

Issue #24

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RUST

Forza Italia!

Why the Italian Enduro Championship is the best national series in the world!

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Captain Fantastic

Does Fantic's new 250cc trail bike deliver?

Best Western - Part 2

Our Kiwi Adventurers hit the wild west of America

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Massimo Di Trapani





INSPIRATION

BY JON BENTMAN
PHOTO: SIMON CUDDY / KTM

I'VE JUST BEEN watching the TV coverage of the Daytona round of the AMA SX series. It was inspiring stuff.

I'm enjoying watching Eli Tomac's excellent form; he's riding like a champ, confident and dominant and so the wins keep coming. However, championship leader Ryan Dungey's fight back from 17th to 4th was the stuff of legend. The man just worked so damn hard. After his start line (and T1) setbacks, he simply dug in and worked at it. Tirelessly. And to have the energy, and the resolve, to then stick the knife into Cole Seeley the way he did on the last lap – that's the mark of an exceptional rider.

It's worth adding a word of sympathy for Dungey, for he surely got distracted on the start gate, firstly when Jason Anderson (*in the next gate*) jumped a tenth of a second too early which in turn probably triggered Marvin Musquin to jump himself and clean demolish his gate. These events kicking off in Dungey's peripheral vision must surely have messed with his concentration for he totally missed the gate drop.

Anyway, as has been said over and over, '*you win your championships on your worst days*'. This was a worst day for Dungey and with fight like this he deserves the championship. But then so does Tomac. If they keep this up it's going to be a great second half to the season.



RYAN DUNGEY

One thing is for sure, in supercross we're definitely looking at a scenario where the result is determined at least 80% by the rider, probably more. There's not one bad bike out there, not one bad rider either, but there are only a few who are super-good.

Incidentally, I've also watched a bit of the MXGP TV coverage. The Indonesian round to be precise. Now my mum used to say, '*if you can't say anything nice, don't say anything at all*'.

Oh, and one more positive to take from the SX coverage – it's creating a burning desire to get out on the bike myself. Obviously not in SX, but I need the next round of the R3 rally series to come round much quicker than it will...



AND THE WINNER IS...

The winner of the Scott Hustle MX goggles from RUST Magazine issue 23 is Andrea Bianco from Genoa, Italy. We'll be in touch soon Andrea to arrange delivery of your prize....



Light at the End of the Tunnel?

As part of our look into the Italian national enduro championship, here's a great shot of Antoine Meo at the final round of the Assoluti D'Italia in 2015. Meo was on the crest of a wave back in 2015, just crowned E2 world champion (*his fifth world title*) and here at Borno was in the process of taking the outright 'Assoluti' title in the Italian champs, too – both on the KTM 350EXC which had up until that time struggled to secure the big wins.

What came next was a swap to rallying and an unfortunate end to an otherwise super-successful Dakar debut, where Meo smashed up both wrists on the penultimate day (*still finished fourth though!*). Ligament damage to his right wrist and a broken scaphoid (*in his left hand*) that refused to heal has seen him sidelined for a year. But the worst now looks to be over, Meo is training again and has the 2018 Dakar firmly in his sights.

Image: Massimo Di Trapani





From Little Acorns..

IS THAT AN OAK? Not sure, but it was blocking the trail. This was a couple of years or so ago, too (*see Gallery 1*), the occasion being a traverse across England and Wales using as many trails as possible – all written up in the late Trail Bike & Enduro Magazine (*TBM*). It took four days (*by road, in a car, it's about seven hours...*), and despite (*or because of*) being a British summer it rained torrentially for two of those days – yeah, it was definitely an adventure. Here we have John Vannuffel, the Technical Director at the Trail Riders Fellowship (*a UK trail riding organisation*), manfully trying to heave his KTM 690 around the obstruction. It went, eventually...

Image: JB



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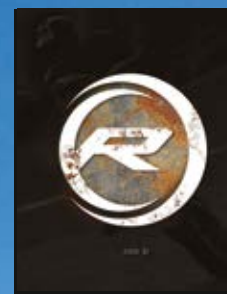
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RUST

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ISSUE #1

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...



ISSUE #2

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



ISSUE #3

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



ISSUE #4

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



ISSUE #5

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



ISSUE #6

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



ISSUE #7

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



ISSUE #8

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



ISSUE #9

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



ISSUE #10

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



ISSUE #11

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



ISSUE #12

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

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ISSUE #13
SWM returns! 10 reasons why you should buy a SuperTénéré. RUST do the Welsh – Part 1. Scott Prospect goggles, Chris Evans column and the first part of the Honda TLR project...



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



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



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



ISSUE #17
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...



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



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



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



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



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



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

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RUST Enduro

No one celebrates enduro quite like the Italians – and their national championships are probably the most prestigious and most high-profile in the world. Keen to experience the excitement for ourselves, RUST flew to the first round of the Assoluti d'Italia, held on one chilly February weekend...

**Forza
Italia!**

Words: Georgia Wells
Images: Massimo Di Trapani



DOES ANYONE EMBRACE and celebrate enduro more than the Italians? The French arguably run them close, but to anyone who's been to an Italian round of the World Enduro Championship there can be few comparisons. Few can match the fervor, the enthusiasm of the Italians. And it's not just the fans, but the organisers too. And when it comes to their domestic championship, here too they've taken the sport to the next level.

INTRODUCING THE ASSOLUTI D'ITALIA

For 2017, the enduro season the action really kicked off at the end of February, close to the Slovenian border in Lignano Sabbiadoro (*a seaside resort on the Adriatic coast*), with the first round of the Italian Enduro Championship – also known as the Assoluti d'Italia (*the very name itself meaning the 'Absolute of Italy', the best of the best!*). With each passing year the level in this championship seems to get higher, the tests more challenging, and the atmosphere ever wilder. And while Italian enduro is steeped in tradition, the organisers proved they can move with the times, creating a traditional timecard on the Saturday, and a GNCC style race on the Sunday.

Over the years the championship has attracted some of the biggest names in enduro with the likes of Antoine Meo, Mika Ahola, Johnny Aubert and Eero Remes all winning titles here. It has become almost as important to the teams for their rider to win an Italian title as the world championship. After all, many of






the top sponsors, from Acerbis to Airoh, are Italian, too. To this day the 'stranieri' or 'foreigners' class attracts some of enduro's finest talents. Unfortunately this year, thanks to EnduroGP's early start in formidable Finland, Lignano lacked a few top names as they were assiduously training in snowy Scandinavia. But Matt Phillips, Nathan Watson, Lars Enockl and EnduroGP newcomers Christophe Charlier, Daniel Sanders and Brad Freeman all made the trip to this special sand race.

THE ITALIAN WAY

Talent here is nurtured through a kind of schooling system that could do to be adopted the world over. The first step is for 14 year olds in the 'Cadet' class, running 50cc two-strokes (*the noise alone makes these kids worth sticking around for*). Then there is the Under 23/Senior championship, which has all the difficulty of the main championship, but allows the riders to build confidence before mixing it with the elite. And of course, at the top are the Assoluti.

Entry fees are kept low (*300€ for a season in the Under 23, 500€ in the Assoluti*) and riders are frequently talent-scouted by the Italian Federation, who support selected young competitors (*both male and female*) under the Team Italia banner,



providing them with help, money, and advice and placing them into races which will build their skills. The Federation will usually enter a Club Team at the ISDE containing up-and-coming riders, as a sort of shop window for the youth classes of the European and World enduro.

RACERS (MARSHALS & FANS) MARCH ON THEIR STOMACHS

As well as this sensible schooling system, the organisation in this championship puts its head and shoulders above most other national championships, and at times even shows up world-level racing. Information including the location of every test, the paddock, all the hotels and restaurants is made public months before the season begins and everything is kept within easy reach of the host town, with at least one test usually located just outside the

Matt Phillips



paddock allowing for teams and fans alike to keep track of the action. For 2017 the organisers have even created live video broadcasts of the action to complement their excellent live timing service. Press Officer Monica Mori explained: *"It was about time we started providing a live video feed, we must stay modern and keep developing the series."*

On top of all the practical measures, there's also plenty of room for the more 'homely' touches. At the vast majority of races a paddock restaurant is set up with a set price menu for marshals, fans, riders and teams, making for a great social hub in the middle of the paddock.

Food, drink, and festivities rank highly on the agenda. To the point that when it was time for the riders' briefing in Lignano, despite impending darkness and chilly rain, Course Inspector Mario Rinaldi (*also a four-time world champion*) joined the officials in the hospitality unit and offered glasses of prosecco and canapés to all comers.

DRAWING THE CROWDS

The excitement began to build on Friday night when fans gathered around parc ferme. Checking out all the new liveries and busily discussing their predictions, the air was already thick with anticipation and the feeling that winter's cobwebs were about to be well and truly blown away. In fact, a huge storm on Friday night didn't just blow away the cobwebs but also destroyed many of the banners and most of the tapes marking out the tests, meaning an extremely early start for organisers who had to re-mark the routes.



When you bear in mind that the enduro test took thirteen minutes to ride and two and a half hours to walk, it was a mammoth task undertaken with dedication to make this race work whatever the weather.

