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Main image: Matt Watterson by Yana & Anton at Actiongraphers
Inset: Touratech







OH.THE POSSIBILITIES...

BY JON BENTMAI

ANY TIME THE need to write this editorial arises my reaction is nearly always the same. The brain empties (doesn't take long) and distraction therapy ensues. Typically the latter involves a quiet meander through the pages of ebay. Curiously, my fantasy buys are always grounded in reality. I'm not looking for big ticket buys (even in my dreams), but garage fillers of a more modest nature.

I'll typically start with a search for a Honda XR650R, hoping some uninformed chap – no doubt tired of all the kickstarting – will list a pretty clean example for a sub £2k ticket (the eternal dream). An XR650R with a set of Adventure-Spec Magadan bags and a Safari long-range tank would be an ideal adv-lite, I feel (although I'm not entirely convinced).

Sometimes this search is followed by one for a Yamaha Ténéré which I'll argue (with myself) would be a more comfortable, practical adv-lite. Only that's at least a grand more (they start at £3k) and at that price I'm getting close to the price of a BMW GS, either a clean 1100 or a well-loved 1150 (an Adventure model preferably). So I look there next. I love GSs. But then I'll rationalize an old high-mileage GS might be something of a liability – I'm not up for gearbox-clutch-shaft drive rebuilds. So the adventure search goes cold.





Still not ready to write the editorial; next comes the Yamaha WR search. A WR250F is always a useful tool to have, for trail riding and more than good enough for a bit of racing. A neat little reserve player to have sitting on the bench. Again, I'm looking around the £2-2.5k mark, preferably less. Only in making this search I'll remember the WR450F – and what a great bike that is. A bit of a tank for competitive enduro work – but hey, a brilliant rally bike. A few years back I interviewed one Gavin Hockey (local bike dealer) about his taking a £3.5k second hand WR450F, adding an auxiliary tank and a roadbook and GPS and creating a surprisingly competitive rally bike for under £5k. By sharing costs with some mates he then spent less than £2k in competing in the 14-day Intercontinental Rally (that follows an old Dakar route across North Africa). He'd enjoyed a full-blown Dakar-esque experience for under £7k, and stood to recoup at least half of that when he sold the bike...





But when am I going to get the time to go on a proper rally? So then I round on trials. But not modern stuff, instead classic twin shocks. I have one already in my TLR 250, but I've always wanted a Fantic 240, Thierry Michaud was a boyhood (well, young adulthood) hero of mine. From there I'm searching Vinduro as well, of course. An old IT, PE or XR would be great fun. Only the brakes (drums) are rubbish, as is the suspension, and I struggle with forward footrests and pull-back handlebars – I need to stand, not sit, on an enduro.

So that search runs dry. Last chance saloon? I'll try for a Honda CBR600F (1998 FW is favourite) – could I sneak one for under £1300? A great runaround (ideal for editorial meetings in London) and occasional trackday bike... Then, finally, because I'm weird: BMW R60/5. Say no more.

Then at last, I return to the editorial. For all the Walter Mitty-ing the brain's still drawing a blank. But I am reassured, at least, that my love for bikes is both varied and everlasting...



RUST Giveaway

Subscription Offer

Scott Hustle MX enduro goggles

As said in our last issue, it's been high time we brought in some competitions and giveaways, as our way of sharing.

You want these!

Everyone needs a pair of decent goggles.
Editor JB has spent a lot of time wearing
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Here's how!

All you need to do to go into the draw for this sensational prize is to go to our website www.rustsports.com input your email for a download of the latest magazine and press submit. It's as simple as that. We'll make a draw (from all our subscribers) for the winner on January 31st, 2017.

Plus...

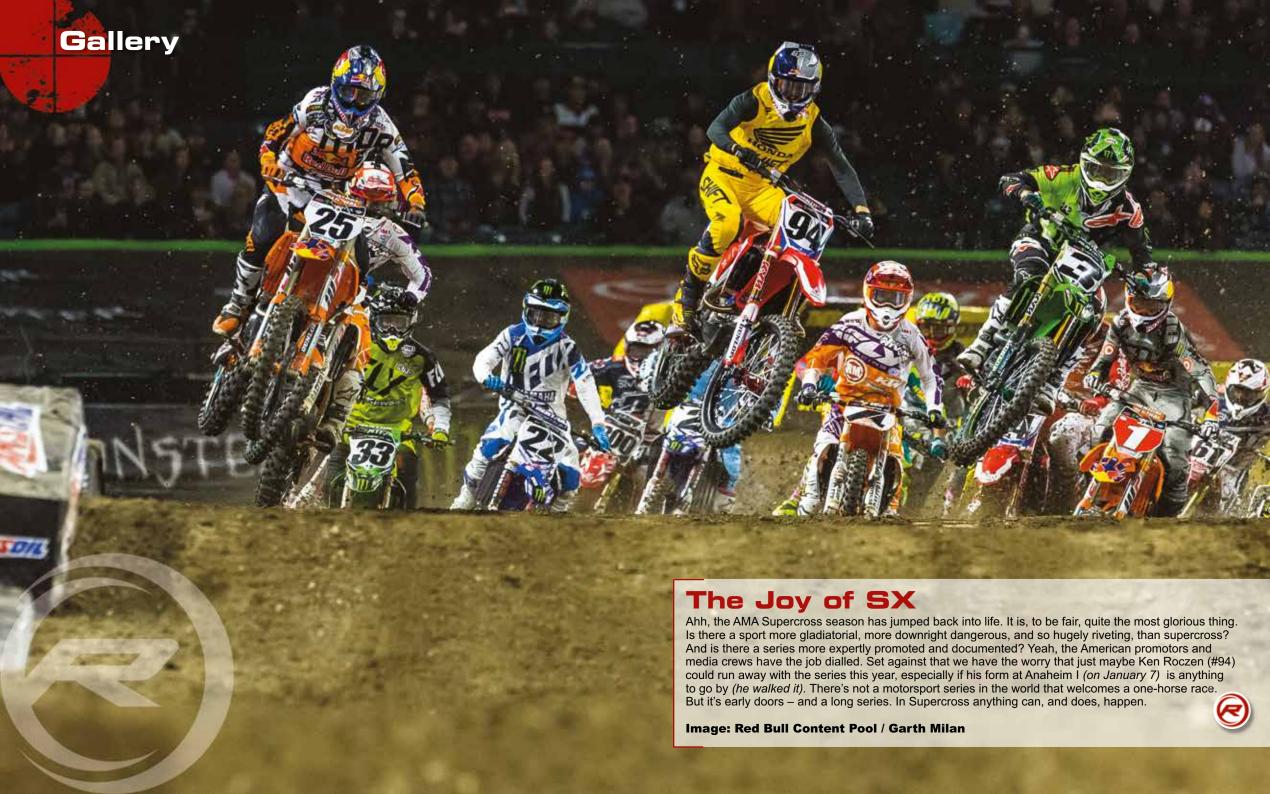
There's an added bonus – once you've hit that submit button you'll get automatic email alerts of future issues. Rest assured your email will not be used for marketing purposes or sold onto third parties. However, we will, through 2017, be developing a RUST membership package with a view to creating partnerships with the dirt bike industry whereby we'll be able to offer some great offers and discounts on the products to our subscribers.





Terms & conditions: It's a worldwide competition, so even if you're in Australia or Antarctica do send in your entry, we'll dispatch the goggles no matter where! We should set a closing date – essentially you've got to have submitted your email by 12:00GMT on January 31, 2017. And as usual in these matters, no correspondence will be entered into!Please note RUST Magazine cannot be held responsible for goods in transit, or any import duties/taxes payable in the winners home country. Many countries will not charge duties if the item is a competition prize, but some may do. Bah humbug... There is no cash alternative available.

