlight. The engine and pipe remained the same as the KLR650 although less power was produced because of a more restrictive muffler. Sensible riding could put 450km behind you from the 23-litre tank but high-speed cruising could drop that by as much as 100km. The liquid-cooled, DOHC four-valve engine started on the button only, with no kickstart. Brakes were twin discs up front, single at the rear and the price was \$5700. To sum up, ADB rated the Tengai as head and shoulders taller than the NX650 or the DR600.



ULTIMA MOTORCYCLIMUS

THE SAVARD 2WD was the brainchild of the Savard twins, who built two models based on a Yamaha YZ360 and a TT680 and raced them in top-level French competition such as hillclimbs, supermoto and beach racing as a means of testing the concept. The idea worked, but added as much as 20kg due to the unusual front-end set up, a weight penalty that was offset to some degree by the improved traction. The drive system to the front wheel was mechanical, with a built-in clutch that sent drive to the front wheel when the back wheel started spinning. Two-wheel-drive works on bikes, but keeping the weight down and making it mechanically simple are the big challenges.



MR MOTOCROSS IS BACK

THE MR MOTOCROSS Series was back in its rightful place as Australia's premier motocross championship after missing a year due to a last-minute sponsorship cancellation by Castrol. The series was the brainchild of Vince Tesoriero and had started in 1974. The format originally was 4x6-lap heats back to back, but was modified over time. The first series was won by Trevor Flood, with the second taken by his brother Gary, the only person to do it on a European bike, a Bultaco. A change for the revamped series in 1990 was that Seniors could only ride in one class, to allow greater exposure and prizemoney for a larger number of riders.

**Ads
back
then**



FIRST TENERE TWIN

Yamaha's XT750 Super Ténéré was just out in 1990, and it still commands a certain amount of awe.



WR CONVERSION

It would be interesting to know more about these YZ360WR Yamahas, but the only contact details given in the ad was a phone number that is no longer connected. Did any readers have one of these?



BAND WIDTH

Geoff Udy Suzuki in Toowoomba offered these custom powerbands in varying widths from very narrow to super-wide, depending on rider preference.

TWO NOW FOUR

FORMER RIDER AND TEAM BOSS **GLENN HOFFMAN** IS RACING ON FOUR WHEELS

Tell me how the Hoffman story starts, when, where and your first bike.

I was 10 and all my mates had bikes to get around to each other's places. I had a Honda ST70. My parents bought it but made it clear any others I would have to buy myself. So I saved and, by the time I was 15, I got myself a 1973 Honda CR125 for \$600.

How did you make the move to competitive riding?

When the Australian Safari came past Newcastle I rode up to Raymond Terrace to watch a Special Test and a few weeks later I went back to ride the same Test and timed myself, thinking afterwards, "yeah, I could do this" not knowing that it was one quite short Special Test in a multi-day 4000km event. By way of preparation I thought I'd better see how long I could sit on a bike, so I went to Alice Springs, taking three days to get there, and watched the 12-Hour Race. After the race I thought "I want to do the Safari" so I decided to see how hard I could push myself. I made the return trip in two days, eating chocolate bars while I was riding, and left teachers' college.

How did you plan to fund a Safari attempt?

A few days after leaving college I had settled in Canberra with some mates and got a job within a day. I realised I needed a bike better suited to the Safari so I bought a Honda XL600RMG with my savings, then went to the bank and asked for a loan for the entry fee. Here I am, 18, I'd only been working a few days and asking for a loan to go desert racing. When they said no I demanded to see the



manager and after showing her my savings record and other paperwork, she gave me a loan, not for the entry fee, but for the bike, which I

already owned. I rode my first Safari in 1987, my first race, and it was a solo attempt with no mechanic or other support and at that time I was the youngest rider to finish.

Was that encouraging?

I decided I liked long-distance rally-type events and went on to score second and third outright in later years. I was even leading the 1993 Safari after five days when the bike blew a motor. In the 1995 and '96 Safaris, I finished with a third outright and then a second on a KTM. That was KTM's first Safari podium. I was on a basically stock Super Comp with a pipe and some head work but, by then, I had a mechanic to help me at the overnight stops. KTM had an official team with Kinigadner and Kleinschmidt entered, with a huge stock of parts including a pallet load of wheels with tyres and mousses fitted. As Kinigadner changed wheels each night I would use them the next day to save my tyres for other races.

