

Knighter
eyes a new future...



RUST

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TIME

BY JON BENTMAN,
PHOTO: JB

I RODE PAST the aging Thai villagers in their remote aging village. They were probably no more than 20 maybe 30 years older than me. But really centuries was the gap. The locality was defined by their bamboo stilt houses, the paddy fields they tended, the buffaloes, dogs, pigs and chickens they kept. Their lines of communication were not digital superhighways, not even tarmac highways, just dirt tracks worn into the land by the passage of bare feet over hundreds, probably thousands of years.

They passively watched the mass of BMW R1200GSs of the GS Trophy growl past, with wonder, awe – or maybe pity? Where were we rushing to? What was it that drew us to charge from here to where so hurriedly? The natural beauty was sublime, flame of the forest spread delicate fading red canopies over our heads, a dying beauty that would be consumed by the rain season fast approaching. Eucalyptus and pines scented the warm soothing air, isolated palms stood like watchmen, towering over the lush green fields. Natural and pastoral beauty is seldom so gentle, so balanced. So much life, so much time. But the R1200GSs thundered on.

This is the conflict we all live. We have, in reality, short lives. So we rush – that is our underlying urge – there's so much we want to do, to see, to experience. And, as we are wont to say, time waits for no man.

Time doesn't wait for David Knight. It's treated him well, allowed him four world championships to appease his hunger for competitive superiority. But the years fly by amid the rush, the hectic flurry of activity. And so, before he's ready, he's arrived at the ultimate reality check – no professional career



lasts forever. However strong the man, however dedicated, consumed, the time comes when it's over. Champion becomes former champion. David reflects on that in this issue.

For our columnist Chris Evans, years of serving on the Dakar Rally may well have come to a close. So there's no more of those flat-out days and weeks, chasing the rally, bivouac to bivouac, reporting the victories, failures and the tragedies. Yet, as he's found, that time is filled so readily – and as ever is our way, over-filled.

Even RUST is an exercise in time. Reaching for a fortnightly publication schedule in 2016 means we'll have to move fast. Fast. Faster. Fastest. It's nonsense isn't it? Those Thai villagers know that. You can't beat time.

So, like those villagers, we need to acknowledge the fact. And stop for a while. Turn off the engine. And to look, listen, touch and smell. Our dirt bikes, noisy mad things that they are, do nonetheless bring us closer to nature, to life. But it's for us to make the final connection. Do, from time to time, allow yourself that.



GRIMBO THE GREAT

At last month's Tough One, Graham Jarvis showed he's far from done, his emphatic win a warning to extreme rival Jonny Walker that 'Grimbo' will be tougher, faster this season. Grimbo's always been brilliant, but not so much 'fast'. Concerted off-season practice on a Husky motocrosser seems to have sorted that – ask our own David Knight!

Now press service photography's not what it used to be, and with this year's T1 images simply not firing the imagination, for Gallery this issue we've dug into the JB archives – going back to 2013 when again it was Grimbo (*then on a Husaberg – remember them?*) hammering the opposition at the Nantmawr quarry. This perilous descent was the butt-clenching black run of that year. If it looks bad in this shot, imagine how it was in the dark of night, when ice started forming on the track. Utterly fearsome.

This is said to be the last year the Tough One will be at Nantmawr. Cold and miserable as it can be, we're going to miss it.

Photo: JB





MELTING POT

Well, the BMW Motorrad International GS Trophy 2016 in Northern Thailand was a roaring success. Seven days of fun and games centered around beasting monster R1200GSs over rough terrain. As always the GSs were dropped, thrashed, up-ended, even endo-ed (*big time a Team China hardman*) and as always you could pick them up, hit the starter button and on they'd go. Of course the resale value will have taken a knock, but it'd still be a runner.

This shot kind of encapsulates the spirit. That's Jolandie Rust (*from South Africa – and hey, cool surname!*) beaming away in centre-shot, the first-ever female marshal for the GS Trophy in the year we had the first-ever female team. All the girls had a ball and proved themselves more than equal to the men. Meanwhile in the foreground Team France's Julien Batier is looking to rescue Team Brazil's Sandro Ceratti's GS which is taking an impromptu rest on the Ho Chi Min Trail.

Look out for the next issue of RUST, we'll have the full story there.

Photo: BMW



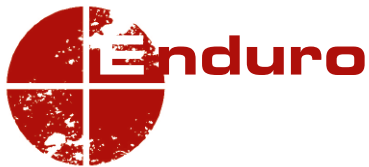


What do you do when your best racing days are behind you?
Four-time world champ,
and RUST columnist, David Knight
knows – you race on, for the
love of the sport

“I’m going from pro to
amateur, but I’ll race
on because I love the
sport so much...”

Words: David Knight MBE
Images: Josh Snowden,
JB, KTM and Red Bull



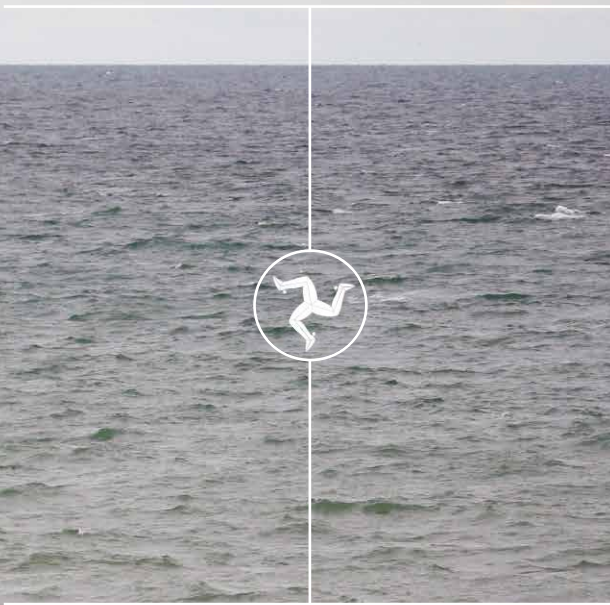


I LOVE ENDURO. It inspired me as a kid, so I learned the game, became good, turned pro, won four world championships, won two AMA GNCC titles, for a while there I was the world's top extreme racer too, kind of king of the world. But that last world title, that was back in 2010, that's fast-slipping into history, and today those works contracts have slipped away, so I race my own bikes, mostly using my own money. I'm just like 99% of all enduro riders, an amateur. It's the natural way of things, one of the circles of life, so I'm not bitter; I'm not raging against the machine (*any more*). I simply love rolling my bike out of the van, pouring in some gas, kicking it into life (*the 300EXC still has a kick start*), and going riding. There's still the buzz, every time. Nothing's changed. I love enduro.

TOUGH

The Tough One at Nantmawr never changes either. Never gets any easier and certainly never gets any drier. That is a fact. For me, this year was probably one of the toughest I've competed in to date. The '*toughest*' doesn't necessarily come from the competition anymore, it's the rest of it. There's no works support for me now, so I'm dealing with the pressures of every day (*family*) life and, like most, racing on a very limited budget. As for all amateurs, it has been a





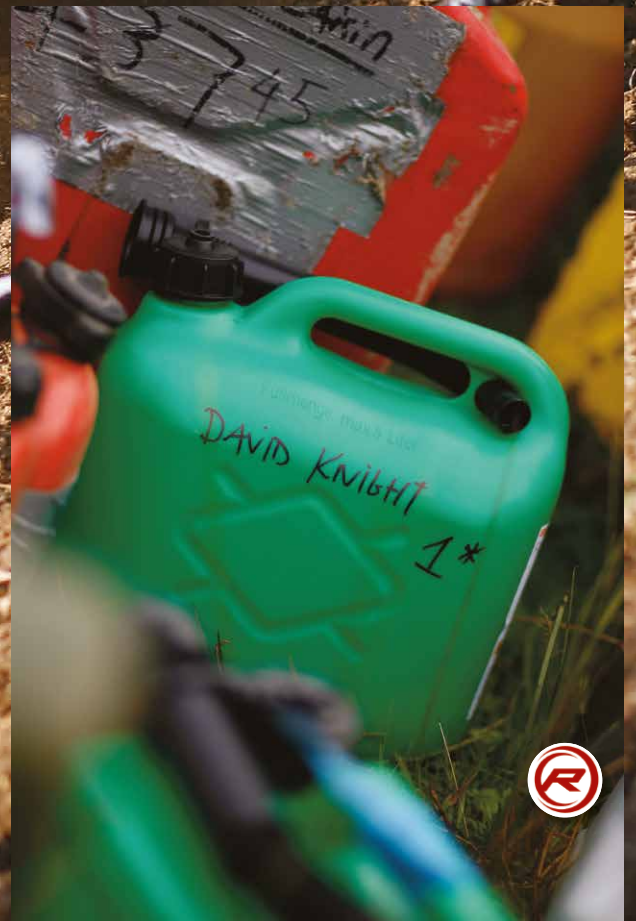
struggle to be 100% race ready.

