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THERE'S THAT OLD saying, 'it's not the destination, it's the journey'. In working around the adventure scene so much that's become something of a cliché to me, although – of course – it's true. Life is a journey, we all start and finish in the same place (and none of us want to reach the destination too soon), so it's where we choose to go in between that counts. Or doesn't, if you're of the fatalist persuasion, but let's be upbeat – we want, need, for our journeys to be as exciting and colourful as we can make them. And - said the hippy - if there's some love and peace to be shared along the way then so much the better. Certainly in this issue we're on a journey, in fact several journeys.

Gas Gas had reached its final destination back in 2015, but through the energies and inspiration – and finances – of some motivated individuals the clock has been reset and Gas Gas are starting out anew. As for all of us, their journey will not be easy; the challenges are many and significant. So much has changed in dirt biking in the last decade. Most significantly the KTM group have grown so huge. We recall when KTM were happy to match Triumph for output, at around 20,000 units a year, now they are exceeding 200,000. So, with Gas Gas projecting just 6000 units for the next year

you can see just what a David and Goliath situation they're facing. But they're canny lads, and their new two-stroke EC/XC models are a clever use of resources. Gasser have worked on nailing the basics: an excellent chassis, top-spec suspension and strong motor. The frills will come later (probably with the 'Factory' edition later this year). As their

development leader Miki Arpa said, 'step by step'.

Our trail boss Chris Evans is starting anew too, with a Yamaha after years on KTMs. Change rarely follows an entirely smooth path and Chris has found a few snags along this journey, but the good is clearly outweighing the bad, and the refresh is obviously, well, refreshing!

My own wee bike, Project TLR (Honda TLR250 c.1983), is about to start what will be probably its third life. The French language manufacturer's warning stickers on the tank suggest an early life possibly on French soil (homeland or colonies) before it found its way to New Zealand. Then after 17 years principally

riding the Coromandel it sat dormant in a (okay, 'my') garage for the next 13, before tracing another journey across the globe to join me in the UK for some planned classic trials action. Heck, the little bike might well have circled the globe already – but it seems to be thumping away quite happily on the original piston and rings...

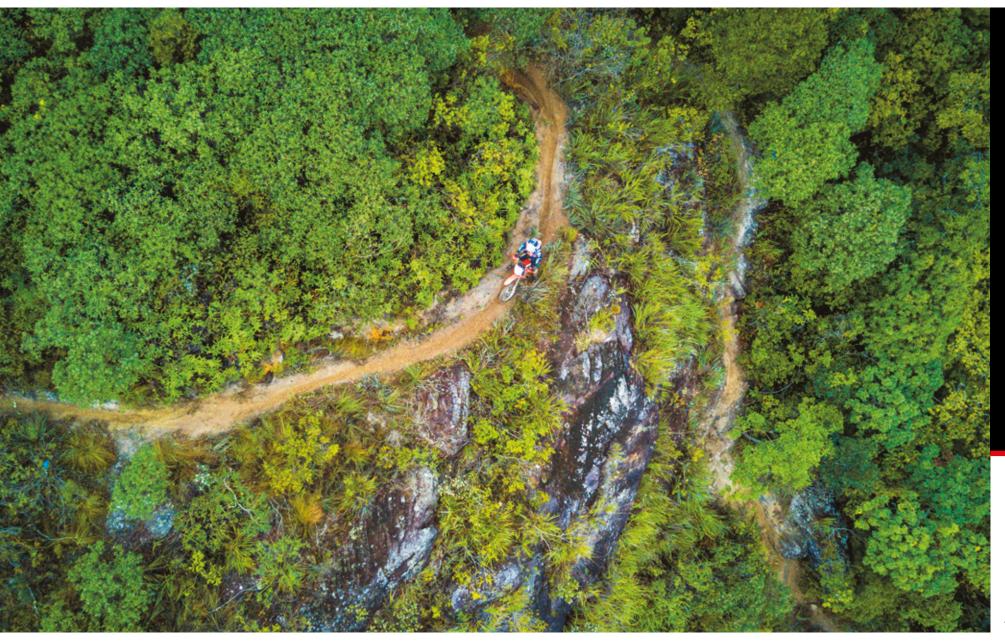
And RUST is continuing its journey. There's been a design refresh going on (as you'll see – again 'step by step') and we're working hard on defining just who we are and what we have to say to the world – we're even thinking very hard on who you are (our audience) and what it is that you value. And coming soon – we trust just days away now – is our latest all-new communication tool: our new website. We're going from 50cc moped to 500cc trail-roosting fire-breather on this – you'll find so much more that we have to share on the new site, reflecting on our 20-year TBM heritage, but also looking at the needs and demands of riders today.

And sharing is such a big part of RUST. As we said to a certain importer recently, 'we ride, we share, we learn'. And each of those three components is part of the journey, for each of us.





GALLERY



OUR WORLD

The 2017 Red Bull Minas Riders hard enduro kicked off in Brazil while we were making this issue. It was expected to be a rematch between last year's winner Alfredo Gomez and runner-up Graham Jarvis, while the US's Cody Webb was expected to play interloper. Like all hard enduros it looks like purgatory, you'd need super-skills to enjoy such a challenge. But there are, as always with our sport, moments of poetic beauty. We like this overhead image from day one on the trails which seems to encapsulate the idea of wilderness location embracing man and machine (embracing for the moment, other times repelling). It's a little bit of why we ride.

Image: Fabio Piva / Red Bull Content Pool



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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...



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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...



The 2016 Beta and KTM model ranges tested. Warren visits the

Pitgirl rounds up the 2015 EWC

Season, plus columns from Si

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Tested – Products for the Honda CRF250L. Gary Freeman column



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 offf-season blues and columns from JB and Gary Freeman...



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



ISSUE #9

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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...



ISSUE #11

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



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...



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 #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 #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 #18

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

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 #22

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



ISSUE #23

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



ISSUE #24

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

GAS GAS 2018

GAS GAS

FROM FIRE-SALE TO PHOENIX

Gas Gas were all but dead in 2015, only to be bought up by a super-successful entrepreneur and restarted.

The trials bike production line was revved up first, but now the enduros are coming...

N JULY 2015 came Gas Gas's darkest hour, as the firm was forced to file for bankruptcy with debts amounting to an estimated €45m. They were a long way from being the busy wee firebrand that could rattle the trials and enduro worlds, a manufacturer that stole at least 13 world titles (not including those odd – but exciting – indoor trials championships). Production lines that had run flat out to build 15,000 units a year had slowed to making less than half that before total stoppage came in January that year.

