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**36 RACES**  
**1 WINNER!**



**WILL TOPRAK  
DOMINATE?**

# WORLDSBK PREVIEW

*Your complete guide to the '22 season*

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# MOTOR CYCLE

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**2022 MT-10  
FIRST RIDE**

# NAKED TRUTH!

**MORE THAN TORQUE! YAMAHA'S LATEST  
RI-BASED NAKEDBIKE GOES HIGH TECH!**



Vol 71 No 19  
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**FIRST TEST**



**KAWASAKI Z650RS**

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THE RACE THAT TAUGHT FAST FREDDIE EVERYTHING / 'MAD' MIKE JONES GRABS ASBK POINTS LEAD!**

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19

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# contents

THIS IS WHERE YOU START

## Scram!

Royal Enfield's  
new part-  
Adventure, part-  
Scrambler roadie  
**p11**



### Ridden/ Tested

## 30 GREEN LIGHT

Learning the Zed way, on Kawasaki's Z650RS

## 38 NAKED EDGE

Yamaha brings more tech to the MT-10

### Features

## 48 SUPER HEROES

Toprak, Jonny and the rest face off to decide the 2022 Superbike World Championship. Here's our preview

## 60 WHEN MAN MEETS MACHINE

Genesio Bevilacqua made a fortune making bathroom ware – and he spent it on an amazing bike collection

## 70 FOREVER RIVALS

Enea Bastianini and Jorge Martin grew up racing each other. Now, they do it at the front of the MotoGP field

## 76 LIKE THERE'S NO TOMORROW

Some yarns do not need many words, so here are just a few; Kenny, Freddie, Yamaha, Honda, Daytona, '84

### Sport

## 98 MOTOGP RD2: INDONESIA

Oliveria soars while Marquez crashes back to earth

## 102 ASBK RD2: QUEENSLAND RACEWAY

Mike Jones and Yamaha lay down the law to Ducati

### Cover story

## NAKED TRUTH!

Yamaha brings some R1 tech to the MT-10 and makes a good nakedbike even better



### WEB HOT!

check out the  
website for  
more action at  
[amcn.com.au](http://amcn.com.au)



30



48



60



Regulars

**10** News / **14** Briefs / **18** Headcheck / **20** Not Forgotten / **23** Access  
**28** Quiz / **82** Second Hand / **84** Top Gear / **88** Buyers Guide  
**93** Old School / **94** Rev Racer / **97** In Pit Lane / **112** Grid Talk / **114** Gassit



84



70



76

**“YAMAHA HAS  
FOCUSED ON THE OLD  
BIKE’S WEAK POINTS  
AND HAS MADE  
SIGNIFICANT GAINS”**



38





## Bad reception

**REMEMBER WHEN YOU** could watch WorldSBK on free-to-air television? I gotta admit, when the series first disappeared from free-to-air several years ago, I stopped watching it, getting all my WorldSBK and WorldSSP info from AMCN.

With some of my weekend viewing time freed up, I found that I was able to 'concentrate' more on MotoGP, which was still free to watch. In fact, I became obsessed enough with MotoGP that I signed up through motogp.com for a yearly subscription, giving me access to all the practice sessions and qualifying, and I soon found these sessions to be almost as unmissable as the races themselves.

Of course, I had to pay for this privilege, to the tune of a couple of hundred bucks every year depending on the exchange rate at the time, but to me it was money well spent. But I still missed WorldSBK.

Now, in 2022, MotoGP has also disappeared from free-to-air TV, with Network 10 giving up its rights to air the world's premier motorcycle racing series. That means there is no way to enjoy MotoGP, or Moto2 or Moto3, for that matter, unless you have a paid subscription, either through motogp.com, Foxtel or Kayo.

If I was unwilling (or unable) to pay for a subscription of some kind to watch MotoGP, where would that leave me? That's the question AMCN reader Ian Ray has asked in Access (page 23) this issue, and unless you can afford to fork out \$15-\$25 per month for Kayo, a couple of hundred bucks a year for a subscription through motogp.com, or even more for Foxtel, it basically leaves you in the dark.

While I don't have the figures to back this up, there's little doubt that the popularity of WorldSBK dropped off significantly in Australia when the series was no longer available on free-to-air TV... and there's got to be a fair chance the same could happen to MotoGP.

Let's hope SBS (or another network) recognises the demand for free-to-air coverage of international series like MotoGP and WorldSBK.

On the flipside, it's now easier than ever to watch live ASBK coverage in Australia, either through the ASBK website or on SBS, and this access will no doubt help grow Australia's premier motorcycle racing series.

*Deano*

Now, in 2022, MotoGP has also disappeared from free-to-air television



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# the know

IT HAPPENED SINCE LAST ISSUE

The big Hawk is here  
but not *here*, if you  
know what we mean



## Honda's retro Hawk lands



...but Honda says it's not coming to Oz

**AS WE PREDICTED** last issue, Honda debuted its retro-sports Hawk at the Osaka and Tokyo motorcycle shows but is coy about revealing its full specifications.

This is a big deal for Honda, which is basically creating a sub-brand around the Hawk that includes clothing and accessories. However it won't be coming to Australia.

"It is a Japanese market exclusive. It is not going to be sold – at least for now – anywhere else, including USA and Europe," Honda

spokesperson Gustavo Weber told AMCN.

"That means it is definitely not coming to Australia in the foreseeable future."

While the release has been limited to the Japanese domestic market, the engine is already certified to be sold worldwide, so it meets even the toughest emissions limits. So we expect the Hawk will eventually be offered in many other markets.

This new model shares the basic architecture of the proven Africa Twin, which

means it's lean and light with a torquey engine that has the characteristics of a V-twin.

Despite its visual similarity to 2017's CB4 Interceptor concept bike, the Hawk is very much a mass-production model. Having its own range of clothing and optional accessories means Honda has big plans for it.

Where the CB4 Interceptor was based on the CB1000R, with that model's four-cylinder engine and alloy frame, the Hawk uses the Africa Twin's 1084cc twin and steel semi-double-cradle frame. From the look

of it, there's no change to the engine's specification. Even the front section of the exhaust, including the catalytic converter and its heat shield, is identical to the Africa Twin's and the NT1100 tourer that shares the same engine. So all indications are that the Hawk 11 will make the same 75kW and 104Nm as the Africa Twin and NT1100.

The Hawk's alloy swingarm comes from the NT1100, which also donates its 17-inch wheels. The seat subframe appears to be the lighter version used on the Africa Twin rather than the luggage-

### ALSO IN THIS ISSUE



#### LAMS'ING THE KAWASAKI WAY

The green, but not mean, Z650RS

## 30



### ONE MAN'S MUSEUM



#### SOME PEOPLE COLLECT STAMPS...

Why we all want to be Genesio Bevilacqua

## 60





# DAX LOOKS BACK

**AFTER TASTING 21ST-century** minibike success with the Grom and reinventing its classic Monkey as a 125cc machine, Honda is adding the 1970s-style Dax to the line-up. The Dax originally appeared in 1969, two years after the first Z50, in response to American demands for a slightly larger machine that could carry a passenger.

The new Dax, officially a 2023 model, brings back just the same style chassis and sits it above the engine and transmission from the latest version of the Super Cub. That means it's the same 125cc engine that's used in the Monkey and Grom, with 6.9kW on tap, but instead of the five-speed manual transmission, it uses the centrifugal clutch and four-speed box of the Super Cub,



eliminating the clutch lever. Like the original Dax, the new model has provision for a passenger.

The five-spoke wheels are from the Grom, it gets disc brakes front and rear and ABS with an IMU-controlled rear wheel lift prevention system.

Weighing in at just 104kg wet, the Dax is still a lightweight but will have a range of around 240km between refills.

The Hawk may be the first model in a Honda sub-brand



lugging version from the NT.

Unique elements for the Hawk include the footrests and handlebar, as well as all the bodywork including that bullet nose fairing, slightly reminiscent of Triumph's new neo-retro Speed Triple 1200 RR, and sports a surprisingly low seat.

The front fork is a Showa SFF-BP upside-downer, like the NT1100, but not identical. Similarly, the calipers and discs are visually similar to the NT's Nissins but appear

to be slightly larger on the Hawk. On board you get a simple liquid-crystal display rather than the full-colour TFT dash becoming increasingly common, suggesting that the Hawk is built to a strict budget.

The dash shows multiple riding modes, though, as well as options to change the power level, throttle map and engine-braking characteristics.

**HAMISH COOPER  
& BEN PURVIS**



## SCRAM! ENFIELD HITS A WINNER

**ROYAL ENFIELD HAS** turned the Himalayan into an inspiring-looking flat-tracker it calls the Scram 411. Mechanically, the Scram is pure Himalayan, with an identical frame and the same 17.88kW, 411cc, air-cooled single. However, some clever tweaks include a new, low-mounted front mudguard, a shorter rear-end, a reshaped seat and a small nose cowl. Combined with a fractionally shorter front fork and a smaller, 19-inch front wheel, RE has created a model with a much more purposeful stance and style.

Subtle details shift the visual weight forward, concentrating it around the engine to give a different profile than the Himalayan. The changed wheel means the nose

is lower, the steering is sharper and the wheelbase is shorter.

While the Scram still has some of the Himalayan's off-road ability, with 190mm of front wheel travel and 180mm at the rear, plus 200mm of ground clearance, it's really targeting city use, perhaps with the occasional weekend in the country.

Luxuries are largely absent, but there is the Tripper smartphone-connected,

turn-by-turn GPS system, mounted in a separate pod alongside the single main instrument – an analogue speedo circling a digital central display for fuel and trip readouts. Price is yet to be announced. **BP**



COOPER COLUMN

**ROARING OLD  
DISGRACEFULLY**

Roaring Sporties racing is *still* a good idea

**93**



SPORT STARTS PAGE 102

**HAVING A WHALE  
OF A SEASON**

Max on the podium in American Flat Track

**108**



1. At first glance Yamaha's TY-E 2.0 looks conventional 2. The blue battery pack (or course) is swappable 3. We'll be seeing more of this bolt logo 4. The components for assisted steering are already quite compact 5. Tests are starting in Motocross and will no doubt expand to other types of bikes

**YAMAHA'S  
ELECTRIC!**



# Yamaha future tech revealed

Electric trials and power steering head Yamaha's futuristic stance

**ALL MAJOR MOTORCYCLE** manufacturers are prototyping projects that embrace a carbon-neutral future while adding rider aids. Yamaha has just revealed two projects that cover electric power and reduce rider fatigue in demanding conditions.

Like several other major motorcycle companies, Yamaha is aiming for carbon neutrality throughout all of its business activities – including across the life cycles of its products – by the year 2050.

The first Yamaha project is a new version of the TY-E electric trials bike that debuted in 2018.

The TY-E 2.0 features a new monocoque frame made from composite laminates housing an electric power unit with improved performance. The bike also features a newly developed lightweight battery with approximately 2.5 times the capacity of the previous model.

The TY-E 2.0 prototype is a development of the original TY-E that competed in the FIM World Trials Championships. While trials riding is a specialised

sport, it doesn't take a great leap of logic to see this technology migrate to motocross, especially when so many tracks around Australia are under pressure from expanding suburbs to comply with associated noise restrictions.

The new TY-E is scheduled to participate in the FIM Trial World Championship from June with Kenichi Kuroyama on the Yamaha Factory Racing Team.

Yamaha is serious about electric power. Last year

it joined Honda, KTM and Piaggio in an innovative but practical swappable-battery scheme, which could lead to making owner battery charging redundant.

Yamaha is also trialing a unique new steering support system on MX race bikes that could be applied to a range of motorcycles. The prototype steering support system aims to give riders improved stability with reduced fatigue at high speed and in rough conditions. Yamaha claims that the assisted steering system will also provide steering lightness and agility at low speed.

It uses a torque sensor,

**IT DOESN'T TAKE A GREAT LEAP OF LOGIC TO SEE  
THIS TECHNOLOGY MIGRATE TO MOTOCROSS**





magnet technology and an actuator in a system already used in Yamaha's electrically power-assisted bicycles. The lightweight system has been tested by Australian racer Jay Wilson, who is currently working for the factory and competing with the All Japan Yamaha Factory Race Team. The team will compete in this year's All Japan Motocross Championship with YZ450FM and YZ250F motocross racers fitted with the unique new system.

Yamaha says this will accelerate the system's refinement and is the first step into a new area of electronic assistance designed to improve motorcycle stability and agility. Yamaha aims to equip a cross section of its motorcycles with a development of this system.

Another boost to future mobility has come with the Victorian, NSW and Queensland governments combining in a \$20m fund to build Australia's first renewable hydrogen refuelling station network.

"While this announcement is initially aimed at the trucking industry, it is a historic first step in preparing the broader transport sector for large-scale renewable hydrogen use," said Federated Chamber of Automotive Industries Chief Executive Tony Weber.

Hydrogen is another option being explored by major motorcycle manufacturers, which include Yamaha.

HAMISH COOPER



## THE ROAD AHEAD

*Just before FCAI changed how motorcycle importers display their sales figures Yamaha had overtaken Honda after shadowing it for 18 months or so. We ask marketing manager Sean Goldhawk about Yamaha's plans going forward and Australia's role in its future.*

### **What are the top models underpinning sales here?**

Our new YZF-R7 has gone straight into top spot in the supersports category for us while in the MX category YZ250F and YZ450F continue to sell well as do their enduro counterparts WR250F and WR450F. Fun bikes continue to make up the largest segment in retail volume. And the Tenere 700 has proved popular with Aussie adventure riders.

### **Yamaha has a history of using Australia to help with testing of its new models and products. Why Australia?**

The development team knows that if a motorcycle can handle the type of off-road riding that Aussies enjoy, then it can certainly perform above expectations in Europe, for example. In the past we have assisted with development

both in Australia and Japan with input from riders like Stefan Merriman and Geoff Ballard. Today the factory seek feedback from Josh Coppins of JCR Racing and AJ Roberts. For the Tenere 700, we lobbied the factory to create a model that was more off-road oriented than originally planned – and they agreed.

### **Manufacturers are looking to the future, whether that is electric, hydrogen or a hybrid propulsion system. What options is Yamaha pursuing?**

All of the above – it pays to cast a wide net when looking to the future. Electric motors are obviously a major focus and Yamaha has already developed the PAS electric bike system and has just announced the TY-E 2.0 electric trials bike. But the internal combustion engine is not finished yet because of different fuel sources.

### **Where does Yamaha see the biggest growth segment in future?**

We are currently seeing growth in the middleweight category – both on and off road. Small-capacity entry level commuters – and scooters – is another area that will continue to expand as fuel and emission challenges increase. Plus we can see more control technologies being introduced to make bikes easier to ride in an effort to widen their appeal. The 200hp superbike is really more of a trackday weapon and many riders now understand that adrenalin pumps just as hard on an adventure ride.

# CFMOTO SPORTS CONCEPT A GOER

**CFMOTO HAS BEEN** on an upward trajectory recently with the 700CL-X getting a warm reception and the new 800MT promising to be a welcome entrant to the middleweight adventure class. Now it has sportsbikes in its sights, with the upcoming 450SR a production version of the SR-21C concept.

Due to be launched in China soon, with a global introduction to follow, the 450SR has been leaked via its type-approval paperwork, including a sole image of the machine. Key elements of the original design, including the distinctive LED running lights above the headlights and the extremely long winglets either side of the fairing, have made it through to the production version unscathed.

Mechanically, CFMoto never revealed what powered the SR-C21, although with the type-approval of the 450SR, we now know it's a 449cc, DOHC parallel twin making an impressive 37kW. The engine is manufactured by CFMoto and doesn't appear to be related to any of its existing power units.

However, given that CFMoto already manufactures many KTM engines on behalf of the Austrian firm, there's an outside chance it could be related to the '490' twin that's long been expected to appear from KTM.

The engine is bolted to a steel tube frame, and weight is kept down to a respectable 168kg wet.

The 450SR looks like a tempting proposition for riders looking for a low rung on the sportsbike ladder. **BP**





**Did you know?** →  
You did not!

Despite doing the 250cc/500cc Grand Prix double in 1985, Freddie Spencer actually rates the 1985 Daytona 200 race as his most important career win. Find out why on Page 76.

## "I DID THE WHOLE RACE WITH THE RIDE HEIGHT DEVICE COMPLETELY DOWN"

KTM's Brad Binder confesses after battling to an eighth-placed finish at the Indonesian MotoGP round. That's pretty damn impressive.



### Kiwi high

Suzuki GP pioneer Hugh Anderson, a four-time world champ, finally gets the chance to pick up his MotoGP Legends Hall of Fame award from back in 2019.

### Miller proposes

Jack Miller became engaged to girlfriend Ruby Mau after proposing on Miami Beach in Florida. "Got my knee down in a different way today," he said on socials.



## Hot & Not

AMCN'S THERMOMETER



### Dr Rossi gone

Dr Raymond Rossi, MotoAmerica's popular Medical Director since the series' inception in 2015, has died from a suspected heart attack. He was 67.

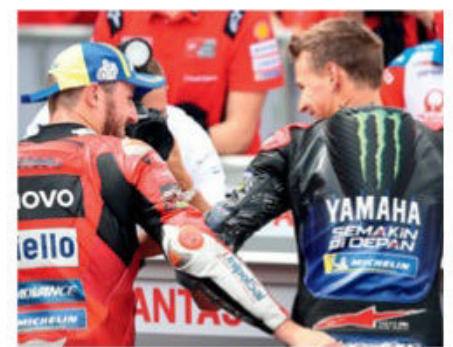
### Horror crash

A motorcyclist has died after a truck smashed into cars and a motorbike at the scene of an earlier crash on the Bass Highway, in northern Tasmania.



## TUNED-UP BONNIE

Triumph has partnered with Gibson to create a one-off Bonneville T120 and 1959 Les Paul Standard guitar to be given away to the person who raises the most money worldwide for this year's Distinguished Gentleman's Ride. Meanwhile a Triumph Bobber and Bonneville T120 have been awarded in Wollongong to Phill Critcher and Ermond Morelli, the two highest fundraisers in Australia for last year's ride and two of the three highest fundraisers globally.



## JACK V FABIO

Jack Miller and Fabio Quartararo indulged in some verbal sparring after the Mandalika MotoGP. Jack said: "He (Fabio) proceeded to ride his motorcycle into my leg. I'll quite happily have a word with him about this. The Yamaha turns well. But that doesn't mean you open the gas and aim for my front tyre."

Fabio said: "I think my move was really not aggressive. I just didn't expect to touch. My touch was not something big. Was a really small touch. Before talking, he better watch it because I didn't do anything wrong." HC & NM

# 36

The number of races in this year's bumper WorldSBK championship. Our in-depth season preview starts on **Page 48**.

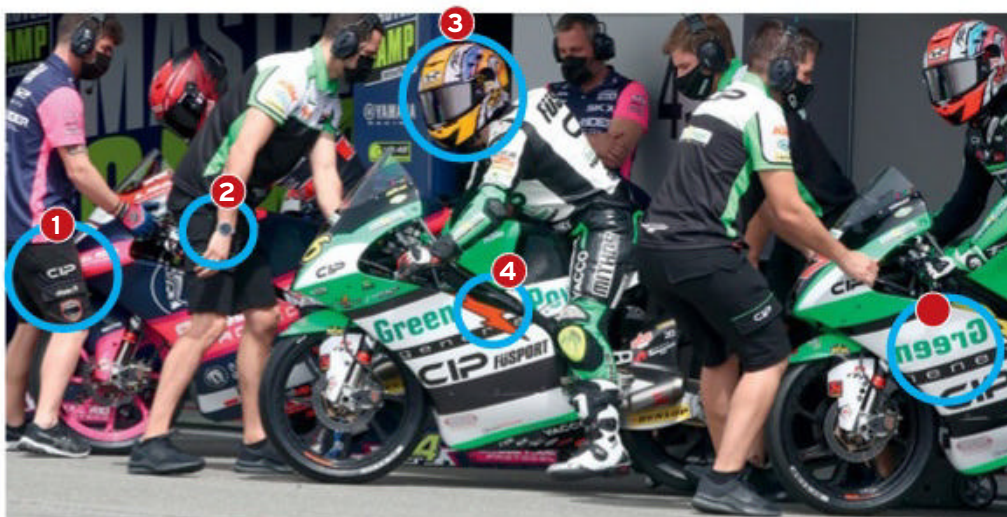
## BLESS THESE BIKES

A five-day Phillip Island Motorcycle Festival, which includes the popular Blessing of the Bikes, will lead into the MotoGP weekend in October. New organisers will also expand the Blessing of the Bikes, which attracts more than 5000 riders, to NSW and Queensland in November. More info at [events.humanitix.com/phillipsislandmotorcyclefestival](http://events.humanitix.com/phillipsislandmotorcyclefestival).

### Mental Twisties

Our spot-the-difference with Joel Kelso proved hugely popular, but it's **Kathy Stackpool** who takes the loot.