On race day morning, the riders in their bright new kit and squeaky boots, were quickly surrounded by fans of all ages desperate not only for a photo or an autograph but for the opportunity to wish their heroes good luck. Children presented their favourites with drawings they'd spent hours on, and were visibly overwhelmed when the likes of Matt Phillips gave them a high five. You can bet your bottom dollar that the majority of these kids are already tearing around on PW50s or ancient Malaguti Grizzlys back at home.

Down on the beach – the site of an enduro test and the following day's beach race – the crowds were gathering, eagerly anticipating

the arrival of the first rider and, as the sand started flying, the adrenaline rush felt by the supporters was plain to see; leaning over the tapes, fist pumping and yelling their lungs out. And the effects are long lasting, their grins and shouts only fading minutes after the riders had passed through. The superbly knowledgeable commentators would inform them: *"Here comes Matthew Phillips! The Sherco rider is the EnduroGP champion AND the E2 champion! This means he is the best in the world! The very best of the best! Are you ready?! He's on his way!"*

After his spectacular performance at Lignano Sabbiadoro last year, Nathan Watson has become a star in these parts. *"Number 91! This is the young Englishman! Nat-han Watsoooooon! The wizard who created magic on these very sands last year!"* You've just gotta love it.

HOW TEAM ITALIA PROP UP ENDURO GP

Without the Italian enthusiasm and support EnduroGP would be a very quiet place indeed.

Here's why:

- Among the managers of the paddock's top teams, three are former world champions: Fabio Farioli (KTM), Tullio Pellegrinelli (Honda), Pierfranco Muraglia (Beta Boano).
- And they are working alongside former top contenders Fabrizio Azzalin (Sherco), Fabrizio Dini (Beta), Simone Albergoni (Kawasaki), Alessandro Belometti (BBM Husqvarna), Franco Mayr (Zanardo Racing) and Luca Cherubini (TM).
- To be precise, 11 of the 18 main teams in World Enduro last year were Italian run. Without their desire and knowledge, could EnduroGP even function?

**Forza
Italia!**





MOTOS MAKE EVERYONE HAPPY

Saturday's main race saw the riders dart backwards and forwards between the cross test, some 4km from the paddock, and the enduro test on the beach adjacent to the paddock. The fans would hop onto scooters or pile into cars – sometimes up to eight people in one small hatchback! The police, who were facilitating the whole thing with road closures and traffic management, turned a blind eye of course! If the riders spotted a group of fans or friends on the liaison section heading to the tests, they'd often pop a wheelie or give it a few extra revs. There's a kind of joyousness about the whole occasion, and all this rowdy fun goes on without even the slightest complaint from the locals.

One resident, an hotelier, told RUST: *"In the summer this town is full of people and it is great and so busy. But in the winter it's so depressing, everything is closed and we miss the sunshine. Having the motos here makes everyone happy, it's more business for hotels and restaurants, and it makes us feel like our town is alive again."*

This is clearly a view shared by the local council, who gave over the entirety of the beach to the Italian Federation. During the summer months this 10km stretch of sand is one of the most popular tourist destinations in Italy, with rows and rows of sunloungers and pristine sands (*the name Sabbia d'oro means golden sands*) but for a couple of weeks in February they send in the diggers, creating two separate tests which spanned almost the entire length of the beach to rival Weston or Le Touquet!

6000+ SPECTATORS...

If a full day of racing wasn't enough on Saturday, once the riders had time for a shower (*that sand gets everywhere!*) and some spaghetti, it was back on the bikes for the night race. Over 6000 people showed up last year and in 2017 it was even bigger, with marshals struggling to contain fans who would only move back once a bike had been launched into them. Despite temperatures dropping to 0°C, the atmosphere was pure fire. With sand flying everywhere and carnage over virtually every log and rock garden, the fans – beer in hands and surrounded by their friends – were having a whale of a time. In the civilised fashion that you quickly become accustomed to in Italy, Sunday's race would not start at 8 or 9am but at 11am. After all, who wants to get up early after a night of partying?

What happened next was a beach race easily on a par France's legendary Le Touquet Enduropale, a mass start two-hour race on the sand, with three compulsory pit stops. Maurizio Micheluz, who finished third overall, participated in both Le Touquet and Lignano's endurance races and said there was no comparison: *"Uff! Le Touquet was so much harder! Horrible weather and much more pressure! This was just so much fun and with the sun out it didn't seem*





difficult to ride for two hours, even in the sand!"

Teams and riders simply accepted this new format, completely different to any other Italian Championship race day. They realised, in the name of progress, that this was an interesting and challenging way to test the skills of everyone from the old stagers to the youngsters. There is the feel here that the organisers know what they're doing, and everyone is happy to let them steer the championship whichever way they feel is best. *"This is good practice for the GNCC style race of the GP of Britain later in the season,"* was the sentiment echoed by much of the paddock.



RUST Enduro

TESTING TESTING 1-2, 1-2...

The Italian Championship is a testing ground, especially in its early rounds, a chance to weed out any mechanical gremlins which could later haunt the top riders on the world stage. That's something which, sadly, Sherco Factory Racing found out when Matt Phillips' bike was irreparably damaged on Saturday night's race, forcing him out of Day 2. And Honda RedMoto Racing suffered an electronic fault that saw Giacomo Redondi's previously perfectly reliable RF450 (it led him to win all but one race in EJ last season) grind to a halt. The reigning champion had to push the bike for 2km in the sand, his mechanic deciding to cut the chain off to make it easier to recover the bike.



■ 8 Time World and US National Champions



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Nathan Watson

But there are positives which come out of these 'learning' rounds too, as enduro newcomers impressed under tricky conditions, with British star Brad Freeman finishing in the top 13 overall both days, and KTM's new recruit Daniel Sanders, with his wild riding style, taking the fight to the top riders. French former world championship motocrosser Christophe Charlier also gave his rivals a thing or two to worry about as his pace on the beach saw him place second overall on both days. It's an exciting insight into the movers and shakers of EnduroGP for 2017, especially as around half the riders from the Assoluti d'Italia will be riding in EnduroGP this season.

CELEBRATION

The final podium ceremonies complete with champagne, flowers and huge shiny trophies were the perfect end to a weekend of superb racing all undertaken with a 'can do' attitude. And while Italian hero Simone Albergoni garnered the biggest cheers after taking eighth overall on Saturday and fourth



overall on Sunday less than a year after announcing his 'retirement' (the 36 year old is nine-times Italian Champion, three-times runner up in world enduro and has been on the international scene for 17 years) it was great to see the reception for Nathan Watson. The youngster from Nottingham has been a revelation in enduro since joining from motocross last year, and his clean sweep for the second year running in Lignano did not go unnoticed. As Watson helped his factory Farioli KTM team pack up their pits at the end of the weekend he was surrounded by Italian supporters who, far from being miffed that a 'foreigner' had beaten their countrymen on home soil, were full of admiration and respect, desperate for a selfie and keen to tell him he must "come back and do it again next year!"

And this, perhaps, is the key. This pure passion for every aspect of racing. And while fans are always keen for a fierce battle and flashes of brilliance, every effort from every rider from the cadets to the champions is encouraged. As soon as the engines start, the crowds will be ready to cheer, support, and truly enjoy themselves. Enduro is in their blood, and racing is their lifeline. And even if this is just one country, a couple of hundred riders and a few thousand spectators, while people like this exist in the world, there is hope for our sport across the globe.