By then the brand's inspirational founding fathers, former Spanish enduro stars Josep Pibernat and Narcis Casas, had long gone. When Pibernat left in 2011 he complained the suits from the banks had ruined the business, and despite producing decent machines (*Gas Gas were number one in trials*) poor business planning was killing the firm.

But 10 months after the factory was closed a buyer at last stepped forward. Ivan Contreras has made his fortune in carbon fibre products, primarily for aerospace, starting in 2004 he had grown his company 'Carbures' from start-up to an international empire with manufacturing plants and offices in Spain, the US and Mexico. Gas Gas, that once would turn over €60m a year, he bought up for €9.66m – the bulk of which went straight to the banks to settle outstanding loans. Contreras promised further investment of €13m over the next three years with a short-term goal of production reaching 6000 units a year.



GAS GAS 2018

Seemingly keen for new ventures Contreras had already acquired Torrot, a bicycle brand of some history in Spain and these days an electric bike specialist. Applying fresh thinking there the firm had created the Muvi electric scooter which isn't sold to the public but to city organisations (*b2b*) as a city mobility solution – much as 'Boris's bikes' work in Central London.

And so already with Gas Gas and Torrot there's cross-over in technologies with the electric bike knowledge being applied to what will probably become Gas Gas children's trials bikes. But while the future

RUST TESTED

might be electric, Contreras has been keen to see the Gas Gas brand restored to former glories. Having literally cleaned and repainted the factory in Salt, he reinstated some 55 of the 90-odd staff that were last employed in early 2015 and when production ramps up he says the balance of the 90 will have first option on the jobs as they come up. As they did at the outset in 1985, the trials bikes are leading the way in the new Gas Gas story, but in the new EC/XC300 the Catalan firm are showing fresh thinking and a determination.









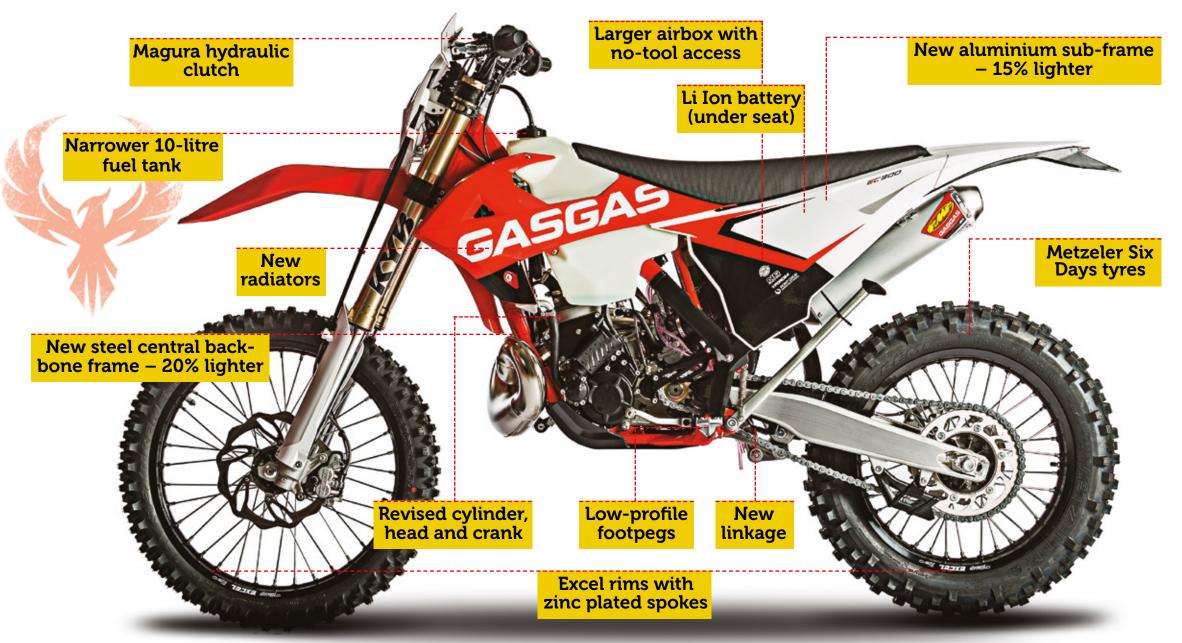




GAS GAS 2018 WHAT'S NEW



GAS GAS 2018 WHAT'S NEW





GAS GAS 2018

ET'S NOT BEAT around the bush, Gas Gas has purposely played centrefield with their new EC/XC300. There's nothing radical to find here, no new innovations – this is tried and tested technology combined with top spec components to make a very efficient, very effective racing motorcycle.

And arguably that is a good thing. This is the rebirth of Gas Gas, brought back from the dead, in very short time, by a highly successful young entrepreneur. The future promises exciting developments, but first the phoenix from the flames that is the Gas Gas team *(not just this bike)* are putting down solid foundations, creating a new EC that most certainly will work, will please and hopefully will win – on the track and in the showrooms.

LIKE THE OLD. BUT NOT...

We rather liked the last of the old Gassers, the last EC300 with the perimeter frame was a sharp looking tool and while it gave best to KTM in the showrooms, in the right hands – for instance Danny McCanney in EWC – it could ace the Austrian favourite on the track. It must have been tempting to simply remanufacture that bike, stick on an attractive price tag, throw in a few tempting accessories and see how the sales worked out.

But the dynamism of the new CEO, Ivan Contreras, and the probable desire of the leader of the new enduro's development, Miki Arpa (a former European Enduro Champion), to see his own ideas made real, resulted in an all-new machine. And created in just eighteen months – drawing board to production line – you can but imagine how intense the development work must have been.

So while Gas Gas had for a long time gone their own way on chassis design, with said perimeter frame, this time around Gas Gas have resorted to the tried and tested central backbone type frame, in traditional 25CrMo4 chro-moly steel – a material Arpa says suits enduro better than aluminum. In the process they made a substantial 20% saving on the weight of the frame. Aluminum is used for the sub-frame, though, and here too Gasser have made significant savings, dropping 15% off the previous weight, while also creating a bigger airbox (with a no-tool cover/panel removal). The swingarm is new too, this one being 7% lighter than its predecessor. These weight savings contribute significantly to the now superlight 102kg that's claimed for the XC300 (the EC300 weighs 105kg).

