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cyclist magazine

For the love of motorcycli

MARCH 2015

FREE

BACK
ON TV
March 5

Own the
Street

Harley-Davidson
Street 500



March 2015

Welcome to the March 2015 issue of Cycle Torque.

We've changed a lot of things in the print edition for this issue, quite a major revamp you might say. We think it's much cleaner and easier to read, and some of this has flowed onto the digital edition too. Hope you like it.

The Harley-Davidson Street 500 is on the cover, and it's a massive milestone for H-D in more ways than one.

There's plenty of other bikes too, including a massive classic feature.

We catch up with a Dakar racer, show you lots of products, our columnists will enthral you, and don't forget the second series of our TV show hits the screens again on March 5.

– **Chris Pickett**
chris@cycletorque.com.au

The logo for Cycle Torque, with 'cycle' in red and 'torque' in white with a black outline, both in a stylized, italicized font.

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FEEDBACK**



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Bathurst Track

THE Bathurst Regional Council is pushing ahead with its plan to build a second race track at Bathurst.

The council is close to securing an additional parcel of land near the Mount Panorama circuit, which will give them the land area needed to build an international level road circuit.

The council has already started talks with Dorna and are thinking big, with ideas of bringing MotoGP and World Superbikes to the Bathurst venue.

Plans for the second circuit include an automotive industry precinct, and the actual track layout is yet to be determined whether it would be separate from, or include, parts of the current and famous Mount Panorama circuit.

Member for Bathurst Paul Toole said a number of preliminary studies had already been undertaken. "Hopefully by the end of the year we will see some physical work begin on the new circuit," said Mr. Toole.

"I'm confident this track is going to happen. I have been lobbying Mike Baird, who is a strong supporter of motor racing and a supporter of a second track.

"He has stood on Mount Panorama and seen the potential. This is the motor racing capital of Australia and all the drivers and teams want to come here and race.

"I am determined to work with Bathurst Regional Council to give this project some real traction and end the talk-fest that's been going on for years," continued Mr. Toole.

The benefits the second track would bring to Bathurst and the Central West region are astronomical according to track advocate and member of the Second Circuit Action Group, Robert Taylor.

"The facilities are already there," said Mr. Taylor.

"It's four hours to Newcastle and to Wollongong, two of the most populous areas in Australia. Imagine how many people we would draw in if we had a second circuit." ■





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LAMS on the street

KAWASAKI has released the latest in its army of LAMS bikes, the Z300 ABS naked street-fighter.



Kawasaki has used styling cues from the larger 'Z' models and the running gear from the extremely popular Ninja 300 models.

We already know the 296cc parallel twin cylinder engine Kawasaki is using for the Z300 goes well, but it also handles well too. It has a sporty chassis set-up but also has the real world benefits of a more upright riding position than the Ninja 300 models. All the performance but in a more comfortable package. It also has a slipper clutch would you believe?

There are a number of cool colours available and it retails for a mere \$5,999 plus on road costs. You'll find them at your local Kawasaki dealer. ■



cyclo **torque**

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Thursday March 5

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More info cycletorque.com.au - 02 4956 9820

*Channel 64 in many rural/regional areas

Wild West bikes

WINCHESTER is known as the gun that won the west, but what's less well known is the fact the company actually made motorcycles for a short while too.



In the early 1900s Winchester commissioned the Edwin F. Merry company from San Francisco to build 200 Winchester motorcycles, using engines supplied by Marsh-Metz, one of the early pioneers of motorcycling in the USA.

These bikes were produced between 1909 and 1911 and were very high end for the time. Both bikes have seen auction action in recent years, with one selling for \$580,000 USD which was in 2013 a world record price for a motorcycle.

Both bikes have been restored and are the only two Winchesters known to exist. Interestingly they will be auctioned by James D. Julia, the world's foremost firearm auctioneer. It seems the name means more to potential buyers than the fact they are extremely rare and old motorcycles.

If you have deep pockets you can find out more at www.jamesdjulia.com. The two-day auction where the bikes will feature is held on March 15-16. ■

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Galloping Griso

ONE of the most underrated machines in Moto Guzzi's line-up has to be the Griso 8V SE. It's back for 2015 and is in dealers' showrooms right now for \$21,500 ride away. It only comes in the red/black colour scheme too.

The "Quattrovalvole" engine features the 90-degree V-Twin engine layout along with a single overhead camshaft and four valves per cylinder. This engine now produces 110hp at only 7500rpm and 108Nm at 6400rpm.

Named after the wicked character from one of Italy's most famous literature pieces 'I promessi sposi' by Alessandro Manzoni, the Griso 8V SE is one of the most unique and nicest machines to ever be produced by Moto Guzzi in our opinion at least.

Whether or not you think it's wicked, as Moto Guzzi seems to, the bike is a gem to ride, with plenty of power from the V-twin engine and plenty of handling prowess too. ■



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Top of the pops

TEAM UK has done the unthinkable, winning this year's Island Classic International Challenge.

Over 530 bikes and riders were entered for the event, probably the biggest in Australian history. While all the racing was awesome, there's no doubt the International Challenge was the headline act. This year there were more crashes, blow ups and spirited riding than usual.

A number of Aussies crashed on oil in one race and this caused havoc with machinery and race completions as the event went on. But the Poms didn't have it all their own way, with engine dramas and crashes of their own. The Kiwis and Americans also had plenty of issues, with America coming third in front of our Kiwi cousins, but it was the UK team's consistency that gave them the win, despite Australian riders winning three of the four races.

Northern Ireland's Ryan Farquhar was the highest individual points scorer in the International Challenge, and fellow TT rider Connor Cummins coming second, and making it a UK 1-2-3 was three-time individual winner Jeremy McWilliams.

"This is a great day for the UK team, and understandably there's a fair bit of emotion in the pits at the moment," said McWilliams. "The International Challenge is extremely tough and you've got to be there in every race.

"This weekend, we had solid riders and solid equipment and we proved to be more reliable when it counted.

"But we still had our fair share of issues, but to get past those headaches and take the victory is an absolutely sensational result.

"And congratulations must also go to Ryan (Farquhar), who was incredible all weekend."

"This is all a bit of a shock really," said Farquhar, a long-time supporter of the International Challenge. "Race four was really all about playing the team game, but in the latter stages I knew what the equation was and I just really put my head down."

That seems to be the way to play this game. Rather than going for individual honour this year it seemed the smart way was to conserve the machine as best as possible and make sure you were getting decent points in each race. A good example of this was Team New Zealand's Damien Kavney on his beautifully prepared Suzuki XR69. He finished fourth overall on a machine not as well developed in the horsepower stakes as the super fast ones at the pointy end.

Shawn Giles was the highest place Aussie individually in the International Challenge at 5th place, with the rest of the top 10 taken by fellow Australians. A special mention has to go to Jed Metcher who rode a Suzuki Katana based superbike. Like many others Metcher had issues over the weekend but it was an extremely good showing from the young Australian who is heading overseas again this year to race full time.

In the Phil Irving Trophy for the most points accrued in the meeting it was a tie, for Michael Dibb and Levi Day, two of Australia's best classic racers. Both riders were super fast and reliable as usual and it was well deserved.

For full results on all classes you can go to www.computime.com.au ■

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Freddie can't wait

THE 2015 Barry Sheene Festival of Speed is getting closer, with one of the best classic road racing events taking over Sydney Motorsport Park on March 20-22.

It's more than just a racing festival though, there are trade displays, club stands, show-n-shine, swap meet and more.

The headline act is Freddie Spencer, the special guest for the meeting.

"I am so looking forward to participating in the 10th anniversary of the Barry Sheene Festival of Speed... It is an honour and a privilege to be the featured guest at this event. Barry accepted me as an equal from that first moment in April 1980 at Brands Hatch at the match races between the US and GB. His contribution to the growth and acceptance of motorcycle racing on the world stage in GB, Europe and the world was unprecedented at the time. He deserves more credit for making GP motorcycle racing cool!

"I am honoured to be the featured guest this year... And most important I am thankful to have called Barry my friend!

"I can't wait to share the weekend with all of you.

"This year is the 30th anniversary of my double world titles. Being able to accomplish that feat was the perfect example of team work. I could have never imagined that, 30 years later I would be celebrating this as the only person to have accomplished this feat. I want to thank HRC, my incredible crew and all of you for all the effort and years of support!

"See you all in March".

Sounds good to us here at *Cycle Torque*. To find out more you can go to www.barrysheene.com.au ■



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Vee Four

APRILIA'S RSV4 and Tuono have come in for a few updates for 2015, with the bikes arriving in the second half of the year.

The RSV4's fairing has been changed at the front, the engine is 1.5 kilos lighter and has an additional 15 horsepower, incredibly now over 200.

The RSV4 RR will replace the 'Factory' model, and will come with Öhlins suspension and forged alloy rims. It will be available in black only where the standard RSV4 will also come in grey.

For lovers of things naked the Tuono V4 now has over 175 horsepower from its 1100cc engine and comes in two colour schemes.

For 2015 the Tuono Factory will get a 'Superpole' livery, inspired from the machine which won the 2014 WSBK title.

Pricing will be announced closer to the on sale date. You can always head in to your Aprilia dealer to show your interest now though. ■



MA submissions

MOTORCYCLING Australia (MA) has advised that rule change submissions for the 2016 Manual of Motorcycle Sport (MoMS) must be received by Friday 13th of March.

The Manual contains the General Competition Rules, which govern the participation and conduct of Motorcycle Sport in Australia. Changes are sometimes made to these rules to make competition easier or fairer, to reflect changes in technology or equipment, or to make the meaning of the rules clearer.

Submissions must be completed on the official Rule Amendment or Inclusion Form and returned to Bronwyn Sorensen via email at rules@ma.org.au.

Thailand on bikes

PHUKET Bike Week, the biggest motorcycle event in Asia, will celebrate its 21st anniversary on 11th -19th April 2015.

The event is expected to attract over 10,000 motorcyclists and 50,000 visitors from around the world to Phuket, and is based in Patong Beach on 11th -13th April 2015 and in Phuket Town on 17th-19th April 2015.

Highlights include a motorcycle exhibition, bike parades, custom bike contests, live entertainment, tattoo contest, Miss Phuket Bike Week competition, and bike accessories and apparel from local and international suppliers.

For more information about this event visit www.phuketbikeweek.com.

Happy Sean

Here's a pic of Sean Seymour from western NSW, the winner of the Kabuto helmet from *Cycle Torque* TV's series one competition.

Good on you Sean, we're sure you'll love it.



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Urban Moto gets MV

URBAN Moto Imports is now the Australian distributor of MV Agusta motorcycles.

"The MV Agusta brand represents a big step forward for Urban Moto Imports and a new era for MV Agusta motorcycles in Australia. We have been in discussions with MV Agusta for sometime and have been genuinely amazed by their new outlook and goals for the future. We feel their recent partnering with Mercedes AMG has added a new dimension to the company that builds 'motorcycle art' and looks set to bring further innovation and leading technology in their motorcycles." said Joseph Elasmarr, CEO of Urban Moto Imports.

"2015 is shaping up to be a big year for MV Agusta internationally with new exciting models and competing in the coveted World Superbike Championship. Here in Australia we will first showcase MV Agusta at the first round of the World Superbike Championship at Phillip Island and we are also planning to enter MV Agusta in Australian road racing series."

GSR here

THE 2015 Suzuki GSR750 has arrived in Australia,

The naked machine is powered by a 750cc inline four cylinder liquid-cooled engine with good torque and power, so commuting, touring or weekend blasting will be no problem for the GSR rider.

Available now for a RRP of \$10,790, the Suzuki GSR750 comes in a Metallic Matt Black colour scheme and is backed by Suzuki's two-year, unlimited kilometre warranty.

See one at your local Suzuki dealer.

ISDE Sherco

THE 2014 International Six Days Enduro held in Argentina was hugely successful for Sherco with three of the six-rider French trophy team mounted aboard Sherco machinery.

Jeremy Tarroux, Fabien Planet and Anthony Boissiere were joined in success by Australia's own Jessica Gardiner who took the honour of winning the women's division and leading the Australian Women's Team to victory.

To commemorate this, Sherco has released a Six Days Limited Edition version of the 300SE-R and 300 SEF-R.

Features include a translucent fuel tank and unique graphics that include the discrete placement of the Australian flag in recognition of Gardiner's outstanding result. The front headlight surround also carries the signatures of the winning riders.

The 300SEF-R four-stroke comes with an Akrapovic exhaust system while the 300SE-R two-stroke is fitted with an FMF pipe and silencer.

The Sherco Six Days Limited Edition 300SE-R and 300SEF-R offer a unique package to any off-road riding enthusiast with an eye for a premium motorcycle with serious racing winning credibility.

The Sherco Six Days Limited Edition 300SE-R (\$12,490) and 300SEF-R (\$13,490) are strictly available in limited numbers. To own a piece of ISDE winning commemorative history, visit a Sherco dealer today. Be quick though. ■



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The Crowds Were Wowed

THE last couple of weeks of January were pretty intense for me, trying to get the February issue out after a short Xmas break and then attending two of Australia's biggest race meetings, one as a mechanic and one as a competitor.

First it was the Troy Bayliss Classic at the Old Bar oil track, the other the Island Classic at Phillip Island. Both were great meetings for a variety of reasons but in some ways both have possibly become a victim of their own success.

Take a look at the TBC for example. It is a long day, hot, and at times hectic. That aside, I had a fantastic time, but by the time the Americana races were starting I'd had enough. The rider I was helping, Zach Thackeray, had fallen while in second place in the Open 450 final, so I called it quits and headed home. Speaking to some other spectators after the event I got the feeling they thought the meeting went too long too, and had too many classes. The overall view was the meeting should centre around the stars and legends, rather than have juniors etc. I know this twilight event was there before Bayliss got involved to raise funds but it's almost got bigger than that and should maybe be a stand alone event.

Barely a few days later I was off to the Island Classic. Normally I'd be away for a week but my friend Brian was also entered and was able to take my Ducati race bike down for me, so I was able to fly down.

This meeting now runs effectively

for four days, with Thursday being a separate open practice, Friday qualifying and the weekend for racing. There were over 500 machines entered and that was after the promoter stated in the supp regs you could only enter two bikes per rider. There are so many classes and machines now it's almost running out of time to run them all.

There was also lots of talk about the International Challenge machines and riders. This is the headline act of the Island Classic and rightly so but many competitors were unhappy with the level the machines in the International Challenge (Period 5 Historic) have been allowed to be modified, also rightly saying it has gone way beyond the reach of the regular classic racer.