You beat the KTM factory team as a privateer?

I did, and as KTM Australia in those days wasn't interested in the Safari, I contacted the factory and let them know what had happened. A little later they



WE ENDED UP WITH A LOT MORE PEOPLE IN THE TEAM AND HONDA SUPPORTED US UNTIL 2014

called me back to tell me they were building up their Dakar bikes and were building one for me for the 1997 Safari as well. So I had a good bike and support but it was a horrific start. I fell on the bitumen, out of Cairns, and nearly got hit by a car. I hurt my right arm badly and put it down to the light rain but I crashed again at the first big corner of the first Special Test. It turned out that the oil overflow line was spitting oil onto the rear disc and tyre. I rode to the halfway point at Ayers Rock but had to pull out as the arm was useless and I was crashing because I could not hold on any more.

You made the top step of the



podium eventually though?

Yeah, I had won the Condo 750 in 1993. One of my most memorable Safari results was in 2000 on a private KTM for a fourth or fifth outright. Then Honda came on board and we started the Glenn Hoffmann Racing Honda Team. I'd stopped riding and was managing the show. I did a few more two-day events with a couple more outright podiums but guys like Sinderson where now the main focus, then Jamie Cunningham, Grabbo and the Smith boys.

That must have been a big step up from your privateer efforts?

We ended up with a lot more people in the team and Honda supported us until 2014. We had our first Safari outright win in 2004 as well as wins at Condo and Finke. Between 2001 and 2013 we racked up wins and podiums in the Safari, A4DE, Condo, Yellow Mountain, Hattah, Finke and the Australian Off-Road Championships and we put an ATV into seventh outright quad at Dakar.

Do any of your own wins stand out for you?

My best-remembered win is on four wheels. I had switched to a custom-built small buggy in 2012 and took first in class in the Safari and then moved into off-road racing cars from 2013. I still like to compete but I'm too old to be competitive on bikes. I have a buggy (left) that I put together with friends and it has a 750cc turbocharged twin in it.

Are you still involved with bikes?

I'm still building bikes to order for customers, to clear the workshop as much as anything, and we have an online parts and spares business called Dirt Bike Racing Products (dirtbike.com.au) which helps pay the bills and keeps us pretty busy.

with Warren Jack

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ACTION NATION

WEEK 1

NEW SOUTH WALES

7 Mar Kings & Queens MX, Fairburn Park
7-8 Mar East Coast MX R1, Fairburn Park

QUEENSLAND

7 Mar Come and try day, WDTC
7-8 Mar Mountain Man Motocross, Echo Valley, Toowoomba
7-8 Vinduro Stonehenge, Toowoomba

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

1 Mar Dynamic Trials Series R5, Junior Development Park, Wingfield
7 Mar Bob White Sidecar Cup, Gillman

TASMANIA

1 Mar State MX Champs R1, Blackwood Park, Penguin

VICTORIA

7 Mar MX come and try day, State Motorcycle Complex, Broadford

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

8 Mar Coastal MX R2, Coastal Park, Henderson

INTERNATIONAL

1 Mar MXGP R1, Matterley Basin, Britain
1 Mar NZ MX Champs R3, Hawkes Bay
3 Mar AMA Hare and Hounds R3, Mint 400, Las Vegas, Nevada
7 Mar AMA Supercross R10, Daytona International Speedway, Daytona, Fla.
7-8 Mar GNCC R2, Wild Boar, Palatica, Florida
8 Mar MXGP R2, Valkenswaard, The Netherlands

WEEK 2

NEW SOUTH WALES

14 Mar Gunnedah Week of Speed dirt track, Balcarry Park Raceway
14-15 Mar AORC R3/4, Dungog
14-15 Mar NSW ORC R1/2, Dungog
14-15 Mar Grassroots R1, Tenterfield
14-15 Mar King of MX Q3, Bathurst

QUEENSLAND

14-15 Mar CQMX R2, Keppel Coast
15 Mar MX club day, Suncoast
15 Mar MX club day, Warwick

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

13 Mar Roy Bitmead Cup, Sidewinder Speedway, Wingfield

TASMANIA

15 Mar MX club day one, Interlaken Rd, Oatlands

VICTORIA

14 Mar State JMX Championship R1, Portland MX Track, Heywood

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

14 Mar Bunbury Junior & Senior Open MX, Shrubland Park, Bunbury
15 Mar WAJMCC club MX R1

INTERNATIONAL

14 Mar AMA Supercross R11, Lucas Oil Stadium, Indianapolis, Ind.
14 Mar American Flat Track R1, Daytona TT, Daytona Speedway, Florida
14-15 Mar GNCC R3, The General, Washington, Georgia
15 Mar NZ MX Champs R4 (last), Taupo