1. CIP logo added to shorts
2. He's wearing a watch
3. A change of helmet
4. Bolt logo now red
5. 'Green' is backwards







**Kawasaki**  
Let the good times roll

# FACE YOURSELF

**TEST  
RIDE  
TODAY**  
ASK YOUR NEAREST  
KAWASAKI DEALER



Lime Green with Ebony GN1



Metallic Matte Graphene Steel Gray  
with Metallic Diablo Black GY1

**THE NEW**

*Ninja*  
**ZX-10R**

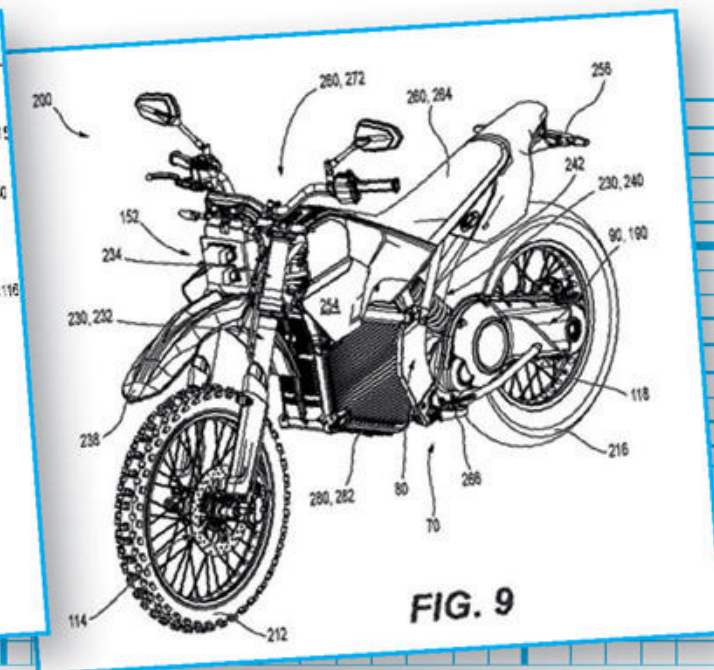
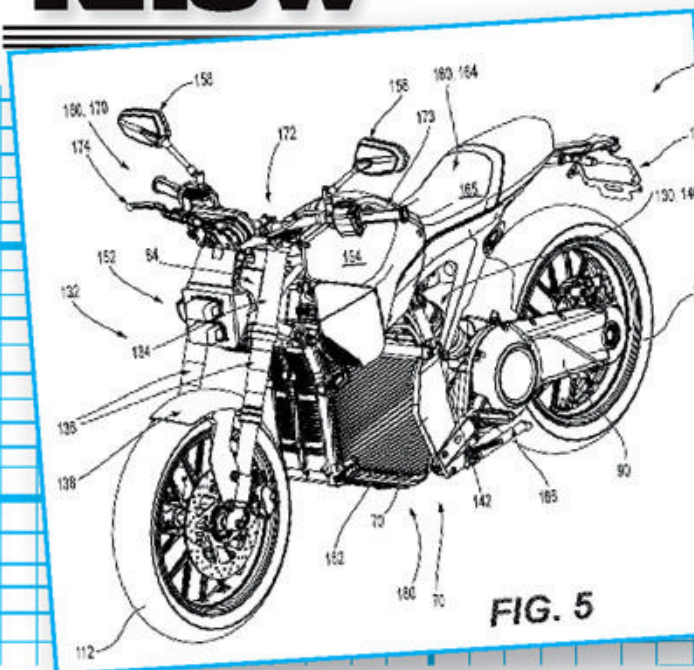
***You can beat all opponents, but there is always a challenge you still have to face, the one within yourself. For those like you who rise to any challenge, we have developed the new Ninja ZX-10R & Ninja ZX-10RR. Now that you have the definitive race focused Ninja, face yourself.***

**For more information visit [www.kawasaki.com.au](http://www.kawasaki.com.au)**

Always ride responsibly. Always ride within the limits of your skills, your experience and your machine. Wear an approved helmet and protective clothing. The actions depicted here took place under controlled conditions with professional riders.



BRP is using a clever system of mixing and matching components to produce different models



## Can-Am turns to two-wheels

Canadian firm to join the electric bike market

**CAN-AM'S FOCUS** on ATVs and three-wheelers is about to change with new patents from BRP revealing plans for a range of modular electric motorcycles that seem sure to be part of Can-Am's future.

After BRP bought the remains of Alta Motors after that much-lauded electric motorcycle pioneer collapsed in 2018, we've been waiting to find out how it intends to go forward with its plans for both electric vehicles and motorcycles. This patent appears to answer those questions, showing detailed designs for an electric roadbike and a trailbike, and outlining how the same structure can be used for a cruiser, a retro roadster and

a supersports model.

Like the next-generation electric models from Harley-Davidson's LiveWire brand, which will be built around a modular central monocoque housing the battery and motor, BRP's idea is to maximise its range from a stock of the minimum number of components.

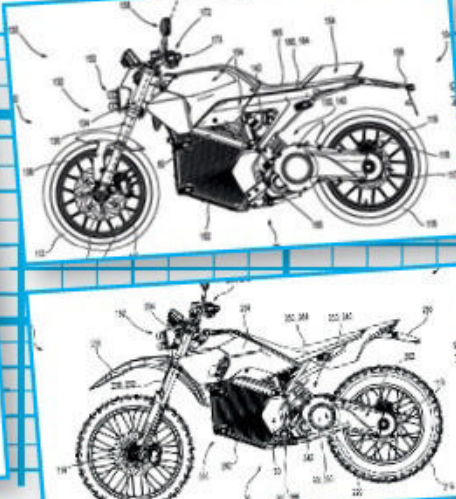
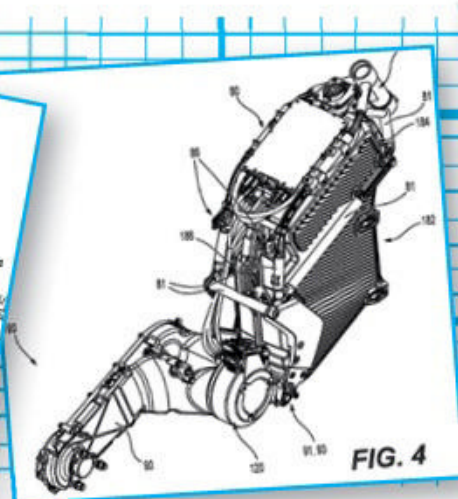
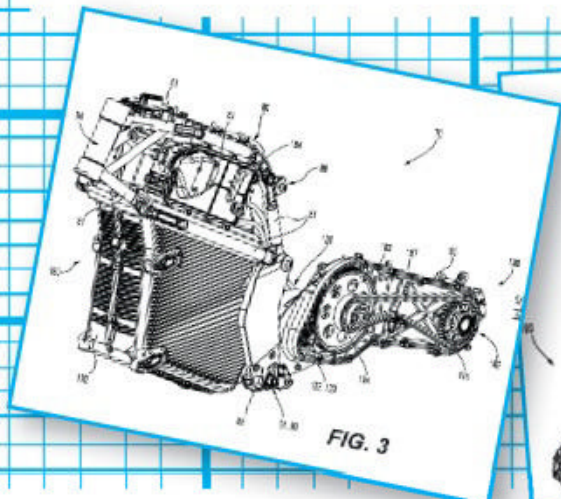
The BRP idea uses a tubular-steel frame housing the battery and control electronics, with the steering head a fixed part of that chassis. The idea is that the entire frame could be tilted forwards, with taller rear suspension and shorter forks, to create a sportsbike with a steep head angle, or tilted backwards – with long forks

and a low-slung tail – for a cruiser. BRP intends to create a range of swingarm units, each containing the motor and differing to suit a particular model's stance and performance requirements.

As well as reducing R&D and manufacturing costs, the use of a shared central section across the entire range promises to introduce an extra element of manufacturing freedom.

All variants of the bike can be made on a single production line, with workers selecting the suitable swingarm, fork, handlebars, footrests and bodywork to match the model ordered.

**BEN PURVIS**



### PRODUCT SAFETY

## RECALL ROSTER

Check if your motorcycle is affected by this recent recall



- ➔ **MODEL** 2021 Triumph Trident 660
- ➔ **IMPORTER** PS Importers Pty Ltd
- ➔ **NUMBER AFFECTED** 79
- ➔ **ISSUE** The sidestand mounting bracket may become damaged over time. The sidestand may fail when the motorcycle is parked.
- ➔ **POTENTIAL HAZARD** The motorcycle may fall over.



- ➔ **MODEL** 2021-2UBCO 2X2 ADV
- ➔ **IMPORTER** UBCO Ltd
- ➔ **NUMBER AFFECTED** 134
- ➔ **ISSUE** Due to a manufacturing issue with the wheel hub component, the wheel hub may become loose. If this occurs it may cause the wheel motors to seize.
- ➔ **POTENTIAL HAZARD** Wheel motors seize without warning.



- ➔ **MODEL** 2020-22 Yamaha MTN890, MTN890D, MTT890D and variants MT09A, MT09ASP, MT09TRASP
- ➔ **IMPORTER** Yamaha Motor Australia Pty Ltd
- ➔ **NUMBER AFFECTED** 835
- ➔ **ISSUE** Due to a software fault in the vehicle's Electronic Control Unit (ECU) the engine may stall, resulting in an unexpected loss of vehicle control, accompanied by a warning light on the instrument panel.
- ➔ **POTENTIAL HAZARD** Loss of vehicle control increases the risk of an accident.





Panigale V4 S

# The Evolution of Speed

The evolution of performance never stops at Ducati.

As is the case in MotoGP and WorldSBK, the Panigale V4 is updated and improved year after year, and the 2022 version represents the most significant evolution. This improvement takes in all aspects of the bike, the aerodynamics, engine, chassis, ergonomics, and electronics. The final outcome is a bike that is even faster on track and, at the same time, increasingly intuitive and less tiring, as effective in the hands of a professional rider as it is gratifying for an amateur.

**New Panigale V4 S: evolution of speed.**

**Engine** Desmosedici Stradale 90° V4 | **Displacement** 1,103 cc | **Power** \* 158.5 kW (215.5 hp) at 13,000 rpm  
**Torque** \* 123.6 Nm (91.2 lb-ft) at 9,500 rpm | **Dry weight** 174 kg (384 lb) |

Find out more at your local dealer and on [ducati.com](https://www.ducati.com)

Overseas model is shown and specifications may vary for the local model. The model in this image may feature accessories and merchandise that are not supplied as standard. Always wear protective motorcycle clothing when riding and obey local road regulations. Do not attempt to recreate the riding scene depicted in this image. Contact your Authorised Ducati Dealer for more information.





# The year was...

# 001988

## SEEMS LEGIT

We brought you the sensational news that American stuntman 'Dangerous' Dirk Dunderberg was getting ready to attempt to jump Uluru on a jet-powered motorcycle. The crazy Yank was said to be hoping like hell that his Uluru jump attempt wouldn't end up like his previous Wembley Stadium 12-bus jump, which went pear-shaped after his Harley-Davidson seized on the run-up to the take-off ramp. Dirk's amazing Uluru jump plans were only slightly more remarkable than the fact that we wasted so much time on 500 words of April Fool BS for our own amusement.



## DR BIG

Suzuki seemed to have a knack for producing bikes that were outrageously different back in the 80s. The first Katana was a case in point and the DR BIG of 1988 was no different. Big adventure bikes may be commonplace these days, but back in '88 the DR BIG was something a bit special – a large dual sport machine with an oil-cooled 727cc donk, 179kg dry weight and twin fuel tanks holding a total of 29 litres of petrol. The BIG has become a bit of an icon in the adventure bike world and if you can find one, they fetch good coin. So iconic is the look that Suzuki made its V-Strom 1050 XT look just like it.



## KEVIN WHO?

Much to the consternation of 1987 500cc World Champion Wayne Gardner, young Texan upstart Kevin Schwantz rode the wheels off his Pepsi-sponsored Suzuki RGV500 to take the win at the Japanese Grand Prix, giving Suzuki its first GP victory in a very long time.



## IT'S CLASSIFIED

We wonder if Graham ever got his R50 back?



### Wanted

BMW wanted. I purchased my first BMW in 1962. A brand new BMW R50 frame no 630799, engine no 630799. This was the start of a beautiful love affair with BMW but when my wife somehow fell pregnant we sold the BM. It was not long after we had another BM and have had one ever since. Someone out there must own this R50 and would be willing to sell it to the original owners. If you have it please ring reverse charges Graham Nichols (074) 62 2777 BH or (074) 62 1513 AH. I am prepared to pay a good price whatever its condition so I can restore it to its original condition.



**AMCN Vol 37 No 20**

104 pages, \$2.00

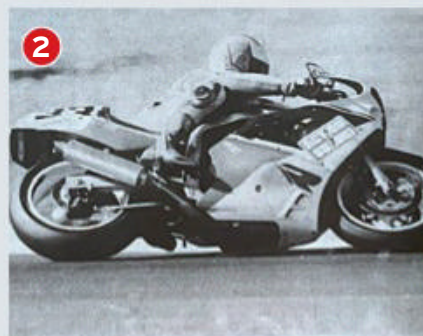
1-14 April 1988

**Editor** Guy Allen

Rob Phillis and Mal Campbell graced the cover this issue after the two riders' intense battle at the second round of the Australian Road Racing championship in Baskerville, Tasmania.

## PIC A WINNER

**1** Mick Doohan on his way to third at the Baskerville round of the 1988 Shell Oils Australian Endurance Championship  
**2** The late Iain Pero on the Action Suzuki GSX-R750 at round two of the ARRC championship in Tasmania



## ERA AD

There are just not enough ads for plastic model kits these days.



FOR | PIONEERS

As long as you are on  
planet Earth you're not lost.

Norden 901 - It's Here



parallel twin 889 cc 105 hp 204



Norden  
901

AUSTRALIA IS A  
PLAYGROUND JUST WAITING  
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INSPIRED BY THE NORTH  
AND BUILT FOR THE WORLD,  
THE NORDEN 901 IS A RUGGED  
TRAVEL MACHINE READY  
TO FACE ANY ADVENTURE.





# Lionel Van Praag

A war hero and Australia's first world motorsport champion

**A BOLD TALISMAN** stands as one of the most significant figures in Australian motorcycling. Born of Jewish and Indian ancestry in Redfern, Sydney in 1908, Lionel Van Praag grew up to be handsome, intrepid and a magnet for misadventure.

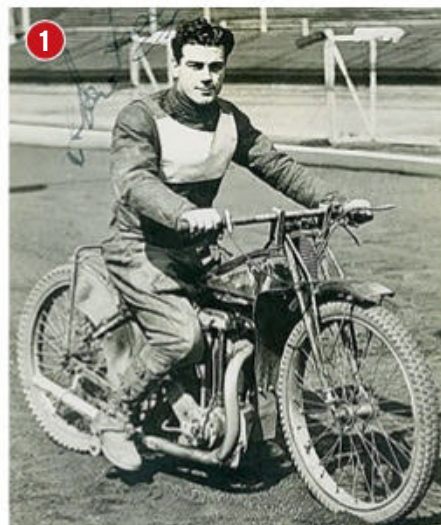
Bright and athletic at school, Lionel was apprenticed as a typewriter mechanic. Within months of the opening of the Speedway Royal at the Sydney Showgrounds in July 1926, Van Praag began his Speedway career. He had an outstanding 1926-27 season in Brisbane in addition to success in New Zealand.

He soon ventured to England where he rode for the Wembley Lions, with whom he won the national league in 1932 and later captained.

Van Praag's victory in the inaugural Speedway World Championship at Wembley Stadium in 1936 wasn't without taint. Fellow Aussie Arthur 'Bluey' Wilkinson scored maximum points on the run to the two-man final, but Englishman Eric Langton had scored more 'qualifying bonus points', as did Van Praag.

A toey Langton broke the tapes, but Van Praag said he would not claim the championship by default and demanded a re-run. Langton gated ahead, and led until the final turn but was unable to hold the dashing Australian back. Lionel won by inches.

Van Praag's induction into the Sport Australia Hall of Fame in 1990 sensationally claims that the race to decide his historic world Speedway championship was fixed,



according to sources close to the action. It was alleged that Langton and Lionel agreed that whoever got to the first corner in front would go on to win, and they would split the prize money. It almost worked out, Langton ahead until the final corner but Van Praag couldn't resist, snatching victory. Lionel reportedly paid Langton £50 conscience money for going back on the agreement.

Coincidence or not, a month later Van Praag was driving to London after a day's flying when a bullet pierced his windscreen. Van Praag accelerated away until he met a policeman who removed glass splinters from his face.

"The shooting remains a mystery, I haven't an enemy in the world," said a shaken Van Praag.

A keen aviator, Van Praag enlisted in the RAAF in August 1941. In February 1942, Sergeant Pilot Van Praag was co-piloting an unarmed Douglas transport over the Sumba Straits when it was fired upon by two Japanese Zeros.

"Machine gun fire cut through the fuselage," one of the crew recalled. "We looked back and there was a Zero on our port tail. Van Praag went to the rear of the craft to get our Mae Wests (inflatable life jackets). No sooner had he left when bullets blew his seat and the instrument panel to

bits. We looked around and there was another Jap Zero shooting up our wing tips on the starboard.

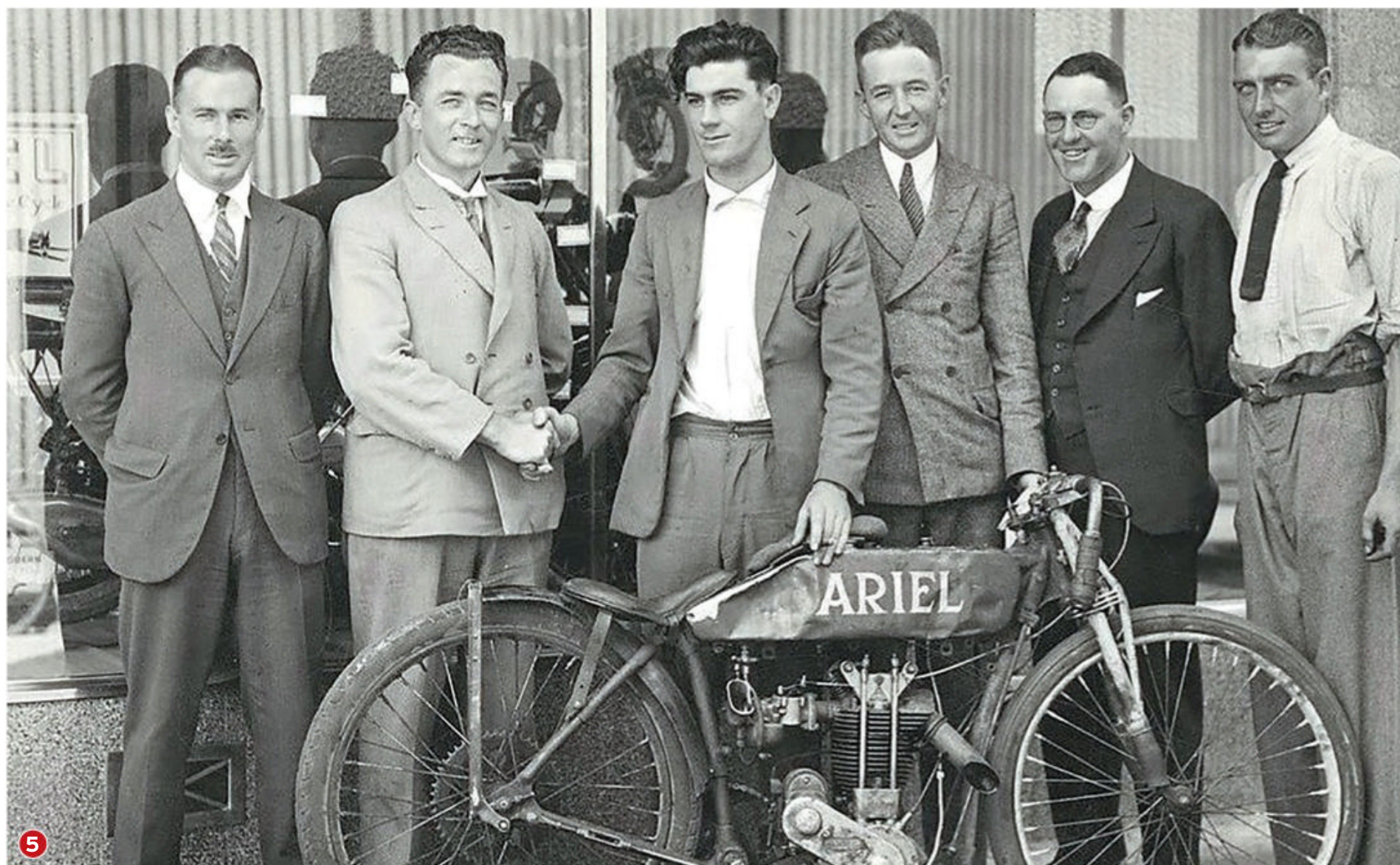
"Flying Officer Webster put the Douglas into a vertical dive, something one never does in a Douglas. The Zeros followed us down, firing all the way. As we flattened out over the water the Japs got a final burst in and sheered off, probably thinking we were goners.

"We just had time to don our Mae Wests, secure our revolvers and a water tin, then eased ourselves into the water before the plane sank. The sea was rough. On top of a wave we saw the Island of Sumba, which we learned was 18 miles away. There was nothing else to do but swim for it."

When the plane didn't return to Darwin, it was listed as missing.



1. Lionel Van Praag ready to take on the best at Wembley pre-WWII 2. 'Van' returned to racing post-war; this is him in 1946 3. He cut quite the dashing figure on and off the tracks 4. So popular was Speedway pre-war that the riders had their own collectable cigarette cards 5. Van Praag, centre, in 1928, with an Ariel racer 6. 'Van' on a Harley-Davidson, date unknown



## Van Praag was awarded the George Medal for bravery by the King

"After an hour in the water, Mason, who had been badly hit in the hand, became unconscious. Van Praag took him in tow for next four or five hours."