That may be the case but it's also a fact that these regular racers have a P5 class to race in, totally separate to the International Challenge.

I have to say that while I understand where they are coming from I believe the Island Classic is one of the best meetings I've ever raced in, and one of the best run. I love seeing riders the calibre of Cam Donald and Jeremy McWilliams going at it in the International Challenge, and they are only two of the superstars in the race. Fast, furious, expensive, exciting, carnage, oil spills, blow ups. You name it, the big races had them.

Some riders complained the rules are out of control but the International Challenge has its own rules, just like the Classic TT on the Isle of Man, and I'm OK with that because



it's a fantastic spectacle.

For me though it's more about the fun. I went down with a number of racing mates and I almost didn't care where I finished. For the record I was mid pack in Formula 1300 but as much as it was fun racing, I had just as much fun camping at the track, eating pizza in Cowes and sitting around the BBQ at the campsite where the ideas on historic racing flew thick and fast while the snags were sizzling and the beer flowing. One great idea, well I think it's a great idea, was from Greg Dalsanto, a name which will no doubt be very familiar to those in the classic racing game. He reckons the International Challenge should include an Italian team. You can be in it if your last name is Italian, like his, or you ride an Italian machine, and as the rest of us were on V-twins from Bologna there were no disagreements.

The TBC is in its infancy really, while the Island Classic celebrated 22 years in 2015. I congratulate the promoters of both events but I can see some changes needing to be made, however minor, to ensure they continue to thrive.

– **Chris Pickett**



Email us your feedback



The Mareeba Supercross

THROUGHOUT the 1980s hundreds of us moto heads would criss-cross Australia in our little four cylinder box vans to compete in dozens of one-off, non-championship events and here is the story of what was one of the best meetings on the calendar, the Mareeba Supercross.

Before I go any further I will take you back to a time when supercross was just kicking off here in Australia so we didn't have special jump-infested practice tracks and we simply rode the same bike we were racing motocross on the week before. The tracks would traditionally be built inside the local speedway or showgrounds and the layouts would be a series of left and right hand berms with double jumps, triple jumps, quad jumps, table tops and stutters in between.

And it was a time of experimentation as far as the size of the jumps go with some of the triple jumps being bigger than the ones being used on today's tracks and I can remember a couple of supercross events where the police actually stopped the racing because of the amount of riders being taken to hospital.

Just about every state had at least one Supercross event, there were heaps of them, from major cities through to regional centres.

Supercross was a big deal right around Australia with full grids of riders and huge crowds at every event no matter the location. Mareeba is 60km West of Cairns and has one of the best rodeo grounds in the region. One Sunday afternoon back in 1980 Sid Carucci

was driving his dust-encrusted son Mark home from a motocross club day and as they drove by the rodeo grounds off to the left Sid said to his son, "Wouldn't it be great if we could race in there?"

The 16-year-old Mark looked at his dad and said, "Nah, they would never let us race in the rodeo grounds Dad." Sid Carucci drove home in silence and the very next week he attended the monthly Rodeo Committee meeting and put to them the benefits of hosting this new thing called 'Supercross' at their facility and thanks to the Carucci family and a very committed club the annual Mareeba Supercross was born.

Over the next decade the Mareeba Supercross was well worth the drive to FNQ thanks to a sensational track, great lighting, second to none organisation, super sexy trophy girls and the club members involved were the ultimate hosts.

I made the trek to Mareeba from 1982 through to 1987 and went toe-to-toe with the local favourites like 1982 winner Mark Carucci and Steve Akers as well as some of the fastest riders of the time like Stephen Gall, Steve Dinsdale, Alex Kidas, Dave Armstrong, Bryan Flemming, Sam Kendall, Tony Fenton, Paul Smart, Dave Armstrong and James Deakin. We all tasted some success in Mareeba.

There was one particular race in 1984 or 1985 where I was in a battle with Armstrong and Kidas for the lead in one of the finals on the night. Dave was riding the berms at absolute warp speed and was getting away a little so I started following his lines and ripping the berms to a point



L to R – James Deakin, Dave Armstrong, Alex Kidas.

where I was dead-set shitting myself but I hung in there and with just one corner to go Dave and Alex ran wide and got hung up in the bunting and I went through for the win.

And what happened next had never happened to me before or since. As I crossed the line I could hear screaming and applause that wasn't part of the main crowd, I looked around and there was Bobby Carucci and the rest of the lap scoring ladies leaning dangerously out of their vantage point to offer their appreciation for a great race.

Each year the club hosted the presentation in a huge under cover area at the back of the rodeo grounds and once the trophies were handed out there would be an absolute cracker of a party.

This is one of the reasons why the Mareeba Supercross was the best in Australia. From the moment you arrived until you started the long drive home, these people just never stopped giving. Sadly Bobby Carucci has passed away and the Mareeba Supercross is just a memory for all of us who were part of that great event but it's fond memories like these that stay with you forever.

– Darren Smart



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LAMS



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Soccer-fication

FORTY years ago Gregg Hansford signed with Kawasaki after several years sizzling his way to the top of Australian road racing aboard Annand & Thompson Yamahas. Although his time at Special K got off to a painful start with a pair of fractured wrists at Bathurst, Hansford's Kawasaki deal would provide an entrée to world championship competition in 1978 and '79. In 1975 Giacomo Agostini won the first-ever two-stroke world 500cc championship, and an 18-year-old Johnny Ceccotto piloting a private Yamaha TZ750 finished second to Yamaha USA's Gene Romero in the Daytona 200. Hailed as the new Agostini, Ceccotto won the 1975 world 350 championship from Ago on debut.

Romero was Kenny Roberts' Yamaha team-mate at the time. The 1970 AMA Grand National Champion had hit top form in the period leading up to Daytona. In the final AMA road race of 1974 at Ontario Motor Speedway, Hansford said he was following the white-hot Romero for a number of laps, and started scraping his knee for the first time trying to keep up with 'Buritto'. The pace got so hot that Hansford stepped off in his pursuit of Romero. 1975 is also remembered for the stunning run of John Warrian and his Ducati 900SS in the Castrol-Six Hour. Warrian duelled fiercely with Team Kawasaki's Murray Sayle in the wet and later with Gregg Hansford in the dry, blasting the loud horns on the Big Duke as he came upon traffic on Bitupave Hill. Playing to a national TV audience in glorious colour, the dice for the lead between the gorgeous SS and the green meanie Z1-B was a ripper. A fairy-tale finish was beckoning until the Duke's gearbox packed it in with less than 30 minutes to go. The sight of Warrian pushing the stricken 900 up pitlane as Hansford circulated calmly to claim the win is one of the most enduring images of the endurance classic. Warrian had ridden the race solo, a strategy banned from 1976 onwards.

Over in provincial France in 1975, a 20-year-old postman was looking at ways to overcome the fears that had overwhelmed him since childhood.

Afraid of water and heights, Christian Sarron noticed high-powered motorcycles buzzing around his town and decided to buy a Kawasaki KH400 triple with the money he made delivering mail. A newbie to motorcycling, Sarron was made aware of the Kawasaki Cup open to standard KH400s so he entered the first round at Magny Cours along with 506 other KH400 owners, winning his first-ever race and conquering his fears. Within two years, he was dicing with Steve Baker, Kenny Roberts, Barry Sheene, Gregg Hansford and Johnny Ceccotto in the 1977 World Formula 750 championship.

I had a long chat with Sarron recently. He is the only rider to have spanned the eras of Ago, Baker, Roberts, Hansford and Sheene to Spencer, Lawson, Gardner, Rainey, Schwantz and Doohan. The era of the 'Unrideables' from 1985-1991 is without doubt the most brutal in modern GP history as Christian attests. "We were all afraid," says Sarron. Many called Sarron brave, but he says he was not fearless. The racing was very hard-fought but Sarron made a very valid point. "In all my time racing 500s there was never any aggressivity (sic), not once was there a bad move." It was a different era of course. Sarron came up through the ranks of European GP-based bikes, while the Americans and Australians emerged from dusty dirt-tracks and brawny Superbike racing. The racing was tough but fair.

In 1996 Valentino Rossi entered the 125 world championship. Racing has never been the same since. Ninety-nine per cent of the racing Rossi introduced was brilliant but by his own admission in the case of bumping Sete Gibernau off line at Jerez in 2005, it was "a hard over-take". Rossi re-wrote the rule book on passing and these up-and-comers took note of the new paradigm in overtaking etiquette.

Whenever they're downing pizza and provincial Italian wine at their favourite restaurant, Rossi and his entourage often talk about all the great passing moves, and how Valentino can best



Christian Sarron

them. For some European riders, a brilliant, high-risk passing move is like scoring a long-range soccer goal. The more daring the greater the legend. The rules of soccer forbid a defender using his arms/hands to tackle a player, yet I see hands and arms all the time. A defender can run a player off the ball using his shoulder, but he cannot barge a player off the ball but I often see that go unpunished too. Such was the rise in barging riders off line in recent years that Race Control moved to stop the soccer-fication of grand prix motorcycle racing, and penalties have been handed out. Call me a dinosaur but dices like Warrian v Sayle/Hansford 40 years ago should be the template for all racing.

– Darryl Flack



Email us your feedback



Minority report

DIFFICULT to believe it's seven years ago, near enough, since we met Art and George at that Day's Inn on the outskirts of Indianapolis. We'd ridden over from Los Angeles and were bound for Washington DC; and one of the stipulations I'd made about the trip was that we would stop at Indy for the grand prix and a general poke around the ancestral home of single-seater motor racing in the USA. As it turned out, I'd been to a NASCAR race before leaving San Bernardino to meet Dick, my travelling companion, so one way and another I'd had a fair look at the state of American motor sport by the time we flew home.

George had been retired for some time when we caught up with him. I don't recall what he'd done for a buck, but in 2008 he would have been climbing up towards 70 and was still getting out from under his wife's feet by riding one or other of his bikes to various corners of the States. Art was seven or eight years younger and still working as sales manager of an engineering outfit somewhere down on the Kentucky border. He was riding an ST2 Ducati ('Doocarrtti') which I thought ill-matched to George's BMW F650, but there's nothing new in friendship between outwardly ill-matched beings – half an hour on YouTube would provide plenty of weird evidence for that.

They adopted the role of hosts and showed us around. In classically American fashion they'd parked their bikes after making the six-hour ride from home and spent the rest of the weekend running about in a hire car. They were delighted to receive the car pass that was in my press pack and were fascinated by the outcome of my interview with Kenny Roberts, but they were there to eat, drink and go to the races and we were happy to tag along. It was their idea on the Saturday night to go to the Indy Mile, newly restored to the AMA dirt track calendar, so we had beer and chips, cheered Mr Roberts when he arrived and enjoyed the racing – it was the best event of the weekend for my money, and much

more interesting to witness than Rossi's win in the MotoGP race the following day. The evening's competition renewed my respect for those XR750 Harleys, too. A great meeting, no doubt about it. Hell, I even bought a T-shirt.

While we were perched in the stands at the Indy fairgrounds I asked Art about a sticker I had seen on the front of his bike that read 'Freedom isn't Free'. I knew what it meant of course, and had seen others before; what I didn't understand was how it applied to Art beyond a broad political statement. I found out after the races. First we called in at one of those stupefying \$10 all-you-can-eat buffet restaurants and then went to a motel some distance from ours but still ringed with bikes, and fell into conversation, this time accompanied by beer and bourbon, with a sizeable group of Art's mates. Turned out most of them had been in Vietnam together in 1970, serving with the 101st Airborne Division – the Screaming Eagles of Normandy, Ardennes and Hamburger Hill fame – in just about the last set-piece battle the Americans had fought in south-east Asia, at a hilltop named Firebase Ripcord.

We learnt plenty about the battle – it was a siege, not dissimilar in many respects to the much better-known scuffle at Khe Sanh – from blokes who seemed only too glad to have an audience. They'd seen stuff, they'd done stuff. We didn't learn as much about what happened after they'd returned but it seemed obvious to me from the little they did say about it: the country they'd come back to was different from that they'd left, that they were seen as instruments of a failed government's discredited policies, and had become on some level outcasts in their own backyard.

Looking about me that night, at quiet, withdrawn men with intense eyes, it seemed to me that this minority had



The boys watched a battle of a different sort at the Indy Mile.

sought comfort not only from the people who understood – themselves – but also from people who might understand – you and me; I wondered if they'd bought bikes as a way of expressing some individuality while giving themselves a shot at belonging to a community that might, just might, have some consideration for them at a moment in their lives when they thought society at large had failed them.

They had my vote, anyway: they seemed to me good, sturdy, family blokes who happened to have been in the wrong place at the wrong time and because of that they felt they were caught between a public that didn't understand and a government that didn't want to know. Sound familiar?

– **Bob Guntrip**



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**Is the first
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Own the Street

★ TEST BY NIGEL PATERSON, PHOTOS BY PATERSON AND HARLEY-DAVIDSON

★ RIDING GEAR: HARLEY-DAVIDSON HELMET, HARLEY-DAVIDSON JACKET, GLOVES BY FIVE GLOVES, DRIRIDER BOOTS.

HARLEY-Davidson is known as a manufacturer of heavyweight motorcycles for experienced riders, and until now you've had to get that experience riding a different brand of bike.

Even the smallest Sportster models - displacing 883cc - had a capacity too big for the Learner Approved Motorcycle scheme, and let's face it, they are too big and heavy for most learners to feel comfortable anyway.

That's changed, as of now. The new XG500 Street 500 is aimed fairly and squarely at the learner market, but it will also attract other riders, because this is the most affordable Harley ever. Prices start at 10 grand.

The Street 500 ticks most of the usual Harley boxes - it's got a V-twin motor, it's raw, stripped down to the essentials and it carries the Bar & Shield badge.

But is it a real Harley?

To build a 500 at the right price for a world market, Harley couldn't build it in the USA - so like many iconic machines, the badge is rolling out of a factory in Asia, in this case India.

The design is all new, and very modern - no separate transmission like in the big-bore Harleys, this is economic and reliable unit construction, where the engine and transmission live in the same housing.

Then there's the liquid cooling, four-valve heads, the multi-plate wet clutch and 17-inch front wheel... so the Street 500 is different to any Harley before it.

Despite the differences though, the Street 500 is unmistakably still a Harley. The Revolution X engine, complete with its finning to make it look air cooled, produces a satisfying thump, although you'll have to rev it harder than any other Harley. The air filter sits out and proud between the cylinders. The pipes snake their way from the pots into, well, a big, ugly pipe.