WEEK 3

NEW SOUTH WALES

21 Mar Casey Stoner Cup dirt track, Loxford Park, Kurri Kurri JMCC

QUEENSLAND

21 Mar Dirt track club day, Mike Hatcher
21 Mar Speedway, North Brisbane
21-21 Mar MX club day, Rockhampton
22 Mar MX club day, Kilcoy
22 Mar Interclub grasstrack series, Green Park, Conondale

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

21 Mar Oceania Sidecar Speedway title, Gillman Speedway, Port Adelaide

TASMANIA

22 Mar MX club day, Cambridge Moto

VICTORIA

21 Mar Speedway Sidecar Riders Assoc R6, Broadford

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

21 Mar LWMCC arenacross, Hendley Park Motocross Complex, Whitby

INTERNATIONAL

20-26 Mar XC Rallies World Champs R1, Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge
20-22 Mar WORCS R3/4, Havasu, Arizona
21 Mar AMA Supercross R12, Ford Field, Detroit, Mich.
21 Mar NZ Cross-Country R2
22 Mar MXGP R3, Neuquen, Argentina
22 Mar AMA National Enduro Championship R2, Caprock Canyon, Texas
22 Mar AMA H&H R4, Murphy, Indiana

WEEK 4

NEW SOUTH WALES

28-29 Mar King of MX Q4, Wagga Wagga

QUEENSLAND

28-29 Mar SSMX R2, Kingaroy
28-29 Mar Ipswich Pony Express, Tivoli
29 Mar MX club day, Keppel Coast
29 Mar Dirt track, North Brisbane

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

29 Mar Woodshed Trial, TROY Series R1

TASMANIA

29 Mar MX club day, Blackwood Park, Penguin

VICTORIA

27-28 Mar Australian Senior & Junior Sidecar Speedway Champs, Mildura
28-29 Mar State MX Championship R1, Portland MX Track, Heywood
29 Mar Wandong Vinduro, VERi Vinduro

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

28 Mar State Dirt Track Championship, Perth Motoplex, Kwinana

INTERNATIONAL

28 Mar AMA Supercross R13, CenturyLink Field, Seattle, Wash.
28 Mar American Flat Track R2, Atlanta Short Track, Woodstock, Georgia
28 Mar San Felipe 250, San Felipe, Baja
28-29 Mar Full Gas Sprint Enduro R3, NC Motorsports Park, Henderson, NC
28-29 Mar AMA Extreme Enduro East R1/West R2, Decatur, Texas
29 Mar NZ Enduro R1, Whangamata

TRAILRIDES AND ADVENTURE TOURS

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28 Mar-4 Apr Great Divide Ride Stage 1 from Grampians to Hunter Valley.maschine.com.au
15 Apr Across Australia adventure tour from Airlie Beach to Fremantle over 16 days (there is a waiting list).outbackadventuretreks.com.au
17-19 Apr South Coast two-day nav. ride from Nowrah.rideadv.com.au
18-19 Apr Backyard Blast for two days from Sawmill Settlement, Vic.bullerbikeadventures.com.au
18-19 Apr Inglewood two-day trailride.

dalbymoto.com.au
19 Apr Beginner/intermediate coaching day, Sawmill Settlement, Vic.bullerbikeadventures.com.au
19-25 Apr Cape York seven-day bucket list from Cairns.capecyorkmotorcycles.com.au
27 Apr-1 May Husqvarna 701 Northern Explorer Enduro Trek from Coffs Harbour, NSW.ridehusqvarna.com.au
30 Apr-6 May Ooraminna to Broome adv ride.darylbeattieadventures.com.au
30 Apr Alice Springs to Birdsville adventure ride.trapptours.com.au

2-3 May Introduction to adventure riding over two days from Blackheath, NSW.rideadv.com.au
3-9 May Cape York seven-day bucket list from Cairns.capecyorkmotorcycles.com.au
2-3 May Kaimkillenbun two-day trailride.dalbymoto.com.au
9-15 May Broome to Kununurra, including Gibb River Rd, adv ride.darylbeattieadventures.com.au
10 May Across Australia adventure tour from Fremantle to Airlie Beach over 16 days.outbackadventuretreks.com.au