I only have one bike at present and I have to use it both for training and racing. Don't get me wrong, it's as close to a factory KTM 300 as I can prepare but I just simply cannot afford to be clocking up the hours I used to do when a full-time pro, that's in terms of time and money. Practicing back home can give the bike a fair hammering and it's difficult to keep it fresh enough to complete a season's racing on without chucking a few grand at it. But you know the story, eh?

And I'll admit it, yes, it is frustrating turning up and getting a solid result almost entirely on my own, especially when I feel I'm still more than capable of beating a handful of the current factory riders. But at least I'm still getting the results, that's what still matters the most to me. I keep looking back at old pictures on Facebook and I love how I can still podium the very same events 10 years down the line among current and fresh talent. I think it gives me that little bit more drive to grit my teeth and prove a few people wrong. And that's one of my *'things'*, too, *'proving people wrong'*. I've always found myself saying that, in interviews, on Facebook, in my mental make-up there's always them and me.

But that conflict matters less with each passing year. I've now a beautiful partner



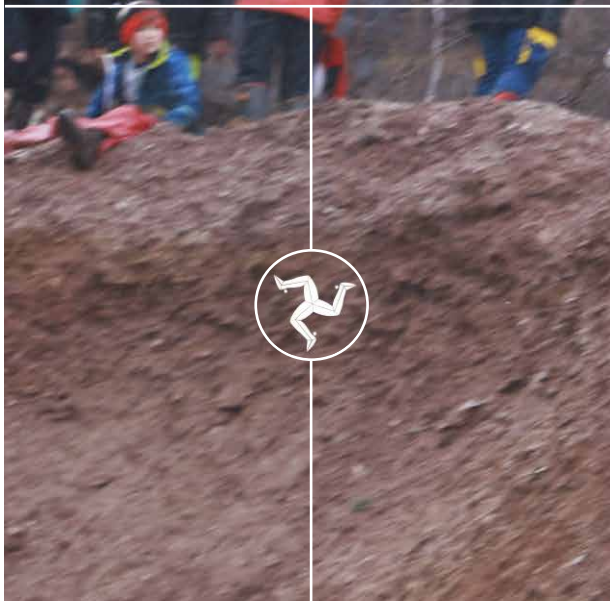


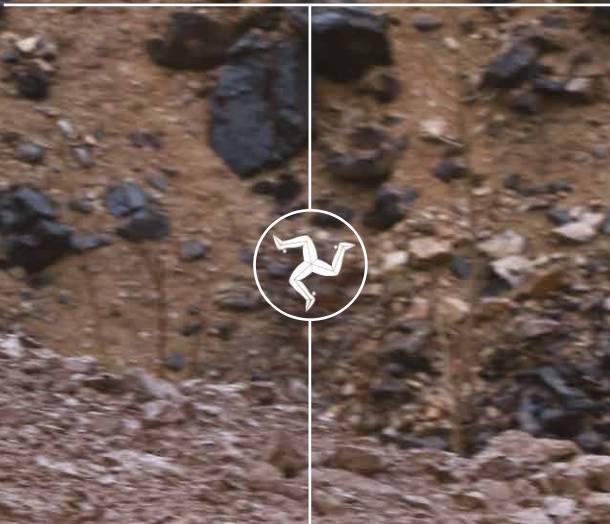
and two lovely kids back home on the Isle of Man, so I'm a little more focused on my family these days. It's difficult travelling the world and balancing that very important time with your loved ones. I still love going to the events but once the job is done I want to return to the Island that little bit more hastily. Also from a financial point of view there are four hungry Knights to feed so I have to be very strategic and sensible with what I spend and where I earn a living. Every time I leave the Island with my bike and van it's a good £400 before I even think about travelling anywhere else!

FIRST LOSER!

I had some boys from back on the rock (*Isle of Man*) travel down to the Tough One with me, and obviously my brother Juan, but I did feel a little lacking in the support department. I bought myself a second bike – a new Yamaha WR450X, I've many happy memories of racing 450 Yams – and that arrived just before the event and so Saturday morning, just hours before the main race, I went out and tested it, but it felt like the suspension springs needed stiffening up before I go out and compete on it. Back to the KTM 300 it was.

After playing on the Yamaha and checking out how the track was running in the morning





race, I was left with little time to make my final preparations for the main race. Ultimately I lined up on the start 10 minutes after everyone else, which operating in a first-come first-serve basis meant my starting position wasn't ideal. I managed to get a good start considering and was in fifth place by turn one, I passed another rider for fourth on the long second straight but by this time I was well and truly roosted.

"I'm not raging against the machine (*any more*). I simply love rolling my bike out of the van, pouring in some gas, kicking it into life, and going riding..."

Racing is coloured by many challenges. After the start I struggled to get settled initially and arm pump took its toll on me, but I felt my speed was good. In fact I managed to get the lead on lap two and pulled a 15-20 second gap, but I was getting roosted by back markers the whole way round – maybe with a bit more race practice I'd have steered clear of them – so I kept stopping for fresh goggles which each time dropped me down to third.

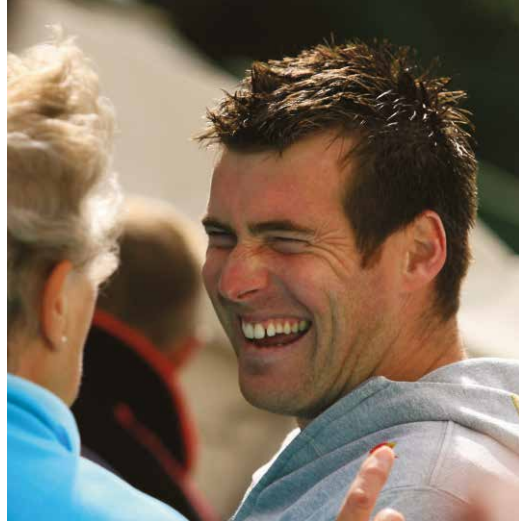
By half way through the race I managed to



gain a one minute twenty second lead, was thinking perhaps I could do a repeat of my victory at Eddy's Extreme two weeks earlier. But somehow Graham (*Jarvis*) managed to claw this back in under a lap. I must have missed something somewhere in terms of race lines. Jarvis passed me again – and pulled over a minute! Despite feeling relatively fit and able to push hard in the latter half of the race I was unable to catch him and had to settle for second place. First loser! As an amateur that's what I have to face now. To beat a full-time pro, especially one as brilliant as Graham, is super-tough. In the circumstances I can't be bitter, but when you've spent your life racing for wins, it does take some adjusting to the new reality.

EWC, not EWC...