**Forza
Italia!**



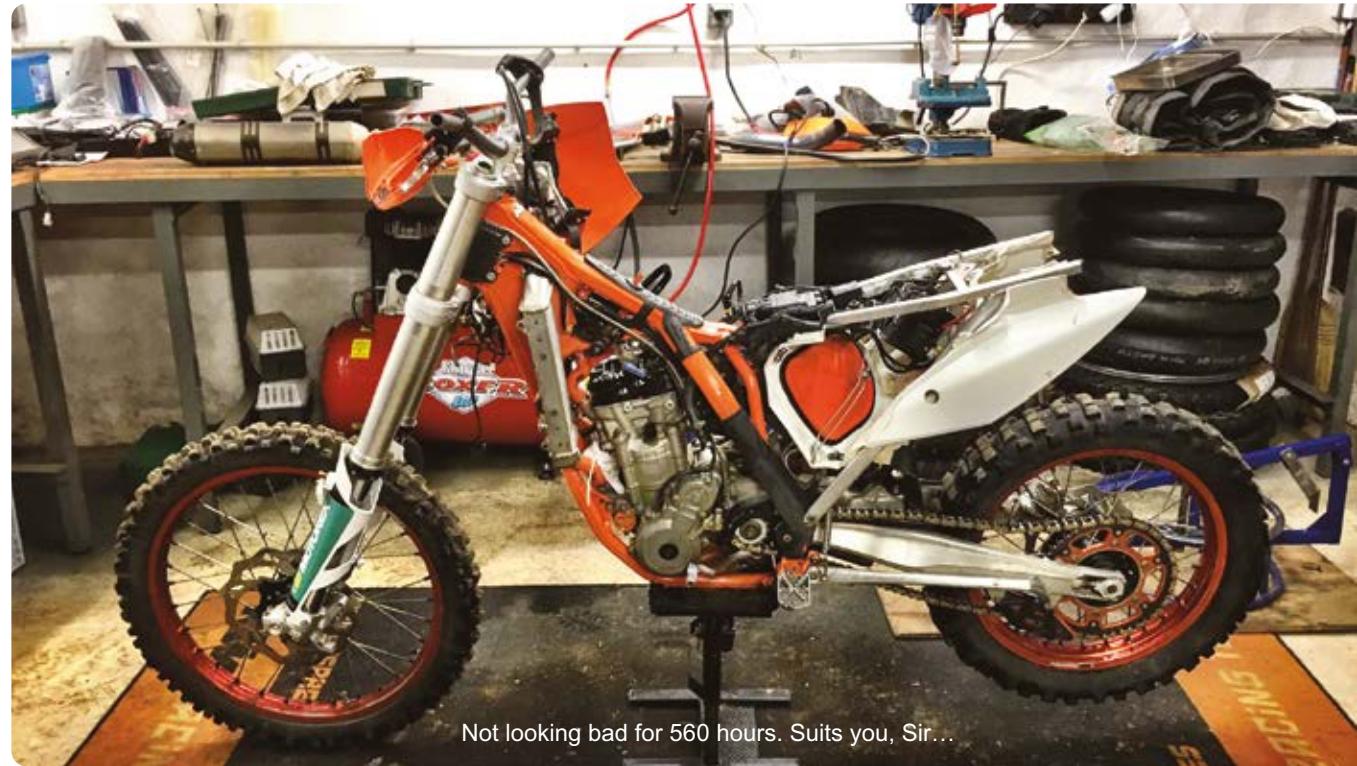
BRAND LOYALTY... AT ALL COSTS?

BY CHRIS EVANS,
PHOTOS: CHRIS EVANS

Chris Evans has let a new brand into the Sport Adventure enclave. It's only taken 20 years...

I'VE ALWAYS STRUGGLED when it comes to changing vehicles. Vans, cars and motorcycles, I simply keep them too long. The reasons are multiple. There's the cost for one thing. You can diminish that considerably by buying second hand but there's a big downside. It's been a while since I've bought a second hand vehicle in the UK and I remember it being reasonably straightforward, but in France it's a major hassle. In part this stems from the fact that, as George Bush famously put it, *'the problem with the French is that they have no word for entrepreneur'*. Basically they're just not very good at business and buying a second hand vehicle is a business transaction par excellence. So they are always advertising things that aren't what they seem, are in much worse condition than is stated or – biggest pain in the arse of them all – agreeing to sell you a bike and then changing their mind. The last time I tried to buy a KTM 350EXC this happened to me three times!

So I keep vehicles too long and my 2013 350EXC is a prime example. It now has 560 hours on it! It looks remarkably good given how much it's been ridden and it runs really well. The big question though is for how long?



Not looking bad for 560 hours. Suits you, Sir...

Which is why it is up for sale and why I've bought another bike to keep the 2016 350EXC company.

Now if I have problems changing vehicles, my attachment to brands is verging on the pathological. Virtually all the cars I've owned have been Alfas. They aren't particularly good cars and certainly nobody could accuse them of being reliable but I do like how they look. More importantly than that, I like and trust the garage where I take to get them serviced, and I am aware of and have suffered from most of the problems they are afflicted with – of which there are many. I'm even worse with vans, as I've only ever owned Renaults. My Master has just cost me two new injector bodies, a gearbox and a clutch – basically I kept it too long – but I wouldn't even consider buying any other brand. Where my brand loyalty really gets out of control though is with bikes. I bought my first KTM in 1998 to replace my much loved Yamaha WR200 and I hated it. It was a peaky bastard with a rock hard seat and suspension to match. Yet incredibly I traded it in almost immediately for another 200, this time the EGS (*slightly softer suspension, softer seat and*



Yeah, even with Chris's appalling photography we can see the attraction

premix) which I liked much more. So much so that I haven't owned another brand of motorcycle for almost 20 years!

Now there are good reasons why everybody buys KTMs. For a while there wasn't much of a choice and they are fantastically well put together. Not just in terms of fit and finish but in the way the Austrians have made them easy to work on. Plus the big bonus is that once you've worked on one you worked on them all. Two-stroke or four-stroke, big or small, the air filter goes in the same way, as do the side panels, the suspension, the wheels, basically everything. Which means that most of the parts are interchangeable. If you're doing the sort of hours I do in a year you need a big stock of spares and the fact that you can carry them over from one bike to the next is a major plus. Yet despite the fact that I know my way pretty well around a KTM and have a huge stock of spares for them, last Friday I turned traitor and bought a Yamaha WR250F. And to be honest I've been feeling a little faint ever since.

The trigger for this momentous change was the loan for a day of the very same model almost exactly a year ago. At first I didn't like it much. It felt very tall (*compared to my lowered 350*) and very revvy. But by the end of the day I was just in love with the thing. Mainly this was down to the way it handled. This is of course a very personal thing but to me at least the suspension felt

perfect, so comfy, and the bike so stable and reassuring. In fact I liked it so much that I even mentioned to JB that if RUST ever decided to get rid of its long term WR I'd definitely be interested, but when they came back to me a few months later with a very good price I turned them down. The fact that it was in the UK and registered in Guernsey was partly the reason for my inertia, but all the KTM spares I had in stock weighed heavily in the balance. And then this one came along. One year old, completely rebuilt (*even a new crank*) in the right country and at the right price. I took it out for a ride on Saturday and despite it chucking it down I had a ball. It was however as tall as I remembered, so Sunday I took the shock off to get it shortened – and struggled.

Now I don't know if it is because Yamahas are less workshop friendly than KTMs, or if it's just that I'm so used to working on them, but shock removal was far from plain sailing. For a start there are two seat bolts instead of one. Time doubled. In the end though I got the bugger out and hopefully the shorter shock combined with dropping the forks through the yokes a tad should allow me to get a big toe down without ruining the fabulous handling. It's either that or I'll have to invest in a pair of platform Alpinestars. Did I mention that I haven't worn any other brand of boots since...



Road-book Enduro Tours in France

DATES FOR 2017

22/23/24 March	Massif du Morvan
19/20/21 April	Cantal
7/8/9 June	Pyrenees
21/22/23 June	Lozerien Bis
6/7/8 Sept	Lozerien Bis
20/21/22 Sept	Pyrenees
4/5/6 Oct	Cantal
18/19/20 Oct	Dordogne
8/9/10 Nov	Massif du Morvan
15/16/17 Nov	Normandie



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Chris Evans, Sport Adventure,
44 Rue des Gravilliers,
75003 Paris, France.
Tel: 0033 662 487190

chris.evans@sport-adventure.com
www.sport-adventure.com



RUST Tested

Okay this bike is Italian not Spanish, but certainly it's a bike that could be a comfortable home for many a rider – especially the keen trail rider...

Words & Pics: Jon Bentman

**Mi Casa
es su Casa**

FANTIC/ENDURO CASA 250E





WHAT IS IT?

It's a brand new trail bike from Fantic, an Italian manufacturer reborn – not for the first time (see panel). Recently Fantic have been making 50s, 125s and 200cc trail bikes (*two-stroke and four-stroke – see RUST 17*) but now here we have a 250cc four-stroke, kind of a full size trail bike at last.

WHAT'S THE TECH?

The engine comes via Piaggio-Zongshen (we're pretty sure it also features in Zongshen's racy RC3 road bike), it's a water-cooled SOHC four-valve four-stroke single, pumping about 28hp. There's a six-speed gearbox to go-with. It's not fuel injected though (*which is a little curious as the RC3 is*).

The frame is new, being made of chrome-molybdenum steel and of a perimeter design (*older riders will recall Kawasaki KDX200s featuring such a design!*) with aluminium swingarm and subframe. Styling and detail is decidedly enduro – neat and slim – and the finished article is entirely contemporary, right down to its black-anodized rims. Suspension is Fantic branded (*made in-house?*) and of a trail rather than enduro spec – those forks are 41mm USD units, not 48s.

It's 100% road legal and fully Euro emissions compliant and yet weighs in at a super-commendable 104kg.

AND THE RIDE?

The 250E impresses immediately. Obviously it's very light, but when you sit on it the suspension doesn't immediately collapse, the way it can on some soft-spec'd trail bikes. It stays stood-up – albeit lower than your average enduro, the seat height is 915mm, not 950-970mm – and everything about it feels like a regular enduro, the way the bars, seat and pegs combine.

There is an ignition key, though, which is damn useful – something that's been dropped from most competition models these days (*making pub/bar/cafe and even tea room lunches a fractious matter for trail riders*) – and given this is a carbureted model it can need a bit of choke to start.

ON ROAD

The engine pulls well enough, there's some decent torque from low revs, but equally importantly the six-speed box is well-spaced and slick shifting. On the road it's actually quite adept. The test bike came with stock 14-tooth countershaft sprocket (*keen off-riders might seek to gear down with a 13T*) and got up to a highway limit of 60mph (100km/h) quite readily. In fact it was quite easy to stop at fifth gear thinking that was the top ratio, given it was pulling fairly low revs and making decent speed; so sixth could almost operate as an overdrive – much better than being short-geared and breathless.