Three times the crew was circled by sharks.

"In the middle of the night one shark came so close that Van Praag shot a grey nurse. The bullet passed through Webster's Mae West, and shot the shark. Webster had to keep himself afloat with the water tin..."

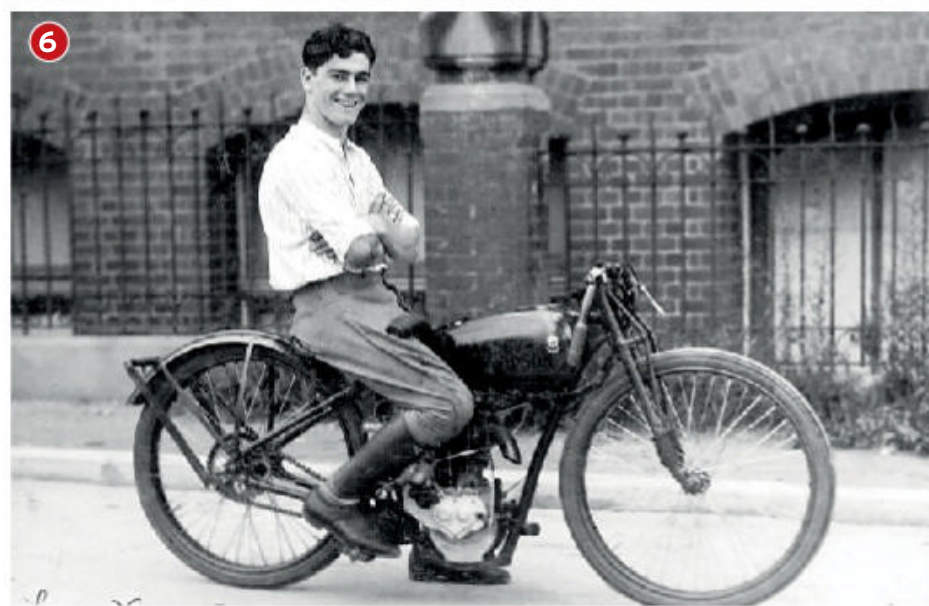
After 30 hours in the water, they all made it to the island and were fed by natives.

"Nothing tasted better in my life," said Lionel.

Both Van Praag and Webster were awarded the George Medal for bravery by His Majesty, King George VI.

In 1947, Van Praag suffered severe burns to his face when material in an incinerator at his home exploded. He said he was still hopeful of contesting the following night's Speedway at the Sydney Sports Ground. In the early 1950s he briefly raced small self-built speedboats at Manly.

In his latter career as a commercial pilot, Van Praag flew charter, crop-duster and freight planes before becoming chief pilot for Adastra Aerial Surveys. Although he had two well-



publicised crashes himself, those who flew with Van Praag valued his informality and his resourceful flying ability.

In February 1951 Van Praag combined his passions for aviation and speedway by contracting with Empire Speedways to carry Great Britain and Australian competitors, along with their bikes and toolboxes, between the various Australian

speedway venues in a Lockheed Lodestar. He later worked as an instructor for the Pakistan Air Force before returning to Australia.

A tee-totaller but heavy smoker, Van Praag, 78, died in Brisbane from emphysema in 1987. He was survived by his second wife Gwen, their daughter and two sons, and a daughter from his first marriage. ■



# SEGUARA



◀ Stripe Black Edition Jacket

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← **Letter of the issue**

## Motomuck

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Include your full name and address in your letter, via post or email. Long letters will be cut to fit, so don't ramble. The views expressed by readers are not necessarily those of the editor.

# access

AIR YOUR THOUGHTS OR VENT YOUR SPLEEN

✉ Access, AMCN, PO Box 6, Bittern, Vic, 3918  
access@amcn.com.au

Letter of the issue



*"For years I've gotten up in the middle of the night to watch the grand prix"*

## Denied the right

Dean, I've never written to you or anyone else, but it's time. What's happened to free-to-air coverage of MotoGP? I'm feeling pretty gutted, I'm on the pension and can't afford Pay TV.

For years I've gotten up in the middle of the night to watch the grand prix from the days watching Eddie Lawson, Christian Sarron, Wayne Gardner, Mick Doohan, Barry Sheene, Casey Stoner and Jack Miller, as well as many of the best racers on the planet. They were inspirational in me going racing myself – in which I did okay.

But now, after they stopped showing the highlights of the lower classes – and sometimes

the more exciting classes – now I can't even watch the races at all. What, is it only the rich people who get to see the races? I mean, have they forgotten about the grassroots people? The blokes and gals that have supported racing since 1989 when the first grand prix of the modern era came back to Australia?

Being a spectator at a few Australian GPs, [after] riding down from Sydney, I hope that something can be done about this appalling situation so I can at least enjoy watching MotoGP and keep up with what's happening with expert commentary from Daryl Beattie and other former racers.

Karl Zirn  
via email

*I couldn't agree more, Karl. I remember being glued to the SBS coverage of GP racing when Wayne Gardner was fighting for the title in 1987. With Network 10 pulling the plug on coverage this year, wouldn't it be great to see MotoGP back home on SBS. In the meantime, the only thing I can suggest is grabbing a Kayo subscription for the season when you see it on 'special'; I managed to pick it up for \$15 per month and as well as MotoGP, it also gives access to Moto2 and Moto3, WorldSBK and WorldSSP, and a heap of other motor racing series. I know \$15 per month might be a stretch for some, but it's certainly more affordable than subscribing through MotoGP direct. Deano*



## Royal exposure

I'm stunned a mag like this would post a pic of such poorly dressed riders in this Royal Enfield ad. None of the group would do well sliding down the road, I already see far too many dickheads like this on our roads, they don't need encouraging.

Ian Ray  
via email

*The image you refer to appeared in a sponsored email campaign, not in AMCN itself, in either print or digital formats. Nevertheless, we totally agree that the riders depicted in the image are not wearing appropriate protective clothing... and even Fred can't condone that kinda behaviour.*

## Hair-brained response 1

I got to thinking about a recent letter. I reckon Hamish calling a certain type of rider 'long haired' is way over the top. I mean, I thought Hamish was talking about a certain type of rider, the young knockabout larrikin who was working in a factory, labouring or at Uni, but apparently Hamish meant every rider had long hair, even the nice people riding Honda Cubs. Even women, who apparently can also ride motorcycles! When will this madness end?

In the spirit of that letter, I think you shouldn't call motorcycles, motorcycles all the time. I mean, seriously mate. We get that you are talking about motorcycles. How about using some different terminology?





## Your say



If it isn't ol' Seventies Longhair himself!

Like mono-cycle with an additional wheel, or fewer-wheeled vehicle than a car, two-wheel death contraption, American V-twin noise maker, single-cylinder two-stroke noise and pollution device, filtering annoyance machine or doctor and nurse employment generator?

And don't get me started on your constant use of the word motor in your magazine.

Gavin Breese  
Marino, SA

*Gavin, this has to be one of the most sarcasm-laden letters we have ever received at AMCN. Or should I say, one of the most sarcasm-laden electronically tabulated letter generated messages we have ever received at Australian Engine Mono-cycle-with-an-additional-wheel Paper*

*Book? Nah, AEMPB doesn't quite have the same ring to it as AMCN does. Deano*

### Hair-brained response 2

Can everyone just calm the f\*\*\* down about one word one columnist chooses to use? Have you seen the news lately? Of all the things in the world that should be upsetting us right now, do you really think it should be over a single word one of this title's best and most-informed journos uses on a semi-regular basis?

Didn't think so. Get off your keyboard, get on your bike and remember all the great and fortunate reasons that allow you to even pick up this magazine in the first place.

Steve Bennett  
via email

### Hair-brained response 3

Me and a few mates are wondering if Hamish really was a seventies longhair, or one of those wannabes who drove around in a Mini with an out-of-date sixties Beatles mop-top and sideburns?

Jeffrey Tram  
via email

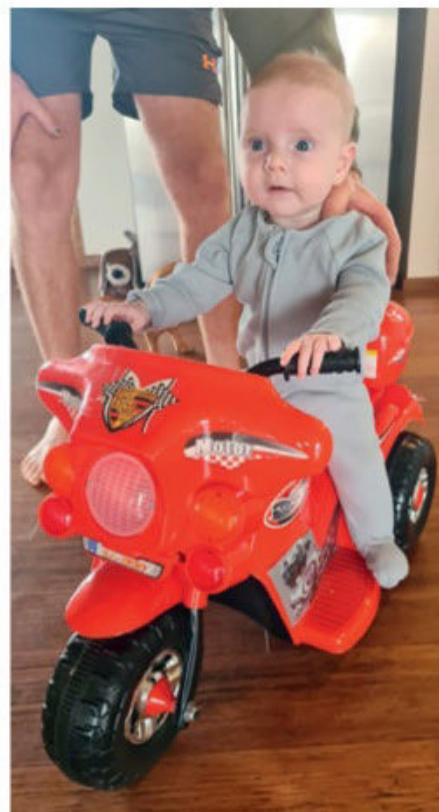
*Hah! Hamish was definitely the real deal... check out the photo (left)! Deano*

### Start 'em young

I thought you might be interested in a picture of my new grandson down in Kangaroo Island. He's three months old, ready to race.

Kevin Corcoran  
via email

*Great photo Kevin! It looks like he's set to head stateside to go Bagger racing judging by the fairing and topbox on that little red bike. Deano*



### RC211V love

The article about the Honda RCV211V (AMCN Vol 71 No 18) was brilliant. The story about the genesis of the V5 was fascinating and the description of the decision not to go ahead with the V6 FXX because of the success of the RC30 brought to mind my frustration that Honda didn't recreate the success it had with the RC30 with a V5.

When the VFR800 series was running its course, Honda came up with the VFR1200. It was a flop and disappeared without many lamenting its loss. Imagine if Honda had introduced a V5 roadbike homologated for WorldSBK in the same way the RC30 was born out of the factory RVF750 endurance racers? There would have to be a ballot to choose the lucky punters to buy one.

Honda would have a bike like no other and could have taken back the WorldSBK crown from the V-twins and the Kawasaki and Yamaha inline-fours. Instead, Honda just can't make a decent racebike from the Fireblade, no matter what they throw at it.

Sometimes I wonder what goes on in the boardroom at Honda. Soichiro Honda would be turning in his grave!

Sam Bateman  
Camberwell, Vic

*If only, Sam. And Honda is pressing on with the Fireblade in WorldSBK again this year, with AMCN's world Superbike expert Gordon Ritchie suggesting that 2022 could be a make-or-break year for HRC. "With no race victories yet, they*

*"Honda just can't make a decent racebike from the Fireblade, no matter what they throw at it"*



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*will have to start winning soon or... sayonara world Superbike?" Gordo asks. See his complete WSBK preview starting page 48.*

### Jacking up

That's more like it, Jack (*Black Jack*, AMCN Vol 71 No 18).

I'm sure you wanted more, but bringing it home on fourth instead throwing it at the gravel just to stay on the podium is what you need to do to stop these young guns pulling the factory mat out from underneath you, mate.

Don't worry about Zarco – he's four years older than you. It's those fast young blokes you gotta watch.

Martin's performance in the first two rounds at least has him off your back for a bit – but he'll be back with pole position and a podium in Argentina, so keep it upright! And finishing 30 and 28 seconds ahead of Bagnaia

### "Wouldn't Rossi love a Bezzecchi-Bagnaia factory Ducati duo?"



and Bastianini shows you've got what it takes, too – just keep it up.

Because there's a threat no one saw coming in the form of Marco Bezzecchi. And wouldn't Rossi love a Bezzecchi-Bagnaia factory Ducati duo? And I reckon the sponsors would, too.

Go Jack!

Josh Shoemark  
via email

*We're only two rounds in and already the MotoGP season is shaping up to be an absolute ripper. And yes, Go Jack! Deano*

Reader Shoemark is encouraged by Miller's fourth in Indonesia





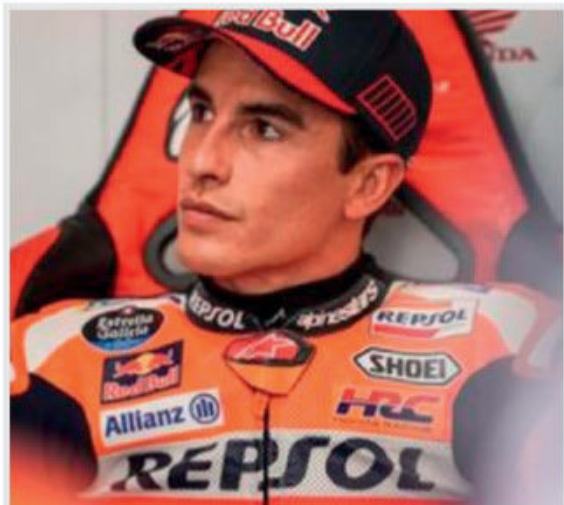
# socials

Facebook



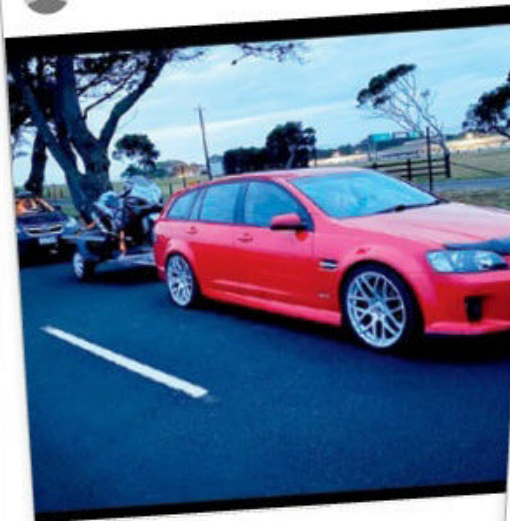
## Post of the issue

Marc Marquez's massive highside prompted many (and varied) comments



Instagram

@ad2mny



ad2mny • Follow  
Phillip Island Grand Prix Circuit

ad2mny Bright and early. Well... early anyway  
#phillipislandcircuit #trackday #hayabusa  
#panigale #amcn\_mag #pumped

@markjek



markjek Time for a quick forest ride  
#Australia #seeAustralia #igersAustralia #NSW  
#visitNSW #escape #optoutside #DriRider

➔ **Don't Forget  
#amcn\_mag**

## Comment of the Issue

**Bill White** said what many were thinking with a glimpse of Honda's 1100 Hawk:

"I loved my VTR1000 but [it] lacked some ponies. If this is lighter with a more lively motor, I'd be tempted. Till then I'll stick with my 1098 S"



## Reaching out

**Want to see your pride and joy featured in AMCN?**

The only thing we love more than writing about bikes is looking at your bikes. Tag your social pics with @**aumotorcyclenews** on Facebook or @**amcn\_mag** on Instagram, or fire them off in an email to **amcn@amcn.com.au**. And don't forget to tell us why you love it.



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24  
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\* Advertised 'Ride Away Price' includes a minimum of 3 months registration costs in all Australian States and Territories. Overseas models may be shown with accessories that are not standard fitment. Royal Enfield Australia reserves the right to vary colours, specifications and pricing at any time. Please contact your local dealer for final specifications and pricing.



# mental twisties

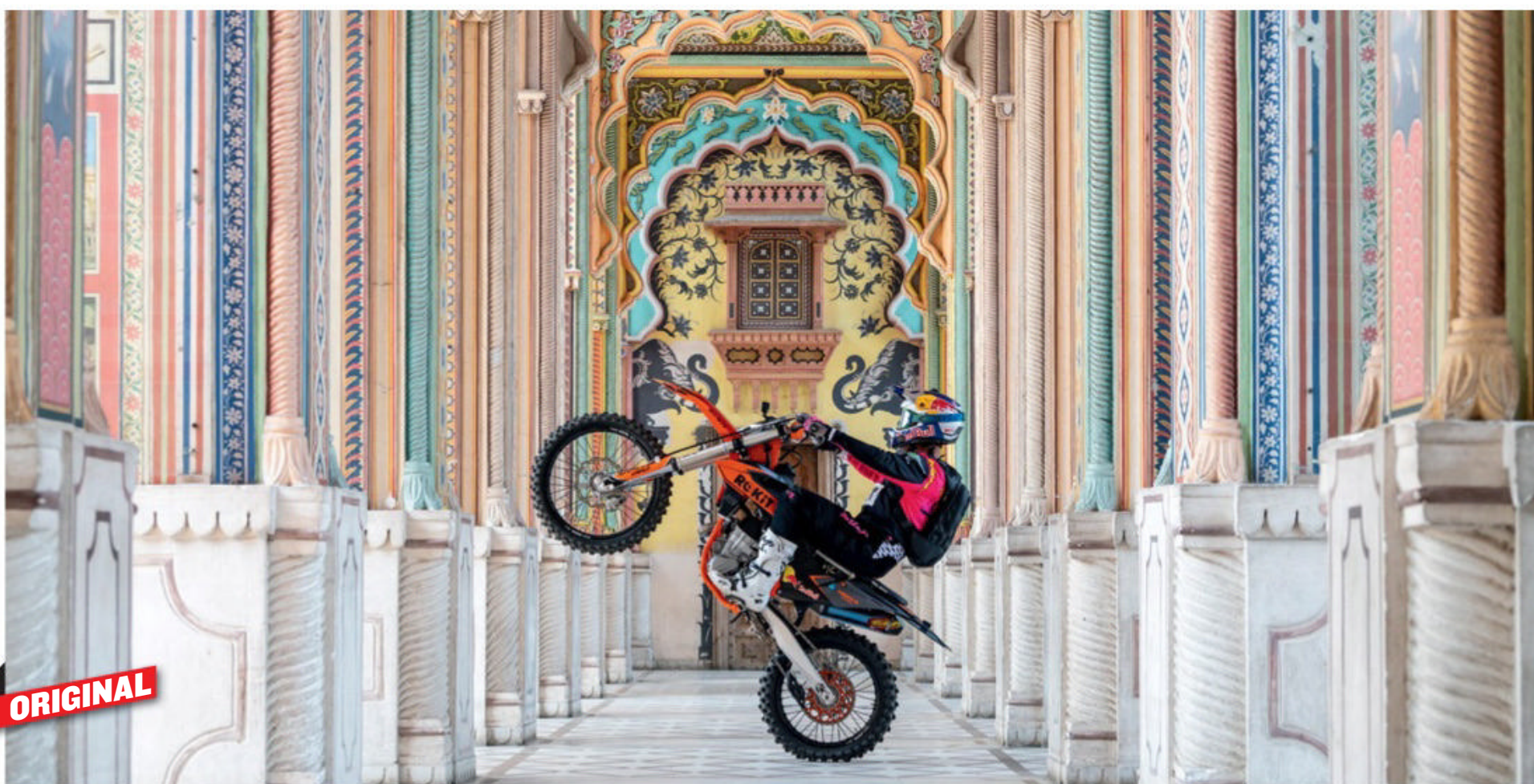
SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

*So Fred is a student of Asian architecture. Who knew? He picked out this wheelie shot and has made five changes to it. Name them, email them to us and get yourself into an AMCN neck sock!*



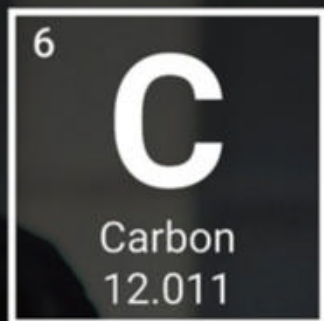
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# GREEN LIGHT

■ TEST **DAVID WATT** ■ PHOTOGRAPHY **INCITE IMAGES**

The latest retro-themed LAMS  
bike proves just how good  
learner riders have it these days









1

In 1972, Kawasaki re-wrote the rules for sportsbikes by bringing racebike double-overhead cam performance to the masses. The cult following for Kawasaki's Z900 began and it's still alive and kicking today, 50 years later.

And much like in 1972, when the Z900 was the first bike of the family to be released, the Z650 original came a few years later. So with the modern Z900RS doing well, there is no better time like the present to introduce the brand-new learner-approved Z650 Retro Sport.

The Z650RS is welcomed into a family of other well-established motorcycles sharing the same parallel 650cc twin-cylinder engine configuration. The Z650 naked, Ninja 650, Versys and Vulcan all share a similar platform. But I think the RS is the pick of the bunch.

At first glance it is easy to recognise the classic Z family resemblance and, once you look a little more closely, you can see the details like dual analogue dials, single round headlight, round taillight and the retro-styled fuel tank are all modelled off the classic Z bikes of the 70s. The Z650RS in candy emerald green with gold wheels looks amazing and stands out in a crowd of fairings and modern nakedbikes.

One part definitely not modelled off the old bikes, however, is the engine. The fuel-injected parallel twin is shared with its 650cc twin siblings so it has a few runs on the board already as a reliable, punchy and user-friendly package. I can't help but imagine how cool an inline four-cylinder 600cc engine would have been as a bit of a nod to the past Zeds.

Alas, the twin is far better suited to novice riders and let's not forget the effect on purchase

price and running costs. The engine features a 180-degree crankshaft so it is pretty smooth with very few vibrations. The semi-dry sump reduced both the engine's size and weight, allowing it to sit low in the frame to lower the centre of gravity. To keep the engine looking cleaner and less complicated, the cooling system has been simplified to reduce unsightly external plumbing and to increase reliability.