Moving forward in my career I'm a little unsure on what's around the corner. I absolutely love riding motorbikes, I wouldn't be doing it otherwise. Over the last three years I've still been competitive in a number of disciplines, I have victories at the Enduro World Championship, victories at the Super Enduro World Championship and of course victories out here in the Extreme Enduro world. The main problem for me at present is the lack of funding to concentrate my time entirely on one or the other. Not only that, I

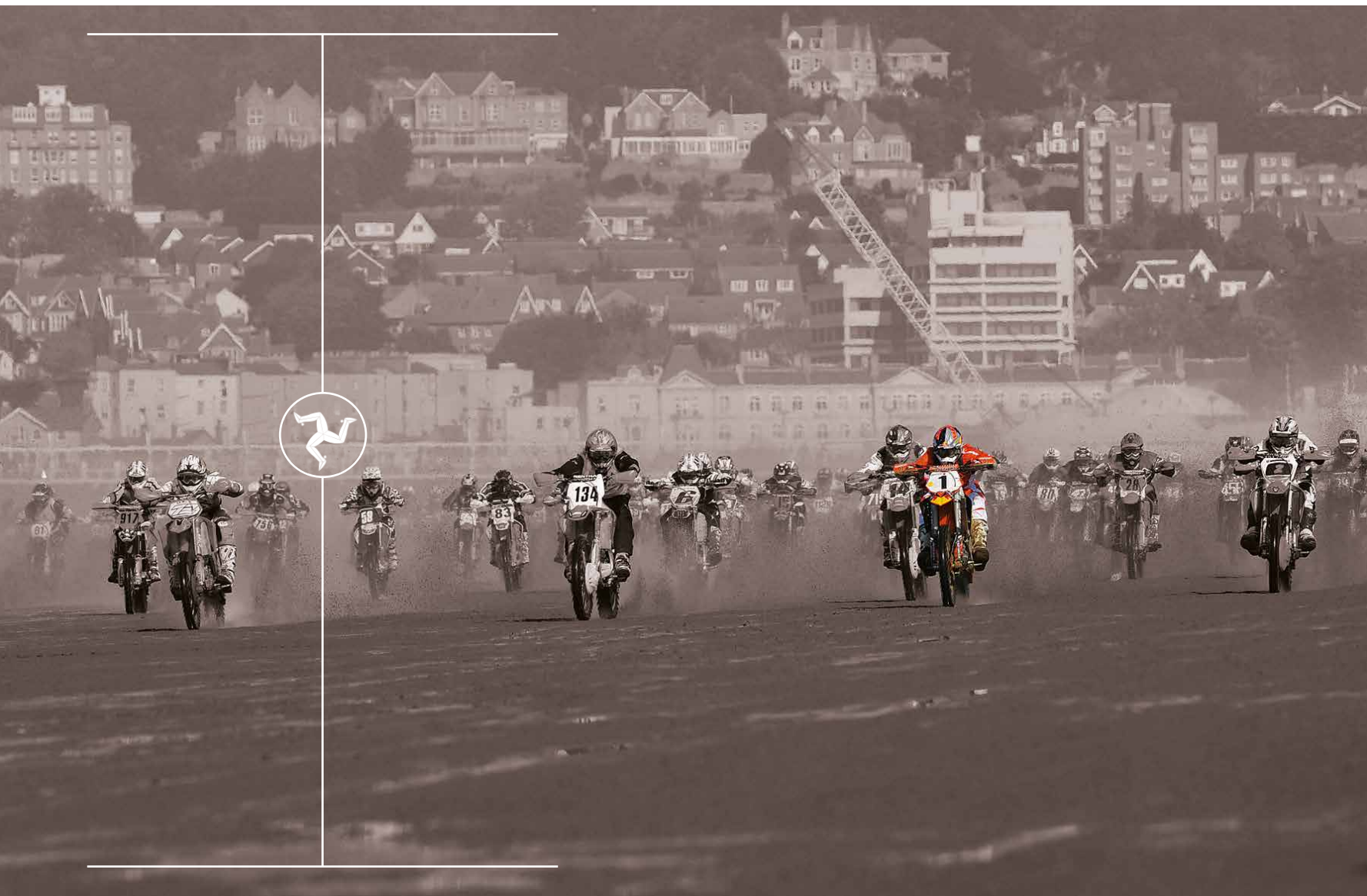


KNIGHTER'S 300EXC

The KTM 300EXC is so good straight from the crate that it takes only modest changes to make it extreme-ready. After sorting the suspension, which for a factory racer means top shelf WP Cone Valve 50mm forks and Trax shock, or for the serious amateur a set of kitted standard WPs, it's then a matter of personal solutions – things that through time and experience we know will get the job done.

For the Tough One, my bike has P3 carbon exhaust and sump guards, front and rear disc guards, a toughened chain guide, Raptor foot pegs, an oversized KTM Powerparts quick-fill petrol tank, Twin Air air filter and filter covers, soft Metzeler tyres, CFX gripper seat, Renthal chain and sprockets, Clacson tow rope up front, and some oversized hand guards. The homemade oversized hand guards are actually a little treat for myself, coupled with heated grips, they help to keep my hands warm and dry. Every little helps!





really don't think I'd like to fully focus on one aspect of the sport and from day one I've taken pride in being able to win at everything. I suppose that's why I had the nickname "*The Iron Man of Enduro*".

To earn a crust recently I've held a number of training schools and it has been thoroughly enjoyable. I find it really satisfying watching a rider progress in a day, if only a little here and there. It's a great feeling knowing that you've helped someone make their riding easier. I'm not sure if it could well and truly pay the bills but there are certainly going to be a few more David Knight training schools this year.

Nothing is set in stone as of yet, but I've a quiet passion for racing on the black stuff. I own a race-bred superbike and enjoy the odd track day. I competed in and won the Pirelli Masters a few years back which basically pitched motorcyclists from all kinds of disciplines together to see who was the best all rounder. On the road bike I even managed to beat a few professional road racers. Maybe with my '*endurance*' background I might try and sort a deal to race the Endurance World Championship, but that's only an idea floating around.

Another potential avenue that I need to consider which has been offered to me over the years is to compete on a rally bike.



“Recently I’ve held a number of training schools and it has been thoroughly enjoyable. I find it really satisfying watching a rider progress in a day...”





In the past, contracts to race the EWCs have put a quick stop to that. But that's no longer the case and the Dakar really interests me, every year I follow it very intently. I may just pick up the phone shortly and see if any of those offers are still valid.

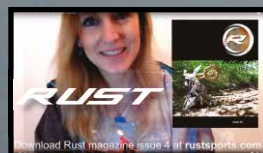
I've got a lot to think about this year, but my big passion always has and always will be enduro racing. No matter what, I'll always carry on riding and I'll always carry on chasing the victories, but it might just be I'm at that time in my career where I need to diversify and direct my focus elsewhere, but only just so long as I'm still involved. Enduro is my life.



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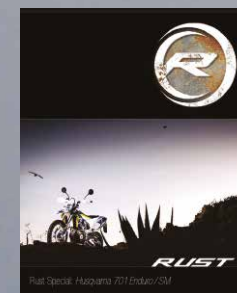
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IN PRAISE OF THE HONDA CRF250L

Images: Steve Halsall & Jimmy Tupman



Last issue we ran through the modifications we made to our Honda CRF250L during its time with us in 2014. The model goes from strength to strength – latest converts being Austin Vince and Lois Pryce – but here two of our readers take the opportunity to share their praise too...

L OF AN OVERLANDER

Nice to see a good mix of bikes in the magazine. I thought I'd reply to your Honda CRF250L article (*RUST 6*) and give the CRF-L a bit of praise. I bought mine for £2700 and thought I'd just have it as a fun commuter. Bit by bit I have come around to thinking it can be made into a pretty competent rugged road bike. With the suspension upgraded it turned out to be pretty decent on most trails and one of the easiest bikes to ride, it's so soft on the power delivery and yet will climb very well. So I've

gone further into it and with around £1500 invested I'm quite impressed by its ability to take me to pretty much all the trails and places that most folks would ever want to go, and with the IMS tank it will chug along for 200 miles.

I've done a few mini trips to the North Yorks peaks and South Wales and I've been very pleased with its ability to travel and trail. With a few comfort aids – like the screen, Airhawk seat and heated grips – it's 10 hour good. I will be taking it further afield in the future. Portugal off-road is on my hit list, I think it will be ace in those tight woodsy

trails, easy to manage and turn around.

It's no enduro bike, but it handles the trails very well and my aim is to make it into a mini adventure bike and the longer I've owned it the more seriously I take it as an overland proposition. It's not a thrill machine as such but it's so easy to ride, beautifully balanced and almost unkillable. Drop a 13T sprocket on and first gear is proper novice-low and yet the six-speed 'box lets you hoon around at 60mph with little bother. Add in the huge service intervals and tyres that can last 6/7000 miles and 75mpg fuel consumption and it really starts making a lot of sense. A CRF400L would be even more awesome.

The old DR-Zs, DR350s and TT-Rs etc are a dying breed and good ones can cost as much as the 400 mile old CRF-L. A good bike for me, I really can't knock it.