10-16 May Africa Twin Tour from Kununurra to Cairns.darylbeattieadventures.com.au
15-17 May Distant Dargo three-day trailride from Sawmill Settlement, Vic.bullerbikeadventures.com.au
21 May Alice Springs to Birdsville adventure ride.trapptours.com.au
23-29 May KTM Australia Adventure Rallye Queensland Ranges.ktm.com.au
30 May Across Australia adventure tour from Airlie Beach to Fremantle over 18 days, including Finke.outbackadventuretreks.com.au



ACTION STATION

SLIDERS PAY ATTENTION: IF YOU HAVEN'T RIDDEN WITH THE COWRA CREW YOU SHOULD!

YOU CAN'T CALL yourself a dirtbike slider if you live in NSW, ACT or Vic and haven't been to the Cowra Motorcycle Racing Club track. For starters, it's got some solid history, having been established in 1997.

The NSW club specialises in dirt track and long-track racing for both Junior and Senior riders. They don't dabble in motocross or enduro, this is a club for those that like to hang it all out.

While the club's home track, Woodstock Park Speedway, has been the place where riders like Damien Grabham, Brett Dawes, Peter Kirkman and Vincent Burt have cut their teeth it is regarded as one of the safest in the country, with large run-off areas should you over-shoot.

The track is located in the village of Woodstock and, like

the legendary US music festival venue, it is a wild joint, 20km east of Cowra and 75km west of Bathurst. To find the track take the turn off to Woodstock from the Mid-Western Highway and follow the signs.

The club conducts dirt track and long track racing usually on the last Sunday of each month from February to October and Junior and Senior speedway meetings during the season.

The surface is watered, crushed granite and track sizes are decent. The long track loops around for 800m while the dirt track pips it at 850m. The Senior speedway track works out to be 310m while the Junior one is 110m. Yep, that's right they've got a purpose-built Junior speedway track!

There are loads of

outstanding facilities, including a modern canteen and amenities block and a large pit area and spectator zone. For club days, gates open at 7.30am with sign on and scrutineering for riders from 8am until 9am. To ride with Cowra Motorcycle Racing Club and even participate in its race days or coaching and training sessions, you need to join the club. It's super cheap, especially for families.

If you are seven years and over you will need a licence issued by Motorcycling NSW, but that's easy to sort out. Just enrol and complete a kickstart program. Those who are between four and seven years can still have a ride, you just need to become a member and apply for your Mini Licence through MNSW, then turn up at a club day and do an induction.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Four tracks to accommodate all ages in dirt track, long track and speedway
- Excellent surfaces which are all regularly watered
- Granitic sand is great for sliding
- Safe track with plenty of run-off area (see images)
- Plenty of facilities

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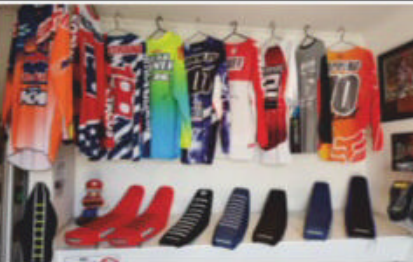
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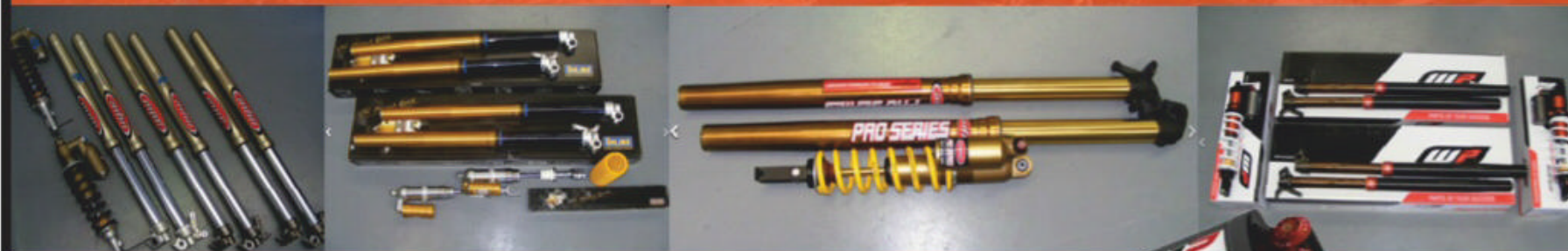