RUSTIESTED







1974: GAS GAS the shop, opened by Josep Pibernat and Narcis Casas

1985: First Gas Gas trials bikes produced (in response to the demise of Bultaco)



1987: Josep Pibernat races the Dakar on a Suzuki DR650, finishes 18th

1989: First Gas Gas enduro bikes produced

1993: Jordi Tarres wins world trails championship

1994: Paul Edmondson wins 125cc world enduro championship Jordi Tarres wins world trails championship







1995: Jordi Tarres wins world trails championship

1996: Paul Edmondson wins 250cc world enduro championship

1998: Petteri Silvan wins 250cc world enduro championship

2000: Bank of America take 33% stake in Gas Gas



2003: Petri Pohjamo wins 125cc world enduro championship

2005: Christobal Guerrero wins Junior enduro world championship Adam Raga wins world trials championship



GAS GAS 2018

What you'll notice fairly readily is how the frame and swingarm now resemble that of a well-known Austrian brand, particularly the crossbrace to the top mount of the shock and the swingarm. We mentioned this to the commercial manager of Gas Gas and he smiled coyly. Yeah, this is no bad thing, this gentle nuance of familiarity – especially to such a quality brand. And just as KTM needed to return to linkage suspension to crack the US motocross market, so in toeing the line on frame technology puts Gas Gas right back in the enduro game.

K-Y-B

Never have three letters meant so much. KYB – Kayaba – is one top shelf suspension manufacturer; for years the Japanese brand has helped make Yamaha YZs and WRs great. It's super-rare you ever hear a journalist, let alone an owner, bitch about them. Kayabas work well and they last. And so fitted to the new EC300 the cartridge type Kayabas (with air and oil separation) really do help elevate the product.

In the past Gas Gas have played around with all manner of suspension kit, fitting lesser-favoured (being polite here) Sachs and Marzocchi suspension on their base EC models, reserving better-quality Öhlins components for their higher-spec'ed EC-Racing models. Only Öhlins have been so peripheral to enduro for such a long time it's debatable how much attraction that brand retained. Choosing Kayaba for the new model is then something of a masterstroke, both in terms of performance and caché.

BOOSTED MOTOR

The EC motor also is much changed, but retains enough of its architecture and layout as to be recognisable as the old motor warmed over. It would, we're sure, be a task too far to create a whole new engine within the development period, but the work they have done in that time is nonetheless impressive.

A new cylinder and cylinder head, creating what Gas Gas call new thermodynamics (they supply no specifics on this), have created a sizeable boost to the power and torque, right through the rev range. The EC250 now steps up from just over 40 to a full 50hp, while the EC300 has jumped 10hp from 45 to 55hp – those are big gains.

We should note – and this is consistent across the industry – that this performance only comes in derestricted *'closed course competition'* setup. To meet the stringent Euro 4 emission regulations the EC will leave the factory with a diminutive Del 'Orto carburetor, a full-on plumber's







2006: Adam Raga wins world trials championship

2010: Ludivine Puy wins Womens enduro world championship ('world cup')



2011: Ludivine Puy wins Womens enduro world championship ('world cup')

Josep Pibernat leaves Gas Gas, selling his 33% share to the banks

2012: Laia Sanz wins Womens enduro world championship ('world cup')

2014: Gas Gas and Ossa join forces, Catalan government invest €2m

2015: (July) Gas Gas files for bankruptcy with debts of an estimates €44m

2015: (October) Gruppo Torrot Electric buy Gas Gas for €9.66m – €6.38 goes straight to the banks to repay credit





'In the right hands –
for instance Danny McCanney
in EWC – it could ace the
Austrian favourite on the track...'

nightmare of emissions paraphernalia plus a strangling exhaust pipe – a bunch of expensive stuff that's all destined for immediate disposal. Yeah, sometimes bureaucracy is hypocrisy... Full power comes with the fitting of the ubiquitous Keihin PWK38 carb (you'll be supplied one on purchase of the machine) and the FMF expansion chamber. The XC model sidesteps all such issues and is full power from the get-go.

TIDY

Around this engine and chassis Gas Gas designed a neat new layout. There's new ergonomics (called 'kinematics' by Gas Gas), with a slimmer but more cavernous translucent fuel tank (now 10-litres), an agreeably tall and flat saddle, very tidy 'low profile' footpegs and a set of Renthal handlebars. There's a Spartan simplicity to it all.

Excel rims can be added to the list of premium brand component suppliers, along with Nissin brakes and NG discs (in standard 260/220mm sizes). Oh, and there's a Magura hydraulic clutch system. Alas the trick louvered headlight and number plate seen on the prototype at the Milan Show in 2016 clearly didn't make it through Type Approval (it would be a cool accessory for 'closed course competition use', though...).

LATERAL THINKING

Overall, there's very probably a lot of forward thinking in the conversely lateral direction that Gas Gas have taken. Gas Gas use the word 'innovations' in their briefing notes, but the reality is they've almost done the opposite. The new EC/XC300 is almost deliberately more conservative, applying industry standard rather than industry-leading technologies. And why not? It works in the field, and given that us

dirt bikers are actually instinctively super conservative, there's a fair chance this approach will also work in the showrooms.

THE RIDE

'Balanced'. That's the word I used to describe the new EC300 after the first ride, and I was still repeating it after the end of the second and final test (in all we had an hour in the saddle – yes, more would have been preferable). Gas Gas have certainly been able to create a very complete package and there's a sense, a feeling – I dare say a reality – that the engine and chassis are working in harmony.

The engine does not immediately feel any more powerful than its earlier incarnations. The power is fairly linear and while there is a powerband as such, the progression into it is very gradual





and controllable. Word is the gearing is longer than the predecessor, 13:48, and so this probably softens the delivery – shorten this up and the extra kick will be much more obvious. There were no detectable holes or glitches in the carburation either, and shifting through the neat six-speed gearbox you could really keep the Gas Gas flying along. Being a 300 it's a brave, no, talented, man who keeps it full-gas. But it'll need a back-to-back test of old and new to reveal the true extent of the performance enhancement. All of which at least tells us that Gas Gas have done a sterling job on the management of that power.



The chassis meanwhile was equally competent. After a concerted rain shower we had a slick track to start with and this was leading to two-wheel slides as well as the more usual lurid power slides exiting the corners. But throughout there was an excellent sense of balance in the bike, and with the front able to seek out corner ruts like a regular pathfinder (and staying dutifully in them even on a gentle throttle) you could ride with a sense of ease. Even when the rear did let go big time a chopped throttle saw it snap straight back in line. The front meanwhile never tucked.