Note: To know more about Scott goggles go to www.scott-sports.com







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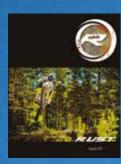
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Introduction to RUST Magazine. 2015 KTM 250EXC vs 2015 Yamaha WR250F shootout. Trail test of the Chinese made WK400 Trail and columns from Chris Evans, David Knight and Gary Freeman...



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



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



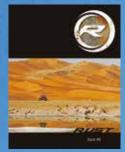
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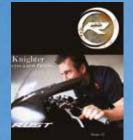
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Yamaha's 'new' WR250 tested, the Royal Enfield Himalayan adventure bike, Iron Men – 3000 miles off-road on Harleys! The Adventure Motorcycling Handbook – 7th Edition.



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



ISSUE #14

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



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



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



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2016 ISDE from Spain, two new superlight trail-enduros from Fantic. Chris Evans In praise of the new CCM GP450 adventure bike plus products from Pirelli and Polisport...



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



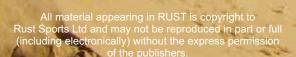
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2017 Dakar race preview, the Wieleckis continue their search for America, Andy Dukes searches for the 'Perfect RTW Bike' and JB finds more nasty surprises on the Project TLR...



ISSUE #20

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



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



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



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



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



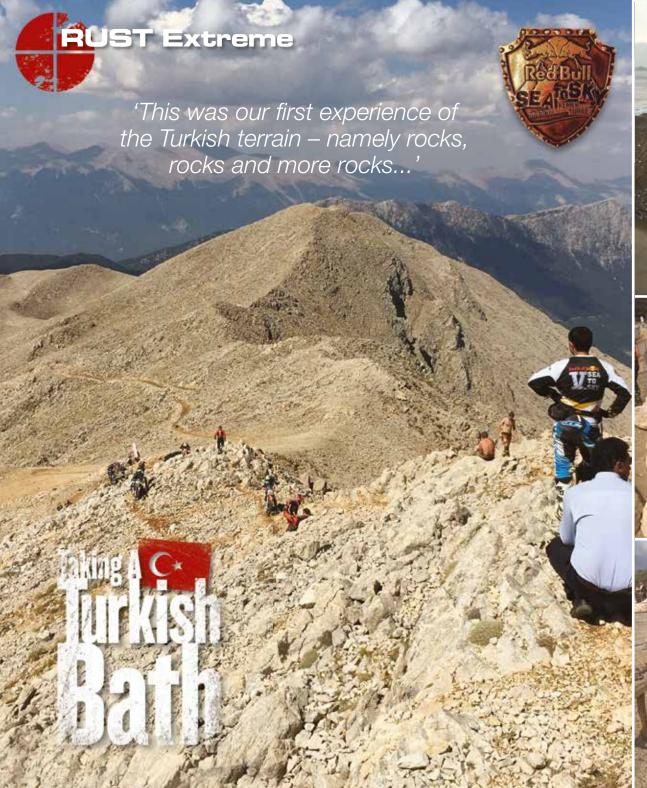
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With only five months to train for the event we enlisted the help of a personal trainer (the most excellent Jamie Burroughs of www.bodyclinic.uk.com) and all started well with regular training sessions while following nutrition plans. Then there was that (failed) military coup and we were asking was the event still going to run? Any excuse – our training duly slowed and the pub dinners returned.

Later, we decided to pull out of the event altogether, only then we realised we'd already paid out for the race entry, flights and accommodation in Turkey so we decided (okay, had) to stick it out. So we rendezvoused with the race organisers' transporter that would take our bikes and kit to Turkey and the following week boarded the plane – unsure if our bikes had made it through the tightened border security. On arrival we checked into our hotel the five-star Kemer Crystal Deluxe Resort and Spa then made our way to the race paddock. Our bikes were lined up waiting for us, no damage, kit all present - and signing on was straightforward. Top marks to the organisers!

A PRELIMINARY RIDE-OUT

The organisers scheduled a ride to the top of Tahtali mountain (2366m) as a fun group ride to settle the riders in. For pretty much all of us this would be the first and only time we would be reaching the top. Leaving the town with 200+ riders in tow we made our way off



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the tarmacked roads onto the dusty fire roads, which, as we climbed, got more and more narrow. This was our first experience of the Turkish terrain – namely rocks, rocks and more rocks. Some big rocks, some small rocks and lots of loose rocks. The top of the mountain looked like the surface of Mars.

Nearing the top it became apparent that the thinning air had taken effect on our carb jetting, our KTM 300EXCs all felt at best nothing more than 125cc. Heading back down, the group split and we had a choice which guide to follow. I decided to take the Silver route back, which would tie-in riding some of the main mountain race track. Gary had issues earlier in the day with a stuck carb float which meant he didn't have enough fuel while Shaun had problems on the way up the mountain with his bike overheating so they both took the direct route back down.

The following day was the ride-with-the-pros day, basically your chance to go out with one of the top guys in a small group and try and pick up some skills – or realise just how crap your ability really is. Seeing as we already knew we were lacking in ability we decided to sit the day out as already much-needed bike maintenance was due: my bike needed the carb stripping as it wouldn't tick-over, so did Gary's due to the sticky float,





while Shaun's needed a little TLC and the newly installed digital fan kit adjusting.

We took the afternoon to go and walk the beach racetrack – a mix of rocks, sand, gravel and manmade obstacles. The first issue to overcome was a 15m wide gap jump. Yikes! If we made the jump the numerous rock gardens, water holes, logs, tyres and wooden ramps would be next to inflict more pain.

DAY 1: BEACH RACE

FORMAT: The beach race consisted of two timed qualifying laps with the fastest 150 riders going through to the afternoon finals in three groups of 50 riders. We had half an hour to walk the track and then the qualifying was to start. Only the weather was not great — a torrential downpour! The organisers waited for it to pass, only it didn't, so (by now soaked through) qualifying begun, with the rocks, logs and wooden ramps now slick.

MATT: Beach race qualifying lap 1, I decided to take the leap of faith and head for the big gap jump straight off the line. Not sure if I was going to make it, I gave the bike a handful to be sure and sailed over fine. I managed the next few obstacles without too many dramas, but on reaching the first of the up-and-over wooden ramps I underestimated the deep sand on the run up and didn't have enough momentum to get cleanly over. I made a quick turn around ready for another





attempt only to come face to face with Gary. I was blocking his approach. A few swear words later from Gary and I was gone, clattering my way straight down the side of all of the rock sections, knocking photographers and Red Bull signage out of the way to fall over the finish line, exhausted. I felt I had done enough in the first timed lap so I sat out the second run, and when the final results came in I was just inside the top 100 which meant that I would be out in the second wave of riders in the afternoon finals.

In the afternoon finals, after a bad start, I was making up a few places along the long straight when I came to the floating log hole. Only the course had changed since the morning qualifying – baying for more blood, the organisers had removed some logs and added water. The line I took in

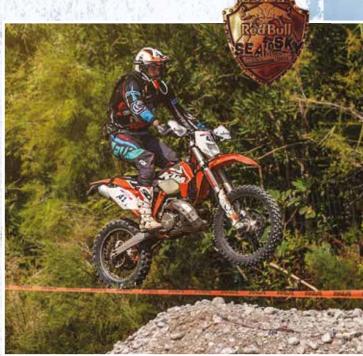
qualifying was no longer good and I crashed out into the log hole, drowned the bike and was left sat in waist deep water with two bikes on top of me. End of my day's race.

their way from the paddock to the start, I watched intently as the top boys (and girls) pinned it from the flag, straight over the massive gap jump. You had just 20 metres from the start to decide if you had enough speed (and balls) to hit the jump – or take the









chicken route! Now, being a solid 18 stone with kit on, I'm most definitely not meant to fly, and having never ridden much motocross I really didn't fancy it. So I'd decided to play safe and not kill myself, and my bike, right from the get go. That was until my old mucker Matt, who was two spots ahead of me, went and did the jump! Oh Bo%*ocks, I thought, now I've got to do the jump, purely because of the massive peer pressure mounting in my own tiny brain! So I pinned the 300 and genuinely hit that jump with my eyes shut! I survived and carried on round the beach track massively pleased I was still in one piece.