Mi Casa
es su Casa

The motor sounded a little like an air-cooled motor (*making a metallic throb*) when cold, but once warmed-through became quieter and smoother. Its not a revver like the latest 250cc four-stroke racers, instead its best performance is to be found in the low-to-middle range, feeling more like a Honda XR250 of old than a KTM 250EXC-F – which is actually a good thing.

The Fantic held the road well, too, wasn't skittering at all, despite its light weight and enduro tyres. For daily commutes it would be quite adequate. The saddle was firm, enduro style, but surprisingly comfortable, quite possibly better than that found on Honda's CRF250L which is arguably too soft for longer journeys.

If there was a sense of wanting more in any aspect it was probably the brakes, both needed a fairly meaningful squeeze to get to maximum effect and the feel was a little wooden. Sometimes a very simple change in brake pad brand can make a big difference here, so it would be worth checking out alternative brake pad manufacturers.

OFF ROAD

The Fantic took to the off-road like a natural – as you'd expect. It's not going to chase down any modern enduro weapons, it has neither the power nor the suspension for that, but for regular trail riding at steady speeds it was spot-on.

It has quite a spacious cockpit for the standing rider and while at 1.82m (6'0") I'm



usually finding myself either stooped or cramped, on the Fantic there was enough space for a natural standing riding position while the bars were wide enough to allow a properly braced elbows-up stance.

Tight cornering was not quite on the money, though, not sure if that's due to the geometry or the Mitas front tyre (*maybe even the tyre pressure*). Most trail riders wouldn't have a problem here, but coming from razor-sharp enduro bikes there was a slight vagueness that was probably exacerbated by the tricky muddy conditions we found.

However, the Fantic revealed its chops in two particular challenges we encountered. The first was a wet chalk climb (*with steps*

Mi Casa
es su Casa





Mi Casa
essu **Casa**

created by wood planks) and here the Fantic tractored up the slippery terrain easily in second gear at low revs (*despite the tall gearing*). The second challenge was another climb, again on chalk, only much steeper and following deep narrow channels, footpeg high. We were down to first gear on this one, but again the engine displayed a real resistance to stall and would use its bottom end plonk to pull itself effortlessly to the top, giving the rider an easy time.

Bearing in mind the 90kg (200lb) rider, the suspension did a decent job, pitching somewhere near the upper end of trail quality (*not quite enduro tough*), but given this bike isn't intended to be ridden WFO through special tests, again it was fit for purpose.



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DISC GUARDS



SWINGARM GUARDS





THE DETAILS

The digital speedo was more than adequate and easy to read. The switchgear too was fine, simple but effective. The brake and clutch levers are a little lower-spec than enduro (*the clutch lacks a span adjuster*) but comfortable enough in use. It was neat to get hand guards as standard. Also, we like the mini indicators, the front ones are tucked neatly away and should stay well protected, the rear ones stand a definite chance of getting walloped, albeit are bendy enough to take a fair amount of abuse, but again are tidy enough not to offend and can aid safety in highway conditions.

The footpegs could stand to be just a little more aggressively serrated (*especially for riding in mud*) but again by typical trail standards are above average. The sidestand was spot-on, holding the bike fairly upright and then folding neatly away. A decent sump/bash plate would be handy though, if for no other reason than to protect the paint on the bottom frame rails.

To meet Euro emission laws there's a lot of extra plumbing (*check out the pipe coming from the exhaust header*) but to the Fantic's credit it performed strongly all the same – and there's scope to remove the emissions kit (*for competition use, naturally...*) and so release more horsepower. The exhaust, made by Arrow, is neat and just about quiet enough although where the connector pipe (*to the muffler*) makes a snake around the frame it can rub – and melt – your boot. Either a heat guard or alternative routing would help here.



Mi Casa
ESSU Casa



Click for video footage of the Fantic 250E Casa
www.youtube.com/watch?v=SEjSqECe6sA

THE VERDICT

The Fantic 250E makes a great impression on the rider. It's just a bit smaller than a competition enduro bike, but only fractionally, so it feels full-size while still helping the lesser-experienced (*or smaller*) rider by way of its lower seat height and modest weight. And it can go everywhere, the power is more than adequate and the chassis can deal with serious terrain easily.

As well the Fantic exudes both a sense of quality and, even, character. The motor grows on you and it can become a comfortable companion, you get to know where it's happiest, where it performs best – and that's exactly where it should be for comfortable trail riding. You want to relax and enjoy the nature, you want the bike to simply get along with its job letting you enjoy the rest – the Fantic does that. And so you get to like it. We had a full-on competition enduro bike for company on our

Mi Casa
es su Casa





Mi Casa
es su Casa

The Fantic 250ER Competition comes with 28mm Fat Bars, and Fantic FRS adjustable front and rear suspension



extended test ride, but at no point did we want to swap, the Fantic fully satisfies.

So, at £4499 in the UK the Fantic Enduro Casa 250E is pitched quite clearly against Honda's £4649 CRF250L. The Fantic offers an alternative mix, though. The Honda we'd suggest offers a 60% road 40% off-road blend whereas the Fantic is probably about 25% road 75% off-road.

That's the theory. However, we have to give the Fantic extra points for performing very strongly on-road, the stock gearing allows it to travel at decent speeds quite easily and the ride position is both natural and sustainable – the saddle is pretty decent.

However, in the CRF's defence, the Fantic's motor isn't quite as smooth and sophisticated as the Honda's fuel-injected DOHC unit and as

RUST Tested

The Fantic 250E Casa shown here in the second red/bue/white colourway...



well as lacking a lockable fuel cap it is a little more rudimentary about some of its details. And looking so much like a competition dirt bike we'd be taking serious extra measures to stop the light fingered making off with it. It's not something we'd leave parked in the street overnight!

But for those who find the Honda a little wanting in off-road conditions the Fantic definitely answers to their needs. Its claimed weight is a whopping 40kg less than the Honda and this makes for a vast difference when you're trying to manhandle the bike through tricky going. And the power on the Fantic feels just that little more off-road suitable, with decidedly more oomph off the bottom. The geometry and the ride ergonomics are also a much better fit for trail work. In all the Fantic is a cracking job, offering most



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of the off-road benefits of an enduro bike, but matched to an easy-going old school kind of motor that suits the cruise mode we really should be adopting when trail riding. It'll suit (*should we go there?*) young bucks coming up and old dudes who want the off-road agility of a competition enduro bike but without the revhound racy nature of modern four-stroke racing engines. In all, it's a well-rounded package and spot-on for the job of trail riding. Nicely done, indeed.

FANTIC 250E CASA

Specifications

Engine: Liquid cooled SOHC four-valve single cylinder four-stroke

Displacement: 249.6cc

Bore & stroke: 77 x 53.6mm

Max Power: 20.6kW (28CV) @ 9000rpm

Max Torque: 22.5Nm @ 7000rpm

Carburetor: KEIMA ø36

Starter: Electric & kick

Transmission: Six-speed gearbox, wet multiplate clutch

Frame: Perimeter steel CroMo with aluminium subframe

Front suspension: FANTIC FRS ø41mm upside down

Rear suspension: FANTIC FRS, aluminium swingarm with progressive link

Tyres: 90/90x21 - 120/80x18

Wheels: Black anodized aluminum

Brakes: Front disc "Wave" ø260mm -

Rear disc "Wave" ø220mm

Seat height: 915mm

Wheelbase: 1420mm

Length: 2100mm

Weight: 104kg

Fuel capacity: 7.5 l

Colours: red/white/blue or black

Contact: www.fanticmotor.it / www.fanticmotoruk.com

UK price: £4499.00 (Casa) £4899 (Competition)



Remember these?



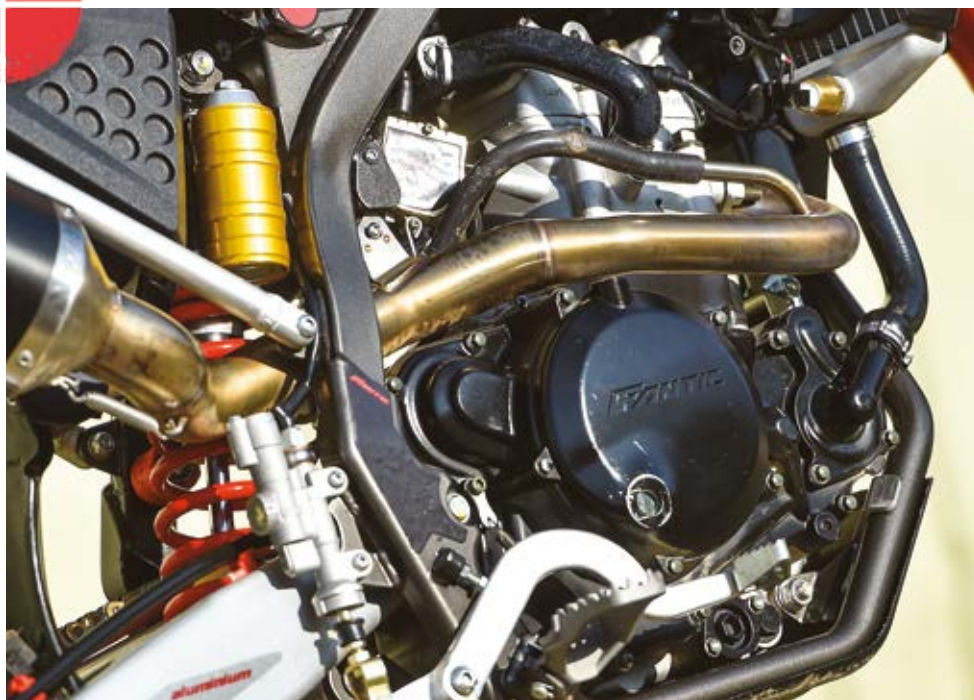
FANTIC

The second, and third, coming...