When you fire the Zed into life it has a lumpy idle with a pretty quiet exhaust note emitting from the underslung muffler. I'll just blame Euro 5 for that. It's not exactly a knee-quivering four-cylinder sound, but the 649cc unit is well matched for the fun and easy nature of the Z650. The throttle response is crisp and predictable. Kawasaki has tuned the engine for low- to midrange power and torque. So power is on tap right off idle for quick getaways from traffic.

The engine is punchy through the midrange and doesn't mind being revved out to the 10,000rpm redline, although the power gently tapers off after 8000rpm, so you aren't making much progress after that. You won't find a quickshifter on the RS as standard and, to be honest, I don't really miss it. Clutchless upshifts are a breeze with a small flight

## THE Z650RS STANDS OUT IN A CROWD OF FAIRINGS AND MODERN NAKEDBIKES

## BLINGING IT BACK

*There's a swag of genuine accessories to make your RS yours*

Kawasaki is ahead of the game and already has a stack of bling to help customise your Z650RS. Our test rig is fitted with axle sliders, frame sliders, side grip and a radiator guard straight from the catalogue. If you find the seat too short, there is a tall option seat that adds 20mm under your rump. Some other options are pillion grab rail, luggage hooks, tank protection pad, bling oil cap, dash surround and an accessory USB port that plugs in under the seat for charging your tech stuff on the go. If the accessories become as popular as the Z900RS, there will be plenty of aftermarket options available soon too.





## SEAT

The 800mm seat height makes the bike accessible to a wider range of riders. There is also the option of a taller seat.

## STYLING

Slim 12L fuel tank, classic style side covers, horizontal rear guard, conventional fork all styled from the Classic Zed bikes.

## ENGINE

DOHC 650cc parallel twin is shared with the other 650cc siblings. Tuned for low- to midrange torque.

## LIGHTS

Form meets function, LED lights all round. The front headlight has two chambers, low/high beam for modern functionality and classic looks.

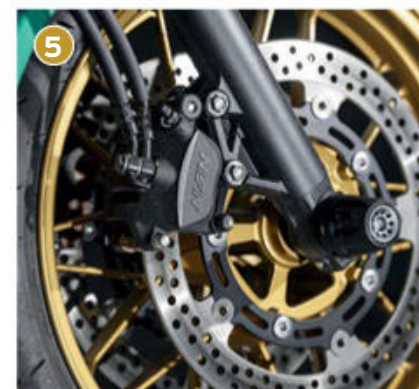
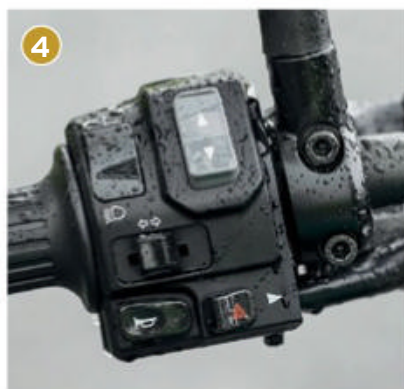
## WHEELS

Spoke-style cast wheels designed to look like wire-spoked wheels but lighter weight (and easier to maintain).



2

1. That bodywork, that green paint - it could only be a Kawasaki Zed
2. There is enough punch in the twin to be a little bit naughty
3. Modern gauges have the classic look from the days of Hansford, Sayle and Jim Goose
4. There's plenty of room on the switches for thumbs in thick gloves
5. Nissin brake set-up looks basic on paper, and works just fine on the road







2022 Kawasaki Z650RS



## WITHIN RETROSPECT

*The LAMS market is a hotbed of options. Let's take a gander at a few of the retro competitors*



The **Triumph Trident 660** is the Zed's closest competition. Offering a three-cylinder engine with an extra 3kW of power, the same torque, but it weighs 5kg more. You get a bit more tech, though, like traction control and ride modes. The Trident costs \$348 less at \$12,840 (ride away).



The **Yamaha XSR700** is a 655cc parallel twin with a 270-degree crank. It offers similar power and torque to the Z650RS, weighs the same and is priced \$511 more at \$13,699 (ride away).



And then there's the **Royal Enfield Interceptor 650**. Powered by an air-cooled parallel twin, the RE is a bit down on performance, in the region of 4kW less power and 6Nm less torque. The Interceptor is also less sporty and weighs over 30kg more than the Zed. The fact that it costs nearly \$2200 less than the Zed, however, makes this easier to justify.



## YOU HAVE TO WORK IT A BIT HARDER THAN ON A FULL-POWERED BIKE

the sportier Z650 nakedbike, but with a flatter subframe to take on the more classic lines.

The engine is also used as a stressed member to save on weight and increase rigidity. The swingarm weighs just 4.8kg, helping keep weight low and close to the centre of gravity.

Up front, the fork is a 41mm conventional style unit to keep with the retro theme, and at the rear a horizontal-linkage monoshock is used to keep the weight in close to the engine.

There are no clickers to play with at either end, only a preload adjustment at the rear which requires the use of tools to tweak.

The fantastic-looking gold cast-alloy wheels are designed to look like wire-spoked wheels from side on while keeping unsprung mass down for improved agility. The Zed comes fitted with sporty Dunlop Roadsport 2 tyres that perform flawlessly on both wet and dry roads. Not that I rode it in the dry much, but I really rate them. Good tyres are a must when building up your skills and confidence, as small mistakes can be saved with good rubber and being able to trust it to save your bacon when you need.

The suspension is tuned for comfort more than outright sports performance so it is pretty soft. This is not a bad thing though as the bike is forgiving over bumps which helps keep things relaxed. The wide 'bar, relatively steep 24° head angle and low centre of gravity make tipping into corners effortless. I find the Zed reasonably stable at full lean when the roads are smooth but the front-end can get a little twitchy under hard braking – but I am above your average weight.

Linking up my go-to set of twisties is a dream.

of my right wrist and the gearbox is slick and precise. The assist and slipper clutch makes for pretty light clutch-lever feel while still biting in a predictable fashion, and the slipper function is there if you need it. It helps smooth out dodgy downshifts and jerkiness from rapid throttle closings.

The Zed is right at home meandering through traffic with the clutch out and low in the rev range. It is like an old friend; predictable, friendly and fun. The neutral upright riding position and wide 'bar make manoeuvring easy and give you confidence on the road without putting weight on your wrists. Much praise should be heaped on Kawasaki's positive neutral finder for making it impossible to not find neutral when stopped. Why the other manufacturers haven't adopted this is beyond me, especially for newer riders. Simply come to a stop, then click from first gear up to neutral when the bike is running with the clutch in and it will not go past neutral. Simple.

Escaping the rat race and getting out on more open roads, I can stretch the Zed's legs a bit more. When cruising at freeway speeds you can hardly hear any exhaust note, though you can hear a bit of induction noise when you wind the throttle on in true Kawasaki style. The Zed is happy cruising at 100km/h but when winding it out over the legal speed limit, I'm reminded that this is a LAMS bike after all. The speed is harder to find; it's not slow, but you have to work it a bit harder than on a full-powered bike. The rest of the time, when you're not looking to tempt the law, you almost forget that this is a learner-legal machine.

The Z650RS chassis is of the steel-trellis variety and weighs just 13.5kg. It is the same frame as





The Zed is very agile and natural feeling. I don't feel like I need to give it heavy steering inputs just to switch directions, it all feels very intuitive.

The twin-disc Nissin front brakes are beaut. Actually more powerful than I expected them to be and as such, require very little effort at the lever to bring things to a halt while still offering good feel. Bosch 9.1 ABS is standard on the Zed and does not interfere during spirited riding. Both the front brake and clutch levers are span adjustable, which is a nice touch for a bike aimed at novice riders.

The Z650RS is pretty roomy for my 175cm frame. Gone are the days of learner bikes being tiny little things. The 800mm seat height gives shorter riders some confidence but doesn't make the rest of the bike feel small. It's been a while since I could put both feet flat on the ground on anything other

**1.** The 649cc parallel-twin has the family lines

**2.** Single headlight combines 70s style with 21st century LEDs

**3.** The 12-litre tank will get learners about 300km

**4.** The bulky muffler silences the twin maybe a bit *too* much

**5.** A optional seat raises the height for taller riders but both are very comfortable

than a cruiser. The stepped seat is slim at the front to aid in reaching the ground with both feet. It's also supportive of long stints in the saddle.

The 12-litre tank is slim between the knees and will take you close to 300km on the open roads on a single fill. The twin analogue gauges look like they are straight out of the 70s but with a nice multi-function LCD screen nestled between them. The Zed isn't loaded with tech so the dash is a fairly simple unit; odometer, fuel level, fuel consumption, fuel range, water temperature, gear position and trip meters all get a run here. The dash is controlled by one rocker switch on the left handlebar and is very easy to navigate on the fly.

The single round headlight looks like a classic but has been given a modern touch. There are two separate sections for low and high beam while





## SPECS

### ENGINE

**Capacity** 649cc

**Type** parallel twin, DOHC, four valves per cylinder

**Bore & stroke** 83 x 60mm

**Compression ratio** 10.8:1

**Cooling** Liquid

**Fueling** EFI, 2 x 36mm throttle bodies

**Transmission** Six-speed

**Clutch** Wet, multi-plate, slipper and assist

**Final drive** Chain

### PERFORMANCE

**Power** 37.8kW @ 8000rpm (claimed)

**Torque** 59Nm @ 6500rpm (claimed)

**Top speed** 190km/h (est)

**Fuel consumption** 3.8L/100km (measured)

### ELECTRONICS

**Type** Not given

**Rider aids** ABS

**Rider modes** Not applicable

### CHASSIS

**Frame material** Steel

**Frame type** Trellis

**Rake** 24°

**Trail** 100mm

**Wheelbase** 1405mm

### SUSPENSION

**Type** Showa

**Front:** 41mm conventional fork, non-adjustable, 125mm travel

**Rear:** Monoshock, preload-adjustable, 130mm travel

### WHEELS & BRAKES

**Wheels** Cast aluminium

**Front:** 17 x 3.5 **Rear:** 17 x 4.5

**Tyres** Dunlop Sportmax Roadsport 2

**Front:** 120/70ZR17

**Rear:** 160/60ZR17

**Brakes** Nissin, ABS

**Front:** Twin 300mm disc, twin-piston caliper

**Rear:** Single 220mm disc, single-piston caliper

### DIMENSIONS

**Weight** 186kg (kerb, claimed)

**Seat height** 800mm

**Width** 800mm

**Height** 1115mm

**Length** 2065mm

**Ground clearance** 125mm

**Fuel capacity** 12L

### SERVICING & WARRANTY

**Servicing** First: 1000km

Minor: 12,000km

Major: 24,000km

**Warranty** Two years, unlimited km

### BUSINESS END

**Price** \$11,759 (plus on-road costs)

**Colour options** Candy Emerald

Green or Metallic Moondust

Gray with Ebony

**Contact** kawasaki.com.au



**MAIN:** As Fred says, always wear protective apparel when riding (or spear fishing)

**1.** You can also get the Zed in grey - but would you want to?

**2.** Things are kept simple on the right switchblock

## THE CLASSIC ZED STYLING HAS STOOD THE TEST OF TIME AND SHOULDN'T AGE

position lamps light up the whole headlight so it looks more retro. When commuting in the dark the headlight is bright and crisp offering good vision at night thanks to LED technology. LED lights are also fitted around the rest of the bike.

Priced at \$13,188 (ride away) in New South Wales, the Z650RS is a bit steeper than some of its direct competition. The Triumph Trident, for example, comes in at \$12,840 for similar performance but with traction control and ride modes included. But, on the other hand, the Z650RS is a timeless classic even before it has left the showroom floor. The classic Zed styling has stood the test of time and shouldn't age like more modern styled bikes.

If you are just starting out and find yourself in

the market for a full-size bike, the Z650RS should be high on your list. The initial outlay is higher compared to smaller-capacity bikes, but you won't outgrow the Z650RS for a long time, even when you are finished with your restricted licence, there isn't really a need to upgrade straight away. The Zed will still be a capable all-round bike for years to come.

The Z650RS is super capable and user friendly. Going with the less-is-more approach; there are no gizmos to take your attention way from enjoying the ride and improving your skills, but I think some riders would like to see traction control included on the bike even as an optional extra.

For me it is refreshing to just hit the road and not think about what mode you're in or if you can do a wheelie or not, but for some potential buyers the lack of traction control might be a deal breaker.

I think Kawasaki has really hit the target with the Z650RS. Yes, it would be fun to have a high-revving inline four-cylinder like the good old days, but I guess the Z900RS has that covered. Whether it's beating the traffic in the city, cruising down the motorway or carving up some twisties on the weekend, the Zed is simply a breeze to ride. ■



2022 KAWASAKI Z650RS



Styling is spot-on, it could not be more comfortable and the handling is perfectly suited for its target market.

## PROS & CONS

Pricy given basic level of tech and minimal suspension adjustment. Could be a bit louder and still comply.



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■ TEST **ADAM CHILD** ■ PHOTOGRAPHY **ANT PRODUCTIONS**

# NAKED EDGE

Yamaha has made some significant changes to its flagship supernaked and the R1-derived MT-10 has never looked so tempting

**S**itting in the media briefing before riding the new MT-10, two points become apparent. One, the MT range, from MT-125 to MT-10, has been a huge success for Yamaha, with nearly 50 percent of all sales coming from MTs. In fact, with 420,000 MTs produced since 2013, it's easy to wonder what they sold before the MT brand was formulated?

Second, I'm getting old, because I remember riding the first ever MT, the 2005 MT-01, when it was launched in Cape Town as the original 'Master of Torque'. And it only seems like yesterday...

In 2016 Yamaha introduced the pinnacle of the MT empire, the MT-10, and later the premium MT-10 SP. Essentially transforming a crossplane YZF-R1 into a torque-rich nakedbike was an obvious move, and you must question why it took Yamaha so long. It was an instant success: fun, muscular, easy to ride and full of the character other Japanese supernakeds seemed to lack. It was reasonably priced, too.







## 2022 Yamaha MT-10

But in recent years it has started to show its age, especially in terms of technology. The MT-10 was always on the thirsty side, too, and by modern standards the brakes were lacking. That's where the 2022 version comes in...

It's not a wholesale update, but it's an important one. Yamaha has essentially listened to criticism from customers and the press, looked at what the competition is doing, and simply improved the areas that needed updating. Everything else remains as it was.

Yamaha admitted it could have produced a 200hp MT-10 to compete with bikes like the Ducati Streetfighter and MV Brutale, but this wasn't its target. It wanted to keep the crossplane CP4 engine manageable, with tweaks to the power, torque and the much-criticised fuel efficiency. It also wanted to add to the class leading character of the distinctive motor, while maintaining the bike's relative affordability.

Peak power has increased to 122kW (164hp) at 11,500 rpm, which is 5.5hp up from the old bike. Torque is up slightly too, from 111Nm to 112Nm at the same 9000rpm, and Yamaha claims the engine is 15 percent more efficient than before, with a quoted consumption figure of 6.8L/100km. This has been achieved through new fuelling: the throttle is no longer directly linked, there's a new intake and airbox configuration and a new exhaust – some of which has been changed for its shiny, new Euro 5 compliance.

The R1-derived aluminium Deltabox chassis remains unchanged; a good move as it's fundamentally faultless and not too dissimilar to



***YAMAHA ADMITTED IT COULD  
HAVE PRODUCED A 200HP MT-10,  
BUT THIS WASN'T ITS TARGET***





## SUSPENSION

The fully adjustable KYB rear shock is 3mm longer with 3mm more preload over the old bike. It increases seat height by 10mm.

## DASH

The all-new full-colour 4.2-inch TFT clocks are similar to the YZF-R1 set-up, with the familiar right scroll-menu wheel.

## ENGINE

The 998cc CP4 crossplane engine is based on the R1 unit but 40 percent of its components are unique to the MT-10.

## IMU

An all-new six-axis IMU is lighter than the R1's system and allows 125 calculations per second. This now allows lean-sensitive rider aids.

## EXHAUST

To meet Euro 5, there are now four cat-converters, which has added weight. To compensate, the header pipes are now titanium.



the one that was so successful in world Superbike last year. Yamaha has tweaked the fully adjustable KYB suspension settings, and the rear shock's length has increased by 3mm and there is 3mm more spring preload.

Stopping power, which was a weakness of the old bike, has been improved with a Brembo radial master cylinder, and we now have the latest S22 Bridgestone rubber fitted too.

The now 'old' Yamaha MT-10 lacks the sophisticated rider aids of the competition but that has been resolved with the implementation of a six-axis IMU, which means all rider aids are lean sensitive. Slide control, traction control, cornering ABS, front wheel lift control and changeable engine brake strategies (as found on the R1) are all present and correct, and linked to the IMU. A two-way quickshifter comes as standard, along with cruise control, a speed limiter and four riding modes. As you'd expect these can be tailored to match the rider and the conditions and, yes, the anti-wheelie can be

1. Our man Child found handling that inspired confidence from the off
2. Excellent switches are not much changed
3. Dash is small by modern standards but is quite easy to read
4. Dual lights will take you to your leader...
5. Engine is updated to Euro 5 spec but its performance is not greatly different
6. Menu is driven by the familiar thumbwheel on right switchblock
7. Exhaust emits *just* the right note from the crossplane four

deactivated. All this is clearly shown via a new, but surprisingly small, 4.2-inch full-colour dash.

The design team has put in the overtime, too, as there's a completely new headlight, a slimmer subframe, a new rear light section with a high-end finish and a fresh 'Cyan Storm' colour scheme. Check out, too, the neat little MT logo on the red strip on the rear wheel.

I'll raise my head above the parapet and declare that, in the metal, I like the new look, especially in Cyan Storm. However, when I mentioned this to an Italian journalist, he nearly choked on his espresso.

But while the styling may split opinions, the MT's new soundtrack won't. The CP4 has always had a distinctive, charismatic bark and Yamaha has added to this appeal with a new intake and exhaust system, plus new acoustic sound grills in the tank designed to direct the intake noise to the rider. Before embarking on our 220km test ride, I couldn't help a few blips of the fly-by-wire throttle – it really does sound good, arguably better than ever.





1



3



## SP TO COME

Around one third of Yamaha MT-10 sales come from the pricier SP model, and Yamaha has a new model ready to be released. The biggest and most obvious change between the SP and the standard model tested is the second-generation Öhlins electronic suspension, now linked to the six-axis IMU. There will be three semi-active and three manual suspension modes to choose from.

Other upgrades will be braided brake lines for improved braking, a new three-piece integrated sub-cowl and R1M-inspired finish and looks. The usual gold Öhlins fork legs and rear spring, combined with blue wheels, will give the SP its distinctive look. We will be riding the new model shortly, which is priced around \$3700 higher than the standard bike.



2

The first part of our journey was in city traffic, not the perfect environment for a naked R1, but opting for the softer fuelling maps made 164 horses more manageable than you might predict. In mode-D, it's as threatening as an angry kitten. Above 2000rpm and 20km/h, the quickshifter is smooth, too, and the only downside at low speeds – especially for 170cm me – is the seat height which has increased slightly due to the longer shock. Up 10mm to 835mm, it's a longer reach to the ground, and the seat also feels a tad firmer.

As we left Valencia behind, I hit my first stumbling block. My MT is in low power mode-D and running full rider aids and on the move, I can't change between modes. I can change the power, then reduce or turn off the rider aids, but I can't simply flick from mode-D to, say, the full-power mode-B. At the last set of lights before

**1.** Two-way quickshifter is now standard (some other makers, take note) **2.** I need the feel, the feel for... teal? **3.** We do not condone this sort of behaviour on motorcycles, honest, officer **4.** Ergonomics are largely carried over from previous model **5.** The 998cc CP4 donk delivers strong power, torque and reliability







## ***IT DELIVERS TORQUE BY THE BUCKETLOAD, LIKE A HUGE, FREE- REVVING V-TWIN***

leaving town, I quickly flick into mode-B, which is much more like it. Now the MT-10 is unleashed and suddenly we're at the real party.

We've discussed the new looks, much improved rider aids and the tweaked chassis, but the MT-10's ace card is the bit Yamaha has virtually left untouched – the engine. Yes, there is a little more torque and power, but to be honest it wasn't needed. Because 164kW is more than enough on a nakedbike, and the Yamaha delivers torque by the bucketload, like a huge, free-revving V-twin.

It is incredible, and I absolutely love it. You don't need to chase the revs, instead you dance around in the midrange between 4000rpm and 8000rpm feeling invincible. Traction and drive are class defining and wholly addictive and the MT will lift the front at will in the first three gears. Add a distinctive bark and a slick quickshifter and you're not far from the perfect sporty engine. An engine that's utterly suited to the naked market where the last thing you actually need is 200hp.

Back to the electronics for a moment. There is a noticeable step between riding modes and, for me, mode-B is the optimum setting. Mode-A isn't as radical as it once was, but for me it's still a little sharp for the road, and I spent 85 percent of the day in mode-B. Select either C or D for town or slippery conditions.