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I had a good full-beans blast along the straight and got to the first wooden ramp to find Matt was there laying across it, obviously trying to sabotage my qualifying lap! Suffice to say I wasn't patient enough and tried to go past him and got it very wrong and almost decapitated a poor young lady who was stood next to said ramp. That induced a huge amount of huffing and puffing, having to drag the bike back, which knackered me beyond belief. But the rest of the lap went okay, although incredibly exhausting! Qualified in the third group of 50 which wasn't ideal, but I did qualify!







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SHAUN: Lined-up for the beach race first qualifier, it still raining hard, a very nice Turkish chap in front of me gave it a big handful and filled my face with sand, so a good start! I'll confess I took the easy route, not the gap jump but got off to a good start through all obstacles, went over the floating logs okay, but messed it up on a big log on the beach, then got up the ramps okay, went through the tyres okay too, then got to the valley of the rocks and had a 'mare getting through the rock garden, which destroyed me. I got out the other end and finished what I thought was an okay-ish lap for me. We did not know our positions at this point so I took the gamble too, only I finished 167th position overall. So I did not qualify for the final.



ST Extreme

DAY 2: FOREST RACE

FORMAT: Starting on the beach just outside Kemer, climbing into the Olympus mountain foothills and forests, a 50km track with a time limit of four hours to complete, taking in a mix of rocky riverbeds, rocky single tracks and rocky forest tracks. Great for goats, not so easy for bikes.

MATT: The forest race started well for me, I felt comfortable on the bike but the temperature soon took it out of me (35°C+). I had underestimated the temperature and worn too much body armour. The riding was amazing, just so relentless, rocks every-













My main memory from this race - other than near death - was seeing fellow Brit Steve Huzzey stuck off the side of a track some 15 metres down a really steep gulley! He was completely shot from trying to get out and by now out of puff and really stuck. Now I have to be honest, I really didn't want to climb down and help him get his bike out as I was on my limits of fitness already, but you cant leave a fellow Brit in a time of need so down I went and helped him drag his bike up. Almost sick from exhaustion we both got the bike back up to the track, but only after Steve thanked me for my efforts by swinging his leg over his bike near the top and toe punting me straight in the side of the head! A smaller man may have been killed I'm sure, but I've always been good at getting hit, so we carried on regardless of my extra brain damage.

The finish was a curve ball as at the beach they decided to make you ride out over a jetty and then jump into the sea and through the Red Bull arch. This was brutal as the margin for error was tiny – as many found out by ditching it in the sea! Not kind at all. So I finished in a sensible time and set about sorting the bike for the mountain race the following day.

SHAUN: This was what I was here for, the so-called Forest Race should have been called the rocky forest ride – rocks, rocks, rocks and more rocks. Nothing flowing about





this, and climbing into the mountains the fanstopped working, so the bike – and me – kept boiling-over. At section four I discarded all my body armour and felt a lot better for it. But as we climbed the bike had to have more rests than I did and it ended my day's riding, which was again very disappointing. It's a learning thing: always make sure the kit is tried and tested before you go out.

DAY THREE: THE MOUNTAIN RACE (FINAL)

FORMAT: Starting on the beach in the neighbouring town of Camyuva, the race would send us up a rocky riverbed for about 6km then into the infamous canyon section full of deep waterholes, manmade wooden ramps and towering high rock walls, from here we would continue to climb in altitude to the Bronze and Silver finishes. The Gold medal target was the top of Mount Tahtali. With a seven-hour cut off unless you're one of the top 50 riders you can rule out a chance of seeing the top, so the target for us was Bronze and if we made it that far push onto Silver.

MATT: After dropping a few places in the forest race, Gary and I started on the same row (lucky 13). We pushed for the group lead up the riverbed into the canyon and I was feeling strong (I had adapted my body armour to let more air in to keep me cooler). Again it was a relentless push to keep



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moving and making up places. I reached the Bronze finish and pushed on. What faced us after the Bronze finish was a zigzag-climbing route up a mountain followed by long off-camber descents and more rocky singletrack. An hour or two later I reached the Silver finish. With just over two hours remaining I decided to push on again towards the top, only there were more riders coming back down the track than going up. After speaking with one of the Turkish guides I decided that I didn't have time to get through the 'Dark Canyon' section so joined the downward traffic and headed back to the resort happy with a Silver medal finish.

ended up on the same start row for the race, which wasn't ideal as we always end up banging bars off the start, so we purposely started away from each other... I got a great start and with Matt in close pursuit we soon caught up racers from the rows ahead as we raced up the huge riverbed. But then I had a big off in the thick dust (exactly where Wade Young came off and broke his wrist), which gave me a bashed up arm and hip, but nothing too serious. We then entered the famous canyon and this is where my day got very difficult. The bike unfortunately began to let me down. The chain came off five times











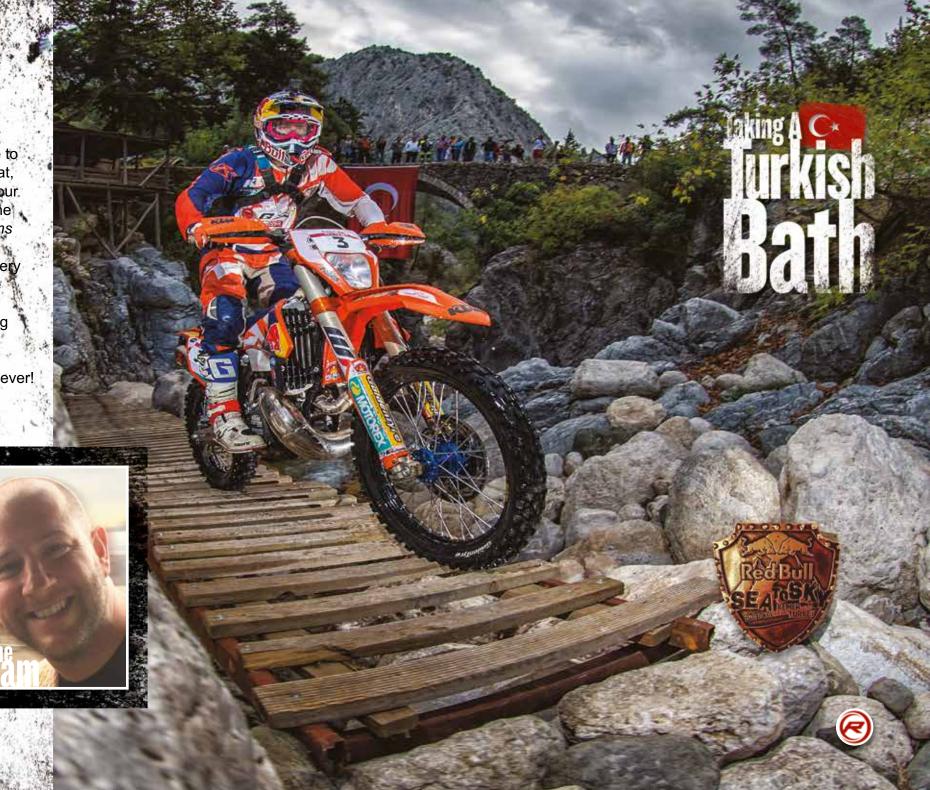
the challenge and we made some new friends along the way.