Editor JB had a Fantic 200 Trials back in the mid 1980s. It was an awesome clubman trials bike; along with the 240 Professional it helped make Fantic the trials bike of choice for the decade – a situation underlined by Thierry Michaud's back-to-back world championships in 1985, '86 and '87. The Fantic trials bikes were well built, seriously robust and very competitive. You find a bike like that and you'll remember it forever, for all the right reasons.

Fantic were on top of their game in the early 1980s. The company was born in 1968, created by Mario Agrati formerly of Garelli. Initially concentrating on enduro but then diversifying into street and trials, the firm was





producing up to 50,000 units a year at their peak. Sadly they lost their grip, the street market withered and Fantic were beaten by better-developed bikes in both trials and enduro. The firm limped along until declaring bankruptcy in 1998 – a sad way to mark a 30th anniversary.

However, the brand was revived in 2003 when two former Caballero-riding enduro enthusiasts bought up the name and restarted motorcycle production in new premises near Treviso in Northern Italy. New owners Federico Fregnan and Massimo Bianchi had fortunes made in coffee machine and keys (respectively) but were keen to bring back the marque that defined their youth. Again connecting with the Minarelli engine manufacturer to create a new line of Caballero lightweight two-stroke enduros, the firm again created 50 and 125cc machines and using a Gas Gas motor would even create a 300cc two-stroke enduro, raced competitively in European and World enduro.

Some 11 years later, in 2014, the firm found new owners again, in VeNetWork, a consortium of successful businessmen from North Eastern Italy who invest in and apply managerial input into local industry of merit. VeNetWork installed Mariano Roman, formerly a technical director at Aprilia and Moto Guzzi as the director at Fantic. Roman's leadership has thus far seen the creation of this new 250cc trail bike while later this year we'll see a range of retro street scrambler machines, of course named Caballero...

Video



RUST

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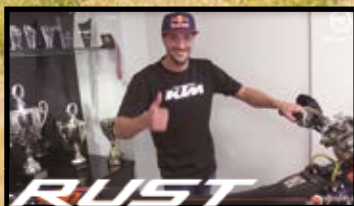
To view any of these videos just click on the link below the
thumbnail to go direct to the Rust Sports youtube channel...



www.youtube.com/watch?v=SEjSqECe6sA

FIRST RIDE OF THE BRAND NEW FANTIC 250 CASA

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



www.youtube.com/watch?v=gJPCcPFgXT8

WE TALK TO SAM SUNDERLAND 2017 DAKAR RALLY WINNER!

JB asks Sam to show us around his KTM 450 Rally giving some insight into the workings of a modern long distance rally bike...



www.youtube.com/watch?v=uL7_ebar560

WE GET TO RIDE THE 2017 SHERCO 300 SEF-R

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



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

THE FINAL ROUND OF THE 2016 R3 RALLY RAID CHAMPIONSHIP

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



www.youtube.com/watch?v=zLdKBsgq8d4

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...



www.youtube.com/watch?v=xH0E2Ra1TL4

2016 Welsh Two Day Enduro

THE MOVIE – RUST rode the Welsh and lived to tell the tale... just. The trials and the tribulations all here, in glorious colour. Enjoy...



www.youtube.com/watch?v=7_EGuentg3s

2017 HUSQVARNA Range Launch

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



www.youtube.com/watch?v=RwK49cZ4yvs

2017 BETA Range Launch

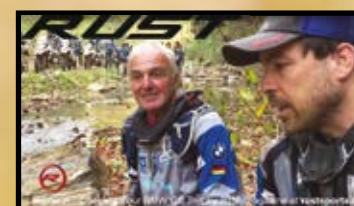
The 2017 Beta enduro bikes, ridden and rated by RUST's Jon Bentman... Check out the full review in the 2017 Beta Special Edition at rustsports.com.



www.youtube.com/watch?v=a0K02x9reLQ

2017 KTM Range Launch

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



www.youtube.com/watch?v=mVYqp3biTnc

2016 BMW GS TROPHY THAILAND

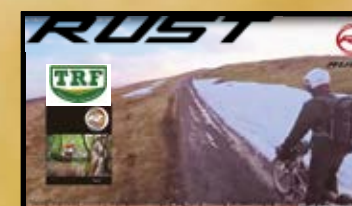
Montage of scenes from the South-East Asia GS Trophy featuring comments from Kurt Yaeger, Tom Wolf and our man Jon Bentman...



www.youtube.com/watch?v=QrOoVPEKiE

JONNY WALKER INTERVIEW

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



www.youtube.com/watch?v=HQBn2qbfpY

THE TRAIL RIDERS FELLOWSHIP

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



www.youtube.com/watch?v=L8ePyJ2E4M

2016 V-STROM 650XT

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



www.youtube.com/watch?v=yriJw_FU910

2016 YAMAHA WR450F

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



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

2016 HUSQVARNA 701

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



www.youtube.com/watch?v=9oHMTpB0RNw

2016 HONDA AFRICA TWIN

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



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

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=ntK07I63tuA

HONDA CB500X ADVENTURE

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


RUST Tested

ON TEST NOW...

SOLE TRADERS

With over 30 issues now done and dusted (*that's 24 plus 7 specials*) RUST has been putting some hours in on our long termers, plus test riding and on various adventures. Throughout all of that, we've been wearing these boots. And this is how we rate them...





RUST Tested

FORMA DOMINATOR COMP 2

THIS IS AN awesome boot. I've had this pair for at least four years now and love the fit and feel so much I reserve them for special occasions. Example: with a 21-day adventure ride across the outback of Australia to contemplate I chose these – and was very happy I did.

The Dominator is a great boot, not because it brings anything new or edgy to the boot party, but because it's simply a solid boot beautifully made. It's 100% European made and I guess it's made by hand, by people long in the job. The way it fits so well to my foot, ankle and calf is sublime and although these are the same weight as my Alpinestars (*all up 4kg the pair*) the Dominators feel lighter because they fit so well. The inner bootie comes with gel inserts around the ankle and these mean the 'pivot flex control system' (*ankle hinge*) doesn't rub. The alloy buckle system has been upgraded in the latest Comp 2.0 and just as well, the system on mine work well but are a touch sharp on the fingers and when stiff with dirt can cause some mild pain to secure or release. That's been my only complaint.

They're lasting well too, helped by me keeping them for special occasions, of course. But my feet have taken some blows in these boots and I've not seen so much as a bruise to show for it.

In short: great quality, great fit, all-day comfortable, highly protective and good looking too. And yes I'd have another pair, no question. Not that this pair are going to be pensioned-off any day soon. **JB**

RUST rating: ★★★★★

Typical pricing: US \$278 (UK £259.99)

www.formaboos.com
www.formaboosusa.com
www.apico.co.uk



RUST Tested

ALPINESTARS TECH 7

WHAT I LIKE about the Tech 7s is the simplicity, there's no inner bootie, no pivot, nothing fancy, just a boot. Of course they are fancy – Alpinestars developed an injection moulding process to make this boot (*and others in the range*), that offers a dual compound foot shell that also integrates a toe protector and steel shank. They've thought about ease of use too, so the boot opens wide to allow easy getting on and off. Then there's stuff we struggle to visualize, like a TPU (*what?*) ankle protection system incorporating a biomechanical link between middle and bottom sections. Well, apparently TPU is a form of plastic, while biomechanical pertains to the structure and movement of living organisms. Yeah, fancy stuff.

But do I like the Tech 7s to wear? Pretty much. They are indeed a no-nonsense boot and the moulding of them gives them something of a moon boot feel, they are soft and yielding and yes are comfortable for long periods. However, the lining, which is also moderately padded, does hold water and so they do take some drying out (*longer than the Formas*) which makes them a soggy proposition at times. ►

www.alpinestars.com



RUST Tested

**ALPINESTARS
TECH 7**



And they lack the precision feel of a handmade boot. So I like them, but I can't love them. They should be cheaper than they are, too. The latest alloy buckles work well at least, I like those a lot. Overall a good boot, certainly, but not great. **JB**

RUST rating: ★★ ★

Typical pricing: US \$349.99 (UK £319.99)



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RUST Tested

ALPINESTARS TECH 8

THE TECH 8 DESERVES its own Wikipedia page, it's been around long enough. Heck I recall Ricky Carmichael kicking around in these as long ago as 2000 (*yeah, 17 years ago!*) – it's been one remarkable run.