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R1250GS	A	F	850	20	E	\$23,890
R1250GS Exclusive	A	F	850	20	E	\$28,890
R1250GS Rallye	A	F	850	20	E	\$25,465
R1250GS Rallye X	A	F	890	20	E	\$30,590
R1250GS Adventure	A	F	890	30	E	\$25,865

BRAAAP braaapmotorcycles.com 1300 272 227						
MX2	M	F	785	4	I	\$3499
MX3	M	F	785	4	I	\$2999
MX17	M	F	825	3	I	\$3299
Silent 60V	P	E	570	N/A	B	\$2999

COBRA cobranation.com.au (07) 3255 8306						
CX50JR	M	T	680	4.2	I	\$5530
CX50SR King	M	T	762	4.2	I	\$5666
CX65	M	T	762	4.2	I	\$7151

CROSSFIRE crossfiremotorcycles.com (02) 9822 8899						
CF50	P	F	560	3	B	\$1349
CF70	P	F	549	2.6	B	\$1099
CF110	P	F	770	3.0	B	\$1399
CF125	P	F	770	3.0	B	\$1549
CF125s	P	F	770	3.0	B	\$1649
CF140	P	F	830	3.0	I	\$1699
CF250	P	F	930	6.7	I	\$2149
CFR250	P	F	930	6.7	I	\$3149

DUCATI ducati.com.au (02) 9741 3000						
Multistrada 950S	A	F	840	20	I	\$20,990
Multistrada Pikes Peak	A	F	825	30	E	\$35,990
Multistrada 1260 Enduro	A	F	840	30	E	\$29,790
Scrambler Desert Sled	F	F	860	13.5	I	\$17,490



AJP PR5 ENDURO 250

The PR5 runs Zongshen's liquid-cooled 249cc EFI engine that's made its way into quite a few bikes. The distinctive Portugese machine runs ZF Sachs suspension and comes in at 125kg wet.

FACTORY RIDE / READER RIDE / HERITAGE / ACTION / OAS / **BUYERS GUIDE**

SEAT HEIGHT IN MILLIMETRES FUEL CAPACITY IN LITRES

SKILL SET **P** PRO **E** EXPERT **I** INTERMEDIATE **B** BEGINNER

TYPE	ENGINE	SEAT	FUEL	SKILL	PRICE
GAS GAS gasgasmotorcycles.com.au					
E10	P	E	595	N/A	B \$2990
E12	P	E	610	N/A	B \$3390
XC200	E	T	960	10	I \$10,990
EC200	E	T	960	10	I \$11,690
XC250	E	T	960	10	E \$11,690
EC250	E	T	960	10	I \$11,990
EC250 Six Days	E	T	960	10	I \$12,490
XC300	E	T	960	10	E \$11,990
EC300	E	T	960	10	E \$12,490
EC300 Six Days	E	T	960	10	I \$12,990
ECRanger 300	E	T	930	10	E \$11,490

HONDA hondamotorcycles.com.au 1300 146 632					
CRF50F	P	F	548	2.6	B \$2099
CRF110F	M	F	667	4.0	B \$3149
CRF125F	P	F	735	4.3	B \$3799
CRF125FB	P	F	785	4.3	B \$4199
CRF150F	P	F	832	7.2	B \$5299
CRF150RB	M	F	866	4.3	I \$7099
XR150L	P	F	825	12	E \$3499
AG-XR190	T	F	823	12	B \$4499
CRF230F	T	F	872	8.2	B \$5999
CRF250F	T	F	884	6.0	I \$6499
CRF250L	T	F	875	7.7	I \$6099
CRF250LA ABS	T	F	875	7.7	I \$6399
CRF250RLA Rally	A	F	895	10.1	I \$6610
CRF250R	M	F	951	6.3	I \$10,999
CRF450L	T	F	940	7.6	I \$12,999
CRF450R	M	F	960	6.3	P \$11,999
CB500XA	A	F	810	17.3	B \$7699
CRF1000 Africa Twin	A	F	870	18.8	E \$17,499
Africa Twin Adv. Sport	A	F	900	24.2	E \$19,499
Africa Twin Adv. Sport DCT	A	F	900	24.2	E \$19,999