What would we do different if we were to do it again? Prepare yourself for the heat, reduce clothing layers, adapt body armour to allow airflow, fit and test a fan kit to the bike, possibly run a better coolant (Evans coolant seems to work well) But most importantly fit Turkish flag stickers to every panel on the bike and your helmet – the Turkish supporters love to help a stuck Turkish rider, once they have them going again they move on and help the next Turkish rider, and so on...

Extreme Enduro, it's all about riding clever! See you in Romania for Romaniacs 2017...

Gary Hanson

Age 37, Company Director, lives in Kent. Been riding off-road eight years, road for 16 years. Rides timecard enduro and H&H events. Attempting to fit in more riding and still keep a family balance (wife and two kids). Ex rugby player. Also entered Red Bull Romaniacs 2017, currently riding 2016 KTM 300 EXC Six Days.





RUST

BMW R nineT, Scrambler, Cafe Racer The BMW R nineT seems to be the flavour of the month at the 2016 EICMA Show... The range of bolt-on accessories, and modified bikes on show is truly mind-boggling...



www.youtube.com/watch?v=1gL9oTh6LN0

2017 BETA Range Launch

Stephano Fantigini tells us about the continuing development of the Beta range and the secret of their recent success...



www.youtube.com/watch?v=_L8ePyI2E4

2016 V-STROM 650XT

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



RUSTSPORTS.COM: THE EICMA MOTORCYCLE SHOW MILAN 2016

RUST Magazine takes you for a walk around the Milan EICMA show with all the new models and a whole load more interesting stuff...



2017 KTM Range Launch

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

JB tests the new Yamaha WR450F in the hills of

demands a good deal of respect...

Andalusia and finds that it's packing some heat and



www.youtube.com/watch?v=xH0E2Ra1TL4

THE MOVIE - RUST rode the Welsh and lived to

tell the tale... just. The trials and the tribulations all

2016 Welsh Two Day Enduro

here, in glorious colour. Enjoy..

tuned forks for RUST Magazine's long term Husgvarna TE300 and KTM 200EXC test bikes.



Alan from Stillwell Performance explains their A-Kit



2016 YAMAHA WR450F

Testing the new Husky 701 Enduro and the 701





2016 BMW GS TROPHY THAILAND Montage of scenes from the South-East Asia GS Trophy featuring comments from Kurt Yaeger, Tom Wolf and our man Jon Bentman...



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2017 BETA Range Launch The 2017 Beta enduro bikes, ridden and rated by

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RUST's Jon Bentman... Check out the full review in the 2017 Beta Special Edition at rustsports.com.



Beta works rider Steve Holcombe

FIM EnduroGP World Championship contender Steve Holcombe talks to RUST editor Jon Bentman about going pro and the challenges ahead...



JONNY WALKER INTERVIEW

JB asks the extreme enduro specialist some pertinent questions about his rivals Graham Jarvis, David Knight and in-race hydration...



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THE TRAIL RIDERS FELLOWSHIP

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



www.youtube.com/watch?v=mLpIT6Z-ACC

2016 HONDA AFRICA TWIN

Jon Bentman discusses the finer points of the new Honda CRF1000L Africa Twin with Tom Myers of Touratech USA



www.youtube.com/watch?v=ntK07I63tu/

HONDA CB500X ADVENTURE

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

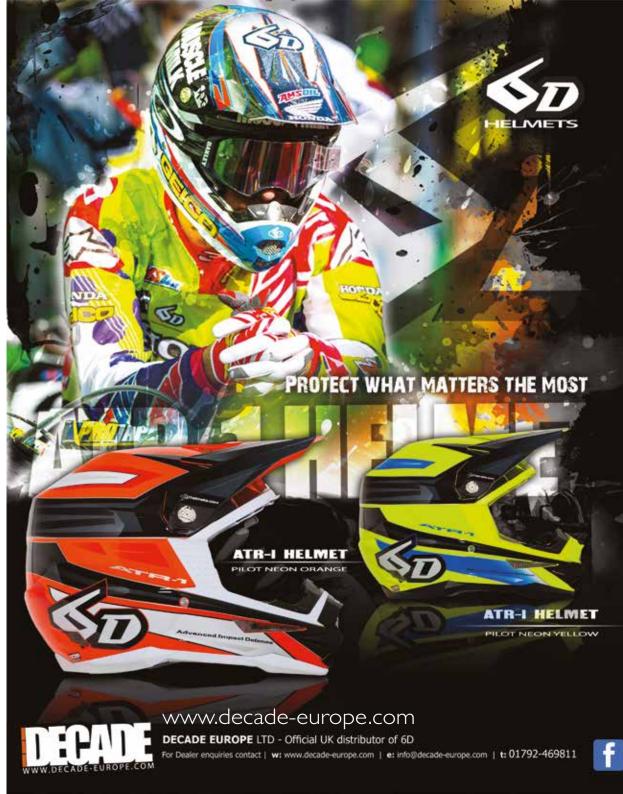


www.youtube.com/watch?v=8I54XQOYoPo

2016 HUSQVARNA 701

Supermoto on the road and on the track...









What is it?

WHEN INTRODUCED IN 2013 the 6D ATR-1 was a unique product.

A helmet designed with an uncoupling between the outer and inner shells.

The Omni-Directional Suspension (ODS) system places an array of dampers between the two shells (they look like little hourglasses) allowing a rotation of the inner shell to reduce/slow the transfer of energy between the outer and inner, and thus reducing the potential for brain injuries, such as concussions etc. Unique in 2013, both Bell Moto 9 (Flex) and Troy Lee Designs SE4 (MIPS) have advanced technology to compete, together setting a higher safety standard in helmet design.

Nonetheless it's a big forward advancement from conventional helmet design, and while its selling point is vastly superior performance in 'angular accelerations' created by oblique angle impacts, it's also claimed to outperform conventional helmets in regular low and high speed impact testing. Maybe one day all helmets will be made this way? The ATR-1 Carbon Electric version we've been testing retails for \$845/£550.





How did it rate?

Warren Malschinger:

It's certainly a comfortable helmet. I also like that 6D offer quite a few options on replacement liners and cheek pads so you can customize the fit. I didn't have access to those when I collected the helmet but would have gone for slightly larger cheek pad, to make it fit tighter (as is my preference). As it was, I've ridden over 300km over two days in torrential rain, through mud and water, and the helmet fared well and stayed comfortable.

I noticed the helmet is physically bigger than most motocross type helmets, probably to accommodate the ODS system, but that doesn't transfer to the wearing experience. It feels fine and at 1590 grammes (the weight is kept down by making the shell a mix of carbon fibre, Kevlar and composite fibreglass) it's not heavy so I did not suffer any fatigue (of the neck).

As I didn't (fortunately) find myself in a situation of testing the safety benefits of the design the standout feature for me was instead the ventilation – I think there's something like 18 intake ports, 13 transfers, and four exhaust ports listed! There are plenty around the mouthpiece increasing

airflow in a crucial area. I appreciated the six intakes across the forehead that feed into the liner and flow air over the head especially due to the humidity – I'd say this helmet offers the best ventilation that I've ever encountered.

Riding in torrential rain I found the peak gave quite a bit of protection, being long enough to block out the mud and rain, it worked really well. The ATR-1 also has all the other now standard features in a high end crash helmet: a Coolmax antibacterial comfort liner (removable for washing), emergency-removable check pads, shear-away peak screws – all quite standard these days. There's also a cutaway to clear the clavicle (collarbone) and a pad on the chin piece to help protect the sternum should you force your chin into your chest in a crash.

The ATR-1 comes with a three-year limited warranty, and post-crash rebuild programme (*subject to the shell still being viable*) – the only manufacturer doing this (*albeit this requires sending the helmet to 6D in California*).

In all, I was super-impressed and I've no hesitation in rating it at **5/5**. That said, I'd like to see one small improvement – can the mouthpiece be made compatible for a hands-free hydration system, please? Even so the ATR-1 has found a permanent home in the Malschinger kitbag.