Steve Halsall

L OF A TRIALS IRON TOO

Hi Guys, I'm so pleased that TBM lives again.... well in one form or another! Loved the articles on the CRF250L, I think you guys did a great job of testing it for what it is. I fully agree with your modifications for trail use apart from one thing, AC10s! AC10s are horrific on my 250L. I use Mitas trials tyres: ET01s. Good enough for a gold medal on the Exeter Trial, and they don't last too bad on the road either, I've even been touring France on mine.

Jimmy Tupman



Missing in Adventure?

Whatever happened to the KTM 690 Adventure...?
The obvious successor to the 640 Adventure model and the
bike that never was. We look back at the 640 Adventure and
ask is the 690 Adventure about to launch...?

Words: Jon Bentman Photos: KTM (H. Mittebauer, J. Cunha), Ramona Schwarz & TBM archive

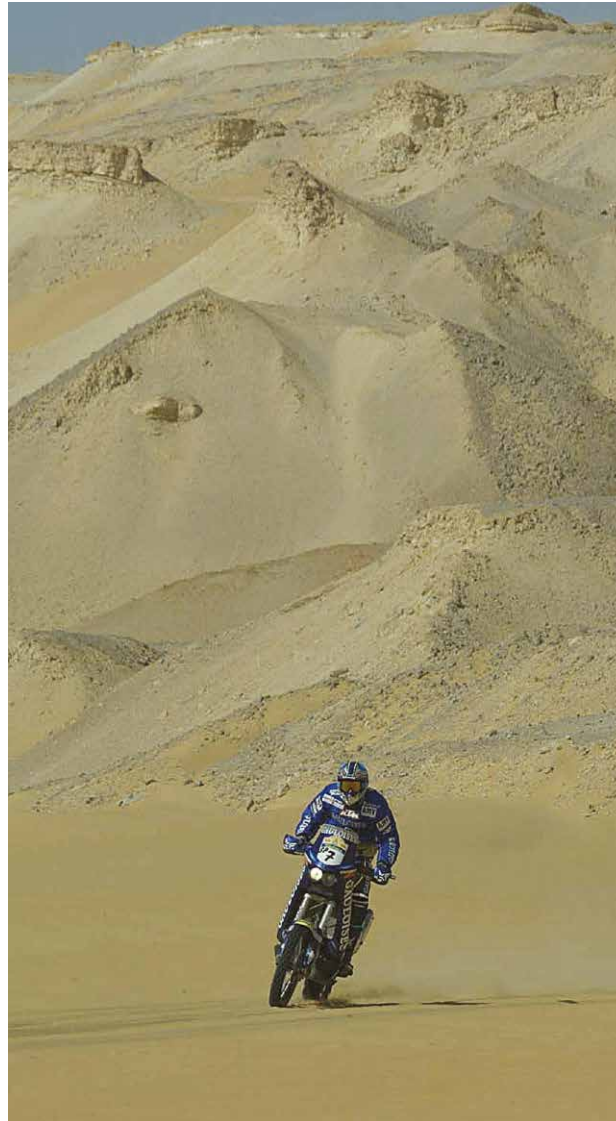


IT'S THE QUESTION we hear time and again - and we constantly ask of KTM: when is the 690 Adventure coming? We've only been waiting nine years, surely it must be due some day soon? Of course KTM's answer is always the same... there will be no 690 Adventure.

And that's a curious stance. Adventure motorcycling has never been more popular than it is today, the internet is awash with round-the-world-on-a-motorcycle blogs. There are countless tour companies who'll guide you on a little desert-seeking adventure down Marrakech way and - if you've got the money - take you all the way east to Ulaanbaatar.

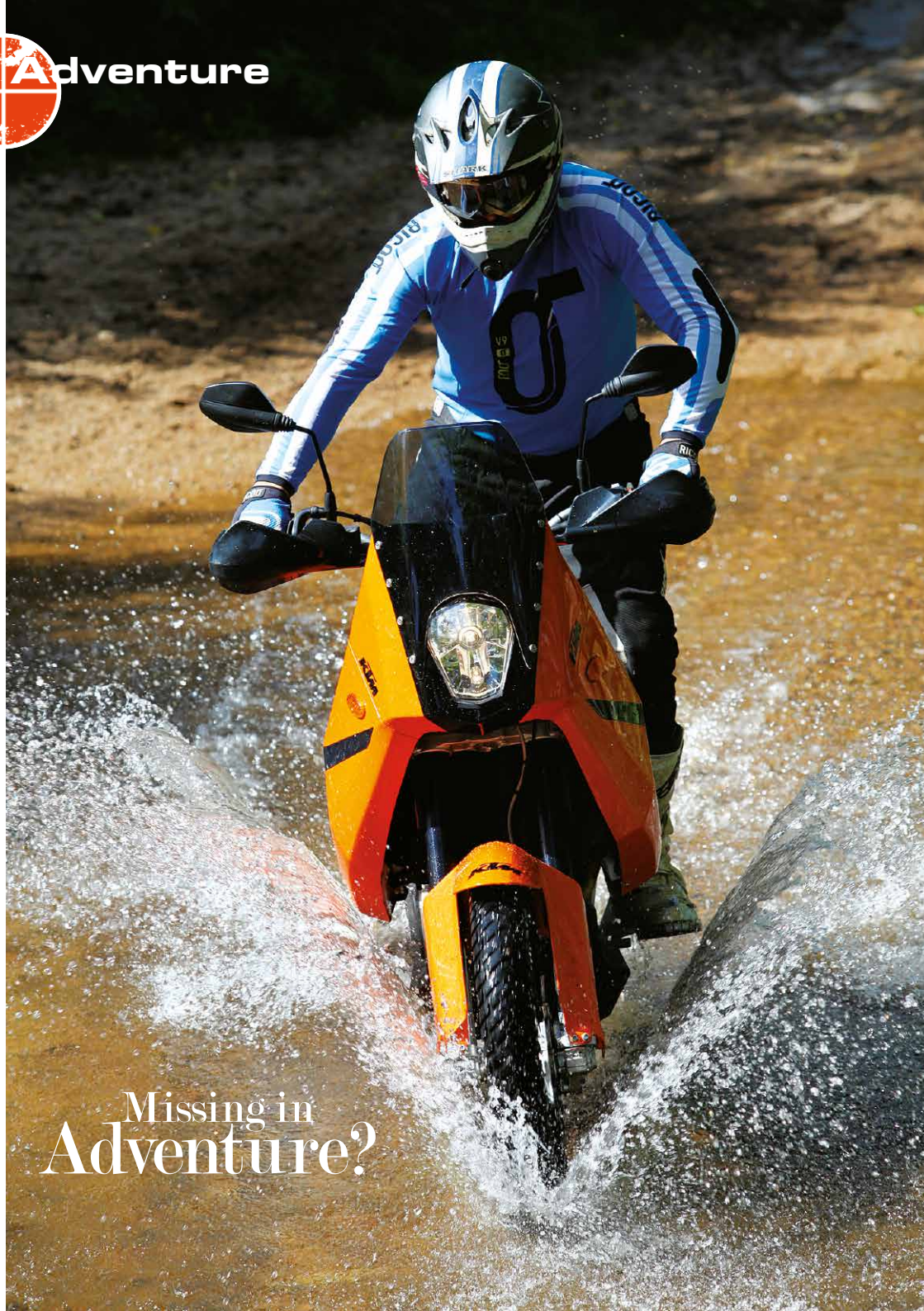
And yet KTM - always the most innovative and adventurous of bike manufacturers - refuse to make us a mid-size production adventure bike.

And that's all the more galling because that's exactly what they did do for the decade from 1997-2007. How fondly we remember the KTM 640 Adventure, and how richly we covet the remaining examples (*we're talking premium values as a second-hand purchase*).