The reason they've been around so long, though, is because they are so good, for me these are still the standout boot in the Alpinestars range – better than the top of the line Tech 10 for my money.

It's probably because they're made the old fashioned way, with the stitched sole, and because the toe section is that much slimmer (*than the injection moulded boots*) which makes them that bit more tactile in use – and there's a fit and finish to these boots that puts them in the top echelon.

The latest version, the RSs, introduced in 2015, come with the latest alloy buckle design – which is a vast improvement on A-stars' old buckles which would jam given the slightest bit of dirt – and a full bootie (*where before there was just a sole and a couple of ankle pads*).

Comfort is very good, although the slim insole – which aids feel – means they're not necessarily a choice as an all day boot. For enduro great, but for 10 hours or more (*adventure riding*) they lack a little padding. ►

Alpinestars – Roger De Coster wore them

Alpinestars started in 1963, making hiking and skiing boots. The name derives from Stella Alpina a flower found in the mountains close to Asolo, where A-stars still live. Founded by Sante Mazzarolo, the company is still family owned, being run by his son, Gabriele.

Sante worked with five-time world champion Roger De Coster to create their first motocross boot. Today A-stars have branched out into all manner of sporting protective equipment, although motorcycle racing remains core to the brand.





RUST Tested

As said, feel is also excellent and details like the rubber (sorry, soft polymer) gaiter around the top of the boot speak of considered design. And yes, I'd have another pair when these ones are done. **JB**

RUST rating: ★★★★★
Typical pricing:
US \$499.95
UK £349.99

ALPINESTARS
TECH 8



Special Issues

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



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Test of the new Husqvarna 701 Enduro and 701 Supertmoto



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



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



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



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



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



RUST



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RUST Tested

SIDI CROSSFIRE SRS 2

I HAVE BEEN putting my feet into Sidi boots for over 25 years and outside of dabbling with some Axo Turbo Plus boots so long ago that they're now described as vintage I have been brand loyal to Sidi boots forever. And in my opinion for very good reason.

Before my current sets (*yes I have FOUR pairs*) of Crossfire SRS 2s I had the Crossfire TAs which I loved, although my size 45s were a little wide. The revised fit of the SRS 2s are slimmer internally and externally due to the way the new sole is attached and now I'm 100% satisfied.

In my opinion the SRS 2s offer the most comprehensive protection available in off-road boots today. This is especially true when your foot is thrown back or ripped from the pegs by scrub, rocks or pretty much anything. The pivot ankle allows the foot to rotate comfortably while remaining rigid enough in the vertical plane and still offering feel, grip and response at the pegs. The slim construction of this boot also gives you an unrestricted inside and outside feel when steering the bike with your legs. ▶



SIDI – Joel Robert wore them

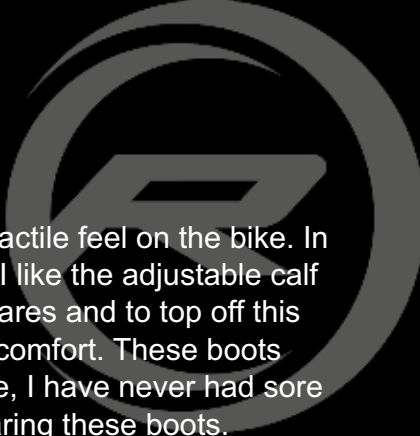
SIDI began in 1960 and was named from the first two letters of the founders name and surname, reversed. Dino Signori. Sidi were also mountain footwear specialists to begin with, but soon specialized in cycle and motorcycle footwear and still are to this day.

Dino worked with five-time world champion Joel Robert to create their first motocross boot, sold in the USA under the Full Bore brand name.





RUST Tested



The SRS 2s are slim, lightweight and have a very tactile feel on the bike. In fact they fit like a good Italian boot is expected to fit. I like the adjustable calf tabs, the interchangeable soles, the availability of spares and to top off this glowing praise the pièce de résistance for me is the comfort. These boots were made for spending hours if not days on the bike, I have never had sore feet or in fact any irritation at all anywhere when wearing these boots.

In short the only thing in my opinion that may beat these SRS 2s are the new SRS 3s (*that just been delivered to the RUST HQ*). The new boots will have a lot to live up to. I can't wait to try them out. **WM**

RUST rating: ★★★★★

Typical pricing: US \$545.00 (UK £394.99)



SIDI
CROSSFIRE SRS 2



SIDI
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ADJUSTABLE
CALF SYSTEM

MICRO ADJUSTABLE
AND REPLACEABLE
BUCKLE SYSTEM


REPLACEABLE
SHIN PLATE

HYPER EXTENSION
BLOCK SYSTEM

SRS DOVETAIL
SOLE

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RUST Tested

RAPTOR TITANIUM FOOTPEGS

Supplied by
www.raptortitanium.com
Raptor Enduro Footpegs
£209.00



What are they?

Super-trick footpegs – made from aerospace-grade 6al-4v sheet titanium (4mm thick), Tig welded, 57mm wide, weighing under 500g for the pair. Covered by a two-year warranty. Used by many top professional riders, including Ryan Dungey. Our 'pegs are the ones made 5mm down and 5mm back from the standard position (as used by Jonny Walker).

How do they rate?

Warren M.: I've had these pegs on my Husky for over a year now and they still look like new, they haven't worn, they haven't sagged, are still sharp and honestly they are Terminator strong! Together with a Husky high seat they've helped transform the TE300 for me, totally opening out the 'cockpit' area of the bike – these and that high seat have made the biggest difference of all the mods for me on this bike. The boot-to-peg grip with these foot pegs is brilliant while the width means they stay comfortable as there's so much support. They are indeed pricey, but they are undoubtedly one of the best pegs on the market – just as ask Dungey!

Rating: ★★★★★





FASTWAY FLAK SHIELDS

Supplied by www.fastwayperformance.com
Fastway Flak Shields \$49.99

What are they?

Hand guards are what they are; the shields are made from flexible plastic, while the mounting brackets are made from robust billet aluminium. Handily you can buy the parts separately, which can make replacement after breakage that bit cheaper. There's a good array of colours too, to match just about all brands.





RUST Tested

FASTWAY
FLAK SHIELDS

How do they rate?

Warren M.: Here's another product I rate highly. These are strong enough and big enough to effortlessly brush away roost and branches without being so big as to act like proverbial barn doors. Together with the ARC flexible levers they offer enough protection and security that I'm of the opinion full wrap-around bush guards are no longer needed. By the way, I crash fairly often (!) so I can tell you they've been given regular workouts. Recently I crashed so hard as to bend the handlebar mounting bolts, but the Fastways just shrugged the crash off. The quality is excellent. Love them!

Rating: ★★★★★



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RUST Tested



DIRT TRICKS SPROCKETS

Supplied by www.dirttricks.com
Husqvarna Zirconium rear sprocket \$119.75

What are they?

Ultra lightweight, yet extremely durable sprocket, made from chromoly steel which is heat treated, nickel/chrome or zirconium plated and laser etched, made to a minimalist design so as to weigh just 16-18oz. Dirt Tricks researched aerospace steels, heat treatments and applied stress analysis before settling on the materials and design.

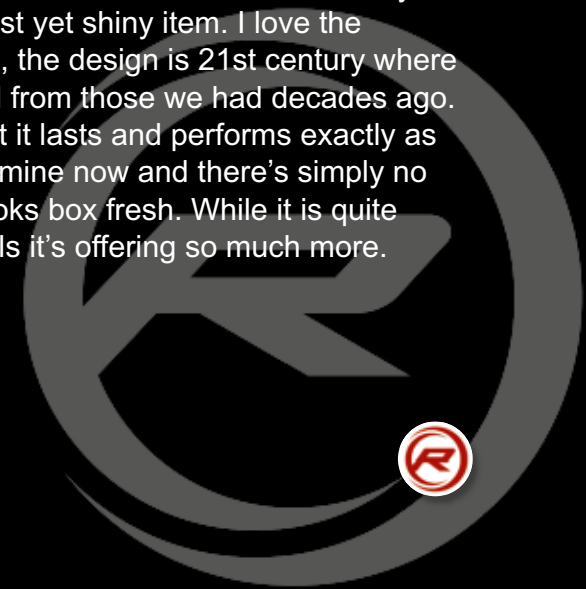
These sprockets are designed to match alloy sprockets for weight, but last a full season of hard riding.



How do they rate?

Warren M.: I have the zirconium plated version of the Dirt Tricks sprocket, which is 2oz lighter even than their standard superlight sprocket, while the zirconium coating allows 50% less friction and adds even more durability. The finish is all-bling too, this is a minimalist yet shiny item. I love the advanced thinking behind these sprockets, the design is 21st century where I see most other sprockets are unchanged from those we had decades ago. The sprocket looks trick because it is – but it lasts and performs exactly as Dirt Tricks say. I've done a lot of hours on mine now and there's simply no visible sign of wear and the coating still looks box fresh. While it is quite a lot more expensive than most of the rivals it's offering so much more. Just excellent!