RUST Tested

They're still pretty fancy, featuring outriggers for the wide 45mm strap (for better fit), triple-layer foam, a detachable nose guard — and handily a second (clear) lens is included in the price (as are a bunch of tear-offs, for those closed course racers). The lens is Lexan (with a nine-pin retention system) and we've counted at least 32 options on colour and various treatments, including dual lens. Rather neatly, the www.ride100percent.com website features a goggle simulation video, where the various lens options can be superimposed on an on-bike video (on three track scenarios) so you can get a fair idea of the kind of lens you'd like for your riding.





How did they rate?

Warren Malschinger:

I've tested these over the past 7 months during long distance road book rallies, enduro's and at local club motocross. Now, like so many riders, I've gotten to be attached to a certain brand and type, in my case Oakley Airbrakes, but I have to say by comparison (function and price) I was massively impressed with the Racecrafts. The quality of vision is excellent in comparison to other brands within their price range, the triple layer foam fits well and has excellent ventilation. I sweat more than is usual (and so will rotate my goggles during a long ride) I found the absorption was superior to most other goggles I've tested. I also liked the styling, they look bitchin'! They're one of the nicest looking goggles and with huge a range of colours and options they're placing themselves in a strong position in the market.

What I didn't like was the mirrored lens started chipping after two-three rides. Not a massive detraction, but I wouldn't expect this. And I didn't like that the nose guard felt insecure – and I particularly like to have a nose guard as I've had more than one rock to the face in my time.

I would rate these goggles **4.8**/**5**, losing points because of the nose guard fit feeling flimsy and the mirrored lens chipping. Even so, they've moved into the top three of my goggle options. They offer the best value for money on the market in my opinion.



Jon Bentman:

I've used mine for adventure riding, having put in four weeks on the trails in the Azores and Australia. And they're good. I have a pair called Abyss Black with mirror silver lenses. These are great in bright light, they save you getting tired eyes from squinting, but are the opposite of great when it gets dark – time for a lens change there – yeah, not a lens I'd use for woods riding.

They vent well without creating a distracting draft (so no eye watering). Air filtration is pretty good, I occasionally got a bit of grit in the eye, but not bad. As for sweat absorption – I was riding for a while in 45° heat and they were fine! The fit is good with my Nolan N53 mx lid but needs a wiggle to fit in with my Touratech Aventuro. Lens clarity is good and the lens, while marginally smaller in area than say the Airbrake or Scott Prospect, is still generous enough. I also like that the aperture on the inside is slightly wider than my Oakley Crowbars so they don't sit on the edge of my eyes! My lens hasn't chipped but then I haven't been hustling at the rear wheel of race rivals!

As Warren has said, overall they impress and for quality they compare well with Warrens' Oakleys and my Scotts. For me, they score **4.5/5**.











I'M NOT SURE that coveting your smug editor's riding experiences can be considered one of the seven deadly sins, but jealousy certainly does provoke action. So, late November 2016 and while JB is swanking it up on his Australian adventure I'm doing a cracking job racing my office chair, watching JB's posts on RUST's Facebook page in between work-related stress attacks. But God loves spontaneity and by the last week of November I'd had it and needed a bike fix.

I love the sun and the riding in Portugal, so before I consciously knew it I had found my way onto Horizon Adventures' website looking for a fly-and-ride option at short notice. I've been riding with Joao and Pedro (at HA) since 2015 and besides them operating my Portuguese touring company of choice they have both become good friends and riding buddies. Thankfully they had a package for the final round of the R3 Rally Raid championship to be held in the Algarve a few days away. Sun and riding – what more could you want?

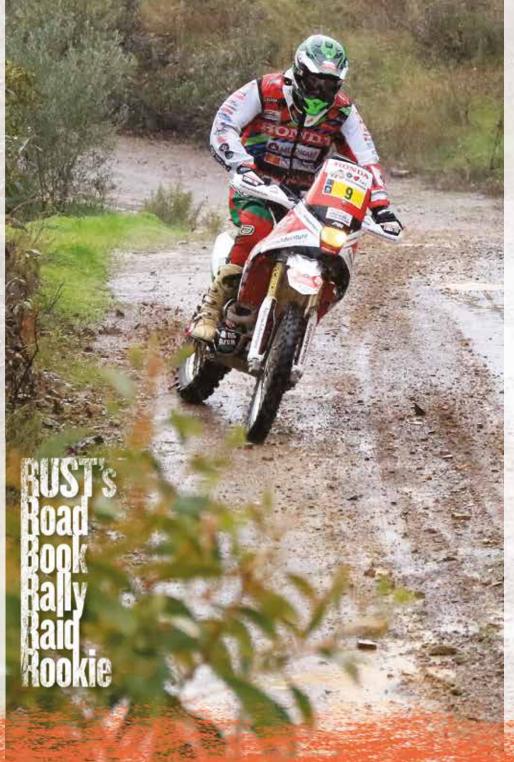


RALLY RAID? The Portuguese R3 rally raid

The Portuguese R3 rally raid series started in 2016 with four events, all run to FIM/FIA roadbook navigational principles offering authentic rally competitions for bikes, guads, UTVs and rally-raid cars. It offered two classes for bikes to compete in: Pro and Hobby. Quite frankly very little of this meant anything to me since I'd never ridden a rally before. However, I did note that this was the last round, and the Pro class championship decider, and as many as eight riders would be using this event as a training ride in preparation for the upcoming 2017 Dakar, including HRC works rider Paolo Goncalves. I have to admit that I was a little daunted, but there's nothing like jumping in at the deep end when it comes to fast learning.

I arrived on Friday morning in Faro to be met with the tropical thunderstorms that had been forecast over the entire weekend of the event. So much for the sun... I'm very glad I'd over-packed and had remembered to bring some rain gear, spare gloves and goggles and roll-offs.

Joao and Pedro arrived early afternoon with the bikes (2016 KTM 450 EXCs). The bikes were in excellent condition and I could



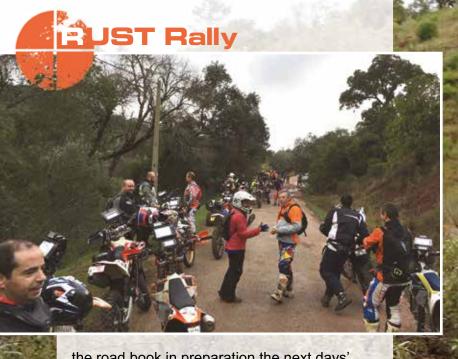
see that they had been well prepped so all that was left to do was fit the F2R road book reader that was mounted using a universal handlebar bracket. Being RUST's road book rookie (say that quickly), I paid close attention to the installation, asking questions of Pedro as he moved through the various procedures of mounting and connecting the components and controls and ran me through the do's and don'ts of how to use the equipment.

This was exciting stuff, I was on the brink of realising a dream that I hadn't really acknowledged until now. I've always been a Dakar fan, and like many have dreamt idly of perhaps participating in a rally raid – only the prospect has always seemed rather daunting. As a young buck I couldn't quite fully grasp the combination of speed and navigational accuracy that is required to be a good rally rider, but age has its compensations it seems. Rallying may not have the gun-and-run of motocross or allow the carefree charge around a closed-course hare & hounds, but the combination of a need for both speed and navigational accuracy requires a good deal of concentration (as I found) - and that suits the older rider.

PAY ATTENTION

So here's the good part: it wasn't as hard as I had thought it would be, at least in terms of demystifying the equipment and the instructions. It does need you to pay attention and prep / mark the road book well before you ride but, looking back, the laughter and camaraderie while sitting with fellow riders around a box of highlighters, scissors and tape, while highlighting, cutting and splicing





the road book in preparation the next days' ride was one of the best parts of the entire weekend.