And customisation is built into the DNA of the Street 500. Harley-Davidson will offer an array of parts and accessories as long as your arm to make your Street 500 suit you as an individual, and custom builders everywhere will be able to make your Street 500 unique.

For the hipster crowd looking for street credibility, it starts here.

Harley's already started with the bike we have here. Wheels, pipe, grips, levers... bits and bobs everywhere are from the accessory catalogue.

The inspiration

Heritage is the name of the game for Harley-Davidson, so it comes as no surprise to discover the stylists went back to the past to find inspiration for the future. They chose the 1977 XLCR Café Racer as the template for the Street range. With its blacked-out engine, low 'bars, tall wheels and high performance engine, the XLCR has become a cult classic - in many ways it was ahead of its time. Marketed as a performance/sports bike, it was too expensive for the Harley faithful and not capable



enough to convince riders of Italian and Japanese machinery to switch, it wasn't a sales success - so many would be surprised it was chosen as a template for the Street.

However, the Street is for younger riders looking for sporty style and the XLCR's design fits in very well with the genre.

Revolution-X

The engine's the first Revolution X powerplant, Harley's first all-new motor since the Revolution power plant fitted to the V-Rod machines. This one's a fuel-injected 60-degree V-Twin, water-cooled and featuring four valves per cylinder and a six-speed gearbox.

Interestingly it has vertical-split cases, a single overhead cam on top of each pot and screw-adjusted valves.

While some might have liked a more traditional Harley engine - 45-degree air-cooled V-Twin - existing noise and emission laws combined with customer performance expectations probably made that impossible.

So the engine is thoroughly modern, and it's a sweet motor, although you have to rev it more than larger Harleys, which affects the exhaust note - it's firing more often than every second lamp post. Vibes are there, adding to the character and not annoying - they are tamed but not eliminated by the engine balancer shaft.

Performance is relaxed, although with judicious use of the clutch and a few revs you'll never lose a traffic light drag to a car. The Street 500 will scoot up to freeway speed limits promptly, and sit there comfortably all day long. Top speed? Difficult to say, but maybe around the old 100mph (160km/h) if there's a long enough straight.

Chassis, Suspension and Brakes

The Revolution X motor is wrapped in a new steel perimeter chassis which is narrow and built to be nimble in traffic and confidence-inspiring.

This means a low seat height, with the Street 500's coming in at 709mm - low but not really low. Getting one's feet to the ground was pretty easy, although it's certainly not the lowest seat in the business.

The seat could be lower if Harley had reduced suspension travel, but luckily they didn't - the suspension performance provides a comfortable ride even on bumpy surfaces. It's not sports-bike tuned, so it can be made to wallow and buck, but by then you're pushing the bike to its handling boundaries and beyond its design brief. You're unlikely to do this in the

bike's native environment of urban blasting, although scraping the footpegs through fast roundabouts is fun.

The suspension itself is a set of non-adjustable forks, complete with gaiters - those pleated rubber sleeves which hide the chromed fork leg. Originally these were used to protect fork legs from dust and stone chips, but I suspect they're used here for form rather than function - part of the way Harley keeps this bike as blacked-out as possible.

At the rear there's a pair of preload-adjustable shock absorbers, which for most people means set-and-forget - but your bike will handle much better if you increase the preload when a passenger jumps aboard, for example.

Stopping the Street is a disc brake at each end with twin piston calipers. Anyone with small hands will be disappointed Harley didn't fit adjustable levers, and anyone who has experience with modern, high-performance brakes will wonder why the Street 500's brakes are wooden and lack power. They aren't bad, but this is one area where experienced riders will notice the penny-pinching Harley had to do to get this bike on showrooms at under 10 grand. That said, most buyers will get used to the brakes and not have a problem with them, for they work fine once you get used to them.

There's no ABS on the Street 500, another cost saving, and that means this is the only bike in the Harley line-up without ABS. It's a shame the only learner bike is also the only one without ABS, but it's no surprise the cheapest one doesn't have ABS.



The important but boring bits

The fuel tank is small but the fuel economy's good (3.7l/100km, claimed), so range is fine. The tyres are Michelin Scorchers, so they're fine too, and the switchgear is international standard compliant, which means the indicators are on the left and push to cancel. They don't self cancel.

The instruments are all housed within one circular dial - an analogue speedo with an LCD odometer/trip meter. There are lots of idiot (warning) lights which are only visible when lit. The mirrors are too short and give a great view of your elbows, just like most bikes these days.

The transmission has six gears and final drive is a low-maintenance, clean-running toothed belt.

Warranty is two years and you get a year of complimentary Hog membership.

At 222kg ready to roll it's a heavy machine for its category, but it's a Harley, anyone expecting it to tip the scales much lower doesn't get it. They use lots of steel in these!

This means it's a little harder to push around the garage than a sub-200kg bike, but beyond walking pace you'll not notice the weight.

The upright riding position and mid-mounted footpegs offer heaps of control and confidence – you can even stand up on them comfortably when going over speed bumps, potholes and prone pedestrians.

An (almost) blank canvas

Wheel a Street 500 out of the showroom and you've got a nice new bike. But really, it's a blank canvas, ready to be turned into a work of art. You can choose to simply switch out a plethora of parts with custom style accessories from the H-D catalogue, or you might get radical and modify your Street into something like nothing else.

Harley-Davidson has commissioned a number of these machines, some of which were on display at the Moto Expo in Melbourne when the Street 500 was shown off for the first time to the Australian public.

If you follow Cycle Torque's Instagram feed you'd have seen a shot or two from the event for they were some of the coolest machines at the show.

For young, creative urban people, the Street 500 will be the basis for their bike – their styles, their ideas, their personality.

Urban riders who've avoided Harleys in the past because they've been too big,

too heavy and too expensive should be wowed by the Street 500, too. This is urban friendly, powerful enough and light enough to be urban transport. It's designed to get you through city streets with speed and confidence. Dump the quiet, huge standard muffler for a more open pipe and you'll really start to enjoy the Harley rumble - but it's not as deep as bigger Harleys, because physics plays a part – to make the 500 perform Harley had to fit four-valve heads in a short-stroke design and make it rev hard, which means it doesn't sound the same as a Sportster or Big Twin.

Learning on the Street

Learning to ride is all about confidence - don't have any and motorcycling is simply terrifying. The Street 500, while bigger and heavier than most 'learner' bikes, is slim and confidence-inspiring. You'll feel ready to take on the urban grind in no time, and getting through the traffic on a Street 500 is a lot more fun than doing so in a car or bus!

The steering is light and direct, so the bike goes where it's pointed. The power is moderate and delivered gently, so there are no surprises. The clutch is very light and the six-speed gearbox effortless to use, so it's a good package for a learner.



It's got soul

Of course, buying a bike because it's a good learner or commuting machine is all very well, but at the end of the day you want a bike because it satisfies the soul. That's where I wonder if the Street 500 works - sure, you'll be satisfied, for a while. The machine looks good, rides well, gives a satisfying throb and this will be ok for some.

For the others it won't be enough. After a while – a year, maybe a couple – they'll be back at their Harley dealer, throwing a leg over a Fat Boy and thinking how the repayments don't seem that high, how the extra grunt will make carrying a passenger that much easier...

The Street 500 is an awesome entry into the Harley-Davidson lifestyle. You'll probably want more eventually, but it's a fun ride until you do. ■



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feedback**



New bike, New factory, New Ideas

THE beginnings of the Street 500 - and the Street 750, which isn't coming to Australia this year - go back a few years. Harley's research showed real growth for the company wasn't going to come from building big bikes in the USA, where the company already has a huge market share, and it simply wasn't going to be economically feasible to build smaller bikes for a small American market and big international market.

So the obvious thing would be to build the smaller bikes overseas... which is what's happening, with the Street 500 and 750 being built in India, in a factory controlled by Harley-Davidson.

However, for the local USA market and research and development, Harley-Davidson is also building the Street models in the USA.

Someone will get a USA-built bike and an India-built bike together and compare them one day, but I doubt they will find too many differences.

Rumours of a smaller-capacity Harley started years and years ago (Cycle Torque published a rumour about the engine in 2009!), but by mid-2013 it was one of the worst-kept secrets in motorcycling. In December 2013 Harley-Davidson Australia hosted all the bike journos in the country to a lunch and the announcement of the bike - and they didn't even have one to display, and it wasn't going to be available for another 15 months...

The Street series is the first time Harley has built anything other than heavyweight bikes since the mid 1970s, and it's the newest platform for the company since the first V-Rod - that's 14 years! Having tried to expand under other brand names (Buell and MV Agusta were bought and respectively closed down and sold in recent times), it seems Harley's biggest asset is its name, so marketing the new bikes as Harleys was essential to their success.

New bikes were required, because Sportster and Big Twin models, even built in Asia, would not have suited the markets and been affordable anyway - and given the Indian motorcycle market is around 30 times larger than the USA's, you can see why Harley-Davidson would like a machine which will appeal to relatively wealthy Indians - and then there's Japan, China, Malaysia, Indonesia...

For the West, the Street 500 will be seen by many as a stepping stone bike until a full licence or budget is acquired. I reckon that's underselling the Street 500 though - many riders who are looking for a bike which isn't intimidating, expensive or complicated will love the Street 500, and may never consider moving to a larger machine. Harley-Davidson has been well aware the average age of buyers has been getting older and older with the Baby Boomers being the biggest buyers of Harleys - but that won't last too much longer with that age group starting to move into their 70s. The company needs to attract a younger audience, and the pictures being used to promote the Street models are hipsters in their 20s. ■

No Street 750, yet

AT THE same time as the Street 500 was announced a bigger-bore sibling, the Street 750 was also launched - but it's not coming to Australia, yet.

Visually the same, Cycle Torque suspects the Street 750 would be too close in price and capacity to the existing Sportster range to make it viable to import, while being too big for the LAMs market.

Engine-wise the 750 simply has a bigger bore with the same stroke to provide the extra engine capacity, so it's likely to rev pretty hard too - in fact it will be interesting to see how the real-world performance is compared to an 883 Sportster, where I suspect the smaller bike might do very well indeed...

The Street 500 could easily handle more horsepower, so the 750 might be an even sweeter ride - and if the 500 is successful, expect to see the 750 in showrooms in a year or two, where I suspect people will be trading up from their Street 500s. ■



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TWIN SHOCKS**

**REAR TYRE:
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**FRONT TYRE:
100/80-17**

**REAR BRAKES:
SINGLE CALIPER**

**TRANSMISSION:
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Multi-Monster

★ TEST BY CHRIS PICKETT, PHOTOS BY BRIAN DYER AND DUCATI

★ RIDING GEAR: KABUTO HELMET, M2R JACKET, ARLEN NESS GLOVES, ARLEN NESS BOOTS

DUCATI'S Monster is 21 years old now, and what a ride it's been so far. It's been available in many different specifications, and with a wide variety of engine sizes. One thing has remained constant though, it's always used a 90 degree V-twin, or L-twin as Ducati likes to call it, for motorvation. From 400cc right through to the latest 1200cc Testastretta version you see here.

The latest big-bore Monster is liquid-cooled but it's not the first, with the S4R Monster using a four-valve superbike engine over 10 years ago. But the underlying point is that since the early noughties you could buy a Monster with either a liquid-cooled four valve or air-cooled two-valve engine.

There's a different feel between the air and liquid-cooled models too, with the air-cooled engine all old-school and lumpy, and the four-valve donks all raspy and edgy. Both are great engines, just a bit different from each other. The power is different too, with the four-valvers having a definite edge in outright power outputs.

Same but different

But, that's not telling you all that much about the new Monster 1200 S is it? Styling wise it shares some styling cues to past Monsters but it is still quite a departure.

The trellis frame is very different, and well, there's more superbike in this Monster than ever before. The other thing you immediately notice is that you sit 'in' the Monster 1200, not 'on' it like every other Monster I've ridden. The riding position is definitely better for it too.

Helping here is the two-level seat height, 810 and 785mm. You can also get an accessory low seat if you are on the shorter side of the scale. And lighter people shouldn't worry about the weight of this bike either. It weighs just over 200kg with fuel but does feel lighter than that.

As you can see, our test bike had a single seat cowl covering the pillion's accommodation. It's easy to remove, and the seat is surprisingly pillion friendly, relatively speaking of course. Somehow I don't think your pillion in a million will enjoy a 1000 kay day, but a trip to the other side of the city, or out for lunch will be fine.

No Urban Cowboy

I was pleasantly surprised by the suspension. The standard Monster 1200 gets adjustable 43mm Kayaba forks and a Sachs single shock which has



adjustment for preload and rebound damping, so it's a decent set up without being too flash.

On the 'S' though, the suspension is Öhlins at both ends. The forks are massive 48mm units and are fully adjustable, while the rear shock is also fully adjustable.

Now, you'd think a bike like this would have pretty stiff suspension. In the past I've been critical of some of the suspension units on Ducatis, just being way too hard for our crap roads - but not this one.

I rode the Monster 1200 S across one fairly bumpy piece of road and was almost giddy with delight on how good the suspension was. I braced myself for the first major bump and couldn't believe how well the bike soaked it up. As the ride went on I almost didn't worry about the road. The suspension felt

very Multistrada like. Awesome.

Now the last big capacity Monster I rode over that same road was an 1100 air-cooled model. It was very stiff and was very flighty. Not all that pleasant. Of course it was great on smooth roads but how often do you get that these days?

When I got to some serious corners the front felt a little squirmy but that was down to it being set on the softer side. All I did was tweak the compression damping slightly and this all but went away, without losing the plushness it already had. It would still let you know when it was near its limits but I found this a great compromise. Top marks Ducati.

Technology Plus

The 1200 S is powered by the Testastretta 11-degree engine, the current road-tuned version of Ducati's 8-valve Desmo twin. It's a great motor with heaps of power and torque. The different power modes mean it can be aggressive and sporty or docile and friendly - your choice.

There are three riding modes available. Urban, Touring and Sport. With the fly-by-wire throttle you also get traction control and ABS is standard too. Each power mode has its own power output and characteristics, and also default traction control and ABS settings. You can tailor these independently but for me each riding mode was great. In case you're wondering, there are eight traction control levels, and three ABS. This is part of what Ducati calls the Ducati Safety Pack.

In Sport you could also loft the front wheel at will out of a corner, but we don't recommend that sort of riding on the road do we? Sport has 145hp on the 'S' model, while the standard Monster 1200 makes do with 135. That's some serious mumbo without being over the top.