## **NAKED RIVALS**



### **BMW S 1000 R**

999cc, 121kW and 114Nm  
\$22,695 (ride away)



### **KAWASAKI Z H2**

998cc, 147kW and 137Nm  
\$23,160 (plus on-road costs)



### **SUZUKI GSX-S1000**

999cc, 112kW and 106Nm  
\$17,290 (ride away)









1



2



3



4

The MT-10 has always been perhaps the easiest bike on the market to wheelie. And while the introduction of a six-axis IMU has made the electronics lean-angle sensitive, they don't hinder the fun. For example, you can switch off the lift-control but leave the slide and traction control active, meaning in slippery conditions you can still wheelie but retain the safety net of slide and traction control. Alternatively, you could just reduce the lift control to its minimum setting, which still allows the front wheel to lift but does so depending on the speed of the lift, gear, road speed and throttle position... it's an impressive system.

The rider aids are also smoother than before, as is the re-introduction of power after the initial intervention. We had perfect riding conditions in Spain, but with the rider aids reduced it was still possible to slide the rear a fraction on the dusty roads. Feeling the intervention was a welcome addition and by no means hindered the MT-10's legendary fun.

Cornering ABS is now standard and, like the other aids, is faultless on the road. Yamaha has upped its game and added a Brembo master cylinder, but while braided lines will appear on the SP model to be released later this year, they still do not come as standard on the MT-10 and the four-piston ADVICS calipers remain the same – no Brembo items here.

Stopping power has increased – the brakes are sharper – but towards the limit they felt a little wooden. There wasn't that one-to-one connection you get with the very latest Brembo stoppers

## ***CORNERING ABS IS NOW STANDARD AND, LIKE THE OTHER AIDS, IS FAULTLESS ON THE ROAD***

fitted to the high-end bikes in this class.

It's a similar story with the suspension. Yamaha has raised the rear ride height and compensated with minor changes to the front. For 90 percent of the ride there are no issues, and the new Bridgestone S22 rubber is a big improvement. The ride is excellent on the motorway and the MT-10 soaks up imperfections around town with ease. In the mountains, around the countless twists and turns, I had the confidence to lay the MT-10 on its side on unknown roads – it is one of those bikes that instills confidence and always feels easy to ride at pace. For a bike weighing 212kg, it turns into corners with precision and balance, and the rider aids and mechanical grip allow you to dial in that incredible torque earlier and earlier.

When you flick between turns or make a direction change at high speed, the MT-10 is not as lively or responsive as, say, BMW's 194kg S 1000 R, but that extra bulk does give a reassuring feel and stability. Interestingly, the wheelbase is now a fraction longer due to the smaller rear sprocket (introduced to reduce the

**1.** Cyan Storm with some red bling can be a matter of taste, good or otherwise

**2.** Lights are well up to the task

**3.** Braking has received a well-timed upgrade

**4.** So have the tyres; grippier Bridgestone S22s now come as standard



# SPECS

## ENGINE

**Capacity** 998cc

**Type** Inline four-cylinder, DOHC, four valves per cylinder

**Bore & stroke** 79 x 50.9mm

**Compression ratio** 12.0:1

**Cooling** Liquid

**Fueling** EFI

**Transmission** Six-speed

**Clutch** Wet, multi-plate, slipper

**Final drive** Chain

## PERFORMANCE

**Power** 122kW @ 11,500rpm (claimed)

**Torque** 112Nm @ 9500rpm (claimed)

**Top speed** 250km/h (est)

**Fuel consumption** 7.6L/100km (measured)

## ELECTRONICS

**Type** Not given

**Rider aids** Cornering ABS and traction control, slide control, lift control and two-way quickshifter

Rider modes A-mode, B-mode, C-mode and D-mode

## CHASSIS

**Frame material** Aluminium

**Frame type** Deltabox

Rake 24°

**Trail** 102mm

**Wheelbase** 1405mm

## SUSPENSION

**Type** KYB

**Front:** 43mm USD fork, fully-adjustable, 120mm travel

**Rear:** Monoshock, fully-adjustable, 120mm travel

## WHEELS & BRAKES

**Wheels** Cast aluminium

**Front:** 17 x 3.5 **Rear:** 17 x 6.0

**Tyres** Bridgestone S22

**Front:** 120/70ZR17

**Rear:** 190/55ZR17

**Brakes** ADVICS, ABS

**Front:** Twin 320mm disc, four-piston caliper

**Rear:** Single 220mm disc, single-piston caliper

## DIMENSIONS

**Weight** 212kg (dry, claimed)

**Seat height** 835mm

**Width** 800mm

**Height** 1165mm

**Length** 2100mm

**Ground clearance** Not given

**Fuel capacity** 17L

## SERVICING & WARRANTY

**Servicing** First: 1000km

Minor: 10,000km

Major: 24,000km

**Warranty** Two years, unlimited km

## BUSINESS END

**Price** \$23,649 (plus on-road costs)

**Colour options** Cyan Storm or Tech Black

**Contact**

www.yamaha-motor.com.au



lively engine feel, and give a lower rpm when touring) but it's still shorter than the MT-09.

It was in that last 20 percent of the fork's stroke, the last bit when you're really pushing, that I wanted a little more front-end feedback – and possibly a slightly softer front-end – which usually translates more feedback to the rider – would have helped. I suspect Yamaha has raised the rear-end a fraction to quicken the steering, but was then forced to increase the front damping to compensate for the weight transfer – some lighter riders may want a softer set-up.

Yamaha has changed the exhaust, and airbox, and added new acoustic sound grills above the tank, but tank capacity remains at 17 litres. Without riding the old bike back-to-back with the new model, it's hard to judge how much it has improved the bike's sound – but it does sound good for a Euro 5 bike, and fuel efficiency appears to have improved – I managed 7.6L/100km after a spirited ride.

Instead of searching for more power to win the bragging-rights war, Yamaha has focused on the old bike's weak points and has made significant gains. The rider aids are a big step up and haven't diminished the fun. The brakes are stronger and now have lean-angle sensitive ABS in support, while the CP4 crossplane engine is more efficient, sounds better and has even more accessible torque. If you rate a bike on smiles and how it makes you feel then you must score the MT-10 very highly.

The '10' looks set to continue the MT line's strong sales record



It's reasonably priced, too. It's significantly more expensive than Suzuki's GSX-S1000, a good deal cheaper than Aprilia's base-model Tuono V4 and almost on a par with Kawasaki's Z H2, which boasts more performance.

The MT exudes a quality feel, despite its relatively small TFT dash. Suspension can be tailored to match the ride and I'd want a little more feel, but it really is hard to fault. There is little doubt the new MT-10 should continue to be a success for Yamaha. ■



2022 YAMAHA MT-10



Much improved rider aids and tech, the sound and character is top-notch and there's loads of torque.

**PROS & CONS**

It's still thirsty, you'll either love or hate the styling and the dash is lacking in both size and bling.





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MATT BLACK









# SUPER

Next month, 24 riders will launch into 2022's 36-race battle for production racing's biggest prize

# HEROES

■ WORDS **GORDON RITCHIE**

■ PHOTOGRAPHY **GOLD&GOOSE & BMW MOTORSPORT**



# 2022 WORLDSBK CHAMPIONSHIP

**A**lthough the 2022 Motul FIM Superbike World Championship does not start with a big bang locally at Phillip Island again this year, it will end there with a cracking Aussie finale, most probably a single week after the penultimate rounds at Mandalika.

A relatively late start to what might otherwise feel like an 'old normal' season takes place at Motorland Aragon in northern Spain, between 8-10 April. Two days of supported testing will take place over 4-5 April, but the first points will arrive shortly after that. Three races again at each round, as per a new normal that pre-dated the modern plague.

Assen over 22-24 April, Estoril in Portugal over 20-22 May, and a doubtless toasty Misano on the Adriatic Coast of Italy (10-12 June) will get the first third of the 12-round year done.

Donington Park, more than a month later, hosts the fifth round in mid-July. The returning Most circuit in Czechia (with some more safety and facility upgrades, we expect) sees the year reach its halfway point between 29-31 July.

A free August, plus more potential holiday time in the first week of September, will give way to old favourite Magny Cours between 9-11, with Catalunya also squeezing into September, between 23-25. The final European round will



**1.** Joannan Rea will be looking to resume his dominant form

**2.** And world champion Toprak Razgatlioglu will be out to stop him

**3.** Can Kawasaki fight off the challenge from Yamaha and Ducati?

**4.** Andrea Locatelli is looking to build on a strong rookie year

**5.** Razgatlioglu was the class of the field last year, taking 29 podium finishes in 38 races

**6.** Superbike rookie Philipp Öttl suits up for GoEleven

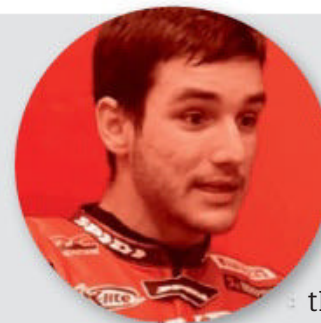


## GORDO'S DARK HORSES

*Cos this bloke's been floating around the paddock for decades*

### Iker Lecuona

A MotoGP rider without a podium and without a ride in the paddock that made him, becomes a factory rookie WorldSBK rider in the iconic HRC set-up. A big gamble or a big enough talent right away, Honda has thrown not one but two sets of dice down the green baize table



this year. There is no reason why Lecuona cannot challenge at the front right away, but he will need a Honda with more feel and consistency than the one on which Alvaro Bautista scored a podium, while crashing with greater irregularity. He'll be worth watching. It will be riveting, either way.



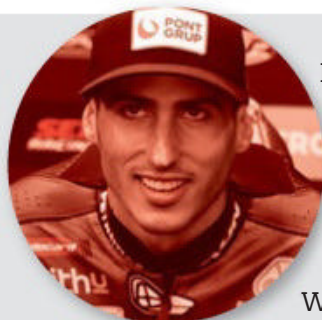


## THE BIG TWO REMAIN WITH THEIR SAME TEAMS IN 2022



### Xavi Vierge

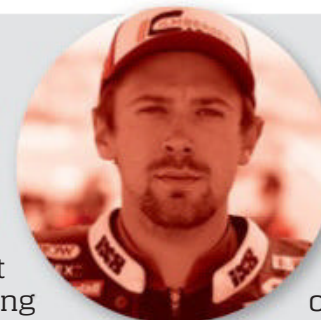
As Lecuona, a real gamble that probably nobody outside of the entire HRC set-up actually understands. That said, the jump from Moto2 to WorldSBK is not unbridgeable, but it is a distance that is not fully understood. Most ex-GP paddock figures – think



Krummenacher, Cortese, Öttl, Locatelli – go via WorldSSP to get a WorldSBK ride. But not only is Vierge straight into WorldSBK, but on a factory HRC Honda. All things are possible, and it will be compulsive viewing to see how it all works out. The whole HRC set-up is a reset in 2022.

### Philipp Öttl

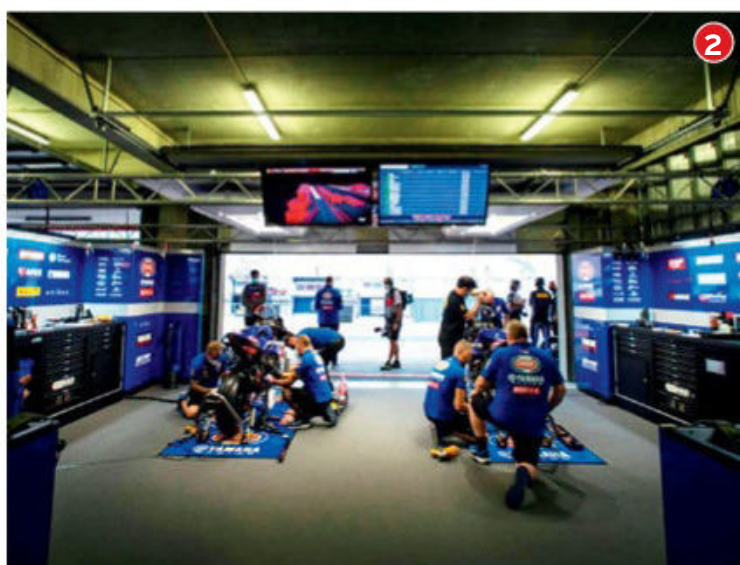
The German impressed his GoEleven team first time out in testing, as he rode a Superbike and a big V4 for the first time at Portimao, posting very respectable times. A real racer, almost as good in his first two years of WorldSSP on the outdated Kawasaki tech package as former lead rider



Lucas Mahias. He enters WorldSBK for the first time with lots of WorldSSP podiums to his credit. GoEleven may not be as directly supported by the official team as it was with Rinaldi and Davies, but nowadays the gap from privateer to factory is very narrow, in terms of machinery at least. Yeah, he could be good from the get-go.



# 2022 WORLDSBK CHAMPIONSHIP



be in early October (7-9) at modern classic Portimao, in Portugal.

And then the first two 'flyaways' – Argentina and Indonesia will build intensity until the final weekend in Australia. Final date for your home round is... yet to be confirmed, but will probably be just one weekend after Mandalika, making it 18 November.

The WorldSBK 2022 entry list has a very similar feel in terms of teams and competing machinery, which gives us five manufacturers – BMW, Ducati, Honda, Kawasaki and Yamaha – but Dorna has added to the regular rider numbers to take that total up to 24.

The leading light at the end of an incandescent 2021 season was Toprak Razgatlioglu (Pata Yamaha with Brixx) who beat Jonathan Rea (Kawasaki Racing Team) to the championship by just 13 points.

The big two, the most recent champions, remain with their same teams in 2022, with Toprak joined on the best YZF-R1s on the planet by 2021 Rookie of the Year, Andrea Locatelli, and Rea once again teamed up with Alex Lowes on the largely unchanged Ninja ZX-10RR.

**1.** Rea faces a grid filled with changes this year

**2.** In 2020 Yamaha finally delivered on the promise of its R1

**3.** Can Alex Lowes take the points off the other riders like Rea needs him to do?

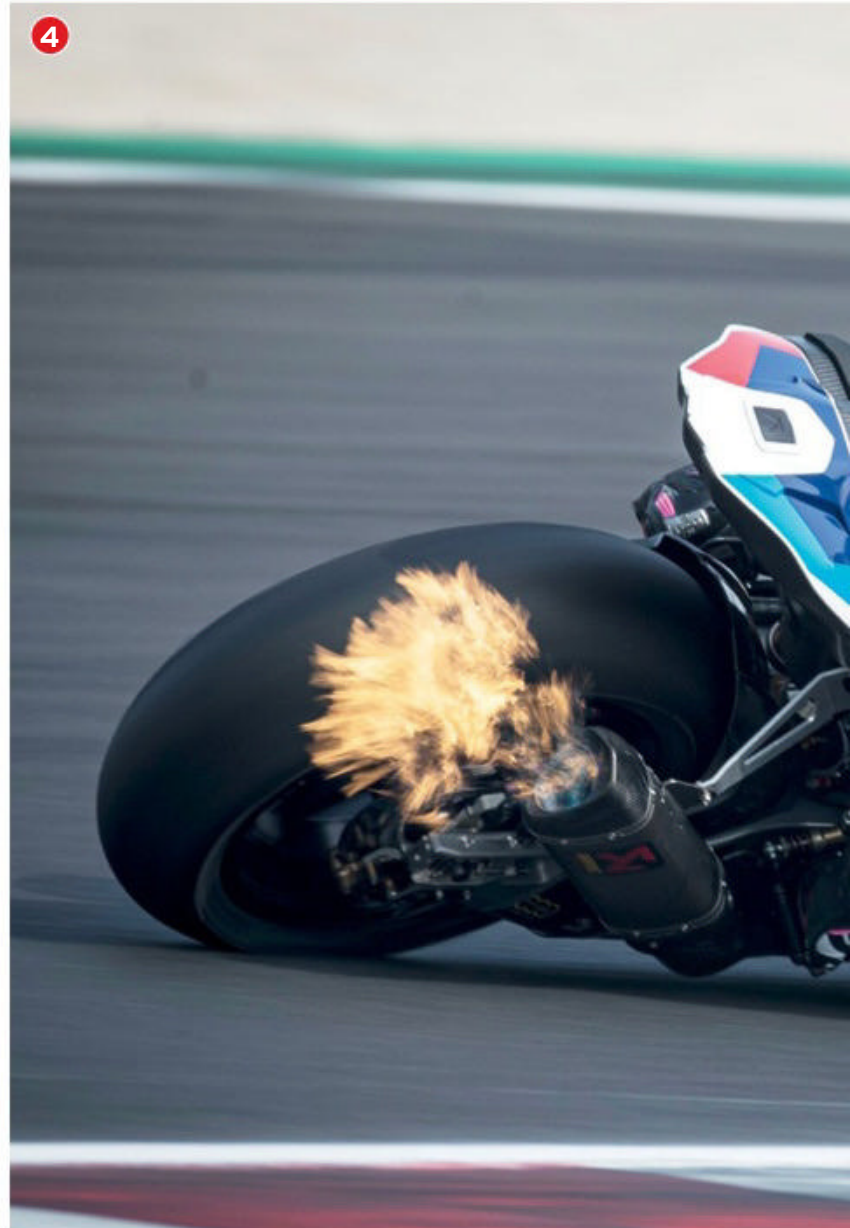
**4.** BMW has recruited Scott Redding to lead its works Motorrad team

**5.** Is this the time for former WorldSSP winner Lucas Mahias to step up?

**6.** After two tough seasons with Honda Alvaro Bautista is back on a Ducati

**7.** Redding on a BMW? That is going to take some getting used to

**8.** The highly-rated Loris Baz is also a BMW man now, riding for the Bonovo Action team



## HONDA LAUNCHES INTO 2022 WITH COMPLETE RIDER CHANGES





The entire Yamaha line-up from 2021 is replicated with GRT fielding the mercurial Garrett Gerloff and the still-developing Kohta Nozane; GIL Motorsports return with Christophe Ponsson. There is one new Yamaha team this year, as Motoxracing Yamaha team moves up to WorldSBK with ex-Kawasaki privateer, Isaac Viñales.

Lucas Mahias (Kawasaki Puccetti Racing), teenage rookie Oliver König (Orelac Racing VerdNatura) and Loris Cresson (TPR Team Pedercini) complete the line-up of Independent Kawasaki riders.

All change for proven race winners Alvaro Bautista and Scott Redding, as they move teams for 2022. Bautista takes over Redding's ride to rejoin the Aruba Ducati guys, while Redding slots in alongside existing factory BMW Motorrad WorldSBK rider Michael van der Mark, on the M 1000 RR. Two more well-equipped BMWs will join the official bikes in 2022, with old stager Eugene Laverty and the highly experienced Loris Baz on the books of the Bonovo Action BMW squad. Strong riding duo for an Indie team, eh?

After a disappointing 2021, HRC shocked everybody with the adoption of two WorldSBK novices in Iker Lecuona from MotoGP and Xavi Vierge from Moto2. Two riders that could raise a few eyebrows this season (see sidebar).

Honda has launched itself into the 2022 season with complete rider changes, but has also made several background alterations that underline this year as a corporate reset.





# 2022 WORLDSBK CHAMPIONSHIP



As well as a new logo and a new crew chief for Lecuona in Pete Jennings, Honda has moved to Showa suspension from Öhlins, and swapped out its previous Brembo brakes for Nissin.

In the third year of its high profile but low-key HRC WorldSBK re-entry (after one learning year with the previous Fireblade in 2019), this could well be a make-or-break year for the biggest manufacturer of all. With no race victories yet, they will have to start winning soon or... sayonara world Superbike?

There will be two, not one, MIE Racing Hondas in 2022, with existing rider Leandro Mercado joined by long-time MotoGP paddock figure, Malaysia's Hafizh Syahrin, who is heading for his first-ever WorldSBK season.

Ducati almost *has* to win the championship this season, given how much they have been nearly there for many years. Over to the aforementioned Bautista and a proven, if so far occasional, WorldSBK race winner Michael Ruben Rinaldi in the Aruba team. Axel Bassani is on a privateer Motocorsa Racing Ducati again, and out for more podium finishes in his sophomore season.

Other V4 R Independent riders include recent WorldSSP podium worriers Philipp Öttl (Team GoEleven) and Luca Bernardi (Barni Spark Racing) – both WorldSBK rookies, as the generational changes within WorldSBK carry on apace.

A new world champion defending his title, saddle swaps from some true top names and new talents all over, there is lots to draw the attention in 2022 before the tyre warmers have even been plugged in.

## THIS COULD WELL BE A MAKE-OR-BREAK YEAR FOR HONDA. OR SAYONARA SUPERBIKE?



1. Does the fire still burn for Irish veteran Eugene Laverty?

2. With one year to go (in all likelihood) before Toprak moves to MotoGP, can Rea topple him?

3. Ducati's Michael Ruben Rinaldi was fourth in the points in 2021

4. While a lot of teams have made changes Kawasaki carries a lot of technical stability into its 2022 campaign





# 2022 WORLDSSP CHAMPIONSHIP

## MIDSIZE MENAGERIE

*All eyes will be on the new-look Supersport category hosting some very hungry riders*

**A GRID OF** 23 full-time riders and seven WorldSSP Challenge riders (who do not go to the three flyaway rounds) will have a very different look, feel and sound compared to any previous year. The first-ever WorldSSP season had the usual 600cc fours and some 750cc Ducati V-twins, but for 2022 we also have 800 and 765cc triples, and a smattering of whopping 955cc V-twins.

How do you equalise that lot? Well, by regulations first tried out in the British Supersport class in some ways, and by a lot of dyno, electronic and other simulation work behind the scenes in the off season, led by the FIM's Scott Smart and consultant engineers. We will get to see how it all works out at the 12 rounds of the championship. WorldSSP is down for full attendance in 2022, and two races per weekend again.