Luckily I had Joao to explain the various symbols, warnings and abbreviations contained on the road book - and how to mark them up for easy reference while travelling at speed. His advice was utterly indispensable. I hadn't known previously that all the abbreviations contained in road book instructions are in French, but now it seems obvious when you think about the history of the (Paris-) Dakar and subconsciously while I've never been au fait with the French language, or found it particularly easy to learn, it's amazing just how much you retain when said French instructions can either help you or have dire consequences if you forget what they mean. It was the best French lesson I ever had.







The rain obviously had a huge effect on the event and the organisers' had to make adjustments to large parts of the course due to the heavy rains and swollen rivers. That meant them having to hand out last minute updates and new routes. I should mention that the rider briefing didn't start until 9pm (to allow the Portuguese competitors time to finish the week's work before jumping in their vans and making their way to the event) and so the road book marking was a late night affair. Again I was grateful for the experience of the many riders in the briefing, asking questions, clarifying the new routes and coordinates. With the road book marking taking some time, the bikes finally made it into the parc ferme at around 2am(!) with the road books now loaded into the towers (the mounting bracketry) and covered with sophisticated black bin liners for rain protection. All the while the rain continued the pour down steadily...

DAWN RISE

Wakeup was at 5am, after a three-hour sleep, and I prepared my kit and food and headed for breakfast. JB will tell you that I like to be well prepared – and early – at the start to take any stress out of things before the race. However, leaving things to the last-minute must be an off-road riders' quirk because despite the early rise by the time we (Joao, myself and Luiz) got down to the parc ferme to collect our bikes we were running late. The liaison to the start was around 23km and with the roads being so slick, and it pelting with rain, gunning it to the start just wasn't an option. True to form we missed our 08:13 start time: penalty number one. After about a 10-minute wait we were slotted in for a





revised start time and headed off.

I had entered the Hobby class, which is judged on navigational accuracy only, with points deducted for the slightest deviation off the set course. Each rider is provided with two GPS units to track their position throughout the event. The Pro class meanwhile is judged on speed and navigational accuracy along with a host of additional penalties for various infringements. I would have personally preferred to enter a mid-level category that assessed speed and navigation rather than just navigation, for the simple reason that you could crawl along at 5mph and finish dead last on the road but be extremely accurate on the navigation and win. I'm just never going to do that - too boring and just not the reason I ride dirt bikes. This was a common sentiment among most of the Hobby riders (at least the faster ones). Thankfully the organisers responded to the request and have for the 2017 series introduced a pro veterans class for the over 45s who want more than just the navigational challenge. Happy days, this gives us a goal!

Right from the off the riding was excellent, the terrain was slick and muddy along what would normally have been pretty hard pack surface as we ascended into the hills of the Algarve along some mildly technical single-track and narrow firebreak roads that wound their way around the mountains. It was misty and wet with limited visibility so initially the going was slow but I have to commend 100% Goggles on their new Forecast Advanced Mud System (roll-offs) that worked really well in



EUST Rally

these extreme conditions.

For me this event was never going to be about results or trying to be as accurate with the navigation. It was all about getting out from behind the desk, being free and facing a challenge, isn't that why we all ride? I just wanted to ride at my own pace while I'm trying something new.

DROWNING

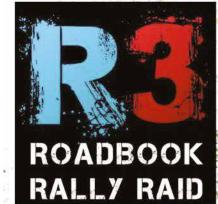
The first day's riding was about 165km of mixed terrain with some brutal river crossings that claimed more than their fair share of bikes. Overall I was rather pleased with my combination of speed and navigation – except where the preprinted road book had been updated with course amendments. I'm pretty sure that my rookie understanding of how to update the road book resulted in me losing my way and any chance of a good result. It was quite frustrating when the biggest navigational error







RIDE THE



SERIES **2017**

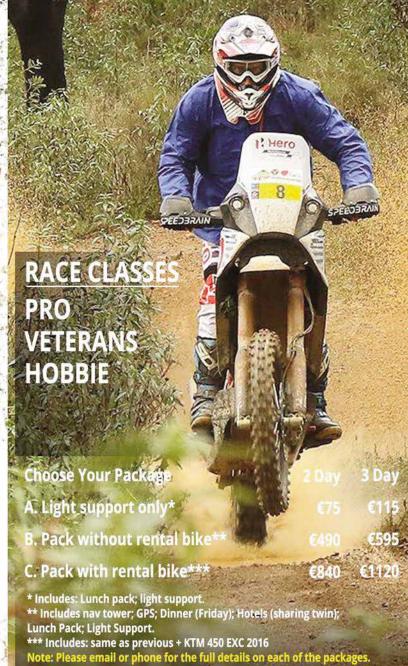
IN PORTUGAL

03 - 05 Feb: Santiago do Cacém

28 Apr - 01 May: Fafe

15 - 17 Sep: Mação

10 - 12 Nov: Faro



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Photo b Ricardo Andrés Xplora.

EUST Rally

came on the tarmac and saw me adding 10km to my mileage as a result. Yet three pair of goggles, two pairs of gloves and a trashed Acerbis rain suit later I arrived at the finish having thoroughly enjoyed the ride.

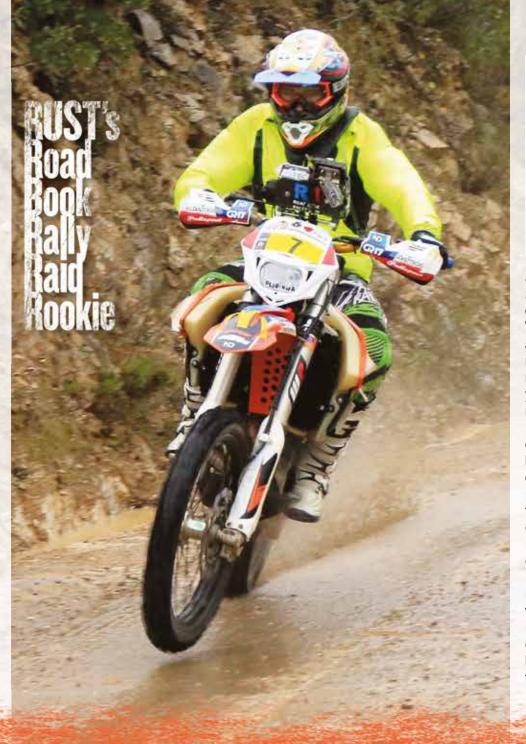
I made a few mental notes for the next day's riding: number one, duct tape my boots to keep the water out; number two, wear a thicker base layer; and finally, reload the roll-offs (and take a spare canister – I had run out of film within the first two hours).

Another long briefing that night, with quite a few amendments to the road book because of the worsening weather, resulted in rookie error number two (or is that three?). While I had correctly cutout the original route sections from the road book as instructed, rather than sticking in the the newly printed updates that would see us avoid impassable sections of the route and redirect us accordingly, I had inadvertently pasted back the original route without realising my error. In my defense it was late, but here's a tip: if you get updates, stick them into the road book BEFORE you mark them up, so you can tell the difference between the new and the original.

A WIN

Start of day two saw me start fifth from last due to my navigational error the day before. But by the first checkpoint I had caught the front of the Hobby field and landed up winning stage one.

Joao gave me some excellent advice, which of course I didn't follow. "All you have to do now is to follow a good navigator, check your





speed and ensure that you stay on course to take the day two win." They say with age comes wisdom, well obviously not in my case. While I had a good beginning to stage two and stayed on course the road book error made the night before killed any chance of my not getting lost. And boy did we get lost – yes, I wasn't the only ass that had made that mistake!