The Kayaba suspension also felt well balanced, meaning the bike felt to ride on an even trim front-to-back without excessive dive or squat, and whether this is true or not, it felt to stay mid-to-high in the stroke leaving plenty of reserve for big impacts. We didn't have any rocky or woody terrain to see how the suspension would work on short sharp stuff, so for now we'll have to hold back on a full evaluation, but first feedback is reasonably plush action and a good match front to back.

The ergos also felt good. The bike feels tallish (claimed seat height is 960mm) and the flat seat and lowish handlebars made for a sat-on rather than sat-in feeling. Yet it felt comfortable at that, you can command the bike and the tall feeling to the seat made standing to seated transition feel agreeably shortish. And again the flat seat and the narrowish tank and radiator shrouds meant you could get your weight well forward for the tight turns. All the levers felt to be the right distance so it was instantly comfortable on that account too. And the saddle was firm without being hard, just right.

'Gas Gas has a long road ahead, but for a first step, excellent work...'

THE SKINNY

It's an easy bike to like, this new EC300. It's potent without being wild and will for sure make a decent race bike; an even, predictable set of steering and handling responses is something racers (clubman and expert alike) can exploit. The KTM-esque line of development has led to some real world benefits. The no-tools access to the air filter is spot on, the clean lines should make for easy cleaning and hopefully some longevity for the bodywork.

It is though, missing some of the niceties that KTM (and others) have brought since Gas Gas exited the market back at the end of 2014. There's a head steady that's said to reduce vibrations (it does) but that's not the same as the counter-balancer KTM/Husky brought to their 250/300s in 2017 – that truly transforms the ride. That's not something that's going to make a difference to race results, but for comfort it's a nice add. As well, the electric start is still sitting there above the crankcase, not neatly



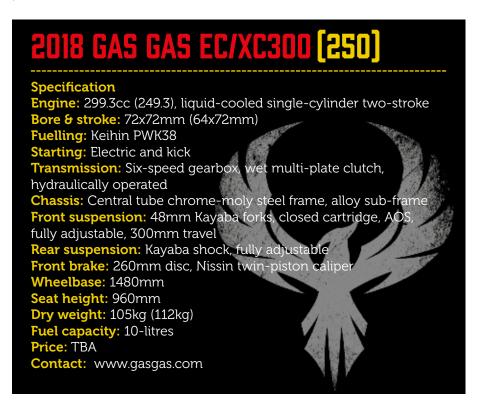


GAS GAS 2018 RUST TI

concealed under the engine the way Sherco pioneered and KTM have followed with. And it would be neat to have the luxury, that is now almost OEM in all models, of an engine mapping switch, so we could choose a traction map for slick conditions. And hey subliminated (you know, in-mould) graphics should be standard!

But these will probably come in the forthcoming annual updates and don't seriously impact on the performance of the bike. And while we can probably rely on Gas Gas to come up with some very keen pricing that will undercut the opposition, its fair to say this is still a premium product and given the quality of the suspension it has that ready-to-race (maybe we should say 'straight-from-the-crate race-ability') attitude.

For sure Gas Gas has a long road ahead of it, and it's never an overnight thing getting back on a level with market leaders (Gas Gas are, after all, a small concern) but for a first step this is an excellent piece of work.



















THE PROJECT STARTED a year and half ago, while physical testing started last summer. We then presented the bike at the Milan Show at the end of 2016 and now (mid-May 2017) we've built the first 50 bikes and hopefully by the end of May we'll have made the first 400.

The idea was to stop with the old model with the perimeter frame and start with the new spine type frame, but always in steel, which we feel is the correct material for enduro. We are very happy with the way the new chassis has worked out and particularly the suspension linkage – I think one of the best aspects of the new bike is the traction the rear wheel finds.

The engine is quite similar to the old engine, which people always liked a lot, so combining the good traction with the great engine characteristics we've created a bike that is easy to ride. We were really thinking about the needs of the Sunday hobby rider when making this bike.

The Kayaba suspension is good commercial speaking – helping us with sales – but also technically. We spent a lot of time riding and testing with the Kayaba technicians working to optimize the settings. We listened to what the riders – the hobby riders – wanted, we worked with the Kayaba technicians and we test-test-test. Using all our experience I think we have a great set-up.

So now Gas Gas is a new company, and we want to regain the trust we lost because of mistakes made by the people running the company in the recent past. Now we have a nice product and a good financial situation. Of course we need to walk before we can run, but the plan is to build, step-by-step, and to again create a range, two-strokes, four-strokes and kids bikes.



Swapping from orange to blue comes with challenges and rewards, as our France-based trail guide Chris Evans explains...

EVER SINCE I announced that I'd traded my EXC350 in for a WR250F I've been amazed by the number of people who have contacted me to ask whether I'm happy with my choice. Back in the UK visiting my Mum, and walking down the local high street I saw some people collecting for the local dog rescue centre. On stopping to make a donation, even the bloke I gave a pound coin to asked me whether I liked my new WR – I kid you not. I was starting to think the whole WR stalking thing was getting a bit out of hand before finally recognising him as someone who'd been on my trips. As it was a long time ago I couldn't remember his name (sorry about that, Kevin) but after he also asked after Kenneth (my dog) he confessed to being a regular reader of RUST. Phew.







obstacles on the WR has become a whole lot more stressful. Either I don't have enough power and have to desperately kick the bike down into first in a last ditch effort to get to the top or the back end just spins up. Adapting my technique a little and getting a bit more momentum going has helped but 1500 kilometres into ownership I'm still tackling certain challenges with uncharacteristic nervousness. And we all know what nervousness does to any riding skills you may possess...

So in addition to having to splash out on a spares kit

of brake pads, levers, air filters, oil filters and bearings (the stuff you never realised cost so much when you simply had it lying around) I've stumped up for a rather pricey Power Tuner. I've been told that it has nine pre-installed maps and that there's one that will haul the WR up the side of houses. I'm secretly hoping that it turns out that my bike is currently running the moto-x map and that I can switch to the standard map. The alternative will be carrying the Power Tuner around with me and remapping the bike every time I come to a climb.

OVER-ENGINEERED?