Yamaha's YZF-R6 should still be a good competitive bet, and we will see the likes of reigning champion Dominique Aegerter (Ten Kate), nearly champion Jules Cluzel (GMT94) and 11 other YZF-R6 riders try to prove the bluebirds can still fly. Kyle Smith, a multiple race winner from the UK, is back in the series again, on a VFT Racing Yamaha.

But it is another English-speaking rider who has captured the imagination of most so far. Oli Bayliss (Barni Spark Racing Team) is his name. Seven riders in all will run the Ducati Panigale V2, but as of now nobody knows how it will really be. It's the middle of March and the tech rules have still not been published by the FIM...



## THE YAMAHA YZF-R6 SHOULD STILL BE A GOOD BET

The tech controllers are confident, however, that the complex relationship between revs, torque and gearing realities will keep the Ducati's from running away out front. Raffaele De Rosa (Ducati Orelac Verdnatura Ducati) hopes he and riders like Nicolo Bulega (Aruba.it Ducati) and Federico Caricasulo (Althea Racing Ducati) will all at least start with more oomph to play with than their rivals.

Kawasaki continues with the Ninja ZX-6R, with Can Öncü maybe its best hope in the Puccetti Racing team. Reigning WorldSSP300 champion Adrian Huertas (MTM Kawasaki) may have something to say about that, if he adapts quickly to the 636cc four.

Aussie Ben Currie (MotoZoo Racing by Puccetti Kawasaki) will be a full season entry for his new team. Triumph, and the famous PTR set-up (called Dynavolt Triumph nowadays) will run the hybrid Street Triple RS with a race fairing, with Hannes Soomer and Stefano Manzi on board.

MV Agusta Reparto Corse riders Niki Tuuli and Bahattin Sofuoglu will have 800cc F3 RR machines under their control in 2022, which should make the classic Italian marque competitive again.

From a near Yamaha Cup in recent times to a five theoretically podium-capable manufacturers in 2022, WorldSSP enters a new era as a visual and auditory treat. But what should we keep our eyes on most in 2022? There's a few special projects to study.

The potential of a constantly modified rulebook, for starters. And the competitiveness of each format waxing and waning across different circuit layouts?

But perhaps what we're all most interested in is whether those big Ducati V-twins are going to be the most capable podium harvesters.

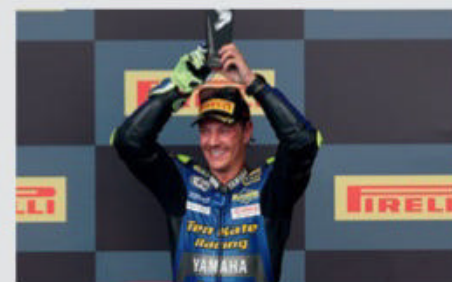
A lot of people think you can't beat cubes. Are they right?

Well, we'll find out between 8-10 April at Motorland Aragon.



## GORDO'S PICKS

*There's simply no way to say which bike will have the edge, so the most likely riders from each engine category are...*



### Four

Dominique Aegerter, the current champ for Ten Kate, should be the best bet for top 600cc rider.

Could this be Jules Cluzel's year, however? If he remains uninjured, and is supplied with a peppy enough engine, possibly.



### Three

Soomer is most experienced in this arena but Manzi is also highly regarded. Tuuli has raved about the bigger MV triple since he got on it, and has lots of experience now. If he finds consistency in himself and his bike, he is highly capable.



### Two

Raffaele De Rosa could even be it if he can change his riding style to suit. Federico Caricasulo could be a dark horse as he has some great WorldSSP results from previous years. Nicolo Bulega is highly rated by many, and also on the 'factory' twin.

1. Can Oncu carries the Kawasaki challenge

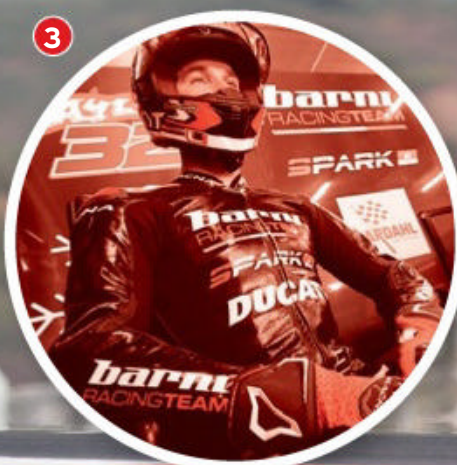
2. Two big names feature at Ducati; former Moto2 racer Nicolo Bulega...

3. ... and Oli Bayliss, already a race winner at ASBK level

2



3





# WORLDSSP300

## BULK FEEDER



*Wild child turned mature teen, the 300 class is doing what it should*

**A FORM OF SANITY** has broken out in a class that badly needed an overhaul after its first five early wild-child years. Hence 'only' 30 permanent entries, which means no split qualifying and hopefully not too many over-eager kids taking too many risks. There will be at least fewer over-eager kids taking too many risks this year.

It will be, again, many Kawasakis (17) against quite a few Yamahas (12) and just one single KTM RC390R, for Lehmann Lennox in the Freudenberg Paligo Racing team.

Many top names have moved on in 2022. Ana Carrasco, Tom Booth-Amos, Adrian Huertas, Jeffrey Buis, Bahattin Sofuoglu, Unai Orradre, Oliver König have all shipped out. Many have gone up one category to WorldSSP, which means the system is working well now, and there is potential for many new stars to start burning brightly.

The recently all-conquering MTM Kawasaki team remains, even though it has Huertas in WorldSSP too. It will field Yuta Okaya, Victor Steeman and Robert Bijman on the Ninja 400 this season.

Aussie Harry Khouri will be back for more in the 300 class, as part of the Team109 Kawasaki set-up this time around. ■

## MANY TOP NAMES HAVE MOVED ON FOR 2022

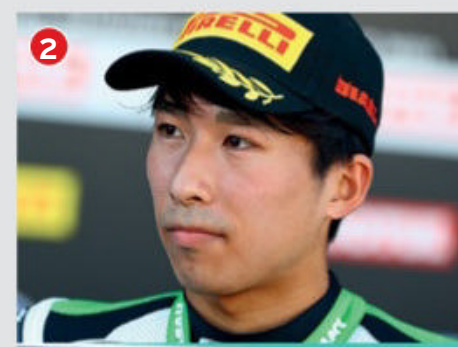


## GORDO'S PICKS

*It's anyone's game and that's why it's great*

**ALWAYS DIFFICULT TO** pluck this year's true star from this far out, as previous seasons have shown all too well. This is a science made all the more inexact by the fact that so many of the top 2021 riders have moved on.

Yuta Okaya is a good bet, as much for his MTM team's winning experience as anything else. Consistency wins this championship more than any other. Hugo De Cancellis, Samuel Di Sora, Bruno Leraci and maybe even 2017 season champion Marc Garcia are ones to look at as potential champions. But this being the craziest class of all, any one of the 300 cast could have their name in lights by the end.



1. One KTM rider, Lehmann Lennox, will take on 17 Kawasakis and 12 Yamahas
2. Yuta Okaya will be looking to lead the Kawasaki fleet
3. So will Frenchman Hugo De Cancellis
4. Spaniard Samuel Di Sora has lots of experience



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When the 2022 Superbike World Championship takes off next month **Toprak Razgatlioglu** will be looking for two titles on the trot before, in all likelihood, a move to MotoGP beckons







GENESIO BEVILACQUA

WORDS ALAN CATHCART PHOTOGRAPHY OLI TENNENT

# WHEN MAN







# MEETS MACHINE

The man behind Althea Ducati's history-making double title is inspired equally by mechanical works of art as is he by the characters who race them. And this is the stunning result





Genesio Bevilacqua

It's hard to believe that 62-year-old Italian entrepreneur and diehard biker Genesio Bevilacqua's story is for real – but please be assured, it is. The record books say that his privately owned Team Althea racing equipe completed an unlikely double-up dominance in 2011 of both the Superbike World Championship and the FIM's World Superstock 1000 series, thanks to Spanish former MotoGP star Carlos Checa and young local rider Davide Giugliano respectively, both aboard Ducati 1098R desmo V-twins.

The fact the teams – named after his state-of-the-art Ceramica Althea ceramics factory located an hour north of Rome – scored two world titles in the same season in quite separate categories, running against all four Japanese manufacturers in each, as well as the colossal BMW and Aprilia factory teams, is hugely impressive. But the fact that Checa's title was achieved very much against the odds aboard the supposedly obsolescent 1098R, and indeed marking the very last time a twin-cylinder motorcycle would ever win the WorldSBK crown, makes it incredibly so.

It gets better. It was also the last time a WorldSBK championship was won by a private team, with Bevilacqua himself very much a hands-on team manager responsible for guiding both his riders to their titles, rather than just a wealthy sponsor signing the cheques. But there was a downside.

“Being fully committed to world Superbike that season meant I had to give up classic racing for a year on my ex-Paolo Pileri 500 desmo Ducati single,” says Genesio with a grimace. “And I only managed two trackdays all year long at my local Vallelunga circuit – both during the summer break, when it was too hot to really enjoy riding.



“But winning both titles made it all worthwhile.” Indeed so – but even that wasn't the end of this story. For after Bevilacqua's relationship with the VW Group's German-owned Ducati factory later soured, Team Althea scored a memorable riposte by repeating its FIM World Superstock title victory in 2016, but this time with Raffaele de Rosa from Naples, another rider like the team owner from Italy's deep South, riding an S 1000 RR made by VW's rival, BMW!

Satisfied, Bevilacqua then turned his attention to reorganising his already impressive private collection of around 140 predominantly road-racing motorcycles into a magnificent display known as the *Moto dei Miti*, which translates to 'Bikes of the Legends' and which opened in November 2017 in the grounds of the Ceramica

1. Althea Racing won two titles for Ducati in 2011
2. Genesio Bevilacqua with Paolo Pileri's 125cc title-winning Morbidelli
3. Althea operates from an impressive facility in Civita Castellana, north of Rome
4. Carlos Checa's WorldSBK title saved some red faces at Ducati
5. And when he had to, Bevilacqua turned to BMW to keep his team racing







## “PAOLO [PILERI] WAS MY IDOL, BOTH AS WORLD CHAMPION AND AS A PERSON”

Althea factory. Later, a second pavilion was constructed to show his reserve stock of bikes off to best advantage, while opening the result to the public virtually via a video tour accessible on its website [www.motodeimiti.com](http://www.motodeimiti.com).

Born in 1959 in Calabria, then Italy's woefully poor southernmost province at the toe of its boot, at the age of six Bevilacqua followed his dad north to Civita Castellana in pursuit of work. He grew up displaying an artistic flair coupled with an interest in engineering, which led him to establish what later became the Althea company in 1979, immediately after graduating from the local art institute, where he'd developed a ground-breaking new ceramic formula via experimental chemistry.

Althea now employs over 200 people, and its products are sold in more than 50 different countries, with a particular emphasis on bathroom products – the profits from which have helped fund its eponymous racing team's largely successful activities for the past two decades, thus promoting its products globally.

Bevilacqua began racing at the age of 12 aboard a three-speed 50cc Benelli *ciclomotore* belonging to his elder brother. He won short impromptu races against other lads round village streets, which led to his contesting properly organised racing on local tracks in the late 1970s. Flashes of success coupled with occasional tumbles made him realise he had the talent to do well.

“But this meant spending money, and I didn't have much to spend,” he recalls. “So I decided to concentrate on building up a business, and



getting properly established, then returning to racing which I did in my 20s – but with the invaluable support of my maestro, the late, great Paolo Pileri.”

Pileri came from nearby Terni, 50km from Bevilacqua's home town, and was a local hero who made good by winning the 1975 125cc Grand Prix World Championship on one of Giancarlo Morbidelli's self-built rotary-valve twins, after winning seven straight races in a dominant season.

“When I was young Paolo was my idol, both as world champion and as a person,” says Genesio. “I met him at our local motorcycle club and we began a close fellowship which became friendship.”

After retiring from racing, Pileri and brother Francesco founded the AGV Racing team, then groomed Loris Capirossi to become the youngest-ever world champion in 1989 in the 125cc GP class, defending the title successfully in 1990 ahead of a newly recruited teammate, the late Fausto Gresini.

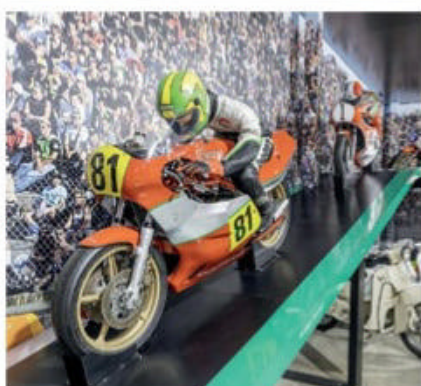
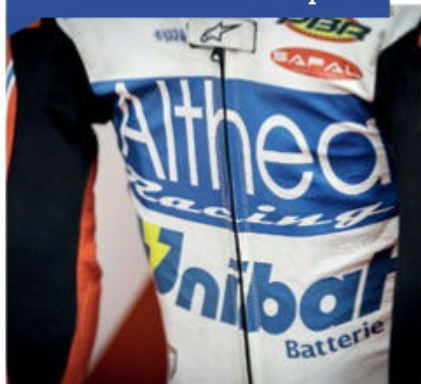
“Paolo taught me so many things,” says Genesio. “Knowing him was fundamental for me in terms of growing up as a person and a motorcyclist, but also in understanding the organisation of a team.”

Pileri's death from a heart attack in 2007 aged 62 led directly to the creation of Genesio's exquisitely presented *Moto dei Miti* collection.

“I wanted to create a shrine to the memory of this remarkable man who was such an inspiration to me,” he says. “So I went looking for the bikes he raced, and all the personal memorabilia



Genesio Bevilacqua



surrounding his career to put on display in the Pileri Corner of our museum.”

The completeness of the result is typical of the Bevilacqua philosophy of collecting, with one of Pileri’s two title-winning Morbidelli 125 twins on display, surrounded by Paolo’s entire collection of trophies and World Championship certificates entrusted by the Pileri family, plus his helmet, racing leathers, files and paperwork. It’s a poignant display, but right next door is the first part of *Moto dei Miti*’s Honda Collection, comprising the two Pileri Team AGV RS125 singles on which Loris Capirossi won the 1989/1990 125GP world titles, the former as the youngest-ever world champ at just 17 years, five months and 13 days.

Pileri is also credited with giving Valentino Rossi his first opportunity to compete in road racing when he joined Team AGV at the age of 14. Other Paolo Pileri racebikes in the collection include the 1966 Motobi 250 Sei Tiranti he began road racing on in 1971 after a successful motocross career, and indeed the specially developed full 500cc NCR Ducati desmo single he moved to next that Genesio has competed aboard in Italian Classic racing for the past two decades. Also on display is the unique 52° V-twin MBA 250 Pileri raced in 1985 just before retiring.

“The Paolo Pileri Tribute display effectively kickstarted *Moto dei Miti*,” says Genesio.

## “JARNO SAARINEN WAS A REAL INSPIRATION FOR ME”

“I had already amassed quite a nice collection of bikes, but without any particular theme. But the Pileri display taught me that my greatest interest was matching the mechanical works of art which the motorcycles represent to the legends who raced them – not necessarily to any great success, but who simply brought life to them on the racetrack.

“So a good example of that is the C81 Cagiva 500 Cinghiale (which literally means ‘rubber band’) which represents the first real Cagiva 500GP motorcycle, ridden by Virginio Ferrari in 1981 at the very start of the Castiglioni brothers’ involvement in racing. Its inline four-cylinder motor with belt-driven rotary valves is unique in the world.

“But besides the very first 500GP Cagiva, I also have the very last, the 1994 V4 of John Kocinski. Both engines were designed by Ezio Mascheroni, who is also commemorated here. I wanted the ’94 because it was the maximum expression of Cagiva’s abilities, but then I also have the first one, illustrating the initial commitment of the Castiglioni family to make a 100 percent Italian 500 GP bike, and finally 12 years later... it won!”

Other little-known 1980s Cagiva GP racers on show include a 125 single and 250 twin.

The display is divided into various sections, with the first one a visitor enters devoted to Ducatis and entitled *Cuore Desmodromico* – the



desmo heart of the matter – even if the ceiling displays Mike Hailwood on a Honda GP racer! This includes a gloriously unrestored 1953 pushrod Ducati 60cc Milano-Taranto racer complete with massive bumpad for the long hours spent lying on the fuel tank to maximise every last fraction of speed on the long, straight, flat roads heading south.

Nearby is the ultimate Ducati single, one of the 67 fuel-injected four-valve Supermonos built in 1993-95, and adjacent to that the 600TT2 and 750TT1 V-twins, which Genesio himself raced





for several years in the 1980s.

In front of these is a wide-frame 1972 Imola-type F750 racer, and behind them the first of the 18 Ducati Superbikes in the collection; a 1990 ex-Raymond Roche 888 ahead of Cristiano Migliorati's Italian champion 916. On a separate dais sits one of the rare Senna 916 streetbikes, next to the 125 Gran Sport with which Giuliano Maoggi won the 1956 Motogiro.

This leads into a second area with the most poignant of all the displays on view – a joint tribute to Renzo Pasolini and Jarno Saarinen.

"I was just 13 when they both died on that tragic day in May 1973," says Genesio sombrely. "Jarno Saarinen was a real inspiration for me even as a child, competing against giants like Agostini and Phil Read with just he and his wife looking after everything, including working on the bike, changing tyres, her alone in the pits during the races giving signals or refuelling during longer races – you name it.

"He really made the difference because he rode his bike in an extraordinary way that I'll never forget, and since he died on that sad May day, I have carried this sense of loss inside me ever since."

His tribute includes a genuine ex-Pasolini 350 Aermacchi H-D twin – there's a 250cc version elsewhere in the collection – and a replica of

**1.** One of Bevilacqua's favourite bikes is the ex-John Kocinski Cagiva 500 GP racer

**2.** Bevilacqua has just one replica bike, a Yamaha in tribute to the late Jarno Saarinen

**3.** If Italian motorcycles do not quicken your pulse... what about ex-Kenny Roberts and ex-Norick Abe factory Yamaha 500s?

**4.** Genesio was a hands-on manager with his riders, like Carlos Checa

**5.** Some of the finest Ducati racers ever to grace Italy...

**6.** ... or for that matter, Taree





Genesio Bevilacqua

Saarinen's 350cc Arwidson Yamaha, with the correct shape of steeply slanted handlebars obtained thanks to Genesio's British friends Steve Carthy and John Hackett.

"It's the only replica I have in the collection, but I wanted to pay tribute to the hero of my youth with this display," he says.

Next comes a more modern collection of GP racers, headed by Casey Stoner's 2007 MotoGP world champion Ducati GP07 and the GP08 on which he tried unsuccessfully to defend his title, both bikes being sourced directly from the Italian factory. There's also a Desmosedici RR 800 engine that powered them on separate display, as well as an older 2005 ex-Loris Capirossi 990cc GP05.

"I've always bought the most important bikes in the collection directly from the factories," says Genesio. "I think there are maybe three or four of us in the world who have the possibility to purchase these kinds of bikes, which have a significant technical content inside which is often secret. It's for this reason Ducati does not sell



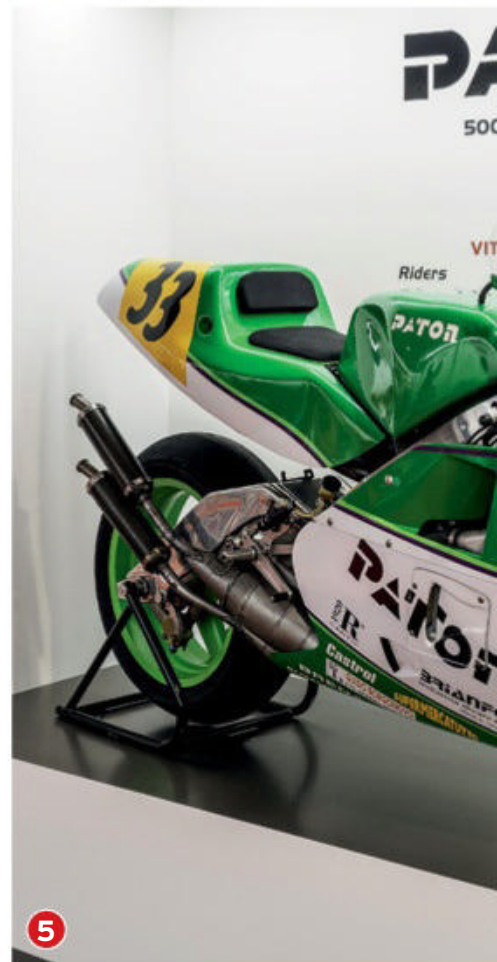
## "DUCATI DOES NOT SELL ITS DISUSED RACEBIKES TO EVERYONE"

its disused racebikes to everyone, as there must necessarily be a relationship of trust. And I always like to have a separate engine wherever possible, so we can appreciate the heart of the motorcycle, and what makes it go so fast."

There's an adjoining display of Italian GP racers under the heading *Genio Italiano* – it's self-explanatory! – including a 1994 Paton 500 V4, 1982 Sanvenero 500 square four with the late French GP winner Michel Frutschi's leathers and helmet, a Tamburini-designed 1975 Bimota SB1 500 with liquid-cooled Suzuki XR05 parallel-twin motor, and several smaller capacity bikes including the Aermacchi 125 Ala d'Oro two-stroke single ridden in 1967 by Alberto Pagani.