HUSQVARNA husqvarna-motorcycles.com.au 1800 644 771					
TC50 Mini	M	T	530	2.0	I \$4395
TC50	M	T	650	2.3	I \$5195
TC65	M	T	750	3.5	I \$6795
TC85SW	M	T	855	5.0	I \$8195
TC85BW	M	T	890	5.0	I \$8195
TC125	M	T	992	7.5	I \$11,195
TE150i	E	T	992	7.5	I \$12,329
FC250	M	T	992	7.5	P \$12,195
FE250	E	F	970	9.5	I \$13,995
TC250	M	T	992	7.5	I \$12,195
TE250i	E	T	960	11	I \$13,995

TYPE	ENGINE	SEAT	FUEL	SKILL	PRICE
TE300i	E	T	960	11	P \$15,395
TX300i	E	T	960	11	P \$14,195
FC350	M	F	992	7.5	P \$12,795
FE350	E	F	970	9.5	I \$14,995
FX350	E	F	970	9.5	I \$14,295
FC450	M	F	992	7.5	P \$13,195
FE450	E	F	970	9.0	P \$15,395
FX450	E	F	992	7.5	P \$14,595
FE501	E	F	970	9.0	P \$15,895
701 Enduro	E	F	935	11.5	I \$15,495

KAWASAKI kawasaki.com.au (02) 9684 2585					
KX65	M	T	760	3.8	I \$5599
KX85	M	T	840	5.5	I \$6499
KX85 II	M	T	870	5.5	I \$6999
KLX110	P	F	680	3.8	B \$3199
KLX110L	P	F	730	3.8	B \$3399
KLX140	P	F	780	5.8	B \$4899
KLX140L	P	F	800	5.8	B \$5299
KLX150L	T	F	875	7.0	B \$4399
KLX230R	T	F	885	6.6	B \$5699
KLX230	T	F	925	6.6	B \$5999
KL250 Stockman	P	F	830	9.0	B \$6299
KLX250S	T	F	890	7.7	B \$6349
KX250	M	F	948	6.4	P \$10,699
KLX450R	T	F	935	8.0	I \$11,199
KX450	M	F	950	6.3	P \$11,899
KLX650	A	F	890	22.1	I \$8199



GAS GAS EC250

Gas Gas has been through some turbulent times and it's a shame to see that it looks like losing its distinctive enduro identity to Austria. It's not too late to hop on a Spanish EC250 at \$11,990, or maybe even less.

REAR GUARD

OUR GARAGE / HOW TO RIDE / WE RECOMMEND / TECH / KIDZ KORNER / USED RIDE /

TYPE **M** MOTOCROSS **E** ENDURO **A** ADVENTURE **T** TRAIL **P** PLAY **ENGINE** **T** TWO-STROKE **F** FOUR-STROKE **E** ELECTRIC

	TYPE	ENGINE	SEAT	FUEL	SKILL	PRICE
KTM ktm.com.au 1800 644 771						
50SX Mini	M	T	530	2.0	I	\$4395
50SX	M	T	650	2.3	I	\$5195
65SX	M	T	750	3.5	I	\$6795
85SX small	M	T	865	5.1	I	\$8195
85SX big	M	T	865	5.1	I	\$8195
125SX	M	T	992	7.5	I	\$10,995
150SX	M	T	992	7.5	I	\$11,595
150EXC TPI	M	T	992	7.5	I	\$11,795
250EXC TPI	E	T	960	9.0	P	\$13,395
250EXC TPI Six Days	E	T	960	9.0	P	\$14,995
250EXC-F	E	F	970	9.0	I	\$13,395
250 Freeride	T	F	895	5.5	I	\$11,495
250SX	M	T	992	7.5	P	\$11,995
250SX-F	M	F	960	7.0	P	\$11,995
250XC TPI	T	T	895	5.5	I	\$12,595
250XC-F	T	F	895	5.5	I	\$13,195
300EXC TPI	E	T	960	9.25	P	\$14,695
300EXC TPI Six Days	E	T	960	9.25	P	\$16,295
300EXC TPI Erzberg	E	T	960	9.25	P	\$17,295
300XC TPI	T	T	895	9.25	P	\$13,595
350EXC-F	E	F	970	9.0	P	\$14,295
350EXC-F Six Days	E	F	970	9.5	I	\$16,095
350SX-F	E	F	970	9.5	I	\$12,595
350XC-F	E	F	970	9.0	P	\$13,695
450EXC-F	E	F	970	9.2	P	\$14,695
450EXC-F Six Days	E	F	970	9.2	P	\$16,495
450XC-F	E	F	970	9.2	P	\$13,995
450SX-F	M	F	985	7.5	P	\$12,995