So seeing as how a lot of you seem keen to know, let's get the bad stuff out the way first. For a kick-off it is clear that Yamaha don't have the same 'built for home maintenance' design philosophy as their Austrian rivals. The WR's bash plate is held on by no less than three nuts, and they aren't the same size. Compare this with the EXC jobby which is attached by just one Dzus fastener! A quick look around the bike reveals that everything else on the bike is similarly over-engineered. I was hoping to hook up my ICO rally trip meter to the standard Yamaha speedo drive as I have always done with previous KTMs but preliminary enquiries to people who should know suggests this is impossible. I haven't actually checked this myself, but apparently the Yamaha has a mechanical system off the front wheel that then converts into an electronic signal before reaching the standard trip. The routing of the various cables is similarly over-complicated. On the new KTMs the front brake hose is guided by the headlight moulding. On the Yamaha there's several guides bolted to the front forks by two nuts. It's a good job the frame is made from aluminium or the whole thing would weigh a ton.

Out of the workshop the other problem I'm having with the bike is adapting to its on/off engine. Now I make no claims to extreme enduro excellence but with my old 350 and 300 (especially the 300) I used to plod my way up most stuff without too much drama. Tackling the same





Unless I can bolt on a magic button that can switch between two different maps. Somewhat worryingly a number of people have told me the ultimate fix is a full Akra system, and they aren't giving them away. I know

someone who's selling a

secondhand example for

£550 but I'm holding off 'til

I've seen what the black box can achieve. The WR's air box location makes the bike noisy for the rider but with the standard pipe the bike is very quiet as far as everyone else is concerned.

OH, BUT THE JOY...

After reading the above you might be expecting me to announce that I've made a terrible mistake, that the WR is up for grabs and that I'm going back to orange. Nothing could be further from the truth. In fact a few gnarly climbs aside, outside of the workshop, I'm in off-road

RUSTIRAL

heaven. If I liked riding my bike before, I simply love it now. And the reason? The Yamaha's quite sensational handling and levels of comfort. It feels like somebody rode ahead of me on the trail and smoothed over all the little bumps. I'm guessing that must be down to the suspension and particularly the front fork. The weird thing is I'm a long way from using all the forks' travel. I put a zip tie on the slider and currently there's 8cm of travel that's never been used, so it isn't that they're super soft.

Why the bike feels so reassuring is harder to pin down. It could be the fork but I'm guessing it is a combination of fork and steering geometry. Or maybe it is the ally frame. You'll have to ask an engineer or a factory rider. All I know is that I've never felt so at ease, so confident on a dirt bike before, ever. And for that degree of reassurance, that amount of riding pleasure, I'm more than happy to undo a couple of bolts on the bash plate. Particularly as so far, in 1500 kilometres, I've hardly had to lay a spanner on the bike. And interestingly last week, sweeping a group of riders, I retrieved not one but two rather too easily detachable Austro-Swedish sump guards...

THE SPORT-ADVENTURE YAMAHA WR250F WHAT'S BEEN DONE SO FAR...

HEIGHT: As standard the bike is *(for my little legs at least)* ridiculously high. I looked at changing the linkage but was worried about upsetting the bike's impeccable manners. Having discovered that (weirdly) the moto-x YZ on which the WR is based runs a shorter shock as standard (and that fitting it is a common factory rider mod) I instead opted to get the standard shock shortened by 15mm by fitting a spacer inside the damping unit. Effectively this stops the shock fully extending and doesn't seem to have any discernible negative effects. It's a cheap *(£200)* and easily reversible fix and has lowered the bike to the height of a *'normal'*

enduro bike. I've found a chap who will cut and reweld the sub frame to lower it a little bit more. It'll no doubt be a pain to get the subframe off the bike (see above) but I haven't ruled it out.

NAVIGATION EQUIPMENT: Luckily I had a bolt-on MD road book reader mount that fitted painlessly on to the handlebars though at the moment I haven't plumbed it into the electrics. Connecting the trip took a little bit more thought but by chance a KTM disc magnet was just the right size to be glued into a hole on the front disc carrier and even luckier that lined up perfectly with the only place I could drill and tap a hole into the brake caliper bracket to screw in the ICO cable pick up. All nice and tidy.





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



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SPECIAL EDITION Full test of the 2017 Husqvarna model range, with New for 2017, some history and the final



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



AUSTRALIA SPECIAL JB embarks on an adventure into The Outback and returns humbled



VIBEO CONTENT

www.youtube.com/watch?v=8516kr og58

NEW FOR 2018 GAS GAS EC300 RIDDEN AND RATED IN GIRONA

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



www.youtube.com/watch?v=7 EGuentg3s

2017 HUSQVARNA Range Launch

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



www.youtube.com/watch?v=_L8ePyI2E4N

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...



www.youtube.com/watch?v=SEiSqECe6sA

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=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=a0K02x9reL0

2017 KTM Range Launch

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



www.voutube.com/watch?v=vriJw FU910

2016 YAMAHA WR450F

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





www.youtube.com/watch?v=uL7 ebar560

Join JB for a ride on board the Sherco 300 SEF-R

to find out if the EnduroGP winning model is

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WE GET TO RIDE THE 2017

SHERCO 300 SEF-R

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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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...



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...



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=HQBn2

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



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...



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





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RUST TRAIL



PORTUGESE MAN OF WHOAR!

DAY 1: ÉVORA > ZÊZERE

TERRAIN:

The first day is the longest, with around 260km to cover. The start is mainly over fast open tracks before reaching a plantation of cork trees where an undulating trail makes for some nice fast drifting corners before the picnic lunch under the trees at the edge of a dam. After lunch it gets a little more technical, especially the last 50km where the trails over mountains and along dry riverbeds just couldn't be better. And to cap it off, G&Ts while taking in the amazing views overlooking the Zêzere River before dinner.

THE RIDE:

We set out from Evora (an hour's drive from Lisbon in the far eastern part of central Portugal), which is Horizon Adventures' conveniently located base camp.