Rating: ★★★★★





RUST Tested

FASTWAY LINKAGE GUARD



Supplied by www.fastwayperformance.com
Fastway Husqvarna Linkage Guard €299.95

What is it?

.....

A replacement for the stock linkage but with the added benefit of an integral guard that means the linkage and bottom shock mount don't take direct blows where you might be dragging over rocks or logs. As well there's adjustability in the linkage by way of alternative inserts for the front link. Machined from 6061 aluminium, the linkage guard was developed in conjunction with Stillwell Performance.

How does it rate?

.....

Warren M.: The protection is excellent, the guard is virtually indestructible and there's no more snagging on logs or rocks – in fact I've never jammed on anything with the linkage guard fitted. The options on the inserts work well too. I ran standard for the Welsh Two Day, all good there. I then ran a 2mm insert for the R3 rally which lent more stability for the faster going. This setting has other effects too, as it effectively lowers the seat height by half an inch and by way of altering the linkage ratio it stiffens the initial stroke on the shock too. One kind of offsets the other there. Unfortunately you can't use the inserts to jack up the rear, which would be a neat option. Overall though, it's the peace of mind that the guard brings that makes it worth its money for me.

Rating: ★★★★★



In this second instalment of their
Trans American Trail tale, the intrepid
Kiwis go from rocky wilderness to
verdant Pacific coastline...

Best Part 2 Western



Story & pics: Chris Stephens





Best 
Western

CANYONLAND. The name sounds like a wild west themepark, and in some ways it is. This vast (*national*) park's rollercoasters are the trails which wend their way up, down, and around through almost 1400 square kilometres of stunning rocky canyon-scarred scenery.

It was a crispy-cold early morning when we headed off to explore the White Rim Loop. The frost soon melted away into a 40+ degree day as we looped around the rim of two canyons created by the Colorado and Green rivers. There were no shortcuts. Once committed it was a 140-mile loop without a Coke machine in sight. The views were stunning and it was a real credit to the nation's encouragement of controlled vehicular access to its heartland treasure. The National Parks can be accessed by licensed vehicles and in some designated areas by OHVs (*Off Highway Vehicles - quads etc*). Anyone can go out and have a good time



Special fuel bladders are all well and good, but you need to make sure they're strapped on securely...



RUST Adventure



provided they stick strictly to the track! One of the team parked his bike off-track and when a ranger came along he insisted that we brush the bike's tracks away. He was pleasant enough but something told us a second warning wasn't an option.

This level of access also takes a compliant public, of course, and nowhere did we see stray 4x4 or motorcycle tracks stretching away up hills as we've no doubt all seen throughout the world. I wonder how our own authorities and the New Zealand public could partner conservation with access-for-all, instead of locked gates.

The White Rim Trail had been a big day and so we had a late departure the following day, finishing up in Green River township via the fascinating Gemini Bridges trail, which features a spectacular twin-arch natural rock bridge.

There are a couple of truly epic days on this ride - long but also more continuously off-road and technical, with long sandy or rocky floored canyons. Green River to Richfield was just such a day.







Knowing we'd run a slower average speed dictated an early start (*our 'Sargent Schultz' Terry ensured this*), a packed lunch, plenty of water and some precautionary extra fuel which we carried in special bladders. The trail loosely followed the I-70 interstate, though at various points it felt 100 miles away from it. It was one of my favourite stretches, a proper adventure.

Along with the technical trails, the day featured some great fast tracks too, where the 690s could be drifted out of long sweeping curves. And at times we perhaps got a little carried away. You see, it apparently rains in the desert, something evidenced by the occasional washout. And at one particularly butt-clenching dip Tony found himself in that horrible no-man's-land: too slow to make a good jump of it but too fast to keep things pretty. A heavy fall silenced someone not usually short of a word or two, and his ribs taunted him for a good week later.

After a long day we finally made it to Richfield and the special fuel bladders had allowed us to skip a scheduled detour for gas.





Paper Trails

We ditched the TAT paper route sheets on day one. Months before the trip I had studied the TAT maps and plotted the trail, and our various diversions, onto a GPS. The accuracy and certainty of the technology made our ride flow quickly and hassle-free. I figured if God made Garmin why not use it. And if you think route sheets will get you there easier, well, there's a Flat Earth Society branch that meet every blue moon at Bull Canyon Ranch. But you'll need a GPS to find it... In Google Earth you can zoom-in and see the tracks where the roads finish and these can be 'pathed' and converted to GPS language as a track. It's some effort but it's rewarding when it all works and points you in the right direction at a fork at the bottom of Eagle Canyon.



The Silver State

The Nevada border was still a day away and it was a very mixed bag of riding. We hit some trees again, (*not literally obviously...*) and some singletrack I had spied on Google Earth, before covering gravel roads at 65mph up one endless valley and into the next. We made it to the Border Inn by mid-afternoon, which proved perfect to fit in some fettling.

Now, it's called the Border Inn for a good reason. The rustic little motel unit is in Utah yet as I serviced my bike the sun cast its shadow into Nevada. Air filters that were washed in Nevada, dried in Utah. And while we slept in Utah we dined in Nevada. Which is all very well but with a one-hour time difference between the two states (*Utah being mountain time, Nevada pacific time*) things could easily get a little complicated.

We didn't meet many Americans out on the trail until we circled the wagons for the evening. And when we did we found them friendly and interesting.





Over drinks (*of course the bar is in Nevada*) we struck up conversations with the locals and three Texans working there on construction. I will never forget how one fellow sounded just like Tow-Mater from the movie Cars. This truly was Radiator Springs, Carburettor County...

Poor old Nevada suffers from a touch of nada. At times there's just nothing, zilch. The countryside is greyed with low sagebrush vegetation and there aren't many significant features. Still, I was on a motorcycle and gobbling up dirt roads taking in the vastness, so I was happy. Some of the roads were barely two wheel marks through the encroaching sage and there were a few Taranaki gates (*a basic wire and batten gate*), so it was reassuring having the GPS to follow.

At a small junction in the back of beyond we found a trailer (*caravan*) parked-up with horses, dogs, and some more friendly Americans. Bearded Bill Massie and his wife Carroll introduced themselves and explained what fun they were having out there in the middle of nowhere. For 20 years the pair had visited this area to be part of the annual re-enactment of the pony express from Missouri to Sacramento. Dating back to 1860, a letter then would cost you \$5 - a tankbag full of money at the time, no wonder it



Best Western





Best Western 



was replaced by telegraph, telephone, and internet! When the time came Bill would saddle-up and, in relay with about 100 other horse riders, ensure that the mail got through.

As we rode through various derelict ranches I realised how hard it must have been to pioneer this land and to make a go of it. Their endeavours sat sadly weathering away in the baking sun. Now it seemed only gold mining and oil fracking brought people out onto this land.

There was one more epic day to do before Oregon, a more isolated and longer ride than we were used to. Essentially, because of accommodation constraints, we joined two days into one real humdinger. It was an early start and we hit a lot of different terrain, including some narrow tracks with white talcum powder-like-dust that squeaked on your tyres which, once stirred, hung in the hot Nevada air. There was no chance of waiting for it to settle and the wind wasn't obliging in blowing it away. Again, the scenery was littered with much evidence of abandoned endeavour yet this place had a





RUST Adventure

Best 
Western




beauty in its vastness, not to mention huge skies. Antelope enjoy the Sheldon National Wildlife Refuge here and a herd of 100 running alongside was quite a sight.

Real 'Gon Kids

We had an inkling that Oregon was near as a range of forest appeared, rising up quite abruptly after we crossed the border of Nevada and the extreme northern tip of California. From Lakeview to the coast we travelled only on forest trails and roads.

The bikes had enjoyed Colorado, survived Utah and endured Nevada, and it felt like Oregon would offer some respite for the machinery. We'd had only two punctures (*score Grant 2, the rest 0*) and swapped to fresh rubber back at Battle Mountain. Twice a day Scott (*our 'Scott-oiler'*) had been charged with chain-lubing duties and



Best Western 



we'd barely touched our chain adjusters. To top it all, there'd been just one withdrawal made from the group parts bin: a single headlight bulb. Sure, there'd been the odd spill and thrill, but the bikes did their job in a very rewarding way.

Despite the forest it was still quite warm but thankfully shaded. In another day we would feel the coolness of the sea breeze hitting land. The forests were beautiful in their own way but gone were the long views. At any ridge, we would scan for a glimpse of the Pacific ocean but it was to tease us and only show itself right at the very end.