Along with my fellow embarrassed colleagues we retraced our tracks and got back on course. A particularly gnarly river crossing that needed at least two or three people per bike to cross slowed us up even further but it wasn't until around 5km from checkpoint two that I arrived at a junction with multiple tracks. Putting it mildly, this junction ended any chance of a decent result. Murphy's Law allowed that I chose the right track to begin with, only to convince myself that as it was entirely under water it just couldn't be the right route. So I turned around and attempted every other path. Some 45 minutes later I headed back down my original route deciding to brave the waterlogged path and came out





the other end on the correct heading.

By the time I got to CP2 Joao and Luiz had been waiting for me for over an hour, although rather serendipitously this probably saved our butts. Not three kilometres from CP2 we arrived at what can only be described as a scene of carnage. One of the rivers was so swollen that it had washed one of the bikes 100m downstream, the very lucky owner only recovering his bike after the front wheel was spotted bobbing above the waterline. The bike was drowned of course.

At this point the organisers called it a day and cancelled the final stages of the event. Meanwhile the river crossing was now populated by 4x4s with winches, ropes and a team of Welshmen forming a human bridge that was ferrying one stranded bike after the next back to safety. It could only have been the Welsh that would take up station in the middle of the river, smiles all round, suggesting that this was like a typical summer's day trail riding in Wales...!

Jokes aside it was a cracking event, testing both my riding and navigation skills, with some reminders and insights into the importance of good winter kit. The closing lunch and awards ceremony was held at the famous Faro Motorcycle Club. It was a fitting conclusion with Paulo Goncalves taking the pro title while the old boys reminisced over the two days past and set plans in place for the new season. Thanks to the organisers for a professionally run event and to Horizon Adventures for the opportunity to fly and ride with them and for their help in teaching me the rudiments of road book rallying.











WHAT DOES A 125hp sub-200kg adventureenduro bike feel like? Potent, in a word. Certainly something to be treated with respect. Which wasn't exactly what I allowed Touratech's R 1200 GS Rambler on first initiation. A quick blip of the throttle in the small car park didn't prompt a cheeky little wheelie so much as a fairly lusty lunge sudden and violent enough to be a whisker away from inducing whisky throttle. About a kilometre later the Rambler's power and mass was again embarrassing as I realised that trying to slow this beast down from speed, on loose pea-shingle, while riding on Metzeler Karoo 3s, was not an easy task. It kind of slides across the surface – there's none of that digging in you get with proper knobblies - it was a job not to skitter clean off the trail and into the rock field that bordered it. Which wouldn't have been a clever idea, obviously. Clearly, for a bike like this you need to adjust your base settings.

LUCKY MAN

I certainly am a lucky man, having been invited to join Touratech's CEO Herbert Schwarz (and his team) for a week riding in the Azores – on the (then) yet to be unveiled Touratech R 1200 GS Rambler. Of course I'd arrived pretty much blind, not knowing a thing about the bike or the mission (half shake-down test, half filming gig). My only instruction being to pack my own crash helmet (and a few clothes, of course) – everything else Touratech would sort.









199

That was Travis Pastrana's AMA race number wasn't it? Well, it was also the target weight for the Rambler project — could the Touratech team create a K50-based adventure-enduro, fuelled, ready-to-go, that weighed under 200-kilos? Long story short, that's exactly what they have done. But not by the most obvious means.

For a start the base of the Rambler actually isn't an R 1200 GS, it's an R 1200 R roadster, chosen on account it runs telescopic forks – not Telelever – and the design team were adamant they wanted conventional (USD) forks for this high-performance project. Taking the R-route also meant a cleaner start point for a lot of other matters, too, including losing unwanted bracketry etc (the R runs without a fairing). So it's an R motor as well (which is very







plastic airbox, all made much smaller and sleeker as would befit an enduro bike. As the Rambler's never intended for series production, the design team could go as extreme as they liked. And after spending most of their year working on adventure-touring projects, you can imagine they went full-tilt!

EASY NOW...

It must have taken me at least a day, maybe two, to get to grips with the power of the Rambler. One aspect of the bike being a prototype is you are sampling it in its most raw form. The bike had come straight from the design studio, via the workshop, and so was far from fettled. This meant the 125hp was being delivered without a complete electronic package. I wouldn't say it was devoid of rider aids, but it was running on the







basics, so when you twisted the throttle you were getting pretty much 100% of the potential power.

This meant the power came in with a hit like no production bike you'll ever ride. At first this made for some neck-snapping wheelie-inducing acceleration, particularly in the lower gears. That was on the tarmac, off-road this simple spelt wheelspin, massive wheelspin. With time (ie learning to twist the throttle a little less and a little slower), and with a little judicious clutch slipping to ease the transitions, we got this situation under control, but certainly in shedding 50 kilos from the weight of a GS, that waterboxer really is unshackled. It's already considered a great motor, but like this, it seriously breathes fire – something the one-off Akrapovic (in Titanium) exhaust struggled to



RUST Adventure



silence. Yeah, there's bark and bite with the Rambler.

The handling was more than good. The geometry comes from standard BMW, so it should be fine, but with fettled F 800 GS Adventure forks and a special shock (both by Touratech Suspension) the Rambler rides that bit higher that usual for a GS. On the Tarmac, riding on the Karoo 3s, this was just fine, being so much lighter than a GS you could flick it around much easier (we had an R1200 GS along for comparison) and it was a hoot in the twisties.

Off-road the handling remained precise, while the weight reduction made the Rambler that much more light-footed. We went through one very tight single-track





RUST Adventure

one point where the trail got loose, where the Rambler had skipped lightly over, the GS nearly buried itself, pitching me over the bars – only a big handful of throttle saved the situation.

There are some caveats, here. The suspension setup on the Rambler had been a best guess by the guys at Touratech Suspension, not having worked on a bike like this before – and having no time for testing. As it was, for me, it was too firm, possibly over sprung and too firm on the damping, too. Quite possibly an ideal setup for super-fast rally racing – with a pro rider who cares not for his wellbeing – but for trail speed riding we needed more movement. Likewise in the dirt, proper knobblies – say

Michelin Deserts – would be a much better match, whether in soft going or on gravel for that matter. Only on the Tarmac, with the power the way it is, you'd have to be mighty careful on those knobblies – it would be too easy to spin up and slide off.

The USD forks also limited the steering lock – not such an issue for rally competition, but not so good for trail work. But this is a common issue with USD forks on any brand of machine. Oh, and the brakes – I wasn't entirely convinced the single disc set-up was enough for stopping from higher speeds. But then there's only so much energy you can push through a 21x2.15 tyre, so maybe it's the correct fitting after all.

The ergos were a mixed package. The fuel-tank-seat arrangement is properly enduro-slim and makes for a narrow mid-section so you can grip the bike with your







knees like a regular enduro bike. As well the slimmer profile behind the headstock (where the airbox resides) makes it easier to shift your weight front (and back) much more than you can on a GS. These matched with some Raptor Titanium footpegs gave a superior setup for 'active' riding. Both Ramblers, however, were set-up with handlebars that were too narrow and probably too low, making for a sometimes awkward lean forward, only without the sense of bracing as you get with traditional enduro bars. A minor issue, but when you're wrestling 125hp it can become a major one...!









AND THE VERDICT?

The verdict already? Okay, I promised the editorial team I'd keep this story short. Anyway, a week and over 700km later, did I like or loathe the Rambler? Well, after a heart-pumping start, we did kind of settle down so that by the end of the week riding the Rambler was second nature. The lightness is very obvious, as is the power. But increasingly you come to appreciate the bike's simplicity. That enduro headlight might make night riding a bit hit-andmiss (we had a couple of late finishes) but there's a joy in the pared-back simplicity of an enduro. The whole bike is uncluttered, very singular in its focus, and that's very obvious when you jump back on a GS with all its whistles and bells.