Now we've established the bike is a hoot performance wise, what's it like on the brakes? Well, with twin Brembo 4-piston monobloc calipers and 320mm discs doing the stopping, it's as lively on the brakes as it is on the throttle. The only complaint is the rear brake which is average at best. You can turn off the ABS if you like too.



Wrap up

I've enjoyed my time on the Monster 1200 S. It's a very easy bike to ride. Ducati has improved the fuelling on recent models and it really shows. And on fuelling, the tank holds 17.5 litres, so expect around 240 kilometres from a tank of fuel.

There's more than enough power and handling performance to keep most riders more than happy, and this is the most comfortable Monster I've ever ridden.

Ducati's engineers must be commended for the improvements in the suspension too.

The standard 2015 Monster 1200 retails for \$19,990 and the 1200 S in red for \$24,290, or \$200 more for a white one.

Simply put, this is the best Monster I've ever ridden. ■



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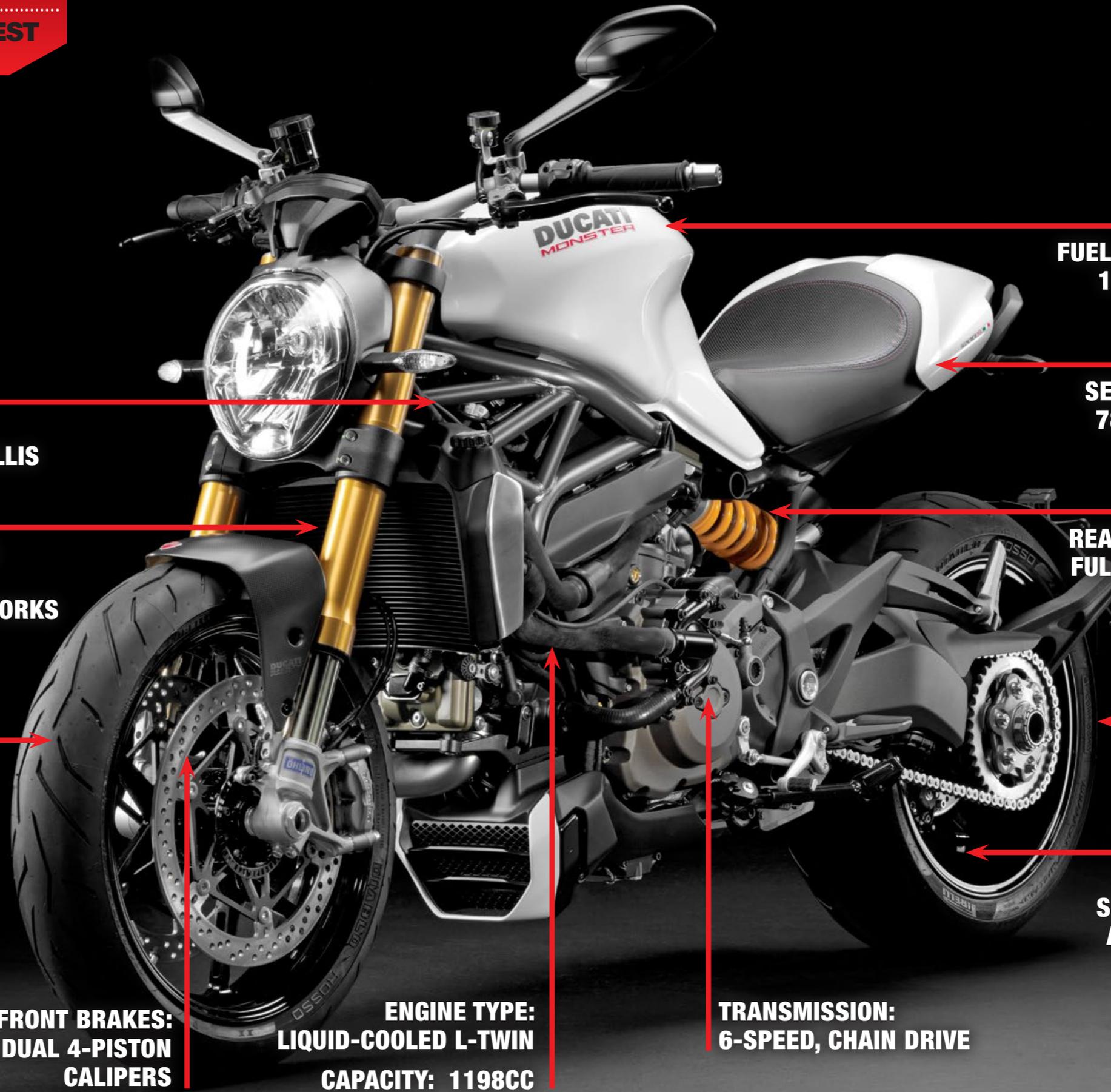


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TUBULAR STEEL TRELIS**

**FRONT SUSPENSION:
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OHLINS 48MM USD FORKS**

**FRONT TYRE:
120/70-17**

**FRONT BRAKES:
DUAL 4-PISTON
CALIPERS**

**ENGINE TYPE:
LIQUID-COOLED L-TWIN
CAPACITY: 1198CC**

**TRANSMISSION:
6-SPEED, CHAIN DRIVE**

**FUEL CAPACITY:
17.5 LITRES**

**SEAT HEIGHT:
785-810MM**

**REAR SUSPENSION:
FULLY ADJUSTABLE
OHLINS SINGLE
SHOCK**

**REAR TYRE:
190/55-17**

**REAR BRAKES:
SINGLE CALIPER.
ABS STANDARD.**



**DUCATI
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CYCLE TORQUE TEST



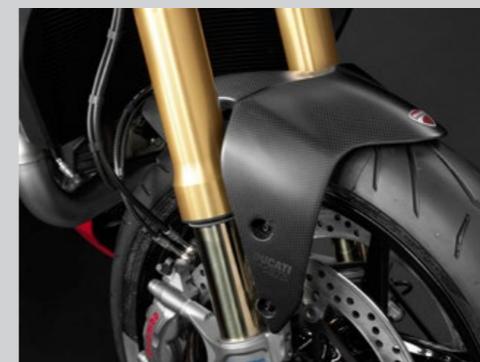
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Single seat cowl looks great and is easily removed.



Twin mufflers give a pretty fruity note for standard equipment.



Ohlins forks come standard on the 1200S.



Ohlins on the rear too.



**DUCATI
MONSTER 1200 S**
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GALLERY



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**YAMAHA SR400
CAFE RACER**

CYCLE TORQUE TEST

cycletorque.com.au **MARCH 2015** | 45



Factory Café Racer



YAMAHA SR400
CAFE RACER
.....
CYCLE TORQUE TEST

Whether you are a wannabe Ogri (google it), a Hipster, or a rider looking for a sweet thing, Yamaha's SR400 can be a platform for your thoughts.



Factory Café Racer

★ TEST BY RYAN GRUBB, PHOTOS BY NIGEL PATERSON

★ RIDING GEAR: SHOEI HELMET, DRIRIDER JACKER, DRIRIDER BOOTS.

WITH cast mag wheels, clip on bars and a kickstart as the sole starting method, you could be mistaken for thinking this machine is straight out of the '70s. It is, but... you would be wrong. This is the new Yamaha SR400, well, it's one of the custom possibilities you could build out of one.

The original Yamaha SR was released in Australia in 1978, back then it had a 500cc engine which was also the basis for the TT500 and XT500 models. In Japan during that era, registration restrictions meant those models had to be 400cc. Things may have gotten bigger and better in Australia and Japan since then, but the popularity of the SR has never completely diminished.

The Yamaha SR has been kept bubbling away in Australia by its quintessential styling that pays tribute to earlier British machines, they have been more affordable, parts have been easier to get, relatively easy to maintain and they have treated owners well if it's been kept in good nick. There's an SR500 club which has also kept the spirit alive for owners - founded in 1999, the club has been running ever since, and the club's website claims to have roughly 130 members from all over the world.

Learners and more

Though it is not until you cue the Learner Approved Motorcycle Scheme and more recently the rise of Deus Ex Machina, who has seen the value in the SR400, using



it as a base to build custom café racers, scramblers, street trackers, brats, surf brats and bobbers that the re-release of the SR becomes significant. The popularity of these types of machines at the moment is huge, and you can see it in the online markets and custom bike builders setting up shop all around Australia. You'd like the Kustom Kommune if you prefer a do-it-yourself approach, where every time you pick up the tools to do some work, you learn a little bit more about the bike and a little bit more about yourself. If you search eBay for a Yamaha SR400 or 500, you will see that to buy one of these bikes in a decent shape can cost anything from

5-10 grand. People have even been importing them from Japan to get top dollar, it really is that competitive at the moment.

Smart thinking

I think this is the reason that makes the SR400 re-release from Yamaha a great move in Australia. It could help to put a ceiling on the price of older models being sold online for the time being, because you can now buy a brand new SR400 for under 10 grand knowing

YAMAHA SR400 CAFE RACER

CYCLE TORQUE TEST

that you aren't going to have any issues. Once it's yours, you can leave it as is, customise it, modify it, whatever. What you do get from the past with the new SR400 is the knowledge that this bike in its original form has lasted over 35 years and it has kept its value fairly well, so it has the capability and potential to last owners another 35 years or more.

Deus is even offering a package of custom parts for the new SR that you can bolt on at home which goes to show that this new model has been built with the chief ethos of customisation.

Lets take a look at this bike -

It has a single cylinder 399cc engine which is air-cooled, with the engine's oil being carried in the frame, the main reason the engine, even back to the '70s, has always been a slim little bugger. It weighs about 174kg wet (this custom may be lighter than that), has a 298mm single hydraulic disc on the front and a drum brake on the rear. There's 18 inch cast mag wheels at each end and is kickstart only.

This SR400 custom which has been built by Yamaha in Sydney features clip-on 'bars, gum grips, LED indicators, a café styled seat, Daytona short shocks on the rear, shorter front fender, a custom polished fuel tank, Prunus short exhaust pipe, K&N Pod filter, cast mag wheels instead of the standard wire wheels, and of all things, a fuel pump from a V-series Commodore. All up, there's over five grand of parts put on this bike, over the \$8,999 new price, but that doesn't mean you can't customise this bike on a budget or have to

replace every part like the twin coil rear suspension and standard spoke wheels. If you want to take the café racer route like this custom, its all about removing unnecessary weight.

The best part of this custom build by Yamaha is, all of the parts that have been used are bolted on, which means you don't have to make any modifications or grind any bits off the SR400, if you want to change it back to original, or even something completely different, you can. In saying that, whenever you take out the air box and replace it with a pod filter, it does change the air and fuel mixture which can have the potential to cause some problems if it's too far out of the fuel injection system's capabilities.

So what is this bike like to ride?

The café racer styling on the SR400 custom might give you the impression that the bike is harder to ride because it doesn't have an upright riding position and you can find yourself seated a little bit behind the centre of the bike, though this is not the case. You can take your time with it thanks to the single cylinder engine which has a long stroke, this means that it will thump away at low revs easily and will take a bit of effort to stall.

It is also easy to kickstart if you know the procedure. The kickstart has a decompression lever which manually opens the exhaust valve and also has an ignition mark on the rocker cover which lets you know when the piston is in the right spot to start. To kick it in the guts, look for the kickstart indicator on the engine head and fire away. If you get stuck, the air has compressed above the piston, let it out with the decompression lever, give it another kick and you should be off and running most times.

The clip-on bars makes steering feel a little heavy, and depending on where you sit on the longer café styled solo seat your knees can get in the way of the 'bars turning at low speeds, if this is happening to you,

loosen the bars and increase the angle to give you more clearance. This should also lighten up the steering a little bit as well. Such is the ethos of this bike that you could even throw on a different set of 'bars if you so desire.

It stops pretty well for the single disc, I've ridden similar styled small capacity single cylinder machines from the late '70's and they haven't had the best braking ability after 35 years, and this gave me confidence on the SR400 and can set it apart from buying an older Japanese bike and customising it with a stronger braking package, where you will usually end up swapping out most of the front end for brakes that will give you the same confidence.

Like I said earlier, it does rev fairly low but it does love a squirt and really comes into its own when you wind it out. Going into corners a gear lower than normal will bring about a big smile and is just as easy if you want to cruise through the twisties.

You will look cool on this Yamaha SR400 custom, that is undeniable. Chicks might dig it, and the ones that do will be worth sweet talking. What you will also find is that guys will stop you wherever you park it, when you get on it, even when your stopped at lights to and say, "Nice bike mate!". You will get asked questions about it, told how good it looks and that you have done a good job. They will fall over if they found out it is actually brand new. You never know who you will end up chatting to, getting ideas from and giving ideas to.

If the custom bike movement is your thing or you think it is, like it is becoming for a lot of people at the moment, check out the new Yamaha SR400. You don't have to have tattoos, a beard or wear plaid shirts. The simple fact is this bike has proven itself through years as a canvas to chop, change or keep standard. Whatever your desire is, this bike will take you there and back. ■



Email us your
feedback



YAMAHA SR400 CAFE RACER

CYCLE TORQUE TEST



SPECIFICATIONS:

- **YAMAHA SR400**
- **ENGINE TYPE:** Air-cooled 4-stroke single
- **CAPACITY:** 399cc
- **TRANSMISSION:** 5-speed and belt drive
- **FUEL CAPACITY:** 12 litres
- **FRAME TYPE:** Tubular steel
- **SEAT HEIGHT:** 785mm
- **WET WEIGHT:** 174kg
- **FRONT SUSPENSION:** Conventional telescopic, 150mm travel
- **REAR SUSPENSION:** Twin shocks, 125mm travel
- **BRAKES:** Single disc front, drum rear
- **TYRES:** 90/100-18, 110/90-18
- **PRICE (RRP):** \$8,999 + ORC

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YAMAHA SR400 CAFE RACER

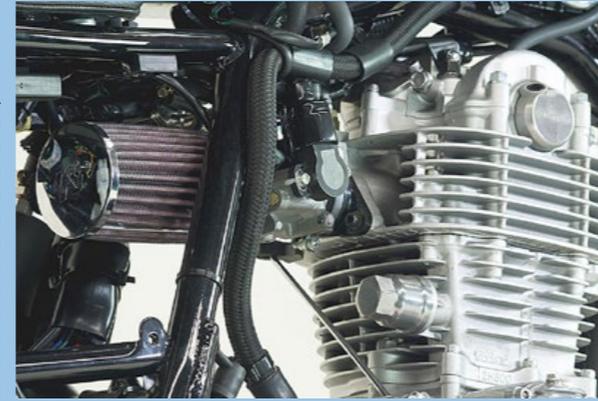
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Prunus short exhaust - tall on style!