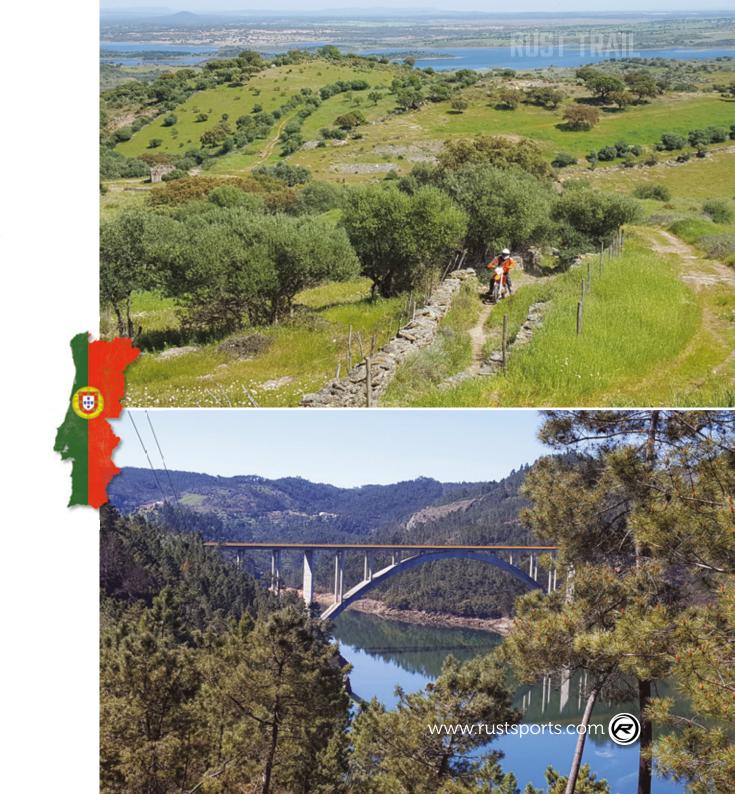
The M'Ar De Ar Muralhas Hotel is the four-star base hotel for all HA tours from Evora and is situated just inside the ancient walled city with views over an equally ancient aqueduct in what is a world heritage site. Some venue!

The group is an eclectic mix of people and machinery. Bikes, quads – and a pretty awesome Can Am UTV! I've met a good number of the riders before on previous tours with Horizon Adventures (so many come back every year) but there are a few new faces, too.

The team use GPS navigation for their tours and the preloaded tracks on Montana GPS units takes out any stress of needing to match others' pace. Other than needing to get where you're going before sunset everyone can set off at their own pace. In reality though, the camaraderie and HA's group management sees everyone spend a good deal of the days' riding together, and lunch each day is laughter filled affair (with the odd frosty).

The first day is longer than is typical for HA tours but as this group is pretty experienced lead-guide Pedro knows it shouldn't be a problem. Typically, riding and rest stops are tailored to be more sedate and manageable to accommodate all levels of riding.

The distance hints at the attraction of riding here in Portugal – uninterrupted trails that last all day. We head north out of town for what starts as a gentle meander along farm roads and liaisons before we hit open tracks about 20km outside Evora.





PORTUGESE MAN OF WHOAR!

The terrain for the day is pretty varied and this is one of the more enjoyable aspects of riding in Portugal: the ever-changing vistas. We encountered wet marshy bogs early on for a little fun and these made sure everyone got properly wet before turning onto flowing forest tracks with large pools of standing water to navigate around or wheelie through. This was followed by dusty single track over undulating hills – definitely the time and place to let the dogs loose, and after a half hour 'moto' racing through the hills we stopped in some shade for a much needed rest and water break. It's properly hot at midday and it felt glorious to be out of the rain in the UK for a change. A picnic lunch followed by a catnap under the trees was an ideal way to wait out the high-heat.

The afternoon ride turned out to be a blinder and given a late start the sun was getting low as we headed into yet another forest for the last 40km before descending down the hills into the valley and on to the night's hotel. Joao and I were riding together and the pace was getting up there a bit and when the helmets came off in the hotel car park it was fist pumps and wide smiles – that was a doozy of a ride!-

DAY 2: ZÊZERE > CASTELO DE VIDE

THE TRAIL:

Breakfast at 9:00(ish) and start at 10:00(ish). Starting with a track along-side the river then crossing over the dam wall. Then onto mountain tracks, which are quite technical in the morning and more open in the afternoon, and onto Bajas rally-style tracks where you can keep it pinned – if you dare! Arrival at Castelo de Vide was set for around 5:30pm – a beautiful village and very tasty dinner waiting in the main plaza.

THE RIDE:

I awake early on day two so enjoy some light maintenance on the bike along with a coffee and some solitude – no one's awake yet. The sun was up at around 4:50 and the sky cast a very surreal pink hue over everything. I'm struck by the beauty; it feels like looking at life around me through a rose-tinted lens filter. The 9:00 scheduled start turns into a 10:00(ish) and we leave as a group. It's a fun, if slow, first hour as everyone shakes out the long previous day's effects.



PORTUGESE MAN OF WHOAR! RUST TRAIL



PORTUGESE MAN OF WHOAR!

The trail is hard-packed with marbles – making good throttle control essential, as is careful braking. We wind our way through the hills and over the hydroelectric scheme and back into the woodlands.

The track for the majority of the morning is a mix of climbing and descending switchback firebreak roads strewn with forestry debris. Not challenging if you're not over-egging it but it took concentration to not find myself in a two-wheel slide from time to time – or finding the back sliding out on me further than I'd have liked. Then, as a surprise, for the last section before lunch we were transported back home to the UK as the ground softens and there's greenery as far as the eye can see and some familiar boggy single track.

Lunch was at a local restaurant – fish caught in the river prepared traditionally with a salt crust (washed down by a beer) and finished off by a nice expresso – and another midday doze, this time under the Horizon support truck.

The afternoon's riding was less communal, and with each of us with a GPS everyone set off at their own pace and in their own time. The terrain changed again and the trail wound itself through farms, forest and over small hills. The traction from loamy ground and sand provided a very different riding experience from the morning. About an hour or so after lunch I found my groove and picked up the pace a little – the forest tracks winding through the trees in gentle essess with loads of small (and large) water puddles for kilometre after kilometre was a huge amount of fun. Looking back now, the dry riverbed trails from day one and the afternoon on day two were my 'take home' riding memories.

We spent the night in Castelo de Vide. The dinner that night was superb – a seafood rice dish that I gorged on! Followed by a stroll with the boys to the heaving local pub for a few G&Ts. It's busy and turns into a late night. We have a new member join the ride (Dan), a British airline pilot who lives in Lisbon and another a multi-time participant of Horizon's tours.