	TYPE	ENGINE	SEAT	FUEL	SKILL	PRICE
500EXC-F	E	F	970	9.2	P	\$15,195
500EXC-F Six Days	E	F	970	9.5	P	\$16,895
690 Enduro R	A	F	910	13.5	I	\$15,995
690 SMC R	SM	F	900	13.5	I	\$16,395
790 Adventure	A	F	880	20	I	\$19,495
790 Adventure R	A	F	880	20	E	\$20,995
1090 Adventure R	A	F	890	23	E	\$22,495
1290 Super Adventure S	A	F	890	23	E	\$26,495
1290 Super Adventure R	A	F	890	23	E	\$27,295

KUBERG stevecramerproducts.com (03) 9587 1466						
Start Young Rider	P	E	390	-	B	\$1950
Hero Trial	P	E	520	-	B	\$2550
Hero Cross	P	E	630	-	I	\$2650
Freerider (8kW)	P	E	860	-	I	\$6995

MOTO GUZZI motoguzzi.com.au (03) 9381 9765						
V85 TT	A	F	830	23	I	\$20,690*

OSET osetbikes.com 0419 634 948						
12 Racing	P	E	390	-	B	\$2250
16 Eco	P	E	480	-	B	\$2450
16 Racing	P,T	E	480	-	B,I,E	\$2950
20 Lite	P,T	E	530	-	B,I,E	\$3100
20 Racing Mk II Lithium	P,T	E	550	-	B,I,E	\$4850
24 Racing	P,T	E	670	-	B,I	\$5995
MX10	P,M	E	515-550	-	B	\$4550

ROYAL ENFIELD royalenfield.com.au (03) 8363 1600						
Himalayan	A	F	800	15	I	\$6990*

SHERCO sherco.com.au (03) 8363 1600						
125SE-R	E	T	950	10.4	E	\$11,490
250SE-R	E	T	950	10.4	E	\$12,290
300SE-R	E	T	950	10.4	P	\$12,590
300SEF-R	E	F	950	9.7	P	\$13,590
450SEF-R	E	F	950	9.7	E	\$13,990
500SEF-R	E	F	950	9.7	E	\$14,190
250SE Factory	E	T	950	10.4	E	\$14,290
300SE Factory	E	T	950	10.4	P	\$14,690
250SEF Factory	E	F	950	9.7	E	\$14,890
300SEF Factory	E	F	950	9.7	P	\$15,390
450SEF Factory	E	F	950	9.7	E	\$15,990
500SEF Factory	E	F	950	9.7	E	\$16,390

SUNDAY MOTORS ycf-riding.com (07) 5520 2483						
S147	P	F	680	6	B	\$3499
S187	P	F	680	6	B	\$4999

SUZUKI suzukimotorcycles.com.au (03) 9931 0500						
JR80	P	T	685	4.1	B	\$2590



OSET 16.0 ECO

The 16.0 Eco shares the platform of the 16.0 Racing but with more eco (economical) running gear like suspension, handlebar and brakes. It's perfect for someone starting riding or learning mototrials.

SEAT HEIGHT IN MILLIMETRES FUEL CAPACITY IN LITRES
SKILL SET **P** PRO **E** EXPERT **I** INTERMEDIATE **B** BEGINNER

	TYPE	ENGINE	SEAT	FUEL	SKILL	PRICE
RM85L	M	T	875	5.0	I	\$5490
DR-Z125	P	F	775	4.8	B	\$3690
DR-Z125L	P	F	805	4.8	B	\$4390
DR200S	P	F	845	12.5	B	\$5190
DR200SE Trojan	P	F	845	12.5	B	\$4690
DR-Z250	T	F	880	10.5	B	\$6990
DR-Z400E	T	F	935	10	I	\$8190
DR650SE	A	F	865	13	I	\$8290
RM-Z250	M	F	955	6.3	I	\$10,590
RM-Z450	M	F	955	6.2	P	\$11,490
DL250 V-Strom ABS	A	F	800	15	I	\$6190
DL650 V-Strom ABS	A	F	835	20	I	\$10,990
DL650 V-Strom XT	A	F	835	20	I	\$12,290
DL1000 V-Strom XT	A	F	850	20	I	\$16,490