LED blinkers are a tidy addition



K&N Pod filter



Nitroheads fender-less kit - Tidy!



Cast mag wheels - it's up to you



Decompression lever makes kickstarts easy



Stylish café cockpit - Clip on 'bars and gum grips

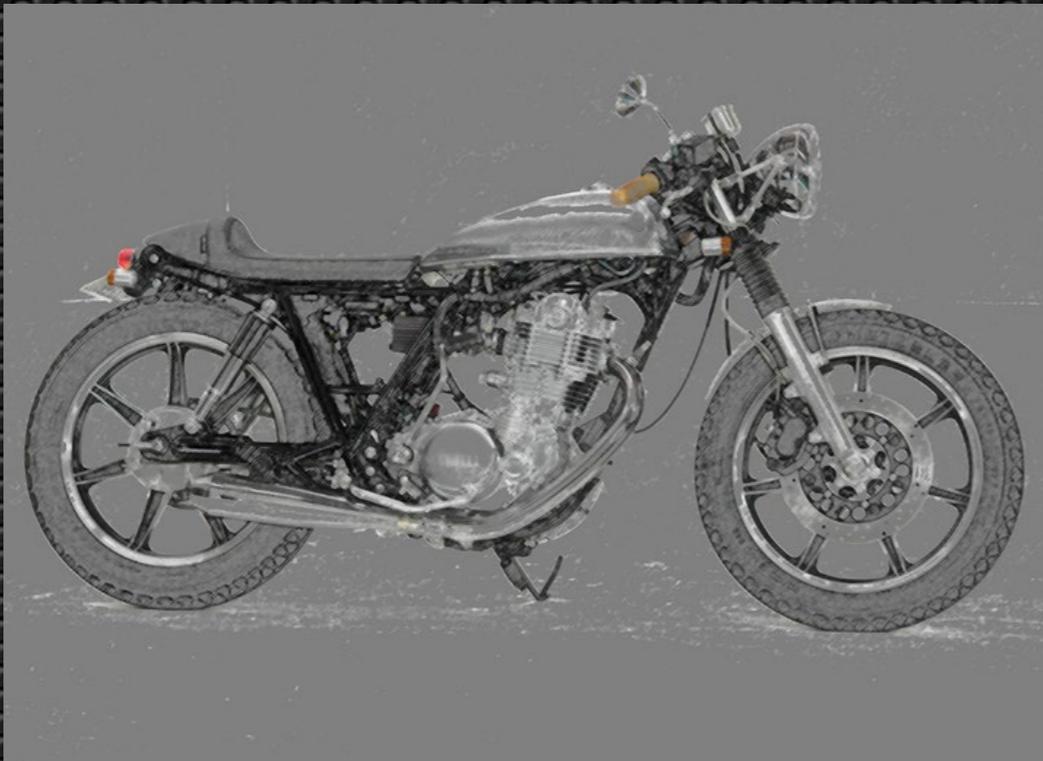


Daytona short shocks - simple and clean



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Three Wise Men





**Rotaries
aren't for
everyone,
and that's a
real shame.**



Three Wise Men

★ STORY BY CHRIS PICKETT, PHOTOS BY NIGEL PATERSON.

ROTARY engines have always been for the eclectic out there, whether it be on two or four wheels. From the mid '70s to the late '80s there were a few options available to motorcycle riders looking for something a bit different, and some of them had rotary engines.

History will show that the motorcycling world wasn't ready for such machines, but we can't blame it all on the motorcycle enthusiast. The manufacturers have to take some blame, because they built rotary powered machines which never lived up to the hype, offering performance, road holding, and reliability which was no better than the average four or two-stroke motorcycle of the time.

We are going to look at the big three when it comes to rotary powered motorcycles from that era, the Norton Classic, Suzuki's RE-5 and the Hercules W-2000, all using derivatives of Felix Wankel's groundbreaking design from the first half of the 20th century.

The Suzuki RE-5 and Hercules W-2000 come from the same era but look decades apart visually, with the RE-5 looking very futuristic for its day, much more stylish than the basic W-2000. The Norton looks more modern than either of the other two, and being built almost 15 years later this is to be expected, but it sits in the middle of the other two when it comes to Flash Gordon aesthetics.



A strong start

We'll start with the most agricultural looking of the lot, the 1976 Hercules W-2000.

Powered by a 294cc engine it was never going to be a powerhouse. Output was a scant 23 hp when first released, but this was increased to an awe inspiring 32hp later in the model run.

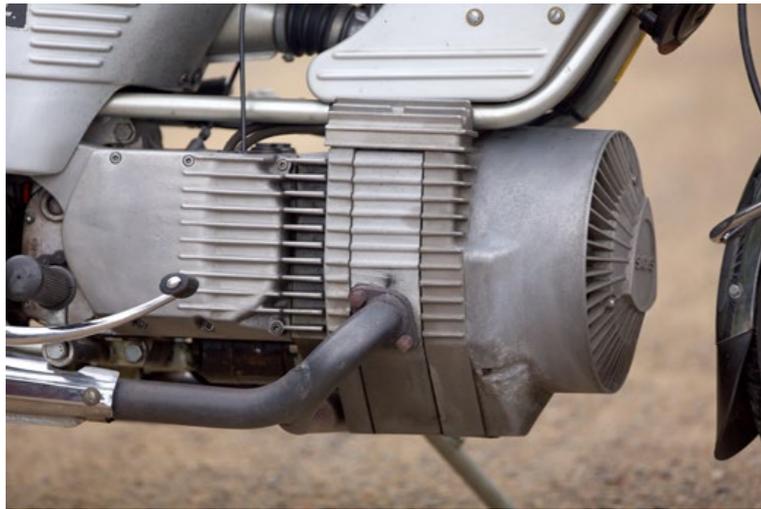
The Hercules was actually built by European motorcycle manufacturer Sachs, mainly known for producing smaller capacity two-stroke machines at the time, but now well known for suspension. Interestingly the Hercules was called a DKW in the United Kingdom.

The 294cc engine had a single rotor design and was air-cooled, by the fairly obvious and massive fan hanging off the front of the engine. The running gear was typical of the mid '70s, a single disc brake on the front, drum brake rear, twin shocks, and basic non-adjustable forks.

Hercules even produced a rotary powered trail bike in 1975, the KC-30. Unsurprisingly, sales were low and the bike was discontinued very short into the bike's production life. It wasn't as bad for the W-2000 but they are rare these days due to the low numbers sold.

The engine though was to go onto bigger and better things, used by BSA engineer David Garside who took the original plans, turned it into a twin rotor design and put it into a BSA chassis for testing. BSA went broke before it made production but it would go on to be the Norton Classic.

I'd seen pictures of the Hercules/DKW over the years



but never in the flesh. It was smaller than I expected but handsome too, in a weird sort of way that's hard to explain. The bike was bought back by the original selling dealer shortly into its life with just over 1000 miles on the odometer. It sat in the dealer's showroom for many years without turning a wheel, and the Australian owner bought it from the 'states after a chance meeting with a visiting American rotary enthusiast. The new Aussie owner already had the Suzuki RE-5 in this article and was keen on building a bit of a rotary collection. And he uses it too, the bike now has over 5000 miles on it. The fit and finish is not quite as good as I would have expected if it is a true representation of how it was when new.

But any ideas I had of disappointment were thrown

right out the window when I rode the little machine. It was a revelation. The owner had told me performance was similar to say an air-cooled Yamaha RD250 or 350 and he was spot on. Acceleration was quite brisk but to get the best out of it you needed to regularly go up and down the six-speed 'box to keep the engine on the 'boil'.

The overall ride quality was way better than I expected too, and you can tell the bike had minimal miles on it. The suspension worked very well for the age of the bike, and being the lightest of the bunch here it cornered extremely well, in fact amazingly well.

Rule Britannia

The Norton Classic is one of 100 built in 1987-88, and it was always planned to be a limited edition machine. Prior to being available to Joe Public, the Norton rotary powered machines were for Police and military use only, aptly called the Interpol II, built from the early '80s to the late '80s. By the time the Classic was produced Norton was in its death throes, but still did go on to build the rotary powered sporty F1 and then the fully faired touring Commander, and was liquid-cooled. The Classic was the basis of these two later machines.

The Norton Classic was still air-cooled and was a twin rotor design, cooling was done by numerous air ducts, and a large steel plenum which doubled as the bike's semi-monocoque frame. To further reduce the air-fuel temperature for the engine a type of ram air system was installed, which sat below the steering head. The main bearings and inlet manifolds were further cooled by oil-injection, and the fuel-air mix also carried a mist of oil to cool the rotor tips.

Initially boasting around 70 horsepower, the engine



was further bolstered up to around 100 horsepower by modifications to improve volumetric efficiency by getting rid of hot gases instead of burning them and by feeding pressurised air to the combustion chambers and by adding the liquid-cooling.

It is a styling child of its time, and perhaps even a bit old hat when you look at other machines on the market in the late '80s. It has cast wheels but also twin shocks and basic telescopic forks. The brakes are good though, on paper at least, with discs all round and Brembo callipers doing the stopping. It is a handsome machine though, at least in my opinion.

The humble Norton rotary motorcycle was doing special things on the race track by the time the Classic was built, starring in many wins on short circuits whilst



in the hands of Steve Spray and Trevor Nation; and on the roads with riders such as Robert Dunlop and Steve Hislop. Norton's last TT victory was by Hislop in 1992 on the rotary powered NRS 588.

The first impression you get when riding the Norton is how smooth the engine is, and this is a trait of rotary engines, and of the three bikes here too. The owner even put a 50 cent piece on its side on the tank and then ran the engine out to redline without the coin toppling over to show how smooth it really is.

The Norton rotary likes to rev and the power delivery is very linear. I was shown a dyno graph of the bike which shows barely any dips at all right through to its peak power. The chassis components are good quality and the bike rides well over broken surfaces. The owner likes his bikes softly set up so pushing the Norton at pace over broken surfaces showed some faults with the handling, like the front forks topping out, giving a squirmy feeling. But that was while giving the engine its head and doing a pretty respectable pace. I found it to be a 'gentleman's tourer', a great engine but I'd perhaps spend some time updating the suspension, especially the forks, which with some modern touches could well transform the bike.

Japan's finest

When Suzuki's RE-5 was introduced to Suzuki showrooms in 1974 its biggest competitor was from Suzuki's own stable, the three cylinder two-stroke GT750. This bike would eventually be the killer of the RE-5. Why go for complexity and expense with the RE-5 when sitting beside it in the same showroom was a cheaper, better handling and more powerful machine?

But that's perhaps underselling the RE-5. It had features almost unheard of at the time. Suzuki went to great lengths to produce the RE-5, and in fact it was one of around ten different rotary powered machine built and tested by Suzuki. Apparently the '5' in RE-5 stands for the fifth engine variant, not for 500cc, the capacity of the engine

It took 12 months to build the prototype of the RE-5 and then two years to test it before it was released in 1974 to great fanfare by astronaut Edgar Mitchell, the sixth man to walk on the moon. To be fair there was a fair bit of jet age in the styling of the RE-5.

Despite only having a single rotor engine, it was quite complex, with a number of subsystems like water and oil cooling. All of these technologically impressive features helped push the weight to over 250 kilograms with a half a tank of fuel.

You could push the weight even further up if you went for one of the accessory touring kits, which gave you a full fairing, panniers and a top box.

Suzuki outsourced the styling of the RE-5 to Giorgetto



Giugiaro and it was one of the nicest designs of this period, with some outrageous paint colours available and features like the instrument cluster and its electrically operated revolving lid on the earliest models. The later RE-5 like the one on test used the same instruments as the GT750, which just don't look as nice to be honest. You only have to look at the engine, which in my opinion is a bit of a styling masterpiece. It is the focal point of the bike aesthetically.

Suzuki had so much belief and investment into the bike they offered an amazing warranty for the time, with a full brand new engine fitted if there were any engine problems in the first 12 months. It is said that Suzuki actually lost money on each RE-5, especially down the track when they were trying to unload them. There was even a 1000cc prototype built but Suzuki scrapped

Continued on next page



that and sent the bike to the crusher so no more embarrassment would be felt by the company.

The RE-5 lasted until 1976, three years of production. You could call it a financial failure for Suzuki, and it very nearly sent it broke, and to this day those lessons learned of pursuing outlandish designs are still probably being taught in Suzuki design school.

But I think it's a beautiful machine, in a space age sort of way. The engine is by far the prettiest of the three rotary machines we've tested, and personally I feel the bike is the most stylish of the three too.

After riding the bike I think if prospective buyers back in the '70s had ridden the RE-5 instead of going for the GT750 they might well have bought one. For a 500cc machine it goes very well, and although the bike is quite heavy (over 250 kgs with half a tank of fuel) it accelerates very well. The engine sounds unlike the other two, which definitely have a typical rotary sound, and is very torquey. You can feel the weight of it when you are rolling but I think this is one of the reasons it also feels 'planted'. Bumps were well soaked up and in the corners the bike felt as though it could be pushed reasonably hard. Like the Norton it's also more a 'gentleman's tourer' than a 'scratcher'.

You know after riding these three bikes I think it's a real shame people didn't take to rotary powered motorcycles. I liked all three but the bike which did it for me was the one I least expected to. The Hercules. It was so much fun to ride.

The owner of these three machines prefers to ride them rather than polish them and because of that they are mechanically well maintained. My order of preference was the Hercules, then the Suzuki, then the Norton, which is the opposite to the other riders helping on the day. Not sure what that says but it doesn't matter really, I feel lucky having the chance to ride these great bikes, which today are so rare. ■





TOBY PRICE – 2015 DAKAR RALLY

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Dakar Disciple



Dakar Disciple

CHRISTOPHE Barriere-Varju has lived his dream of competing in the Dakar Rally. It's a dream many off-road racers share. All too often we write these dreams off as pure fancy and commit ourselves to the reality we will never achieve them.

I already knew Christophe, having interviewed him quite a number of years ago, and I was aware his dream had cost him plenty in the way of relationships and financial hardship. I followed his attempts at the Dakar Rally, admiring his focus and determination.

The thing is we get wrapped up in our own lives, and reading a short story in a motorcycle magazine about some ex-pat French bloke racing in the Dakar was never going to really register on the radar. All we see is the pretty pictures, a dirty face and a beat up bike. We all assume he's got money or backing and he's 'lucky'.

What those pictures don't tell you is how difficult it is to take on something like the Dakar, how much planning goes into it, how fit you have to be, and how tough it really is to take on the hardest off-road race of them all.