DAY 3: CASTELO DE VIDE > ALDEIA DA SERRA

THE TRAIL:

The first few miles are on tarmac, this is a nature reserve and protected area and Horizon Adventures has a special permission from the Natural Parks Authority to ride here. We turn off road and into the highest part of the mountain range, with Spain to the east. Refuel at Portalegre as we





RUSTIRAL

leave the mountains and onto the flat plains famous Baja Portalegre. After lunch its more technical again as we approach the Serra d'Ossa, the mid-size mountain range that has endless off road tracks. We head towards a renovated convent that is now the Charm Hotel and our base for the night.

THE RIDE:

Day three began by picking our way in and out of the nature reserve as we headed out of town and through Mervao and into the hills. I was not quite ready for the few kilometers of whoops right out of the blocks – and neither was everyone else after the late night. To say that the pace was leisurely is being kind. The route criss-crossed the main road into Spain. We cross the border briefly before switching back into Portugal after some very scrubby rock and pebble strewn single track. Traction is nonexistent! And somewhere along the route we encounter an extreme river crossing (or a go-around option), the group I'm in forwent the easy route and we all got a little wet (okay – drenched to the waist).

The day's riding then flattened out into vast open plains outside Portelegre – offering huge vistas as our route picked its way through cork plantations and cattle grazing farmland. Sometimes you can feel lost in time riding here. We passed old Roman ruins and grain stores, churches, all reminiscent of a rich history. There is something comforting about the purity of rural agricultural life out here and it's a blessing to be able to see things that few do. Its one of the reasons we ride these remote trails.

What happened next is a first. Riding with Pedro and Joao, the guides, we're taking turns opening and closing farm gates for each other. We entered just another typical field and Pedro went first and disappearing over the crest of the field, as I followed I'm confronted – in a vast open field – by a not-unattractive pair of breasts being beautifully presented by (as I found out later) a young Italian lass. I did a double take, veered off the track and slammed my foot into square edge of a deep dried out tractor rut – and hyperextended my knee. I was in blinding pain but doing my best not to show it as I recovered and pulled up next to Pedro who had (understandably) decided to stop and talk to the girl.

It turned out our track was set to run right through the middle of the 'Frequency Music Festival'. In the valley there were cars and vans and tents as far as the eye could see, and we could hear the distant rhythm of base emanating from the stage off in the distance. Below, literally



PORTUGESE MAN OF WHOAR!

hundreds of bodies, many like our Italian friend in various states of undress, cavorted in the afternoon sun. We toyed with the idea of staying for a while, but moved on – for sure for another day!

The last 80km or so was now a struggle for me - I didn't realise it then but I had dislocated my knee and ruptured my PCL. Annoying given the final 20km was through the Serra d'Ossa mountain range - a favourite of mine. A converted convent (now luxury four-star hotel) was our base for the night. I was very thankful for the few Hendricks followed by a few beers along with a painkiller or two that night. Notwithstanding, the service and food was spectacular as ever.

DAY 4: ALDEIA DA SERRA > ÉVORA

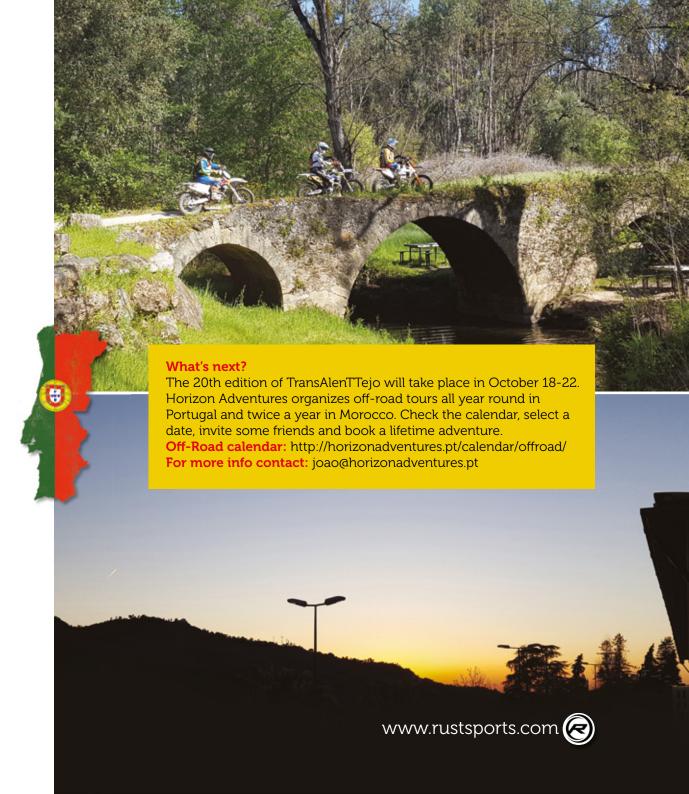
THE TRAIL:

Final day and 180km to go. A great morning ride around Serra d'Ossa before heading to Alqueva dam (the biggest artificial lake in Europe). Another great lunch in a restaurant by the water on a sunny and warm day. Behind us the ancient village of Monsaraz that we reached 5km after lunch (and after a nice enduro section). From there final 60 km back to Évora.

THE RIDE:

My leg was seriously swollen and I decided not to ride the last day. It was a jolly through the Serra d'Ossa back to Evora. I've ridden this area before and it's a joy to ride but this day I was riding shotgun in the support truck as we set off to a restaurant near Monsaraz on the edge of the Alqueva dam. The walled town of Monsaraz is picturesque and is perched atop the highest hill overlooking the waterways below. It was packed with tourists and although we had time to kill waiting for the bikes we didn't stay long and decided to head down to the restaurant and catch some sun instead. The setting was awesome – the beers cold and the sunshine a godsend. I felt a pang of jealousy after lunch as the bikes departed, but hey-ho that's dirt biking – and for once my injury has a decent story behind it.

At the end it's a fond farewell to a group of friends but I'll see most of them again in October for the 20th Trans-Alentejo that is planned to be a pretty special event – perhaps you'll join us?





PROJECT TLR250

THE STORY SO FAR

Editor JB shipped his old Honda TLR250 back to the UK after it lying dormant in a New Zealand garage for over 13 years. It hadn't been prepped for storage, yet once released from its shipping crate and given a splash of old fuel it started fourth kick. Suitably emboldened, JB decided to recommission the TLR, and see if he can rekindle an affection (love would be too strong a word) for trials riding. So far just about everything he's touched has broken or crumbled. Check out RUST 13, 15 and 19 for previous instalments.