Also on display there, on the grounds that it won the 1981 500cc world title thanks to the genius of the Team Gallina engineers who put it together, is Marco Lucchinelli's 1981 title-winning Suzuki RG500 purchased directly from Roberto Gallina – so, the real thing, not one of the roughly half-dozen such replicas in circulation each presented as authentic!

Sharing the *Genio Italiano* display is Genesio's array of non-Team Althea Ducati Superbikes, which range from a first-series 851, through an ex-Falappa 1992 888, an ex-Fogarty 1993 851 with 926cc motor, to a 2007 ex-Xaus F07 999, and a quartet of ex-Troy Bayliss bikes – three of them the Aussie superstar's world championship winners. These include two 999s, his 2006 F06 title-winner flanking the F07 on which he tried to defend the title unsuccessfully, and a pair of 2008 1098 F08 world champions, the two bikes he rode in the final race of his factory career at Portimao exactly







The other side of the workshop sees a total of eight bright-red 2011/12 Ducati 1098R/1198R Superbikes and Superstock V-twins, facing a separate black and white area containing the four BMW S 1000 RRs Team Althea campaigned in 2016 – champions, all of them. Down an adjacent wall is the Ducati that British BSB champion Shakey Byrne rode for Althea in 2010 alongside Carlos Checa, in the first year of the team's switch from Honda to Ducati machinery, then a KTM Moto3 bike ridden by Kevin Zannoni in the 2017 San Marino GP at Misano on Genesio's short recent sojourn in the MotoGP paddock.

Amongst the many fascinating titbits of the Team Althea display is a display of items from a blown-up motor – no, make that two – recording the Team's disastrous trans-Atlantic trip to Miller Raceway in Utah in its 2011 championship year, when Carlos Checa scored DNFs in both races, in Race 2 on the last lap when a valve dropped in while he was in a secure lead.

"I really thought that was the end of our championship hopes," says Genesio wryly. "It was the worst day in my entire racing history! But thank god, it all came good in the end."

*Moto dei Miti's* recently completed Pavilion 2 sits 75m from the main building and contains a mixture of road and racebikes, as well as (most importantly) a bar, various lounge chairs to relax in and a small cinema, with a section of racetrack on which various racebikes are positioned, as if in action. Some of the roadbikes are genuine rarities, including a 2002 Honda SP-02 powered Mondial Piega V-twin, and one of the handful of Gallina TGA Quattro 750 Superbikes built in 1990 with its own dedicated in-line four-cylinder motor by Roberto Gallina for a Japanese client.

The pavilion will host a major Bonhams Auction over 1-2 October, when over 100 collectors' motorcycles will be offered for sale, including a selection of 27 *Moto dei Miti* machines.

"I want to dispose of some of the many

1. Casey Stoner holds a special place in the collection
2. Checa was the last Independent rider to win a WorldSBK title
3. The title-winning 1098R and a proud owner
4. Marco Lucchinelli's 1981 Gallina Suzuki came straight from the team
5. In the green corner, a 1994 Paton V70 C9/2 500 and...
6. ... a 1981 Segale Kawasaki TT1 racer undergoing restoration

as they finished the races, according to Genesio.

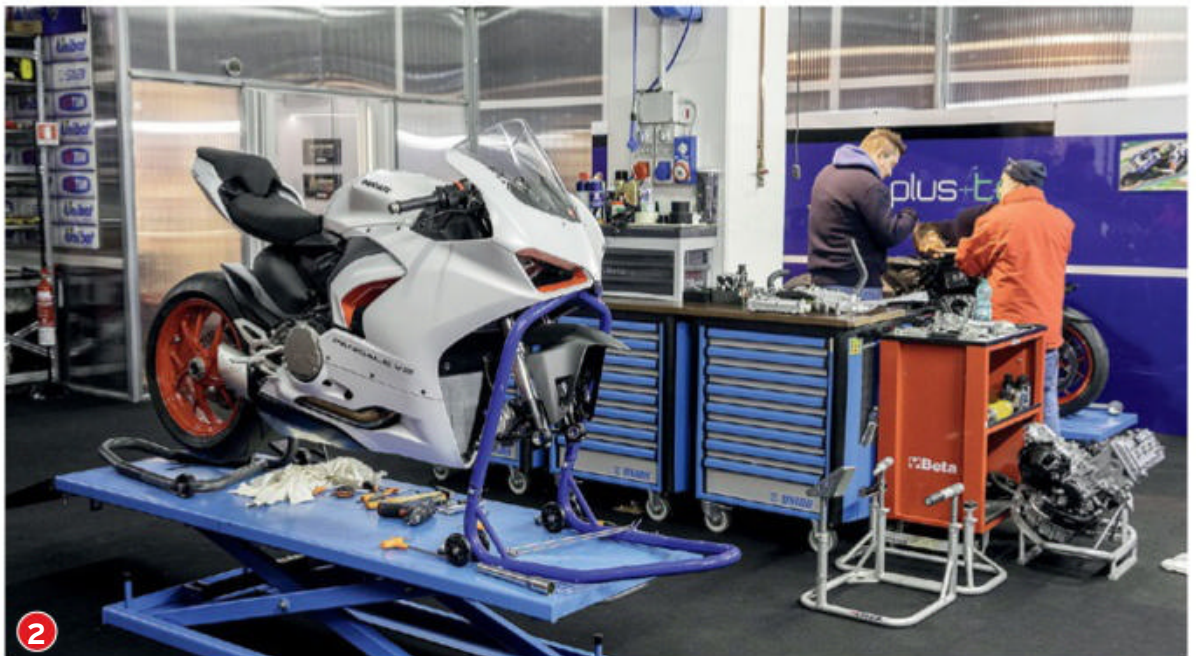
"Troy has been here to visit the Collection, and have some fun on the bikes!" he says.

That line-up acts as a curtain-raiser to the centrepiece of the collection – the array of Team Althea championship-winning bikes in a separate area representing a tribute to Genesio Bevilacqua's inspirational and organisational talents. It's worth mentioning that several members of his race team now work full-time on restorations in the workshop adjoining the collection, and at the time of my visit were completing the rebuild of an ultra-rare 1981 Segale Kawasaki TT1 with composite chassis design and air shocks, which provided the inspiration for Massimo Tamburini's modular MV Agusta F4 frame design.





Genesio Bevilacqua



duplicates I have in order to make space for more exciting additions to the collection,” says Genesio. “There are many bikes on my list which I’m certainly not going to reveal, otherwise the prices will go up! Except one which is already expensive – a genuine 1972 Harley-Davidson XR750-TT of the type that Renzo Pasolini raced so successfully, but so briefly. Apart from that – no comment!”

Okay, but just one more question, Genesio: what’s your favourite bike in this magnificent collection?

“That’s hard to choose, so maybe the question should be, which one excites me the most?” he replies. “What really moves me is Paolo Pileri’s Morbidelli, because I saw him, my friend, race it to victory. But this is a more romantic or emotional response.

“Instead, for the technical content and for the great emotions they gave to millions of people, it’s a choice between Casey Stoner’s 2007 Ducati MotoGP world champion and John Kocinski’s 1994 Cagiva 500, because both of these are full of mechanical and historical fascination, and both achieved sensational victories.

“One because a young boy named Casey Stoner defeated Honda with it, perhaps the most incredible surprise in racing of the last 30 or 40 years, achieved by a kid who no-one believed in. But then the other one because the Castiglioni family dared to challenge the Japanese leviathans of grand prix racing with, what in my opinion, is the most beautiful bike ever made.

“Cagiva is maybe the most important to me personally because I know Ezio Mascheroni, I know the story of how this bike came about, and what it took to achieve those Grand Prix victories.

“But then there’s Ducati which makes a bike that looks extraordinary but nobody can ride well, until luckily Casey Stoner arrives. And the rest is history. Okay – call it a dead-heat!” ■

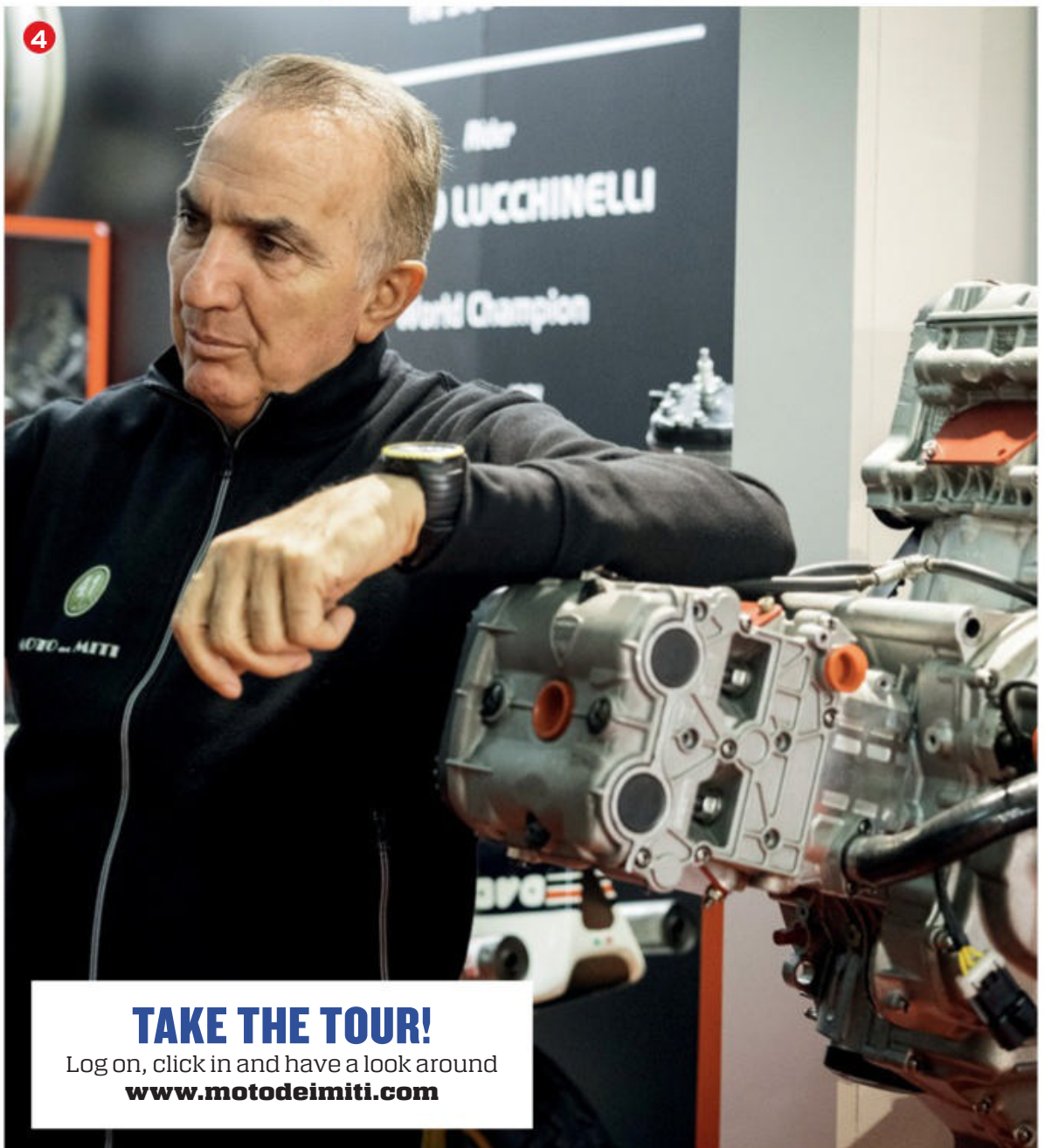
**“NOBODY CAN RIDE  
[IT] WELL, UNTIL  
LUCKILY CASEY  
STONER ARRIVES”**

1. Cathcart got the guided tour from the man himself

2. In the workshop, the Althea team prepares its Panigale V2 for Federico Caricasulo to race in the upcoming WorldSSP championship

3. Genesio himself raced his ex-Paolo Pileri 500 desmo Ducati single

4. Bevilacqua is looking forward to more success on the track and in business



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# THE FORE





# VER RIVALS

MotoGP's newest stars Enea Bastianini and Jorge Martin have been racing each other for the last 10 years. Which one will be the first to win the biggest prize of them all?

In the summer of 1966, *Sports Illustrated* magazine sent journalist Bob Ottum to spend some time with Giacomo Agostini, multiple motorcycle world champion, part-time movie star and full-time Italian heartthrob. At the end of his visit Ottum surmised Ago's job thus: 'to race and skid and crash and then make love and drink wine.'

All those decades ago, top bike racers didn't usually have steady girlfriends. They lived on the edge of death and behaved like it, celebrating each Sunday survival by boozing and chasing women, or "birding it up," as 1967 125cc world champion Bill Ivy so charmingly put it.

More than half a century later, MotoGP is a cold, hard science. The motorcycles are ruled by algorithms and the riders are ruled by pitiless training regimes that leave no room for fun and frolics. Most of the MotoGP grid is teetotal, almost a quarter have children with their partners and others admit their results improved once they started thinking about torque-demand maps, instead of, well...

Of course, there's always one exception that proves the rule.

"I had the same girlfriend for three years – now every week I change!" grins Spaniard Jorge Martin, 24, one of the brightest stars of MotoGP's new generation, who won his first premier-class GP last August. "When I decided to stop with her last summer I won the next race, so now it's no way back – alone forever! →





“Being with us isn’t easy. We are sport guys and the level is so high, so we have some conditions and if your girlfriend doesn’t accept this then, for sure, it’s a problem. They have to step aside because you are the important one.”

“For me it depends on the relationship, if you are okay and the girl gives you stability and support, then that’s better, but if not, it’s better to have fun.”

I’m chatting with Martin and fellow young gun Bastianini together in a Ducati hospitality unit. When Martin confesses his sins, Bastianini collapses into laughter.

“I’ve had the same girlfriend for three years and it’s good,” grins the Italian, who’s a month older and won his first MotoGP race in March.

Martin smiles back. “We sleep in the same truck,” he says, referring to GP Rooms, the paddock’s juggernaut-based hotel, where riders pay 2500 euros (\$A3700) each weekend to sleep a minute’s walk from their garages and team hospitalities.

“Last year on the Saturday night at Valencia [where both had the chance to win the prized Rookie of the Year award] I could hear that he couldn’t sleep either.”

Then he quickly adds, “but I didn’t hear him with his girlfriend!”

I wanted to talk to Martin and Bastianini together, not especially about their love lives, but because they’ve been racing each other since 2013, riding the same road to MotoGP via Red Bull Rookies, Moto3 and Moto2.

“Since we were young we’ve always been coming up together,” says Martin. “I won the Moto3 world title in 2018, then Enea won the Moto2 title in 2020 and last season we were fighting to be top MotoGP rookie, so the difference between us isn’t so big.”



1



2



4



3

There’s not one rider on today’s MotoGP grid that got there via any other route than GP racing’s 125cc/Moto3, Moto2 and MotoGP categories.

So what’s it like being part of motorcycle racing’s star-making machine? What’s it like living your life, from childhood to adulthood, in a merciless junior/intermediate/senior system, trying to get to the top and trying not to get spat out of the bottom?

Lots of fun, mostly.

“I’ve battled a lot with Jorge,” says Bastianini. “I especially remember my first fight with him in the Rookies Cup at Jerez in 2013, it was a beautiful battle.”

Have they ever knocked each other off?

“We’ve been close sometimes!” beams Martin.

“But we have a lot of respect for each other,” adds Bastianini.

“I really remember Sepang 2017 in Moto3, when we arrived at the last corner together,” says Martin. “But I think the best one was Aragon 2019, in Moto2, because we were fighting so close!”

“I remember a lot this race – the last five laps we were on fire!” adds Bastianini. “I think in one lap we made three or four overtakes...”





**“WHEN YOU START TO CLIMB UP THE PRESSURE GETS BIGGER AND IT’S DIFFICULT TO BE FRIENDS”**



“I did my last overtake in Turn 12...” says Martin. “And then I overtook you in the next change of direction,” grins Bastianini, who won that particular duel by 0.145 seconds.

So who is the bravest?

“Me!” Martin laughs. “No, I’m joking – our level is quite close.”

Were they friends when they were in the Rookies Cup and was the teen championship like being at junior school?

“Yeah, a bit,” says Martin. “When I was in Rookies I always had fun. The Spanish kids stuck together, the Italian kids stuck together and so on.

“For sure there was a lot of friendship, then when you start to climb up the pressure gets bigger and it’s difficult to be friends, so me and Enea just try to have a good relationship and have respect for each other. But for sure you feel the pressure and sometimes it’s better to keep some distance.”

Bastianini agrees: “It’s important to be a great on the track but also in normal life.”

The Rookies Cup encourages this attitude by running a good-behaviour championship alongside the racing championship. Seriously.

“You get points for your behaviour, how you work in the Rookies tent, how you are with the other riders, how many rider briefings you go to and so on,” says Martin.

“We missed some briefings...” laughs Bastianini.

So the fast riders lose the behaviour championship but win the real championship?

“Yeah, exactly, exactly!” Martin laughs.

The Rookies Cup was vital for the pair because it’s a zero-cost championship, unlike most other routes into the MotoGP paddock, like the junior Moto3 world championship, where a decent ride costs at least 300,000 euros (\$A445k) per season. Money their parents didn’t have.

In 2013 Martin and Bastianini finished second and fourth overall in the Rookies Cup, but only Bastianini got an immediate promotion to



**1.** Bastianini leads Karel Hanika and Martin in the 2013 Red Bull Rookies at Jerez

**2.** Moto3, Austria, 2018: Bastianini, winner Marco Bezzecchi and Martin

**3.** Martin took his maiden MotoGP win last year in Austria

**4.** Bastianini became a MotoGP winner in Round 1 in Qatar

**5.** Hanika, Martin and Bastianini on the Red Bull Rookies podium

**6.** Martin gave the late Fausto Gresini the Moto3 title in 2018



GPs, with Fausto Gresini's Moto3 team in 2014. Martin had to wait another year. He won the 2014 Rookies crown and got his first GP ride with Jorge Martinez's Moto3 squad in 2015.

"I knew the 2014 Rookies was my last chance," says Martin. "If I hadn't won it I would've had to go home, because my parents didn't have the money to buy me a ride. I think out of a hundred riders coming up, maybe three don't pay. The rest must pay, at least for the first years."

Martin had a tough start in Moto3, riding for Indian brand Mahindra. After switching to Honda he won his first GP at the 2018 season-opening Qatar round. Bastianini took his first world-class success three months later at Barcelona.

The 2018 Moto3 championship went to Martin, who dominated the championship like no one else, before or since. The following year both graduated to Moto2, Martin with the factory-backed Red Bull KTM team, Bastianini with the small but perfectly formed Italtrans team, funded by an Italian trucking company.

Neither won a race in their rookie Moto2 campaigns but they were title rivals in 2020. This time it was Bastianini who got the upper hand,

**"YOU DON'T FEEL THAT LITTLE STOP... INSTEAD THE ENGINE IS ALWAYS PUSHING"**

taking the world title with three wins to Martin's two. Things may have been different if Martin hadn't missed two races after contracting Covid-19.

Last year the pair arrived in MotoGP together, both on Ducati contracts, part of the Italian factory's eight-rider armada (one third of the grid!), assembled to win back the MotoGP title for the first time in a decade and a half. Ducati assigned Martin to the Pramac team, where he got to enjoy the latest-spec GP21, while Bastianini had to make do with a GP19, run by the struggling Esponsorama squad.

Martin stunned the paddock by taking pole position at his second MotoGP race, where he missed the win by 1.5 seconds. That huge high was followed by a big low at the very next race where a monster crash beat him up badly. He missed four GPs through injury, then won his first premier-class victory a few weeks later.

That kind of achievement is a mark of greatness in motorcycle racing, where overcoming hideous pain is a basic requirement.

A few weeks later it was Bastianini's turn to make the headlines. At Misano he beat six-times MotoGP king Marc Marquez for third, never mind the fact he was riding a two-year-old motorcycle. This year he has a much-improved GP21, with Gresini Racing.

Both love being in MotoGP, because they've been dreaming of being there since they were kids, dedicating their lives to turning that dream into reality.