Cyril Despres, Team Gauloises 2000



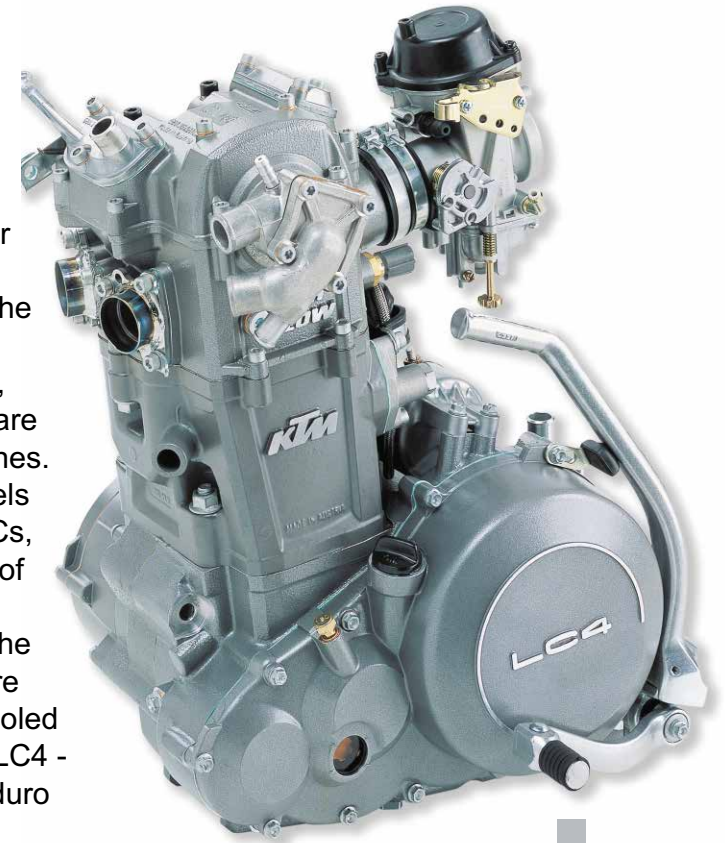


Missing in
Adventure?

Where It All Began

Okay, let's turn the clock back to 1997. We're only three-to-four years after Stefan Pierer's acquisition of the ailing Austrian marque. There's a new impetus, new money, and KTM are developing new machines. In enduro the GS models have now become EXCs, there's been a first dip of the orange toe into the road bike market with the Duke, and now KTM are adapting their water-cooled four-stroke single, the LC4 - formerly a big-bore enduro engine - to trail and adventure duties.

The LC4 motor was already ten years old in 1997. Having first seen service as what was then termed a 'Hard Enduro' powerplant, its competition heritage was extended to rally-raid use. Heinz Kinigadner had been campaigning a rally version in the Paris-Dakar and while he'd taken the odd stage win - he confessed his (*world championship winning*) motocross background didn't give him the ideal temperament to last the full distance. In fact, from his seven Dakar starts he didn't finish a single one. Full Gasssss Kini!



There had been some successes mind, victory in the 1993 Atlas Rally and in the 1994 Pharaohs Rally.

By 1997 then the LC4 was well developed. Certainly KTM had ridden it hard into some of the toughest arenas, and so when they chose to enter the adventure market - still called 'big trailies' at that time - they delivered a machine that was way more rugged than had previously been offered.

Bear in mind we're at a time that is over a decade after the height of the first Paris-Dakar replica fad, when the likes of Yamaha's XT600 Ténéré and Honda's XL600M had brought long travel suspension and super-size fuel tanks to high streets all over Europe.

KTM followed in the spirit of those machines, but brought its own unique added-extra - the no-compromise competition-based motor. '*Only the essentials*' was KTM's claim at the time. The Adventure wasn't a toy, and wasn't a road bike in fancy look-at-me clothes, this was - KTM said - a bike for the hardcore enthusiast.

And that hardcore nature was evident to even the most casual of observers. With 280/330mm of suspension travel



Missing in
Adventure?



and a lofty 930mm seat height this was pukka enduro-rally spec. Those were 50mm WP forks, and the wheels - yes, proper 21/18in sizes - were built to take hard knocks. It had all the look and much of the spec of the proper rally bikes but with road-adventure modifications. That meant an electric start; a much heavier subframe to take not just a pillion but luggage too (*its load capacity is listed as 220kg*); and of course instruments: mirrors, indicators (*even a 12v outlet on the dash, ready to power a GPS*) - all of that stuff requiring a higher spec 200W alternator.

But the four-valve, SOHC, single cylinder motor was still



160,000km round the world on a 640 Adventure (Ramona Schwarz, Germany)

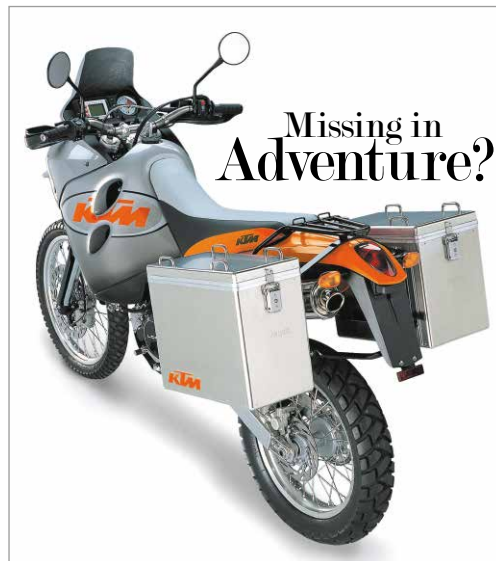
I'M EAST-GERMAN BORN - and when the Berlin Wall came down my wanderlust took the form of riding a motorbike around the world. Curious to find out what lay beyond the horizon, I quit my job, sold everything I owned and bought a KTM 640 LC4 Adventure. This liquid-cooled, four-stroke single was to take me on a two-wheeled adventure without end. Before riding into the unknown on March 8, 2001, however, I had to meet one challenge - I needed to learn how to ride a bike! The day after I passed my test in November 2000, winter

based on that original race engine and that meant that despite the addition of a balancer shaft, it still vibrated like a road worker's jackhammer.

Such vibration could have been seen as a weakness, but in fact the motor was built strong, with a roller bearing crank, needle bearings to the con-rod and bronze bushings through the top end. Oil capacity was a healthy 2.1-litres and with two Eaton oil pumps this meant oil changes could be extended to 5000km (3000 miles), and many owners would extend that! The competition origins of the motor weren't totally hidden, like many hi-compression singles it struggled to pull cleanly below 3000rpm and would need to be wrung out to 8000rpm to find max power of around 49hp (the red line is 10,000rpm), which with a wide-ratio five-speed box would be about 105mph - if the vibes hadn't defeated you.

Ready to Roam

If KTM's enduros were ready to race, the big 640 was certainly ready to adventure. The giant tank - with a 700km range - was perhaps the biggest attraction for many. But as well as that



came. This left me with no more than 80 clicks of riding practice (to my office and back) before I embarked on my self-imposed rookie mission - crossing the Sahara.

Everyone warned me, "On a KTM? Are you crazy? You'll be home defeated with a broken engine in three weeks at the latest!" Instead of being discouraged by the prediction of worst-case scenarios my fighting spirit came alive. The 640 being the perfect getaway bike: versatile, agile, light and an easy-to-ride all-round motorcycle with sufficient power (49hp). I wanted to prove to the world: Yes, it can be done.

Following my initial plans to cross Africa from north to south and take it from there, I jumped over to Australia, then I contin-



KTM's neat fairing that integrated with the tank addressed that second issue for overland travellers - a decent screen (wind on the head and chest becoming tiresome after months in the saddle). The wheel sizes and quality were enduro spec too, even the stock tyres were a good match for overlanding. It was simply a matter of adding touring cases or bags, plugging in the GPS and probably strapping down a seat softening device (sheepskin or air-seat) and off you go. Albeit after you'd spent



ued on to New Zealand and finally crossed the Americas. My KTM took me to the end of the world. We climbed steep passes in the Andes - well above 16,000 feet - crossed raging rivers, got stuck in saddle-deep mud, flew over the Bolivian salt flats, rode up many a dune, ate red bull-dust in the Australian Outback, got a good shaking on bumpy trails with infinite corrugations, rolled over sharp volcanic rocks, almost fell-off broken bridges, escaped from lions and whirled up clouds of dust.

And despite 160,000km (four times around the Equator) of extreme riding in harsh conditions the KTM never disappointed me. Generally, I maintained the bike 'in the ditch'. It got lots of TLC, plus an oil change every 9000 kilometres. When necessary, service parts like chain, brake pads, wheel bearings or

Missing in Adventure?



a couple of nights threadlocking every fastener.