Huge days in the saddle, danger seemingly at every turn, then having to work on the bike each night with barely a few hours' sleep. Then go out and do it all again.

I watched Dream Racer a year or so ago on an overseas flight. No outside interference, no one asking what the story was about. With just my headphones on I was able to almost put myself there with Christophe and I couldn't help but get right into the story of Christophe's 2010 Dakar assault. Just this one bloke living his dream with barely any assistance.

We caught up with Christophe recently to find out a bit more about the whole Dakar experience and his plans are for future Dakar raids.

Christophe rode a very special factory KTM Dakar racer in 2010.

"2010 was the last transition year where the elite had to race 450cc while non-elite riders could still race bikes up to 700cc. The KTM I raced was a work of art that all factory racers loved. The bike was one of a dozen bikes hand built and the mix of the traditional 660 Rallye and the 690 Rallye.

"What made this bike unique was how it had the stability of the 660 but with a very low centre of gravity as the top frame was totally different than the old 660. It was one of the last remaining bikes KTM Austria did not send to the crusher. The motor was a very torquy 690cc. The best rally bike I have ever ridden.

"The new rule now requires a 450cc maximum on the Dakar Rally, and now the bike can go through the full event without an engine replacement if you are careful. The race has evolved from big wide open spaces to slower, more twisty terrain, so a big bore bike would be a handful, however these big bore bikes would be great for the Africa Race ending in Dakar, Senegal.

"I still have the original bike I raced in Africa. I sold it, but it was still waiting in the living room. The buyer was supposed to come and collect it three weeks later and had sent all the money. A few days before he was to turn up I called him and said 'sorry, I can't do it.' I sent all the money back and kept the bike. The ex-factory bike is one of the last, if not the last, still in existence. That is the bike I raced in Dream Racer. This bike is unique and will stay with me forever."

Just getting to the start line is a mission in logistics and funding.



"All inclusive (entries, bike, parts, logistics and one mechanic) the race cost about \$120,000, and that's without a team or assistance vehicles. However, talented amateurs can do the Dakar for about \$80,000 as a Malle Moro entry with no mechanic support."

"This includes the cost of logistics from Europe to Buenos Aires as part of the entry fee. This assumes the bike is in Europe though. Shipping everything from Australia is an additional cost and headache, both in terms of custom clearance in Argentina, and quarantine back to Australia. At least \$15,000 by sea freight when all the cost are accounted for."

Christophe always wanted to make a film of the event but this proved difficult until a chance meeting with a budding film maker.

"The film concept started back in mid 2007. I had some meetings with film producers but the cost of producing a film was way too much. Then about six months later, when helping a friend move house, I met Simon Lee. When Simon mentioned to me that he was into advertising and I put 30 second ads together and thought, we can just keep adding those ads and make a film! Simon is a very talented creative mind, but it took a lot of convincing to bring him on board. "Then toward the end of 2007, he put together a very nice

promotional trailer to help me find sponsors. I hired a conference venue in Pitt Street and invited everyone we knew. I knew things were going to be difficult when I purposely left the bike on the sidewalk of Pitt Street in Sydney at 5pm, and the only two people that stopped were from South America.

"Our next challenge was to bring the bike up a few levels into an elevator and we had to dismantle the roof and put the bike straight up. Only a dozen people showed, the trailer was a success, but the Dakar got cancelled that year.

"Then early 2008 I pushed on Simon a bit more, and got him excited at the concept. The original name of Dream Racer was Freedom Racer, Simon had a t-shirt brand called Freedom Brother and I had an autobiography written about me called Business Racer, so Freedom Racer made sense at the time. However 'Freedom' was not what I wanted Simon to extract from the film and I came up with Dream Racer which fitted perfectly."

The very small crew had no real experience making films so the learning curve was steep.

"There was no acting at all and hardly any 'Take 2' – only when I had forgotten to plug in the microphone. I relied on Simon for input, but he never had made a film either, and he said, 'record everything'. There was no set with lights and fancy background, just both of us recording everything that happened 6-7 months before the race.

"We had no ideas of what was going to happen, other than times were tough with the financial crisis putting the world at a halt at that time. So we just filmed everything that happened individually and when we met, including me driving Simon crazy and off the wall!

"Dream Racer has been nominated seven times and won four awards. No Dakar related film has won any award in the history of the Dakar. Dream Racer is it. Now the challenge is to spread the word so that people get to watch this 'much more than a Dakar' film." Dream Racer was also shown at the Adventure Travel Film Festival in Bright VIC, in February this year.

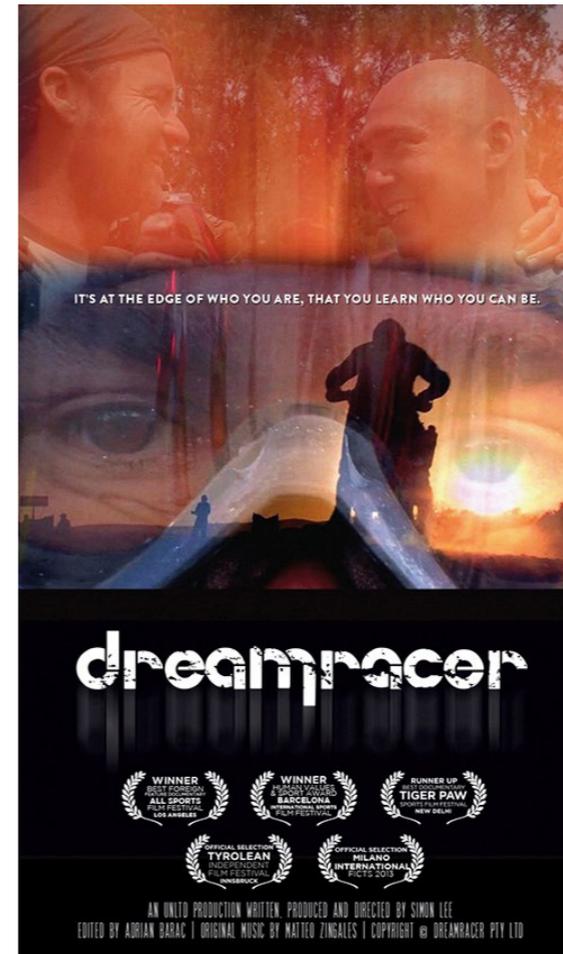
"Instead of the film being a distraction it was actually a motivation. Filming Dream Racer and having this project was actually helpful in keeping the motivation up there. During the day I was chasing work and sponsors, and at night I was on the phone and email with Europe trying to organise bike and logistics. I think it was also helpful for Simon as he wanted to make a film so bad."

But when it came to actually filming while the racing was taking place, there were problems getting it all to work in harmony.

"I had to be extra careful racing during the Dakar because we were filming as well, so I had to reduce my average speed and rhythm because I did not want to spoil it for us. Even with that, the race nearly ended five times and three of those events are in the film.

"Simon took care of all the cameras, charging batteries and making sure memory cards were empty. I am pretty quiet when racing so I had to remember to speak into the microphone at times when riding. Petra from SportsCamera was one of my last desperate calls trying to source some helmet cameras for us, so when I made the call a week before we were due to depart from South America, I was expecting another "nope, not interested" and when she said "sure, just ask Simon to come by and pick up whatever you need" I could not believe it. If it wasn't for SportsCamera, we would have been in big trouble."

The event was full of highs and lows for Christophe, from well before the race to well after it.



"You almost become like a robot, especially when you single-handedly organise every bit. There is no team, no one helping, and the only person that will decide whether you make it or not is yourself. On top of that you have to elbow everyone around to make sure that things happen fast or you know that it will fail.

"I think, at least for me, it is harder to get to the starting line than to race the Dakar. After I went across the starting platform it was like 'ok, now let's have some fun.'

"I know the Dakar is a long and tough race, but I have been racing for over 30 years so I have got that part very well organised in my head. During the race, you only concentrate on what is required and not anything else. After the race it is difficult as well to come back to normality, of course when you cross the finish podium you are happy, but that feeling is still buried through the months of

concentration and preparation you had to go through, and for three-to-four weeks after the race life is black and white and not so exciting anymore – that is until you start thinking about the next Dakar of course."

Often success or failure is in the eye of the beholder.

"Problems can do two things to you: help you find an excuse to give up, or make you extremely stubborn. Luckily I fall into the second category and it does not matter how long I have to wait to finish what I set myself to achieve for myself. In a race like the Dakar, even though it is a win to get to the starting line, you really want to cross the finish line.

"When [bad] things happen, it is frustrating because it is so hard to get into that race, not only financially but

emotionally, physically and mentally as well. There is still some unfinished business and I wish I could get enough sponsors so that I could train 8-10 hours a day for 12 months, only then will you know what your true potential is. Hopefully this will happen with the next challenge."

And the next challenge for Christophe is well in the planning.

"When I finished the Dakar back in Africa in 2007, I saw this SMG single-seater car that was racing. From that moment I thought, 'that's it, this is next.' Eight years later and I am nearly there, the car is powered by a 7.0L motor, there is only one-seat, a co-pilot need not apply. It is a new beginning for me like the early days of learning how to ride a dirt bike. I really look forward to discovering new sensations and developing new skills. It is also very different from motorbikes in terms of preparation. Obviously things go a lot faster in a car like that than on a motorbike, so having no co-pilot is the extra challenge I have set myself, especially in sand dunes."

"The car is being built in California and should be going for its first testing session mid-year. It is a lot easier to build cars there because there are so many desert races there, places to test, and all the suppliers are local. But most of the races there are one day, so it is a bit of a challenge to design a car that can race 14 days with a planned maintenance schedule rather than fix stuff all night long. A lot of thought has to go into the design and you have to reduce performance for reliability unless you have a massive budget to replace parts because there is no point in shining on day one and be out on day two.

"Obviously the budget is a lot higher, and people and companies have seen what we can do with Dream Racer. The more financial support we can get the more parts we can bring with us to make it a success not only in getting to the end, but in getting to the end at a respectable performance.



Plus we will be filming as well, so [there will be] a chance for companies to be in Dream Racer II.

"January 2016 is the come back to the Dakar on four wheels. I am looking for corporate sponsorship to come along the journey and there is also a crowd funding website for the film available on Kickstarter." (<http://kck.st/1ztpJlO>).

The question has to be asked, is two wheels safer than four, or not?

"On a motorbike, when things get iffy you can always jump out. In a car when you are about to fall off the cliff you are strapped in. When things come to a sudden stop, you are ejected from the bike, in a car your internal body parts want to exit. I think on a bike you are likely to break bones more easily, less in a car. But in a car the injuries can be more fatal. The move to four wheels for me is because I want to learn something new and re-experience that learning curve."



Australia now has a podium placegetter in the Dakar with Toby Price picking up third at his first attempt recently.

"What Toby has done is fantastic in his first Dakar, he seems to have come in with very low expectations and did not have any pressure to perform. Dakar is a big beast though and past performance does not necessarily guarantee future results. Having said that, Toby showed great maturity as to when to push and when to follow the leaders when navigation was more difficult. If he can participate in other races where navigation is key he will develop better skills for 2016. No doubt he has the youth, the speed, and racing experience to put it all together and I really wish him well so that he can stand on top of that podium... a lot more than once over the next 10 years.

"I would really like to see a much bigger Aussie contingent race the Dakar Rally every year, but too many of these great racers rely on being sponsored. My motivation to race the Dakar is to compete against myself and that includes raising the necessary funds. It would have taken me five years of not racing the Dakar on a bike again to be in a position to race in a buggy. Hopefully between Dream Racer and the performance of Toby we can open up the TV and print media door a bit more which in turn will open the sponsors' doors for all of us in Australia, then people will realise there is no greater sporting event than the Dakar Rally." ■



Email us your feedback

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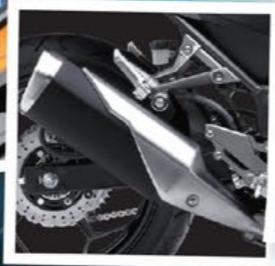
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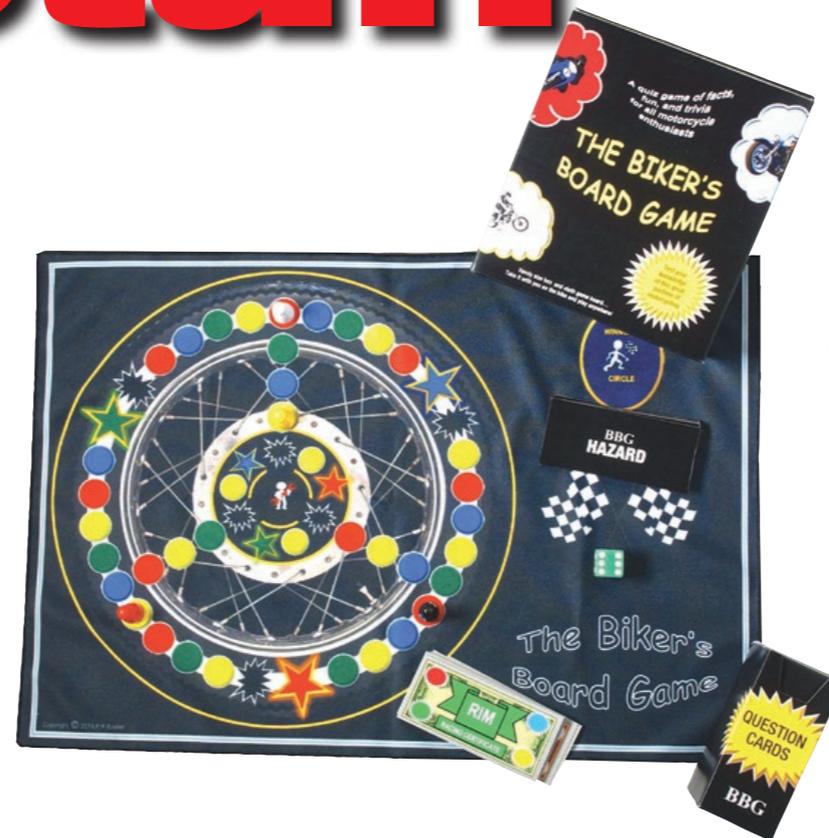
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Kawasaki

Bike Stuff



1 Shark Heritage

DESPITE drawing inspiration from vintage motorcycle helmet design, the Shark Heritage is equipped with all of the market leading technology that the Shark name is synonymous with. Constructed from carbon aramid fibre and multiaxial glass fibre, the heritage distributes shock away from the point of impact, ensuring the highest possible level of protection in the event of a collision. Available in plain white, black, grey and mat black, or with a selection of stylish graphics.