SWM
swmmotorcycles.com.au (03) 8362 1600

RS300R	E	F	963	7.2	E	\$8290
RS500R	E	F	963	7.2	E	\$8990
SM500R	S	F	920	7.2	I	\$9990
Superdual X	A	F	890	19	I	\$10,490

TRIUMPH
triumphmotorcycles.com.au (03) 9381 9765

Tiger 800 XRX	A	F	820	19	I	\$17,100
Tiger 800 XCX	A	F	850	19	I	\$18,150
Tiger 800 XRT	A	F	820	19	I	\$18,350
Tiger 800 XCA	A	F	850	19	I	\$19,950
Scrambler 1200XC	A	F	840	16	I	\$20,300
Scrambler 1200XE	A	F	870	16	I	\$21,700
Tiger 1200 XRX	A	F	845	20	E	\$24,200
Tiger 1200 XCX	A	F	845	20	E	\$25,600
Tiger 1200 XRT	A	F	845	20	E	\$27,600
Tiger 1200 XCA	A	F	845	20	E	\$29,300

YAMAHA
yamaha-motor.com.au (02) 9757 0011

PW50	P	T	485	2	B	\$2149*
TT-R50E	P	F	555	3	B	\$2299*
YZ65	M	T	749	6	I	\$6399*
YZ85	M	T	864	5	I	\$7249*
YZ85LW	M	T	904	5	I	\$7849*
TT-R110E	P	F	670	4	B	\$3499*
TT-R125LWE	P	F	775	6	I	\$4999*
AG125	F	F	800	11	I	\$3849*
AG200F	F	F	830	10	I	\$5699*
YZ125	M	T	973	8	I	\$10,249*
YZ125X	XC	T	973	8	I	\$10,949*
TT-R230	P	F	870	8	B	\$6199*
XT250	P	F	810	10	B	\$7499*
WR250R	A	F	930	8	B	\$9599*
WR250F	E	F	965	7.5	I	\$13,999*
WR450F	E	F	965	7.5	I	\$15,199*
XTZ690 Ténéré	A	F	880	16	I	\$17,149*

	TYPE	ENGINE	SEAT	FUEL	SKILL	PRICE
XT1200Z Super Ténéré	A	F	845	23	E	\$22,199*
Super Ténéré Elec Susp.	A	F	845	23	E	\$24,349*
YZ250 (with race kit)	M	T	970	8	P	\$11,549*
YZ250X (with lighting kit)	XC	F	970	8	I	\$12,299*
YZ250F	M	F	965	7.5	I	\$11,999*
YZ250FX (with lighting kit)	XC	F	965	7.5	I	\$12,999*
YZ450F	M	F	965	6.2	P	\$12,999*
YZ450FX (with lighting kit)	XC	F	965	6.2	P	\$14,199*

YCF
www.ycf-motorcycles.com.au (07) 5520 2483

50A	P	F	550	2.0	B	\$1699*
50E	P	E	550	N/A	B	\$2299*
88 Lite	P	F	710	3.8	B	\$1499*
110 Lite	P	F	750	3.8	B	\$1599*
Start W88E	P	E	655	N/A	B	\$2799*
Start F88SE	P	F	655	3.8	I	\$2099*
Start F110SE	P	F	765	3.8	B	\$2199*
Start F125SE	P	F	765	3.8	I	\$2299*
Start F125E	P	F	765	3.8	I	\$2299*
Pilot F125	P	F	800	3.8	I	\$2299*
Pilot F150	P	F	800	3.8	I	\$2599*
Factory F150 SP2	M	F	810	3.8	I	\$3599*
Factory F150 SP3	M	F	820	3.8	E	\$4999*
Factory F190 SP3	M	F	820	3.8	E	\$4999*
BigY 125SEL MX	M	F	810	5.8	F	\$2999*
BigY 125E MX	M	F	880	5.8	F	\$2999*
BigY 150E MX	M	F	880	5.8	I	\$3199*
BigY Factory F150E MX	M	F	890	5.8	E	\$3899*
BigY Factory Daytona F190	M	F	890	5.8	E	\$5299*

* Prices marked with an asterisk are rideaway, 'no more to pay'


YCF 50E

It's called a 50E but it doesn't have a 50cc engine, just the frame and running gear from the 50A. It runs a 1200W electric motor hooked up to a lithium battery and weighs 36kg.



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