But what I really liked was the Rambler made trail riding just that little bit freer than it might be on a GS. Where the going gets technical





the Rambler has that extra 25% of dirt-capability, so you can carry on riding, just chillin' to the environment. Of course, it has an evil alter-ego – release its full potential and you could fly along off-road trails at the most improbable speeds. But heck, that really is the Dark Side – there was a reason the Dakar Rally stopped with the unlimited machines...

Yeah, call me a heretic, but if I had a Rambler, just as if I had an HP2, I'd be fitting it with panniers (slim ones, mind) and using its potential not to go fast, but to go deep (fnar fnar!). Adventure bikes have become increasingly complicated as power outputs have risen and electronic rider aids have been installed to rescue the riders from the implications of that. Plus there's been that incessant desire to accessorise with every last add-on. Big, heavy and complicated is what they've become. There's certainly space for a simplified, yet capable, machine such as this. Sometimes less is more...





How Touratech made the Rambler...

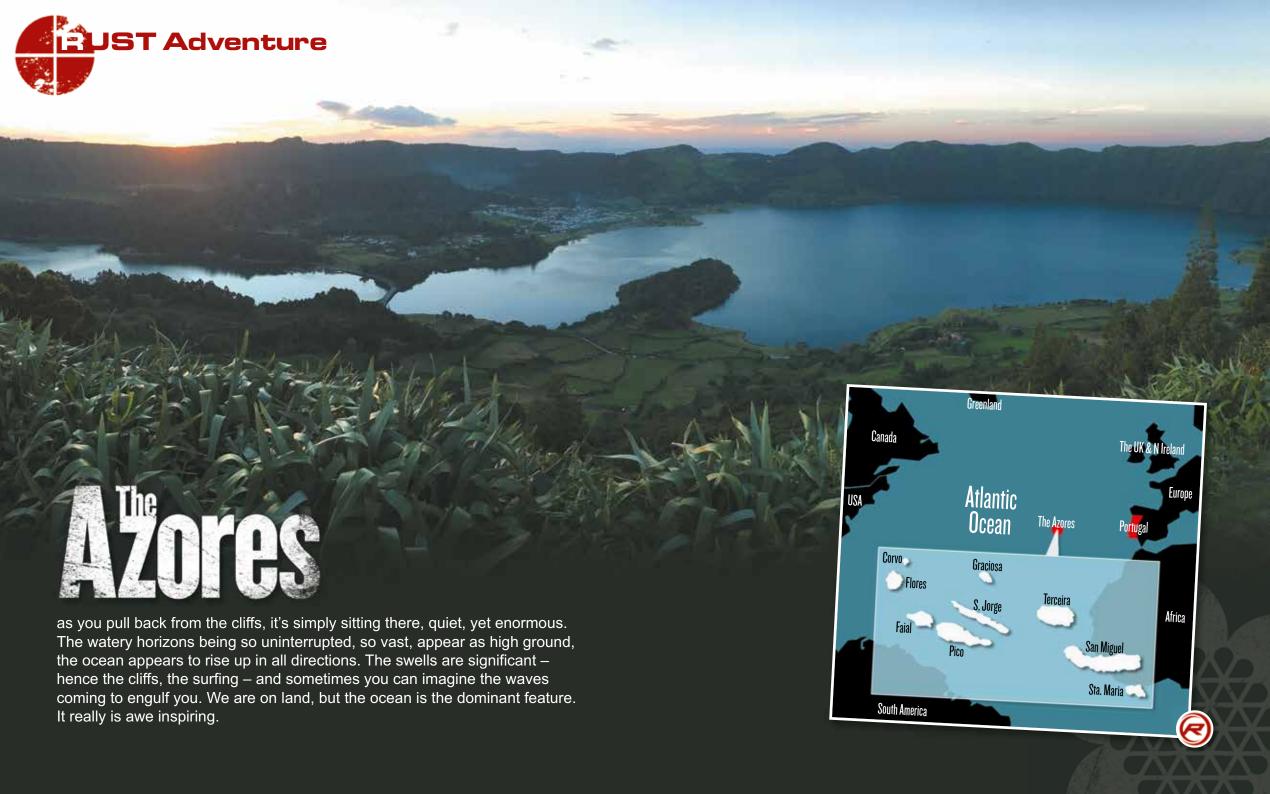
- **Airbox:** Carbon fibre reinforced plastic with original air filter (*Touratech / TT-3D*)
- **Tank:** Aluminium, lowered side walls, with partially load-bearing sub-frame function capacity approx. 16.2 I (*Touratech / TT-3D*)
- Fuel pump: In separate plastic tank (1.8 l) beneath the main tank
- **Seat:** Enduro rally seat made from PU foam (*Touratech / TT-3D*)
- Frame: BMW R 1200 R, strengthened with unnecessary mounting brackets removed
- **Engine:** BMW R 1200 R matched to an R 1200 GS shaft drive
- **Handlebar & fittings:** Magura TX handlebar, very light high-performance radial-pump master cylinders for clutch and brake (*Magura HC3*)
- Triple clamp: Custom-made by XTRIG
- **Stem:** Aluminium tube construction (*Touratech*)
- Brakes: Front: 1 x 300mm brake disc; Rear: 1 x 276mm brake disc
- **Brake lines:** Braided steel hose (*Stahlflex*)









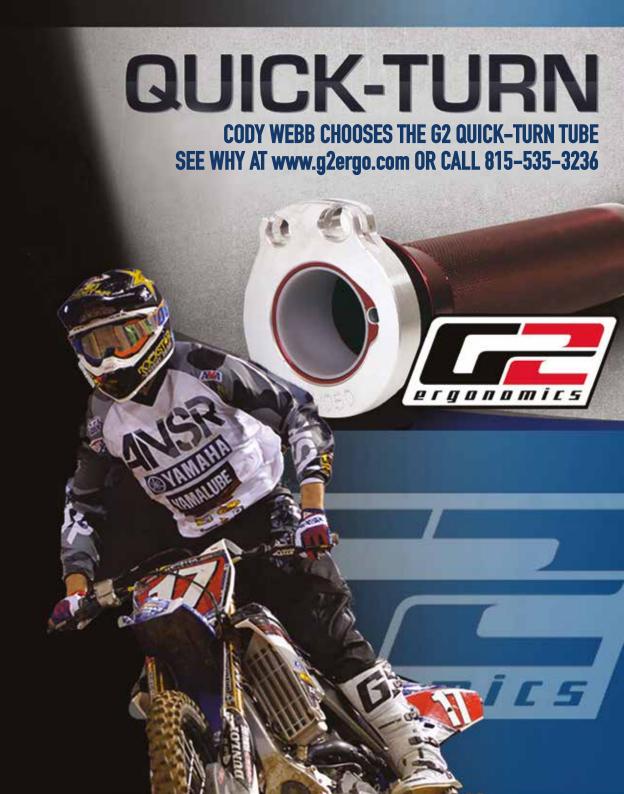




The Azores are not – and are unlikely to ever be – a tourism hotspot, their remoteness puts paid to that. And in the past life there has been hard, the inhabitants historically living off the land. Today that's still going on, with diary farming being most prevalent, albeit on small-scale farms, the cows being 'serviced' by mobile milking services. The inhabitants are still firmly connected to their Portuguese homeland though – some 850 miles to the east – with virtually no other nationalities domiciled on the archipelago. Change comes slow in the Azores.

Riding around the main island, São Miguel – and the sealed twisting lanes are every bit as engaging as the gravel tracks – we found such a varied land. Indigenous forests are always a treat, for so many have been struck from the world, gone forever, so riding through the laurel groves as we entered into Furnas Valley was a wonder. So were the thermal springs; with









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2016 ISDE from Spain, two new superlight trail-enduros from Fantic. Chris Evans In praise of the new CCM GP450 adventure bike plus products from Pirelli and Polisport...



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



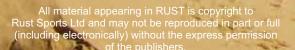
ISSUE #19

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



ISSUE #20

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





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