With the design being based on KTM's rally bike it's no big surprise a few did become rally racers too, some masquerading as 660Rs, KTM's official factory-built rally machines. The rally bikes used bored and stroked versions of the 625cc motor and made a healthy 65hp so were considerably more energetic. There were plenty of other mods besides, not least the three fuel tanks which gave a monstrous 11.6 gallon capacity, requiring further strengthening of the sub-frame. The geometry was slightly altered too - probably for more stability in the dunes - and a steering damper helps. The 660R in fact only registered the one Dakar win, in 2001 with Fabrizio Meoni at the bars, but it's a special one for KTM as it was their first Dakar win - and

steering head bearings, were replaced. Only bigger operations, like open heart surgery, were conducted under proper hygienic conditions in local workshops.

With 100,000km on the clock, two Colombian mechanics - Carlos and Victor - helped to open my engine. Surprised at what good shape it was in, we only changed the intake valves and - preventatively - the timing chain. The engine would last until the end of my journey. It came 6 years and 38 countries later when I bumped into my soul mate. Long story short - here was the end of my RTW trip and the beginning of something new. For the time being, my beloved KTM is 'parked' at Touratech USA. The journey waiting to be continued...



Missing in Adventure?



KTM 620/640 Timeline

1997 / 620 Adventure

First model features a 49hp 609cc motor based on the LC4 600 found in KTM's motocross and enduro ranges. A single 320mm front disc (*with Brembo caliper*) does braking duties, there's a high front mudguard and 28 litre tank. The spec is impressive and rally-proven: tank and plastics by Acerbis, suspension by WP, speedo/trip/computer by Touratech, 21/18in wheels with Excel rims, there's a proper alloy sump guard, alloy swingarm, small alloy luggage rack, and rally-type fairing with twin headlights, hand guards and hard narrow enduro saddle(!). It's not so light though, a claimed 158kg, which comes up to 181kg when fully fuelled.

1998 / 640 Adventure

A year later the motor is increased to 625cc but is curiously known as the '640'. The motor and other small changes bring an 8kg weight saving.

2000 / 640 Adventure

Swap to USD forks. A Mikuni CV carburettor replaces the 40mm Dell'Orto to even-out throttle response, a switch on the CDI allows alternative engine/fuel mapping to suit low-octane fuel.

2003 / 640 Adventure

Motor is updated to overcome issues with main bearing failures. Now fitted with what is known as a 'Hi-Flow' head with larger exhaust valves - there's also an oil level sight glass on the crankcases. Clutch now hydraulic by Magura. Power gain is around 5hp.

2004 / 640 Adventure

New look: the front brake is changed to twin 300mm discs (*still Brembo*), the fuel tank is reduced to 25 litres and the seat becomes more comfortable or, rather, less painful.

2007 / 640 Adventure

Last year of production. KTM 690 launched for '08.

Missing in Adventure?



KTM 640 ADVENTURE

YEARS:	1997-2007
CAPACITY:	625cc (100 x 78mm)
POWER:	49-53hp @ 7500rpm
FUELLING:	Carburettor (Dell Orto / Mikuni 40mm)
GEARBOX:	5-speed
WEIGHT:	154kg
FUEL TANK:	25 / 22-litres
SUSP TRAVEL:	270/310mm (WP 48mm USD forks / WP monoshock)
SEAT HEIGHT:	930 / 945mm
STRENGTH:	Solid, well-engineered race-proven motor, close-to enduro spec chassis and suspension, big tank, no bull spec!
WEAKNESS:	Vibrates badly at high speed, seat like a plank

Other GREAT 650 adventure bikes that we miss...

BMW 650 XChallenge

What is it: Trail bike that took BMW/Rotax's long standing water-cooled 650cc unit as found in the 650GS Dakar / Sertão and plugged it in a neat, light almost-enduro-like package

Years:	2006-2009
Power:	53hp
Fuelling:	Fuel injection
Gearbox:	5-speed
Weight:	144kg
Fuel tank:	9.5-litres
Susp travel:	270/270mm
Seat height:	930mm

Strength: Rock-solid bombproof motor, great handling, light, ready to upgrade to full adventure spec (using aftermarket kits)

Weakness: Duff air shock needs instant replacement. Urgently needs add-on tanks



Honda XR650R

What is it: Possibly the best big-bore enduro bike ever! Gobs and gobs of power, enduro-type handling, king of the Baja 1000 for many years, makes strong and fun trail-adventure bike

Years:	2000-2007
Power:	61hp
Fuelling:	Carburettor
Gearbox:	5-speed
Weight:	133kg
Fuel tank:	9.8-litres
Susp travel:	285/307mm
Seat height:	939mm

Strength: Awesome near-enduro spec, Honda build quality, brilliant motor, light for this category

Weakness: Kick start only (*okay once you've got the knack of it*), small fuel tank - although quickly and relatively cheaply remedied



Missing in Adventure?

they've not been beaten since. The 660Rs are rare beasts by the way, KTM making around 40 each year and a fair few were destroyed in the deserts.

The 690

You can see how the introduction of the 690 in late '07 dealt with so many issues. Given that the 640 powerplant was essentially a 20-year-old engine it was well overdue for replacement. KTM also needed the latest emissions requirements to be dealt with at the same time. So the fuel-injected 690 motor did the double, offering 66hp (*that's 660R power*), a useful six-speed gearbox, cleaned up emissions and - at last - release from those crippling vibrations.

The curious issue, though, is that the 690 has only ever been delivered in trail bike trim - listed under 'enduro' not 'travel' in the KTM catalogue, and so only with a modest 12-litre fuel tank. It's also only ever been delivered with low-rise suspension, with just 250mm of travel front and rear (*not the full 300mm/12in spec of the old*



Yamaha XT660Z Ténéré

What is it: A proper factory-made big-tank adventure bike, ready to go

Years: 2008 - current

Power: 48hp

Fuelling: Fuel injection

Gearbox: 5-speed

Weight: 184kg

Fuel tank: 23-litres

Susp travel: 210/200mm

Seat height: 896mm

Strength: Super-solid RTW motor, big tank, proper fairing - and hey, we can still buy them new, the only proper full-spec long distance 650cc adventure on the market?

Weakness: She sure weighs some!



Husqvarna TR650 Terra

What is it: BMW/Rotax 650cc motor in a proper off-road chassis with proper off-road ergos

Years: 2012-2013

Power: 58hp

Fuelling: Fuel injection

Gearbox: 5-speed

Weight: 165kg

Fuel tank: 14-litres

Susp travel: 300/240mm

Seat height: 860mm

Strength: Kind of a remake of the XChallenge without the dodgy shock, handles well, neat styling too

Weakness: Italian Husqvarna concern imploded before the Terra could get a foothold in the market, so the model died with the Italians' dream - big shame...



Adventure), which has meant a more modest 280mm ground clearance (which could have been worse if the frame had been a conventional twin-loop design rather than the trellis type that's been adopted).

And despite repeated requests from customers, dealers and magazines alike, KTM has consistently refused to upgrade the 690 to full adventure spec. Today if you want a single-cylinder mid-size KTM adventure bike then it's the aftermarket you turn to - which seems strangely at odds with Austria's ethos of marketing 'Hard Parts' to existing customers. With the fuel tank now under the seat (very BMW!) the after-marketeters use clip-on tanks (typically 2 x 5-litres) in the conventional top-of-the-frame position to stretch total capacity to 22-odd litres. You'll need to be speaking to the same crew for a fairing too. Best example of such stuff are the excellent British-made Rally Raid kits, only you'll need around £750 for the tank kits, plus another £1500 for the fairing. That's right £2250 or thereabouts, then add £7799 for your 690R. So you can understand why certain individuals really want to see KTM build a 690 Adventure.



My Ideal Rally Bike (Mick Molloy, UK)

I'VE HAD THREE 640 Adventures: a '99, an '02 and my current one, an '03. The first one (*the '99*), was unreliable, but the second was great, no issues. The third one I've only just bought and have been stripping and preparing it for some ATRC rounds this year.

I came to the 640s after having 950s. First an Adventure then a Super Enduro; I couldn't fault the SE but it was too much, too fast and I could tell in time it would all end horribly. It was just too fast for the off-road. The 640 is the right size, with the right performance, something I can chuck around but still goes well enough. I'm 6'2" and 16-stone so I need a



Will there be one??