- **Price:** Plain \$329.95, Graphic \$349.95
- **Available from:** Good motorcycle shops
- **More info:** www.ficeda.com.au

2 Travelling companion

THE Biker's Board Game is perfect for travelling away with your riding friends, whether it be on your bikes or not. The Biker's Board Game is a question/answer trivia type of game, the object being to win racing certificates by correctly answering motorcycle related questions in three categories of sport and entertainment, general knowledge, and motorcycle history. The game consists of a washable cloth 'board,' a set of question cards, racing certificates, hazard cards, and game pieces for up to four players. The whole lot packs into a box 13cm x 14.5cm x 4.5cm so it will easily pack into a pannier or top box.

- **Price:** \$29.95 + postage
- **Available from:** Direct from Mick's Motorcycles, Gawler, SA.
- **More info:** 08 8522 2618

3 Wrenched

The Gimbal Ratchet hand tool offers enhanced ratcheting access for those working in tight spaces, bringing convenience to your fingertips. The Gimbal Ratchet isn't like your conventional wrench. The unique design allows it to fit perfectly into the palm of your hand, all the while ready to get up and around any obstacle that stands between you and that hard to reach fastener. Available in 1/4" drive and 3/8" drive, the Gimbal Ratchet head can rotate on two planes, providing easier access for the end user.

- **Price:** \$29.50
- **Available from:** Good hardware and tool stores
- **More info:** www.gearwrench.com



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Bike Stuff



1 Oggy for the KTM

OGGY Knobbs kits for the KTM 1290 Superduke are fully bracketed, intricately designed to fit without any modifications while also being stronger and more protective than non-bracketed cut or no-cut styles. CNC machining, laser cutting and MIG welding ensure a quality product with perfect fit. Brackets are made from high tensile steel alloy for superior strength and minimum weight plus the aluminium compression components are made from aircraft grade 7075 T6511. The "plastic" used in the sliders is made of Acetal for the best shock absorption, abrasion resistance and strength. Knobbs are available in black or white with alloy or steel brackets.

- **Price:** Black with alloy bracket \$429, black with steel bracket \$339
- **Available from:** Your favourite bike shop
- **More info:** 02 9484 0777



2 Rukka AiRider

RUKKA'S new AiRider jacket is a great summer or warm weather jacket. Made of knitted Cordura AFT with double layer strengthening on the elbows it also features Rukka's D30 proectors as well as a pocket for a back protector. The collar has magnetic closure and the jacket breathes easily without its Gore-Tex liner. There is width adjustment on the upper arms as well as a connecting zipper to connect to pants. There are two internal and two external pockets and the jacket comes with Rukka's five-year warranty.

- **Price:** \$479
- **Available from:** www.rukka.com.au
- **More info:** 0414 814 194



3 Lock it up

The Kovix Security KDL6 Alarmed Disc Lock features a hardened stainless-steel locking pin system and Zinc Alloy body. A 120dB alarm powered by a CR2 lithium battery senses your rotor as you fit the lock. The lock beeps to notify it is armed and after five-seconds it goes live and any movement will trigger the warning tone, followed by the loud 120dB alarm. The alarm is easily disabled for situations where the alarm is not required yet the lock is. The assembly is waterproof and suitable for use in any weather conditions. Available in a variety of colours.

- **Price:** \$69.95
- **Available from:** Your local bike shop.
- **More info:** 07 3277 0693



THE NEW KWALA MX VISE GRIPS

The Dual Density Kwala Vise grips gives the rider a tacky feel, but also incorporates a more firm feel to ensure the grip pattern holds to rider's glove with the diamond block twist pattern in a low profile.

- » Constructed of both firm and soft Custom Kwala rubber compounds
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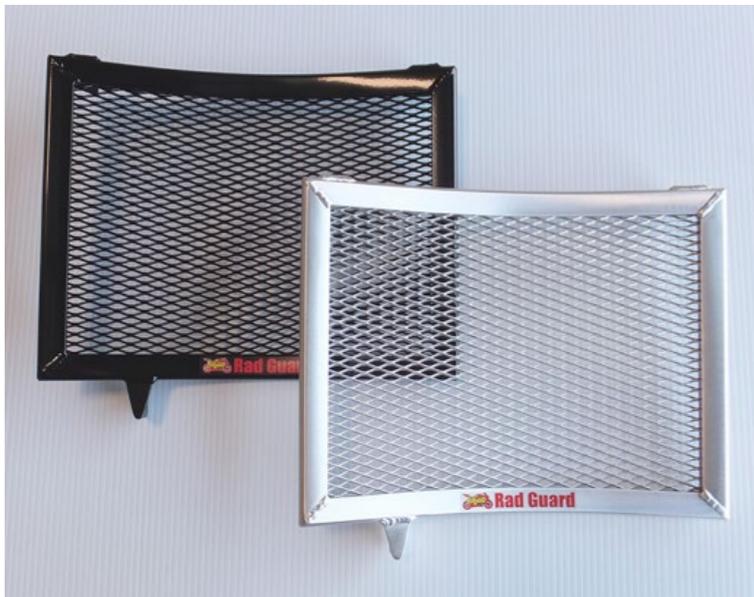
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Bike Stuff



1 LAMS Guardian

AUSTRALIAN company Rad Guard has you covered for radiator protection if you've got one of the new LAMS approved Triumph Street Triple 660. The Rad Guard is bolted on. This means no vibrations and no rubbing. Expanded mesh is used to protect the radiator core along with a rigid frame. This frame will protect your radiator core from crushing on side impacts. Easy to fit, fantastic quality, and they could well save you plenty of money too.

- **Price:** Normally \$195, now \$156
- **Available from:** Direct from Rad Guard
- **More info:** www.radguard.com.au



2 Wet or dry

OXFORD'S Mondial jacket has what all riders need. This fully breathable and waterproof textile jacket comes with a hidden integrated rain hood, perfect for wet weather riding. You'll never have to worry about water trickling down your back ever again. Not only is the Mondial jacket great for wet weather riding, but it's even better on those hot summer days. The durable mesh on the outershell and multiple air vents offer maximum airflow without sacrificing safety or style. The Oxford jackets are made for both men and women and range from sizes, Small, right through to the big boys in 5XL.

- **Price:** \$349
- **Available from:** Good motorcycle shops
- **More info:** www.ficeda.com.au



3 Harley bars

Designed to replicate the look, posture and originality of clip-on bars, the new Sportster Clubman 1 inch Handlebar is designed to drop the grips to a more tank-hugging, sport-orientated riding position. Alternative configuration offers an arms-out stance – with both set ups equally suited to the newly designed Harley-Davidson Café Solo Seat. The Sportster Clubman Handlebar is available in two finishes, Chrome and Satin Black.

- **Price:** \$257
- **Available from:** Your Harley-Davidson dealer
- **More info:** www.harley-davidson.com.au



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News

AWARD FOR ARCTIC CAT

ARCTIC Cat recently received the top industry award for Best ATV/UTV Brand 2014 for Germany and Austria at the annual Power Sports Industry Trade Association meeting.

“We are thrilled to be recognised by such a prestigious organisation in the power sports industry within the European Union. Receiving this award in the important German and Austrian marketplace validates our mission and total commitment to be the market leader by providing the ultimate ownership experience for our customers,” stated Erik Nelson, Director International Sales.

The Best Brands 2014 Awards were presented to those industry leaders and companies that made distinguishing progress for their business within the industry over the last year in the German and Austrian power sports markets. The award criteria were overall performance as a brand, quality of product delivered to the market, dealer support in marketing, sales and overall after-sales technical support. A total of 504 randomly selected dealers, all active in German and Austrian motorcycle, scooter and ATV/Quad markets participated in the survey. ■



MINI FORCE

KAWASAKI now has an entry level Brute Force 300.

Almost mimicking its big brother in style and size, the 300 has a liquid-cooled 271cc single cylinder engine with a two speed auto transmission with reverse.

12 litres of fuel will ensure a full day out on the farm without the need to refuel, as it drinks little in the petrol department.

It has disc brakes all round, weighs in at 243kg and can tow pretty much as much as it weighs.

One cool feature is its storage capacity, which believe it or not is actually more than the bigger 700cc Brute Force. The storage compartment is water and dust resistant too.

The Brute Force 300 is ready and waiting at Kawasaki dealers nationwide. ■



News



MONSTER RAPTOR

SOME cool updates for Yamaha's Raptor 700 make it a beast to be reckoned with in 2015.

Compression has been raised for the 2015 model, it has a new cylinder head and piston design, and valve timing and the fuel injection have been modified to suit. These engine changes have made for a sizeable increase in performance according to Yamaha. There are also new suspension settings, introduced to decrease shock bottoming.

The 686cc four-stroke single cylinder engine is still a torque monster so none of that's changed, nor has the chassis. Fully adjustable suspension and massive front discs offer plenty of usability, and the Raptor still sports its alloy/steel chassis.

For more information visit www.yamaha-motor.com.au ■

POLARIS GROWTH

THE growth of Polaris with its huge range of ATVs and Side x Side models continued throughout 2014 with the US powersports company continuing to take a massive share of the market.

Its 27.1 percent share of the Australian ATV and Side x Side market puts Polaris in a commanding position, with a trust from customers built up over 30 years in Australian and 60 years internationally.

Incredibly Polaris had a 47.9 percent share of the national Side x Side market in 2014, and lifted its ATV share to 22.3 percent for the full year too.

According to industry data, while the market grew just two percent in 2014 Polaris sales increased by 32.4 percent. Polaris also had five of the top 10 selling models in 2014 with the Sportsman 570, Sportsman 400 and Hawkeye 400 ATVs leading the way. The youth models Outlaw 90 and Outlaw 50 also featured in the top 10.

"This strong growth mirrors the incredible growth of Polaris worldwide," said Polaris Industries Australia Managing Director, Peter Alexander. "Polaris has invested heavily in innovation and development and the growth you are seeing is the result of this investment. The fire in the belly burns hot at Polaris resulting in products developed to exceed customer demands and at prices that respect savvy primary producers and everyday users alike". ■



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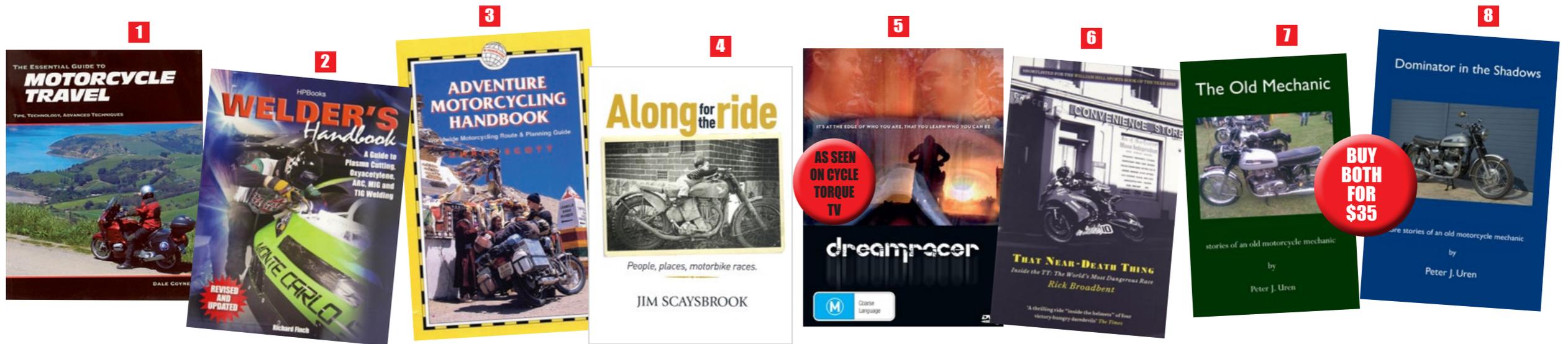
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1. Essential guide to Motorcycle Travel – \$55.00

This book is written to help motorcyclists prepare themselves and their motorcycle for travelling long distances over extended periods. Whether you are getting ready for a weekend trip beyond your home turf, or for a transcontinental odyssey lasting several years, Coyner's book details the fundamentals for riding in comfort, safety, and convenience.

2. Welder's Handbook – \$37.50

Step-by-step techniques are fully illustrated to help you use the latest welding technology to join everything from mild steel, aluminum and chrome moly to magnesium and titanium. Whether you're building a race car chassis or an airplane fuselage, or learning to weld as a trade, you'll learn the proper techniques to get the job done right.

3. Adventure Motorcycling Handbook – \$39.95

Every red-blooded motorcyclist dreams of making the Big Trip - the Adventure Motorcycling Handbook is the comprehensive manual to make that idea a reality. Timbuktu to Kathmandu or Patagonia to Mongolia - it's all here.

4. Along for the ride – \$39.95

Jim Scaysbrook has enjoyed a rich and varied life in which motorcycles have always been the common theme. Itching to follow his father's footsteps, he began racing at the age of 16 and has since competed in virtually every form of competition, including both motocross and road racing at international level. He has competed on the American professional motocross scene, at the - infamous Isle of Man TT, and throughout Asia.

5. Dreamracer DVD – \$24.95

For the first time in a feature length film, Dream Racer shows the legendary Dakar Rally in its purest form – no sponsors, no multi-million dollar team, not even a mechanic – just one rider, a motorbike, a film maker and the world's most dangerous motor race. Far more than just a motorbike movie, Dream Racer is a call to arms for anyone who has ever dreamt of doing anything – a spine tingling antidote to the fear of life passing you by unfulfilled.

6. That Near-Death Thing – \$22.99

A life-affirming journey to the heart of the world's most dangerous race, this account gets inside the helmets of four leading motorcycle racers as they battle fear, fire, and family tragedy for a gritty sort of glory.