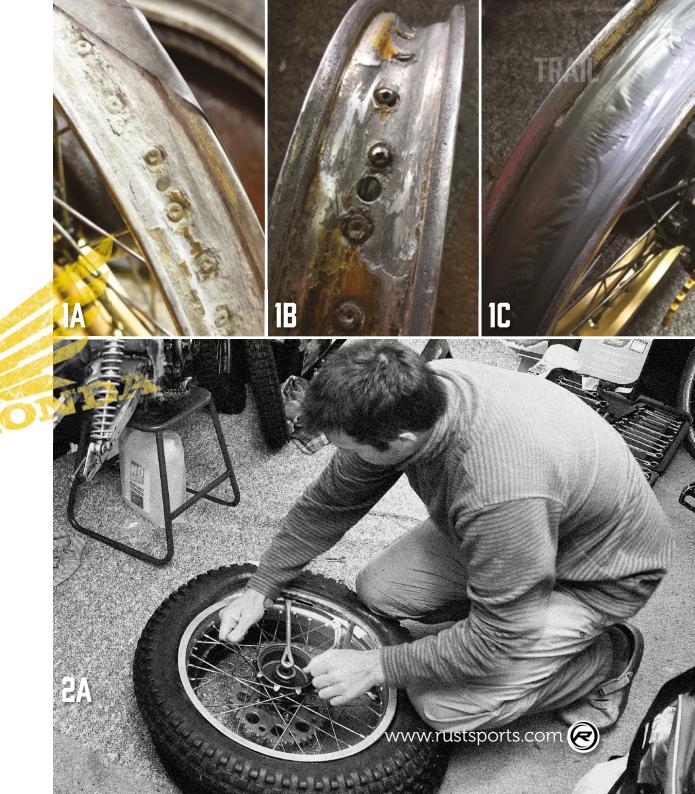
EITHER I WAS too pessimistic at the end of the last instalment of Project TLR, or I'm again being overly optimistic now. But a rare Sunday spent in the workshop (okay, garage – workshop is definitely overstating it) has restarted the re-commission of this venerable old trials iron.

Okay, not a great deal has happened, to be fair, but its heading in the right direction:

1 BACK FROM THE DEAD?

I said in the last instalment that I like spending money, but actually I will hold back given the chance, especially when the numbers get bigger. And the prospect of a big bill for wheel building (plus new rims and spokes) meant I had put a cover over the Honda and run away for a month or two (to Australia then Portugal). On my return, revitalized, and keen to get this project rattling along again, I took the cover off, dragged the old wheels out again and decided to take a file and a wire brush to the rims one more time.

Sure, stack loads of powdered metal fell away, but underneath there was solid metal (well, aluminium) and the rims are actually a good deal thicker than I first thought. So it was a few hours work filing and brushing to get back to some shiny metal (agh, aluminum) on each rim (the back was worse than the front), but having done so and having played around tapping and feeling and measuring I'm now of the opinion there's enough meat left in





these rims for them to remain in service. Obviously they're not exactly tip-top, but equally they could just do the job. They're worth a try at least...

So a good while was spent filing down any last sticky-up bits, then the rim tape went back on and as a belt-and-braces step I added a round of duct tape too, just to make sure the tube doesn't catch on any unseen burrs. I'm expecting the duct tape to be a bad idea, it's a bodge (and wait till it gets soaked) but I'm keen at this stage to get the Honda up and running, give it a gentle ride in the woods and make a full assessment of its condition.

2 SOME REASSEMBLY

With the rims kind of cleaned up I was out with the Motion Pro levers again and shoe-ing on some Pirelli MT43 trials tyres. I suspect Michelin's X11s are the hot ticket these days, judging by the ads (and their premium price), but when I was a lad riding my Fantic I'm pretty sure it was the Pirellis that were the choice for the sand and loamy woods we rode in Southern England. So, seeing as they're still available (something of a record in itself) and come at a fair price I've stuck with them.

Next, I fitted the new chain. Not a major job, just needed the chain splitter to reduce the number of links to suit the TLR. And I needed a punch to drift out the pin the last few mill'. Sometimes there's a little satisfaction in finding you have those tools to hand, there in your toolbox...

3 SORTING THE BRAKES

New brake shoes I'd already fitted to the brake plates – noting that the front brake had previously been enhanced by a strip of sheet alloy being wrapped around the actuating cam – a classic ploy to get a little more life out of old shoes before replacement! So now these, all cleaned up, could go back in the hubs.

The front wheel bearings feel surprisingly good, no play, they turn sweetly and are well greased. I suspect the rear bearings are







PROJECT TLR250

not so good, there's no play but the spinning doesn't feel so slick. I'll give them a small ride and if they don't come good I'll replace (that's me putting off another inevitable job).

I gave the front cable the big lube job and then stripped, cleaned and greased the lever and perch and I'm pleased with the action now, it all feels nicely adjusted and free moving.

4 AND SO...

For now, that's it. But with the wheels back in, with new brakes and tyres fitted there's a sense of life coming back to the old bike. I've got all the parts I need to reassemble the carb and with a new fuel line and filter it's not much of a job to get that sorted.

The exhaust isn't looking exactly flash and will in time be replaced, but for now – alert: another bodge – I'll fix the one serious crack I've found with some liquid metal (told you) and tighten it up.

Then I'm going to fix some new handlebars (taller) and grips (the old ones are like Bakelite) and we should be ready for a shakedown ride. Should be...

PROJECT TLR

The mounting costs	
Valve stem seals	£16.56
Carburetor gasket kit	£12.04
Float bowl drain screw	£ 2.99
Spark Plug	£ 2.99
Air filter	£ 7.93
Chain & sprockets	£61.26
Sprocket circlip	£ 6.08
Exhaust gasket	£ 3.90
Rear sprocket bolts	£ 9.60
Brake shoes	£31.00
Fuel filter	£ 1.25
Pirelli MT43 front	£38.00
Pirelli MT43 rear	£58.00
Total	£251.60

WHAT'S NEXT?

Like I said, I'm going for the earliest reassembly and test ride I can manage. A few pals have dropped by over the months and having looked over the TLR are with me on not (yet) restoring the old bike. We like that the scratches, dents (and rust!) tell the story of its life. But we'll see. And in any case my local club (Sidcup & District MCC) have a wobblers trial coming up — I really do want to get out there.





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Thanks to:

Anna, David and Jordi at Gas Gas and Shirty at Gas Gas UK for the phoenix launch, and our man Joao for his patience!

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