So here's the crux of the matter. Can we expect KTM to ever produce a 690 Adventure? Despite asking this question of them for the last eight years, we asked the guys in Mattighofen once again to address this conundrum. KTM's off-road product manager Jochi Sauer was uncharacteristically quiet on the subject, but we caught up with KTM's public relations manager Thomas Kuttruf and he had this to say. *'KTM's current LC4 strategy and model line up is based on two different chassis-fuel tank-airbox platforms. Street (Duke) and Offroad (Enduro-*

bigger bike and the 640 feels better than a 250 or 450. I'd have had a 690, perhaps, but the math makes my eyes water - £7k for the bike, that's okay, but to prep it to the standard of the 640 Adventure (tanks, fairing, suspension etc) that's another £3-4000. This '03 640 Adventure is barely costing £3000 when everything is done and fully sorted - and it's still a solid reliable bike, built to do big miles.

There's nothing I've found to look out for with the 640 motor, just do the oil changes and keep an eye on the valve clearances. It vibrates so you must keep an eye on the fasteners, and use thread-lock everywhere. And of course there's that vibration you feel when you try going faster on the roads - do 80mph and it's really not pleasant, but at a steady 65-70mph it isn't so bad.

I'm no Marc Coma, I'm not even up to the standard of some of the clubman rally riders in this country, but I like the idea of riding the 640 in rallies, the bigger bike makes it more interesting and challenging than on a 450. And I like the versatility the 640 Adventure brings - I'm seriously looking at a holiday ride into Spain to watch a MotoGP later this year.





SMCR). A proper 690 Adventure would require a third platform layout to achieve the combination for a powerful, off-road capable long distance machine (big fuel tank). Considering the effective market figures and sales volume to be expected, this huge effort to create an all-new LC4 package, unfortunately, can't be justified.'

And there the matter lay until in February 2015 the internet came alive - and not for the first time - with 690 Adventure speculation following the 'leaking' of a selection of 'spy shots'. Hopefully, like us, you're pretty sceptical about so-called spy shots. For instance in this example our spy was able to arrange himself nicely for a low-level shot of a cornering 690 development machine, then jump into a car to snap a neat tracking shot (where car and bike travel in tandem) before hanging around for an evening shot of the bike, while also being present for a convenient KTM and BMW F800GS double shot. Even M15



Missing in Adventure?

can't maintain that level of surveillance undetected.

Anyway, the 'spy shots' or factory leaked images as we like to call them were significant. For if you study them you'll notice almost immediately that this bike has the third platform layout exactly as Kuttruf alluded to. That is not a trellis frame as appears on the 690 but a kind of hybrid trellis-spine arrangement. And with that front down tube there's an obvious mounting point for a big fuel tank. The underslung exhaust is also another design element we often see on adventure models - leaving more space for the big tank. There's also something fishy about the subframe. As we know, on the 690 the subframe is also the under-seat fuel tank. But that's not so evident here - it seems slimmer - and we have to ask why the temporary little tank on the top tube of the frame, and why test it against an 800GS?

Of course we all now know that KTM - sorry Husqvarna - went on to launch the 701 Enduro late last year: less an enduro bike, more a mid-sized trailie. But whilst that machine addressed many of the issues the ADV market had raised (*longer travel suspension than the 690, the potential addition of OE long-range fuel tanks etc*), the truth of the matter is that it still falls short of a full adventure-spec machine. Oh and it's not actually a KTM!

So what can we say about the possibility of a proper 690 Adventure appearing anytime soon? Well here at RUST we still believe that the 690 Adventure is coming - and coming soon. And we think that the launch of the Husky 701 has made that likelihood even more pertinent than before.

As we know the Mattighofen factory is very keen on platform-sharing in order to maximise returns on development costs, and it stands to reason that if they're developing a long-range tank and screen to bolt onto the 701 Husky, that they will also fit them onto a KTM. In that case we can expect to see the 690 Adventure model appearing in the very near future indeed.

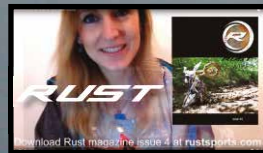
So be ready... there's almost certainly going to be a new KTM-built single-cylinder adventure bike on the way, though will it be a 690, a 701 or something even bigger... we'll have to see!



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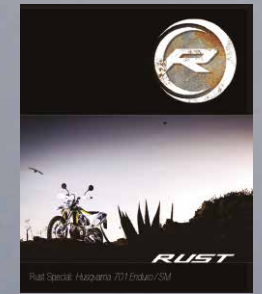
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MICHELIN ANAKEE WILD

Words: JB
Images: Michelin



Could this be the first high-performance off-road AND long-distance adventure tyre?

I'M JUST BACK from the BMW Motorrad International GS Trophy. It's been immense, chasing enduro (not adventure) trails across the remotest parts of Northern Thailand on the mighty GS. It was a ride of our dreams, although not without cost: chasing tough trails took a big toll on the tyres. The Metzeler Karoo 2s performed brilliantly, but after 1500kms they were cooked. And I'll admit I'm a bad





Product News

man for abusing the R1200GS's combination of monster power and clever rider aids, so after seven days the rear Karoo was shorn of all knobs. And this has always been the problem with aggressive, knobbly patterned tyres on aggressive, powerful adventure bikes. You can have performance or you can have longevity. But not both.

So to find news of Michelin's arrival into this very arena, on the day of my return, is interesting indeed. Keen, racy adventure types have, to date, relied on the likes of Metzeler Karoos, type 2 or 3, or Continental TKC80s to meet their sporting needs. A new player is then much welcomed – we crave choice. And the claims for the Michelin Anakee Wild sound promising.

Michelin have certainly understood the challenges. The Wild is firmly a 50/50 on- and off-road tyre, they say, while also addressing the traditional limitations of this type – on-road stability, comfort, and longevity.

The block pattern looks suitably aggressive; open enough to find grip in everything but slick mud. Stability is dealt with by clever design of the tyre's blocks (*knobbles*), particularly allowing a little more rubber contact when cornering on tarmac, while maintaining said fairly open pattern in the centre section for good grip on the dirt.

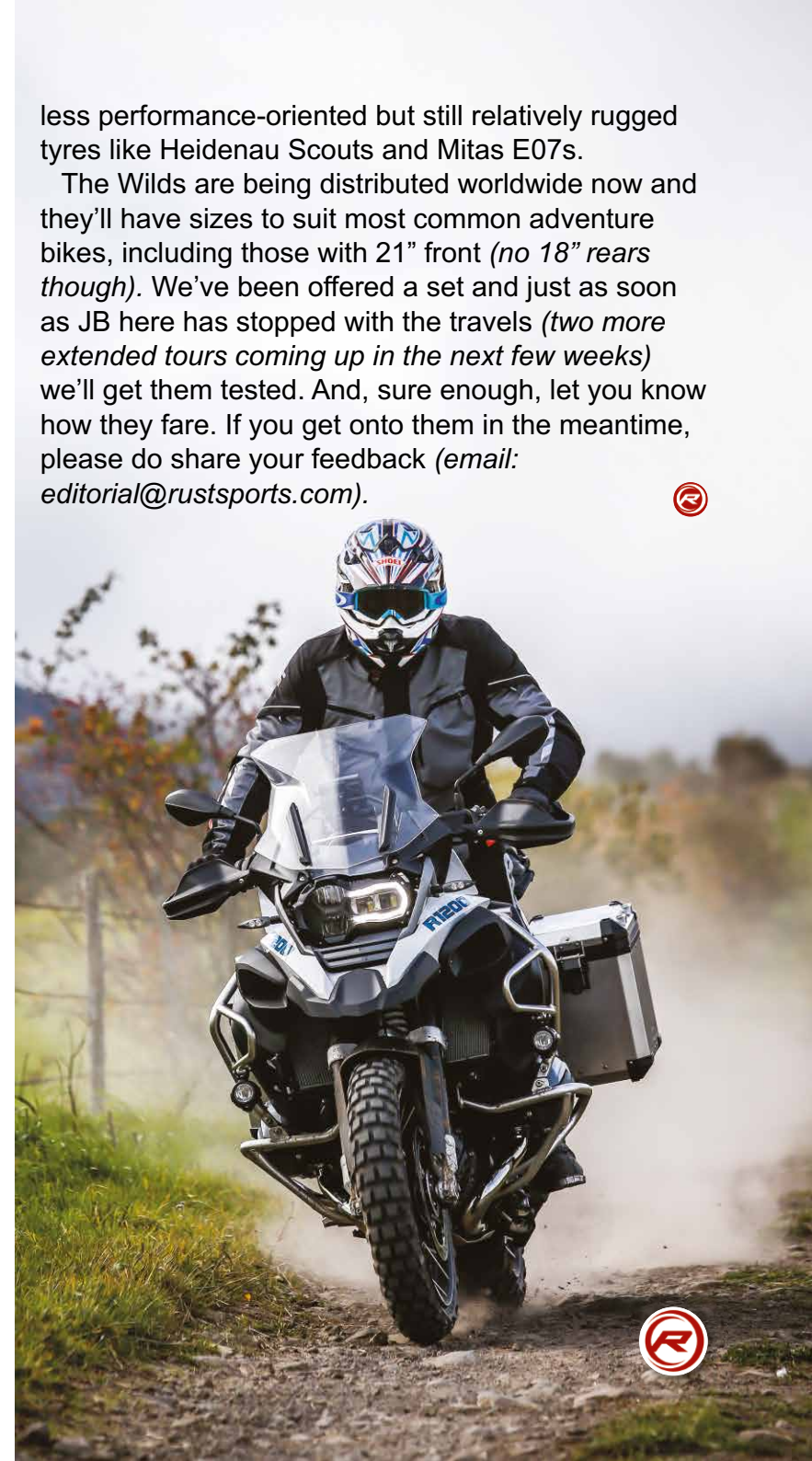
As for longevity – here's the interesting part – Michelin say they've been testing this tyre since 2013, much of that time in conjunction with adventure tour specialists T3 Aventure. They go on to say, when tested on R1200GSs, the Wilds have lasted whole tours intact and that includes a 12,500km tour across Mongolia and a 15,000km ride across South America. Those are the kinds of distances usually achieved by