7. The Old Mechanic – \$17.00

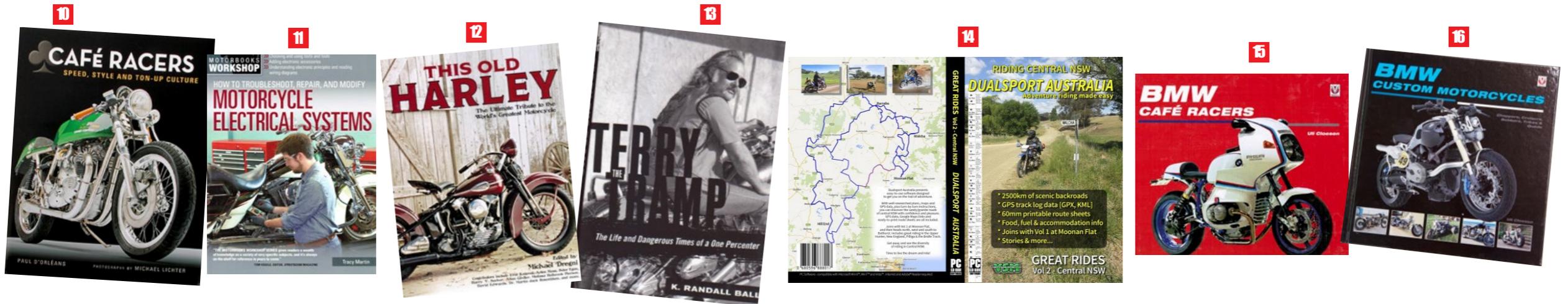
The story of an old motorcycle mechanic who takes on an apprentice and, together, they restore a 1959 Norton 500cc ES2 motorcycle. The book takes the reader right through the process of restoring an old British classic motorcycle, from rebuilding the engine through to getting the bike on the road.

8. Dominator in the Shadows – \$23

Dominator in the Shadows is Peter J. Uren's second novel, and the sequel to his popular The Old Mechanic. Set three years later, it tells the story of two men who each have a dream to own their chosen motorcycle: one a Vincent Black Shadow, the other a Norton Dominator 650SS. The story again takes the reader through the process of restoring an old classic motorcycle. Along the way, they maintain, repair and service many classic British motorbikes.

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10. Cafe Racers: speed, style and ton-up culture – \$69.99

Master photographer Michael Lichter and motorcycle culture expert Paul d'Orleans visually trace cafe racer motorcycles from their origins in the mid-twentieth century all the way into modern times.

11. How to Troubleshoot, Repair and Modify Motorcycle Electrical Systems – \$49.99

Your one-stop manual for every aspect of DIY motorcycle electrical repair and modification. We've all stood at the front desk of a repair shop at some point, staring at an invoice, gritting our teeth and nursing our injured wallets. All vehicles will inevitably need maintenance - and we pay a premium in labour fees every time we take them in - but unlike an automobile, which has its electrical components hermetically sealed within its bodywork, the electrical components on a motorcycle are on display for all the world to see. Out in the open, they are constantly subjected to destructive elements like rain, sand, salt, dust, and ultraviolet rays.

12. This Old Harley – \$34.99

A roll down memory lane is a lot better on the back of a Harley. We all have "firsts" in our lives - our nervous first date, our euphoric first concert - and most of us who have motorcycling in our blood remember the first time we saw a Harley-Davidson. Harleys have a way of catching the eye, that extra 'something' that sets them apart as the proudest, baddest, best-built machines around. There's no denying the fact that Harley-Davidsons are more than just motorcycles; since its founding in 1903, the make has become an American icon revered around the globe.

13. Terry The Tramp – \$24.99

See what it takes to lead men who count themselves among the one percent. Terry "the Tramp," born in 1947 to a broken middleclass home and an absentee father in the blistering agricultural region of southern California, grew up with a violent chip on his shoulder. Raised in that tough-as-nails environment, he developed the courage to look right through a man twice his size and read his level of weakness to discover his breaking point.

14. Dualsport Australia Vol 2 – \$33.00

Dualsport Australia's presents Vol-2 Central NSW which follows on from Vol-1 Northern NSW, in the Hunter Valley before heading North, West then South on Dualsport Australia's quest for a national trail. Vol-2 Central NSW has over 2500km of GPS/Route-sheeted backroads, broken up into four regional loops. Combined there is a week of diverse adventure riding or you can customise loops for shorter rides. With two ways between towns there is an easier option but all routes suitable for all adventure bikes. Using the same easy-to-use format as Vol-1 with information on conditions, fuel distances, fuel locations, accommodation and a few stories from previous rides. With links to Google Maps, downloadable GPS data and printable route sheets in two different formats (forward and reverse) makes navigation a breeze and gives plenty of options to customise Central NSW to fit your adventure.

15. BMW Cafe Racer – \$49.99

Covers the evolution of the BMW sports bike to the BMW cafe racer. This title commonly associated with the cafe racer scene, the growing trend of custom BMW cafe conversions is illustrated in detail with images of sporting, racing, and 'cafed' BMWs.

16. BMW Custom Motorcycles – \$39.99

Many books have been published about BMW motorcycles, but no-one has focussed solely on the BMW chopper, bobber, trike and quad bike custom scene - until now. Although not normally associated with the brand, there are some fantastic BMW customs out there, old and new; this book showcases them in all their innovative glory.

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Book Shop



1. Motocross and Off-Road Motorcycle Setup Guide – \$34.99

For many motorcyclists, the most popular part of a cycle magazine is the question-and-answer section dealing with maintenance, modification, and setup how-to information. The Motocross and Off-Road Motorcycle Setup Guide eliminates guesswork by providing setup and maintenance information every rider needs in a series of step-by-step photo sessions and to-the-point chapters.

2. MOTOCOURSE 2013/2014 – \$89.95

The World's Leading Grand Prix and Superbike Annual reaches its 38th year as the indisputable leader in its field, covering the world of motorcycle racing like no other publication. The 18-race MotoGP season is covered with its usual meticulous attention to detail as it also includes coverage of the Moto2 and Moto3 classes.

3. How to Tune and Modify Motorcycle Engine Management Systems – \$39.99

From electronic ignition to electronic fuel injection, slipper clutches to traction control, today's motorcycles are made up of much more than an engine, frame and two wheels, and just as the bikes themselves have changed, so have the tools with which we tune them. How to Tune and Modify Motorcycle Engine Management Systems addresses all of a modern motorcycle's engine- control systems and tells you how to get the most out of today's bikes.

4. World On Wheels – \$30.00

Travel the globe with Mike & Denise Ferris in the World on Wheels motorbike adventure TV series. From the Himalaya to the Andes via Turkey, Morocco and everywhere else in between.

5. Keep Moving – \$29.99

The idea to travel the world on a motorcycle did not 'come out of the blue' Monica's husband Simon had this dream for 30 years. The opportunity to go arose after their three children had left school and home. Monica had a motorcycle licence but no mechanical skills and very little riding experience. She didn't even have a motorcycle. At the end of a focussed year of preparation sandwiched between two busy jobs as a social worker she was more or less ready to go.

6. 2010 Ducati MotoGP & Superbike – \$59.99

Through words and images we can relive the most exciting moments of the year, the 2007 World Champion Casey Stoner and Noriuki Haga and Michel Fabrizio in the Superbike championship. This emotional year is presented in a collectors edition which symbolises all the prestige of a marque that has written and continues to write some of the most exciting chapters in the history of world motorcycle racing.

7. At The Altar of the Road Gods – \$29.99

His mother may not know it but Boris Mihailovic has lived a fast, furious, often politically incorrect life chasing the epiphanies of speed (the sensation not the drug). For Boris, motorbike riding was the rite of passage into manhood he'd been searching for. Now, nearly 40 years since he first rode a bike, the wisdom of age has provided the perspective for Boris to look back and realise some pretty wild shit went down.

8. TT Talking- The TT's most exciting Era – \$34.99

The decade between 2004 and 2014 was one of the most dramatic eras in the century-old history of the Isle of Man Tourist Trophy, which began with the races in decline, and many observers fearing that they would soon be killed off by a combination of rising costs, political correctness and logistical practicalities. But, just a few years later, the triumphant 2007 celebration of the races' centenary launched the TT into a whole new era of public and commercial success.

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Book Shop



9. The Cafe Racer – \$34.99

The Cafe Racer is one of the most enduring styles of motorcycle ever created, capturing the rebellious spirit of the 50s. This book looks back at the glory days of the Cafe Racer, from Friday night dices on the North Circular, through the street specials craze of the Seventies, to the modern day revival.

10. How to Build a Chopper – \$29.99

Choppers are hot again. All you need to decide is what style you want and this book will guide you through the building sequences. It shows how to build a genuine old chopper or a chopper that looks old and has the conveniences of today, such as electric start and functioning brakes.

11. American Dream Bikes – \$75.00 SALE 25%OFF

Unappreciated by the world is the fact that in today's elusive studio of motorcycle design America is a major player - for some, the major player. Dozens of designers, engineers and craftsmen are creating some

of the most exciting and innovative motorcycles the world has ever seen - ever dreamed about. This doesn't just mean "yet another chopper". It means names like Confederate, Ecosse, Fischer, Roehr, Vectrix (producing an electric sportbike), and MotoCzysz in addition to, and no less worthy in this context, the establishment Harley-Davidson with Buell, Victory, and even Indian. Award-winning author Alan Cathcart visits 25 shops interviews the designers and engineers and rides the motorcycles. Each shop, interviewee and motorcycle has been photographed especially for this book.

12. Troy Bayliss – \$24.99 SALE 25%OFF

This is the story of a life dedicated to racing, the story of a man who has always lived among motorcycles. The Ducati Yearbook chronicles the life of Troy Bayliss, Ducati World Superbike Champion through his memories and his experiences (on and off the track), his relationship with his team and with the bikes and the thrilling emotions experienced together. Take a look into the life of Troy Bayliss, his racing career and his passion for Ducati. Troy and the bikes from Borgo Panigale, like the 999 and 1098, together made

history. This is a book of photography with images accompanied by the words of the rider, fellow Ducatisti friends, colleagues, family and fans all who came in contact with this Superbike legend a true icon for all passionate motorcycling fans, Ducatisti and non.

13. Lost on Earth – \$29.99 SALE 25%OFF

"The only way I am coming home is by bike or by box," Steve Crombie writes when he first hits the road, travelling 90,000kms from Australia to the Arctic Circle via South America. It takes him two years. He suffers from dehydration, starvation and disease. He rebuilds his motorcycle four times. Along the way Steve not only tests his limits but meets the world head on - waking up behind iron bars in Tierra Del Fuego.

14. Motorcycle GP Racing in the 1960's – \$59.99 SALE 25%OFF

The 1960s was a unique era in the history of motorcycle Grand Prix racing, and arguably marked the last period of 'traditional' road racing. The decade saw the rise of the Japanese factories that would eventually dominate

the sport, and the burgeoning two-stroke technology that would go on to replace the traditional four-stroke machines.

15. The Castrol Six Hour Production Race – \$39.95 SALE 25%OFF

For 18 years, the Castrol Six Hour Production Race was the biggest event on the Australian motorcycling calendar. Controversial, important and exciting, the Castrol Six Hour Production Race was one of those rare events which had bikes and tyres developed specifically to win it.

16. The Riders – \$35.00 SALE 25%OFF

Australia's love affair with motorcycle racing and its fearless heroes was meant to be. Two things have made it so enticing. The first is the inherent love of freedom, speed and adrenalin - that wild feeling of the wind whipping your face as you fight to take the machine as fast as it can go. The second is the ingrained Australian desire to test ourselves against the rest of the world - to be the quickest of all.

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Letters

More research needed

YOU may not have found the Yamaha SR400's brakes to be eye-popping (*Cycle Torque* September), but you certainly had this reader's eyes popping regarding the second paragraph: "the SR500 spawned two off-road variants, the TT500 and XT500". Reckon you've got that ass-backwards. I bought one of the first XT500s in Australia, from Kevin Cass Yamaha in Wollongong, in 1976, and shortly afterwards saw another one on the road in the Sydney CBD, ridden by A grade road racer Laurie Barnett. The SR500 followed two years later.

Chris Sim

MMM, got me there. I should have known better because I also owned a TT500 and XT500 plenty of years ago. Looks like I should have researched it better :-) Ed.

Blanket rules

WHEN is Australia going to start behaving like one country and not six countries with an extra set of politicians to pay for on top of the state ones?

I have just recently moved from QLD to Tas and I cannot believe the bullshit involved as far as cars and bikes go. This is a country of only 22 million people. Let's have one licence, rego, number plate. Also one set of rules regardless of the part of the country you are in.

KISS

Brian Moore

Sounds good to me Brian. Ed.

TV stars

IT'S taken a while for me to write but I want to congratulate you on your TV series late last year. I thought you had a good spread of bikes, and also presenters. For a magazine to go one step further and put on such a great television show when no other magazine is doing it must make you feel proud. I'm glad you put a classic bike in most of the episodes too, and watching the editor of *Cycle Torque* fall off a Vincent was quite funny. I wonder if he's lived it down yet? Are you going to do another series?

Paul Raleigh

Hi Paul. Glad you liked our little show, especially considering the work we put into it. We are doing a second series, which will kick off on Thursday March 5 at 7.30pm on 4ME (FTA 64 or 74) and 8:30pm on Aurora (Foxtel 183). Hope you like it.

Advice from China

TO Mick working in China. I'm working in Shanghai and can get everything over the 'net. I have set up a Virtual Private Network (VPN).

I'm using Astrill. You will find them online.

Regards,

David Mildwater

MotoGP joke

I AGREE with what Guntrip said about MotoGP, it is a joke that only four bikes on the grid can win a race. The bikes only have about 50 more horsepower than a bike you can buy from

the showroom so why are they so expensive? Who really needs a seamless gearbox or pneumatic valves? Why can't everybody ride a customer factory bike?

The winners are chosen but the championship is

worthless if you're only competing against three riders.

Halve the price of owning a team and well off people will be lining up if they know they have a chance of owning a successful team.

I also read in that edition that the new BMW 1000RR will have 199hp so how many millions does MotoGP expect people to spend to get 50hp more?

The people who run Dorna are a bunch of elitist clowns who care nothing about motorcycle racing.

Aussie super bikes should run in spring and summer and at country tracks as well as the normal tracks used.

Thanks, I needed to get that off my chest.

Paul

TBC

GOOD to see Troy Bayliss is putting something back into the sport that put him on the map. He must be commended for continuing on with the Troy Bayliss Classic and all these scrambles events he's running. I'll be at the World Supers in February and am looking forward to checking out the scrambles races he's organising and no doubt starring in.

It's also good to see guys his age being able to take it to the young blokes, Paul Caslick being another rider doing the business too. Well done lads.

Bill Boxhall

Write a Letter!

WIN A GREAT PRIZE

This month Bill Boxhall has won an Airhawk mid-cruiser seat for his bike, valued at \$159. Airhawk seats make riding a lot more comfortable by putting a cushion of air between you and your bike. Check out www.airhawkguy.com for more information.



Send your letters (and/or great bike pictures) to The Editor, *Cycle Torque*, PO Box 687 Warners Bay, NSW 2282 or email chris@cycletorque.com.au



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