The riding was fast at times but the bikes were tested with fallen logs and debris, and some surprisingly overgrown trails. It seemed as if there

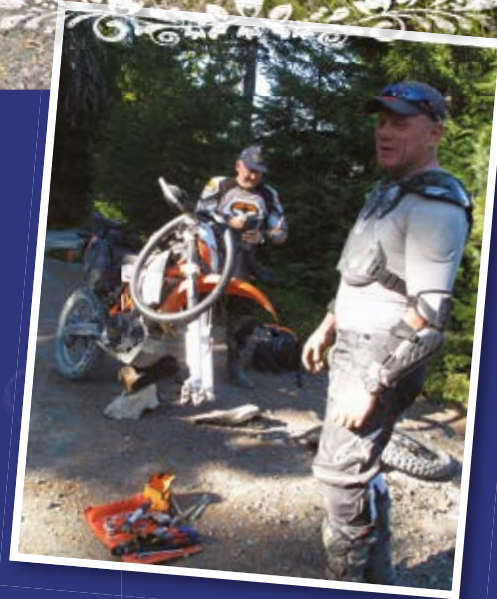




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Western

was an attempt to close down the lesser roads despite being 'grandfathered' as permanent. This became a test of a little Kiwi's forest skills and, with the navigational prep paying off, we picked our way successfully through some tricky parts of Oregon. (*The TAT route has since been changed and unfortunately now bypasses our forest adventure.*)

If something was going to go wrong on this trip it usually happened late afternoon, just when we had mentally programmed-in the end of the day and minds were already in the shower. Barely 20 miles from the coast (*not that we'd seen it yet*)

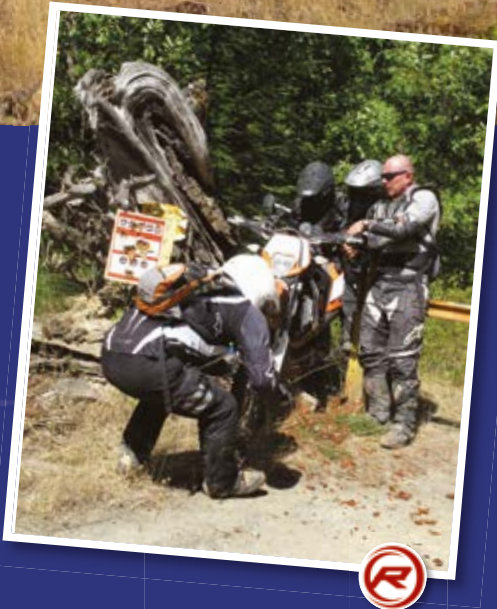




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Tony suffered a flat front tyre and the group congregated back around his bike just in time to see him pinch-puncture his last tube against a tyre lever. Unbelievably, the other two tubes we were carrying had holes chafed in them from a wayward tool. And worse still, a change of kit for the day meant that the only tube repair kit we'd been carrying with us was tucked neatly away in the support vehicle that was, by now, waiting for us on the coast.

Thinking that Tony might simply have to ride on the flat tyre, we ran into our last bunch of



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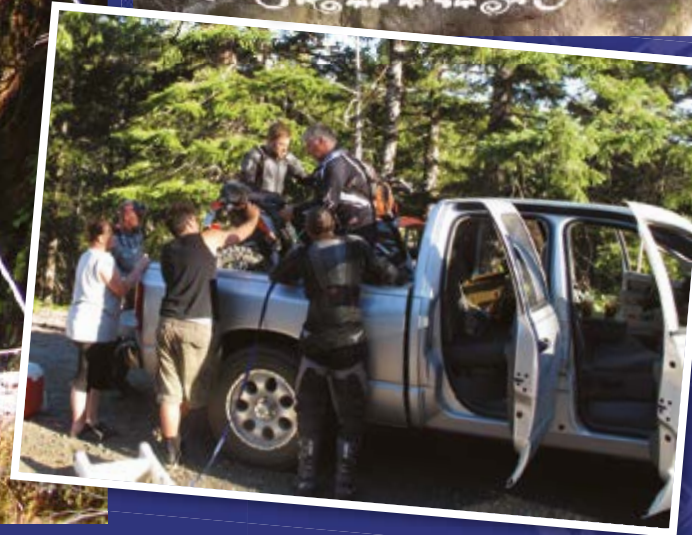


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friendly Americans on the trail. Their Dodge pick-up rumbled towards us from another track and it turned out the family had been digging for gold in the hills. The whisky and ice in their cup holders suggested they were heading home, though it was soon evident these weren't their first of the day. And Junior looked pretty happy nursing the chilly-bin in the back too. It would've been easy to judge

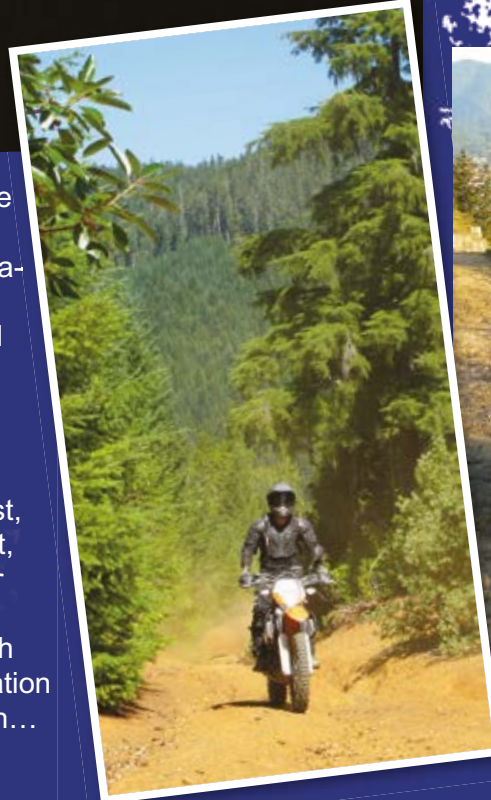
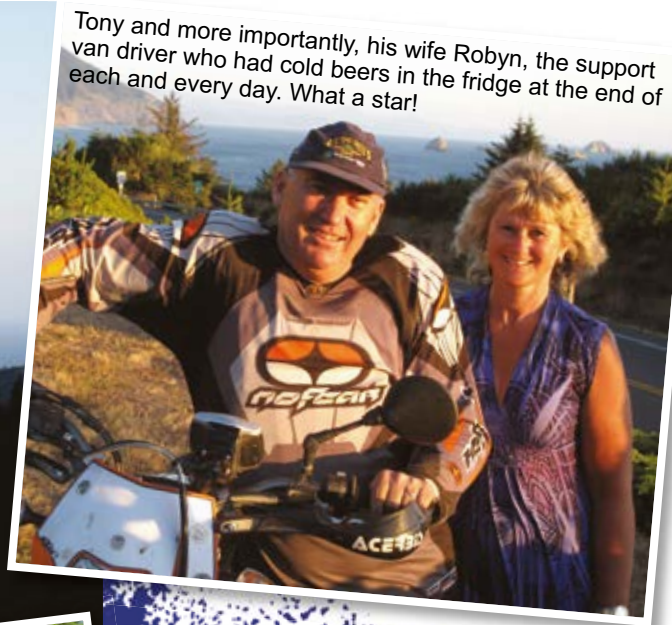
Best Western

this book by its cover, and the 'Clampetts' quickly came to mind, but we gratefully loaded Tony's bike onto the truck. Now old Jed could see the funny side of the situation and as the pick-up rumbled off down to Port Orford with Tony and his bike he shouted out to us *'thanks for the bike y'all!'*

We could follow Tony or we could finish the trail. As everyone looked around, it was apparent that whatever fate awaited Tony, he was on his own!

The sun was turning golden as we finally hit the coast, and the sea only appeared at the very last moment but, oh, what a sight. Tony and his bike arrived shortly after and we lined up in front of the beach for the obligatory photo shoot and a toast to 3000 miles of trail riding with riders and machinery all in one piece. Dinner conversation that night centered on the next trip. We were at it again...

Tony and more importantly, his wife Robyn, the support van driver who had cold beers in the fridge at the end of each and every day. What a star!



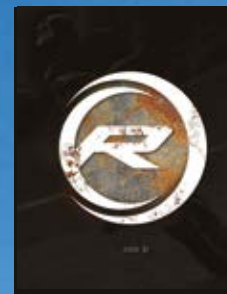
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Introduction to RUST Magazine. 2015 KTM 250EXC vs 2015 Yamaha WR250F shootout. Trail test of the Chinese made WK400 Trail and columns from Chris Evans, David Knight and Gary Freeman...



ISSUE #2

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



ISSUE #3

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



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



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



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



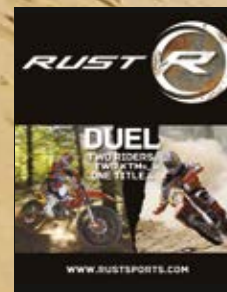
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Interview with David Knight OBE. What happened to the KTM 690 Adventure? Dispatches – In praise of the Honda CRF250L. The Michelin Anakee Wild adventure tyre. Chris Evans...



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



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



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



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

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



ISSUE #14

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



ISSUE #15

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



ISSUE #16

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



ISSUE #17

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...



ISSUE #18

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



ISSUE #19

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



ISSUE #20

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



ISSUE #21

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



ISSUE #22

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



ISSUE #23

Hawkstone Park, the first MX of the year, JB and Warren M. do round 1 of the R3 Rally Raid Series, the long term Husky TE300 and the WR 250F updated, products tested and part two of Best Western as the trail-mad Kiwis continue their trip...



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