less performance-oriented but still relatively rugged tyres like Heidenau Scouts and Mitas E07s.

The Wilds are being distributed worldwide now and they'll have sizes to suit most common adventure bikes, including those with 21" front (*no 18" rears though*). We've been offered a set and just as soon as JB here has stopped with the travels (*two more extended tours coming up in the next few weeks*) we'll get them tested. And, sure enough, let you know how they fare. If you get onto them in the meantime, please do share your feedback (*email: editorial@rustsports.com*).



MICHELIN ANAKEE WILD





TIME LORD

BY CHRIS EVANS,
PHOTOS: FRIENDS

Chris is struggling to figure it all out. No Dakar this year after 19 years on the bounce, but instead a 27 hour flight to New Zealand, then after 461 hours how long has his 350EXC got left to live? And how long is too long in the workshop?

AS I MENTIONED in my last column, for the first time in 19 years I didn't go on the Dakar Rally this year. Instead I was very much looking forward to sitting in my sofa next to a warm dog watching it all on French television.

Only that wasn't to be. At some point in my life I must have incurred the wrath of the God of the Very Large Carbon Footprint, who as a punishment for my missing the Dakar decided to send me off on a very long flight to New Zealand instead. If you've ever been you will know that it's a very beautiful place and I'm not just saying that to suck up to the new editor and fellow Kiwi (*okay, I admit the fellow Kiwi bit is stretching it a tad – JB: maybe Chris, but after the best part of a decade there, it's my spiritual home, and I do I miss it*). Anyway, it is also a very, very long way away and by the time I got home again I felt about as tired as if I'd just done 10,000 kilometres in a camper



van looking after two highly strung full-factory rally riders. Plus, chronic jet lag and a distinct lack of TV where I was staying meant I managed to miss almost all the action. In fact I would go as far as to say I was almost as out of touch with what was going on in the Dakar as if I'd actually been on the event itself. And if you've ever been you will know that that's very out of touch indeed...

On the upside, I did manage to get some quality riding in while over in the Land of the Long White Cloud. And the more I rode the more I started to think what a perfect place it would be for a Sport Adventure off-road holiday. Granted you have the aforementioned jet lag to contend with, and it ain't cheap to get there, but those small inconveniences aside, there's no denying that it is a very big country with a lot of hills in it and not a lot of people.

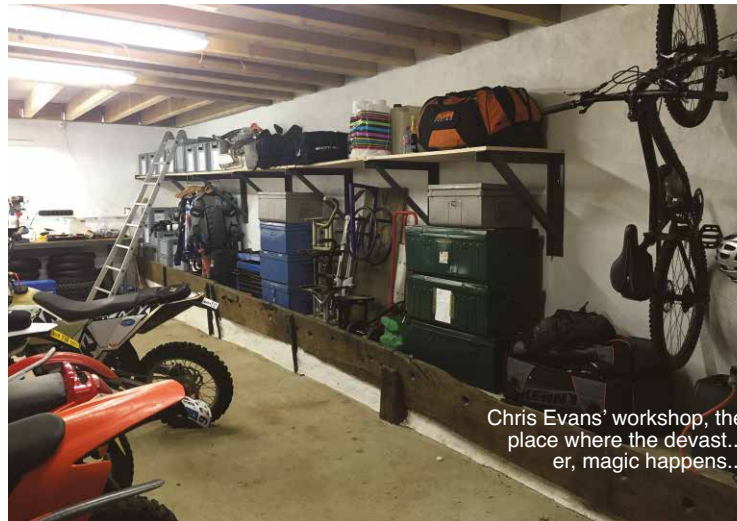
A recipe that we all know adds up to very good riding. I even managed to turn up a source of good condition hire bikes...

In between watching the TV I had planned to spend some quality time in my workshop getting everything ready for the coming season's guided trail rides (*Chris's schedule of guided trail tours through France can be found at www.sport-adventure.com*). The original plan was to sort all the spares, riding kit, order what was needed and rebuild the 350 and the 530. This might sound like a chore to some of you but for me it is getting worryingly close to my definition of heaven. Unfortunately, with two weeks out of my life spent on the other side of the world something had to give and that turned out to be the 530...

Rebuilding the 350EXC was an utter pleasure. Mainly I suspect because it didn't involve anything too complicated. It was basically just a question of bolting on a new set of plastics and a gear lever, sliding on new grips and pouring fluids into the right places and giving it a jolly good clean with my new steam cleaner – a piece of kit worthy of a column all of its own.

A couple of tasks did take me a little out of my comfort zone though, one of them being to fit a new seat cover. I had originally planned just to buy a new seat, but when I saw the price difference between that and a new cover I decided that wrestling with a staple gun might prove to be a worthwhile way of spending an evening. And that was despite having seen the disastrously wrinkled efforts of various acquaintances over the years. In the end my first attempt at automotive upholstery turned out to be a huge success and of

A couple of youtube tutorial videos later my forks and shocks got wrapped up and sent to someone who knows what they're doing...



course there was the added satisfaction of it being all my own work. Emboldened by the experience I was almost tempted to have a go at rebuilding my suspension but a couple of YouTube tutorial videos later my forks and shocks got wrapped up and sent off to somebody who actually knows what they're doing. When they came back and everything was put back together the whole thing looked a million dollars and

that despite the 350 now totalising 461 hours!

Of course like painting the bathroom, going clothes shopping with the wife or writing this column, sorting out the 350 took much longer than expected and left very little time for the 530. Which was a problem because it turned out that the 530 had a lot more that needing doing to it – including sorting out a worrying knocking sound from the engine. It sounds like the cam chain, but it could be the big end, but it shouldn't be anything at all because it was only completely rebuilt by someone who really knows what they're doing a couple of thousand kilometres ago.

But that isn't the only problem with the 530. No, the biggest problem is that nobody likes riding it very much. It supposed to be My Faithful Sweeper (*25 years on the job and counting*) Dominique's bike cos he's supposed to like riding big ruffy-tuffy four-stroke singles. But it turns out he likes riding 'my' 350 a lot more. Basically the 530 is too heavy, too powerful and was too difficult to fix economically in the allotted time frame.

So I made a difficult executive decision. I brought another 350. And once I'd bitten the bullet I was very happy with my decision. Cos much as I love messing around in my workshop, economically it makes absolutely no sense at all. It takes me too much time to repair things and too many things get broken in the process. And there's another bigger problem, which I'm reminded of every time I look at my 350's hour meter. Dirt bikes, especially dirt bikes that work hard for a living, simply can't last forever however much new plastic you throw at them.



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