"For me a MotoGP bike is better in every way



## THE BEAST'S CV

**Enea Bastianini**

Born 30 December 1997

Lives Rimini, Italy



<b>2012</b>	1st Italian Honda RS125 Trophy
<b>2013</b>	4th Red Bull Rookies Cup
<b>2014</b>	9th Moto3 world championship
<b>2015</b>	3rd Moto3 world championship
<b>2016</b>	2nd Moto3 world championship
<b>2017</b>	6th Moto3 world championship
<b>2018</b>	4th Moto3 world championship
<b>2019</b>	10th Moto2 world championship
<b>2020</b>	1st Moto2 world championship
<b>2021</b>	11th MotoGP world championship

## THE MARTINATOR'S RESUME

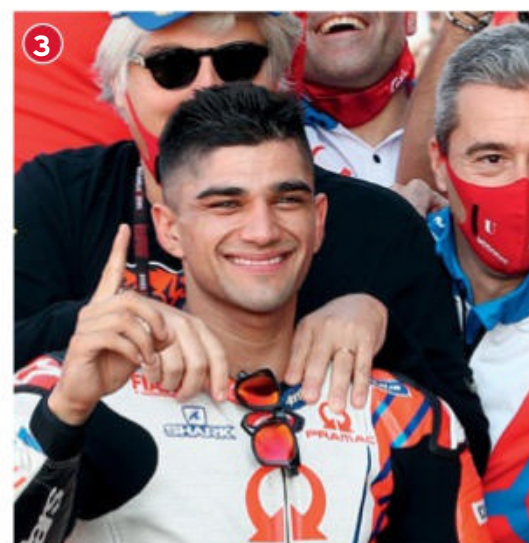
**Jorge Martin**

Born 29 January 1998

Lives Andorra



<b>2012</b>	12th Red Bull Rookies Cup
<b>2013</b>	2nd Red Bull Rookies Cup
<b>2014</b>	1st Red Bull Rookies Cup
<b>2015</b>	17th Moto3 world championship
<b>2016</b>	16th Moto3 world championship
<b>2017</b>	4th Moto3 world championship
<b>2018</b>	1st Moto3 world championship
<b>2019</b>	11th Moto2 world championship
<b>2020</b>	5th Moto2 world championship
<b>2021</b>	9th MotoGP world championship







**1.** Bastianini leads MM93 on the way to his first MotoGP win at Qatar

**2.** Following the retirement of Valentino Rossi, Bastianini might become Italy's new racing pin-up boy

**3.** Martin has become a race contender at Pramac Ducati

**4.** Martin may have been a Moto2 title winner had he not caught Covid-19

**5.** Martin has a strong machine in Ducati's GP22

**6.** The pair both started the season strongly in Qatar

**7.** Winner, champagne – all Lonesome Jorge needs is some company...



than any other bike," says Martin. "You can do things you cannot do on anything else, because the grip is unbelievable, so you can lean like crazy. But for me the most impressive thing is the seamless gearbox. When you change gear you don't feel that little stop you feel with a normal gearbox, instead the engine is always pushing."

"You make the biggest steps forwards when you understand the electronics maps – how to manage the power, where you need the power and at which moment. You make your own style with the maps because every rider is different and it all depends on your feeling with the bike, the tyres and the fuel."

Bastianini agrees. "For me the electronics is the most difficult thing. If you use a map with a lot of power you will be fast but after a while you will be slow because the tyre is spinning too much. These bikes have so much power that the key is using the power in the right moment."

Although the pair have lived parallel lives, growing up together and racing each other for a decade, they are very different.

Martin is more talkative and when he talks he does so with real authority and confidence. Bastianini is much more laidback, pretty much horizontal, so it's hard to believe what he does for a living. His nickname reflects his Jekyll and Hyde character: *la Bestia*, Italian for 'the Beast'.

Martin's fans call him the Martinator, from the Terminator, Arnold Schwarzenegger's cyborg

assassin, because he has a relentlessness about him. He's a winning machine, with the wildest riding style in MotoGP – he hangs way, way off the bike, dragging his body as far to the inside as he can.

"I'm more out of the bike, to make it turn more, even though it's more physical, so I can get tired," he says. "Now we are both at Ducati we can look at each other's data. Enea brakes so, so hard – it's unbelievable how strong he brakes, but maybe I'm a bit better exiting the corners."

Bastianini's greatest skill is using the front tyre like Marc Marquez, employing his elbows as outriggers. This technique allows him to use the rear tyre less, so in the final laps he has more rear grip than his rivals, which allows him to close in for the kill.

During the coming months the pressure on the pair will increase hugely, because there may be the chance of a Ducati factory-team ride from next year, but there will only be room for one of them.

"For me there's always pressure, because every year you want to be as fast as possible and every weekend you never know what will happen," says Bastianini. "But if you feel the pressure too much you are finished and you'll have to go home. You must always be concentrated, because MotoGP bikes are so fast and if you make mistakes it's dangerous."

Who will win the MotoGP crown first, if ever one of them do? Most pitlane experts agree that MotoGP's top riders all have a similar amount of talent, so in the end it's determination that makes the difference. On that basis, Martin should be favourite, but speculation in motorcycle racing is a futile exercise, because there are a thousand different factors that separate success from failure.

Just enjoy these two very different characters as they fight each other and the rest of the grid to reach the very summit of the sport. ■





WORDS STEVE ENGLISH  
PHOTOGRAPHY LARRY LAWRENCE

# LIKE THERE'S NO TOMORROW

The story of how the 1984 Daytona 200 became one of the biggest races in the careers of Freddie Spencer and Kenny Roberts



**“T**he Daytona 200 taught me everything I needed to know about racing,” is high praise from Freddie Spencer, as he took a look back at the famous American race. “Managing a motorcycle. Looking after a tyre. Understanding how a race was developing. I had one of my first ever road race starts there. I had my first big crash there. I had some of the best races of my career at Daytona.”

It's hard to find a greater race than in 1984. This was a seminal moment in motorcycle racing because it perfectly illustrated the Golden Age of American racing. Six years earlier, Kenny Roberts went to Europe and dominated the Grand Prix scene from the outset. Freddie Spencer was 10 years his junior, and the younger racer quickly established himself as the most natural rider in the world.

With Eddie Lawson on the verge of his first 500GP World Championship in 1984 and a host of young riders coming through in Randy Mamola, Wayne Rainey and Kevin Schwantz, it was clear that the American talent pipeline was healthy. The big stars all went to Daytona in 1984 for the Daytona 200.

With so much riding on this event, Spencer picks out the 1984 Daytona 200 as the most important of his career. For the youngest-ever world champion, Daytona was still unfinished business. The 1984 edition was his last chance to prove himself against King Kenny Roberts and his opportunity to finally win the big one.

Roberts, who was coming out of retirement for one last outing, was back on the grid to prove that he was still the King, while Spencer knew this was his last chance to prove he was America's top racer. Amazingly Lawson, leading the World Championship and set to win the title, was almost seen as an afterthought for Spencer and Roberts.

As a 16-year-old turning professional, King Kenny Roberts had always been the target for Spencer. In the domestic scene all young riders were compared to Roberts, but by 1983 the American duo were head and shoulders above the rest of the riders in the world. They won every race in the 500GP World Championship.

Their battle for the title was a private one and Spencer would eventually prevail by just two points. The pivotal moment came in Sweden, at the penultimate race, when they clashed at the final corner. Spencer claimed the win and went on to claim the title, but Roberts ended his 500GP career with a victory at the season-closing round.

“I remember watching Kenny racing at Daytona and it was special,” reflects Spencer. “I'd already seen him racing Flat Track at the Astrodome in Houston, but watching Kenny ride at Daytona was different. I did think that, maybe, one day I'd race against him and it looked like it was going to happen in '79, but Kenny was hurt at Sugo in Japan when he was testing in January. For three





years it was all about us. The '84 race was really important because I wanted that one badly. I knew that it would be Kenny's last race at Daytona. This was it. There was no tomorrow.

"Everybody was looking for the battle between us. I broke the two-minute barrier in qualifying and took pole. The race was going to be very different though, because the 500 was so fragile. Making it last 200 miles wasn't easy. We also were the first team that were changing tyres during pitstops. We would only change the rears, but it meant I knew the last two laps of each stint were important to push.

"Kenny was on Dunlops and I was on Michelins. We timed everything. I knew that I was faster on the in and outlaps and could pick up over a second on those laps. It was really important to be faster when I could push, and I knew that I could pick up 2.5sec on each stop. It was going to be difficult though because fuel management was so important. You could control that with throttle control leading onto the oval."

Tyres were the big talking point in pitlane back then. By 1984 the Dunlop versus Michelin battle was almost as intense as the rivalry between the riders and manufacturers. Daytona was historically the harshest proving ground in the world for tyres. Images of Barry Sheene crashing had made him a household name after a tyre failure on the banking. In 1984, tyres would be even more critical with Spencer bringing unproven Michelin radial rubber to Florida, while Roberts and Yamaha opted for the standard construction from Dunlop.

Tyres were obviously not the only area of development. This was the final year before the regulations changed and limited displacement for two-strokes to 500cc. The 1984 Yamaha was a 695cc two-stroke weapon. The yellow and black speedblock Daytona Special had more power than



## FEELS LIKE ONLY YESTERDAY

*The 2022 edition of the Daytona 200 was a battle royale to the end*

**SLIPSTREAM AND STRATEGY** play key roles in every Daytona 200 race and none more so than the 2022 running of the event, held over 10-12 March.

Brandon Paasch (TOBC Racing Triumph) successfully defended his 2021 Daytona title by

the slimmest of margins, beating Attack Performance Yamaha's Cameron Petersen to the line by just 0.007sec on his Street Triple RS. But it was by no means a given. In one of the event's most thrilling final laps, Paasch exited the back-straight chicane for the final time down in fourth place, behind a trio of Yamahas of Petersen, Sheridan Morais (Syntainics Racing) and Josh Hayes (Squid Hunter).

Morais completed the podium, just 0.057sec behind Paasch, while Hayes was forced off the box despite crossing the line 0.126sec down after 57 laps.

"We did it! It's unbelievably surreal to be a two-time Daytona 200 winner, but I can't say this race didn't play out exactly as I imagined it," said Paasch. "After last year's win, I knew I had a winning strategy, and after a full season on the Street Triple RS, I had complete confidence in the bike and in the preparation of the TOBC racing team to execute it."







3

1. Freddie Spencer, Honda and Michelin took on Kenny Roberts, Yamaha and Dunlop for the Daytona crown
2. Spencer was 22 years old, fast and full of confidence
3. Yamaha built a 695cc hot rod for King Kenny's final assault on the Daytona banking

Roberts. The Italian was already a 13-time world champion, but Roberts was the reigning Grand National Champion and expected to win.

A move to Europe wasn't on his horizon at this point, but to come home second left him bitterly disappointed. Roberts would eventually go to Victory Lane in 1978 and 1983 before the big showdown with Spencer.

Agostini's victory showed that the Daytona 200 was one of the centrepiece events of the international invitational calendar. The race became the biggest non-championship event of the season, because of the money and the prestige on offer. For American riders, as well as Grand Prix riders, Daytona was as important as the Suzuka 8 Hours would later become. If you were a young, up-and-coming American racer you knew that winning at Daytona was a sure-fire way to earn a factory contract with Honda, Yamaha, Kawasaki or Suzuki.

By the time 1984 rolled around, the American audience was ready for a battle royale. This was

to be Roberts' last race before retirement, while Spencer was now the man to beat in Grand Prix as the youngest ever premier class champion. That being so, the great American race hadn't seen a great battle between their greatest racers.

After relinquishing his 500GP crown to Spencer in acrimonious circumstances, Roberts' motivation was matched only by Spencer as

they set to prove, once and for all, who was faster.

"Yes, 1984 was the one," remembers Spencer. "It was the last year of the original circuit and I knew it was going to be Kenny's last 200. This was it and I wanted to win it. There was no tomorrow. It was now or never. I'd beaten him to the world championship in '83, but I wanted to beat him at Daytona too and everybody was looking for that battle.

"That being said, Daytona was tough. I was fast there and I led it every year from 1980 to 1983, but Daytona was such a unique race. Kenny and I were sprint racers who had to adapt to a 200-mile race. That challenge was why I liked the Daytona and what made it so special. The '82 race was the greatest race I never won. I finished second to

sense, and at the time both Roberts and Lawson said it was too wild to race on the roads.

They would have preferred to have raced their 500GP bikes, but instead had to race the bigger, more powerful version. Amazingly Yamaha had an even more powerful engine sitting in the pit garage, but both Roberts and Lawson refused to use it. The bike was powerful enough to spin up the rear wheel almost anywhere and at any speed.

Spencer would be on his NSR500 four-cylinder Grand Prix machine, which he would use for the second half of the Grand Prix season. As ever at Daytona, the question was whether you could match that pace for over 50 laps as you weaved in and out between slower lapped traffic.

Daytona hadn't always been the happiest of hunting grounds for Roberts. He won his first Daytona 200 in 1978, but more often than not the banking had been heartbreaking for the American. Despite three wins and seven pole positions he always felt there should have been more success in the Sunshine State. The 1974 edition was about Giacomo Agostini versus

**"THE '84 RACE  
WAS REALLY  
IMPORTANT  
BECAUSE I  
WANTED THAT  
ONE BADLY"**







Graeme Crosby but it was a great race because it made me utilise all my skills in throttle control, lean angle, trajectory, tyre management, fuel conservation. Mastering all these elements was what made Daytona special.”

What made Daytona special in 1984 was the fact that Roberts, Spencer, Lawson and a host of other riders lined up on the grid knowing this should be a record-setting race. There was no way of knowing who would come out on top.

From the start of the race, fans saw Lawson and Roberts shoot into the early lead. The factory Yamaha duo were aggressive out of the blocks, whereas Spencer was slow starting on his Honda. The plan was to build into the stint and get the tyres up to temperature. As ever, Fast Freddie wasn't flustered and made progress to close back onto the Yamahas in front.

At the first pitstop, all eyes were on Spencer and Honda. How much time would it cost them to change tyres? They lost time to Roberts in pitlane but the outlap was all about Spencer and, suddenly coming through traffic they were nose to tail. With Spencer set to take the lead, the day was effectively over for Lawson. Tyre woes meant he needed to change his rear tyre and suddenly the battle the crowd came to see was underway; Roberts versus Spencer. The King versus The Contender.

Ultimately the fragility of the Honda would be the difference between the pair, with Spencer's NSR500 developing an issue just four laps before his second pitstop. This was when he expected to start pushing before his stop to hold onto the lead. After the stops it was damage limitation for Spencer and he followed Roberts home in second, but was over a minute adrift at the flag.

“I started hearing the change in the engine pitch,” he recalled. “I led into the second fuel stop and I came out in front after Kenny had a problem with his stop. I felt good but about three laps into that last leg, the pitch of the engine changed completely. Kenny caught me. He took the lead and I finished second.”

When the race finished it was clear that Roberts wasn't keen to race again. He had returned at the behest of Yamaha and while he had collected his third

## ROBERTS VERSUS SPENCER THE KING VERSUS THE CONTENDER



Daytona 200 victory, it was the final major race victory of his storied career. Over the course of race week it was clear that he was limiting his running with safety more and more of a concern. Laptimes getting faster and faster and top speeds had jumped from 175mph to 200mph. At 33 years of age Roberts had nothing else to prove. He would only race again on a handful of occasions but never again on the banking of Daytona.

For Spencer, the following season would finally see him scratch his Daytona 200 itch by winning. He would go on to make history by winning the 250cc and 500cc GP title double but after 1985 he would never stand on a grand prix podium again. At 23 years of age his career was now on the wane with injuries taking their toll. The man that defined 'phenom' was now succeeded by Lawson as America's star. ■

**1.** Spencer's fast but fragile Honda 500 was not quite a match for Yamaha's bigger-engined Daytona special

**2.** Spencer's career peaked with a double title in 1985 and then went into an injury-induced tailspin





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DUCATI 900 SS 1989-2002



## Latino fresh

Its Italian character, booming desmo V-twin engine and traditional sportsbike looks make the Ducati 900 SS a very **tempting proposition**

**DUCATI'S INTRODUCTION OF** the 900 Supersport in 1989 gave a respectful nod to the Bologna-based company's highly regarded bevel-drive classics of the 70s and early 80s of the same name. That link got the new air-cooled traditional-style sportsbike off to a flying start. On its own merits the new 900 soon attracted a bunch of enthusiastic fans. It continued to enjoy loyal support during a long model run involving many evolutionary changes and a significant redesign in 1998 until it was discontinued in 2002.

Given that it successfully shared Ducati dealer showrooms from 1994 with its hypersport siblings, the 748/916 series, the 900 SS clearly had its own unique charms.

The debut model in 1989 was basically a beefed-up 750 Sport chassis powered by an air/oil-cooled 904cc engine featuring desmodromic (valve-closing cams instead of valve springs) two-valve heads and a six-speed gearbox. Unlike its bevel-drive ancestor, this engine featured belt-driven camshafts.

Although its unusual car-type twin-choke Weber carburettor produced enough grunt, it was a bit problematic in terms of throttle response in the midrange. However with 83hp to power a trim 180kg package, it was a lively enough performer. With Marzocchi suspension underpinning the iconic chrome-moly tubular-steel frame this latter-day 900 SS was a more agile handler than the early bevel-drive models (to be fair, though, it was not a quick steerer when compared with contemporary sportsbikes). Four-piston Brembos provided top-notch braking.

For 1991, the generally unloved Weber carb was replaced by a pair of 38mm Mikunis that handled the job better. Some chassis and steering geometry changes made the new 900 SS a sharper steerer, and Showa suspension was fitted including a new upside-down 41mm fork. Also new for '91 was the choice of full- and half-faired versions.

These few refinements meant that the

**1** Marzocchi suspension gave way to Showa and then, in the final models, an Öhlins rear shock

**2** Styling by the South African-born Pierre Terblanche has stood the test of time

**3** The 903cc belt-drive V-twin arrived with a single Weber carburettor, then twin Mikunis and finally, electronic fuel injection

**4** The relatively long wheelbase provides typical Ducati handling of the era; slower steering than many rivals but with rock-solid stability



# PRICE GUIDE

## NEW PRICE

\$12,500 (1989)

\$16,495 (2002)

## SECONDHAND

\$7000 – \$9000

# WHAT TO LOOK FOR

**MOST OWNERS WOULD** look after such a bike and will be able to produce a detailed service record. That's gold with a bike like this because fixing a lemon will be complicated and costly.

Two problem areas are cracking of the aluminium swingarm (less likely in later models) and slipping clutches. Abused clutches have been known to need replacing between 5000 and 10,000km. Check these two areas thoroughly.

As always, adjust your offer to cover parts that will soon need replacing – cam-belts, chain, sprockets, tyres, steering-head bearings and brake pads, also brake rotors close to minimum thickness.

The ideal prospect is a low-kay example with a full service record.

# SERVICE HISTORY

**DUCATI'S BELT-DRIVE** V-twins are robust, well-designed engines that are less finicky and more durable than their bevel-drive ancestors. The unique desmodromic valve system calls for specialist maintenance skills, but many capable DIY mechanics have mastered the required desmo skills.

Full services including oil, filter and valve-clearance work are required at 10,000km intervals. Cam belts should be replaced at 20,000km or every two years, whichever occurs first.

While a Ducati specialist may charge more than some all-makes workshops, it's probably money well-spent, given the bike's special needs.

## BUILDING BRICKS



**1. 1971** – Ducati engineer Fabio Taglioni produces its first V-twin roadbike, the 750GT, thus setting the stage for the brand to compete in the large-capacity market for the first time.

**2. 1975** – Original bevel-drive Ducati 900 SS created by fitting a square-case 860 engine into the 750 SS chassis.

**3. 1980** – Taglioni introduces the Pantah 500cc desmo V-twin with all-new belt-driven camshafts. This sets the pattern for all of Ducati's subsequent V-twin engines, including the belt-drive 900 SS, until the recently released Panigale adopted a gear/chain-cam-drive.



## *The SS was a worthy flag-bearer for Ducati's V-twin sporting heritage*

900 SS was now a worthy flag-bearer for Ducati's V-twin sporting heritage. Bear in mind, though, that while its looks, sound and feel – and in particular its ability to delight the rider at speed on a winding road – ticked a lot of boxes, the 900 SS had no answer to the outright bitumen-burning power of multi-cylinder Japanese sportsbikes. However, there are few experiences to match the raw, sensual pleasure of powering a 900 SS out of a bend.

From 1992 to 1997, numerous cosmetic changes and a range of minor engineering revisions distinguished one model from another, improving the breed without affecting its fundamentals.

When the groundbreaking 916 appeared on the scene in '94, the role of the 900 SS became more defined. It remained, as always, a genuinely satisfying sportsbike, but one that represented Ducati's heritage in a way that the 916 could not in the minds of traditional Ducati fanciers. A simpler and lighter bike than the new 916, it was also

more rider-friendly, particularly offering a more comfortable and less extreme riding position. But one man's traditional is another's old-fashioned.

Big changes happened in 1998 – the first significant redesign since 1991. The bike received all-new Pierre Terblanche styling and became the first traditional Ducati to feature fuel injection along with numerous detail changes to the engine.

Suspension and brakes were new – the SS now shared some components with the 916. The chassis was unchanged except for slightly sharper steering geometry. The last of the 900 SS models featured new wheels, revised engine cooling and lubrication, and an Öhlins rear shock on a stronger swingarm.

A 900 SS is a great choice for individuals who value tradition over cutting-edge modernity, motorcyclists who enjoy the exhilaration of a brisk ride as much as the next rider, while getting a little extra buzz from doing it on a bike that has a touch of the timeless classic about it. ■



## New stuff

### 1 HARDLY SHOCKED

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suspensionsrus.com.au

YSS RX362 rear shocks are claimed to offer improved performance over OEM Harley Touring Model shocks. YSS RX362 shocks offer adjustable preload and 30 clicks of both compression and rebound damping adjustment, with the remote reservoir and exposed adjusters also adding a decent lick of style.

### 2 MASTER BLASTER

Cassons Australia  
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cassonsmedia.com

Ixon's Blaster jacket boasts a 600D polyester outer construction with additional 1200D protection in the shoulders and elbows. The Blaster has a waterproof and windproof liner, removable thermal liner, adjustable zippered vents on chest, sleeves and back, and shoulder and elbow protectors, in sizes S to 3XL.

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### 4 JOE BLAKE CLOBBER

Ficeda Accessories  
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ficeda.com.au

Featuring a Buffalo leather construction and 90g fully removable thermal lining, the Segura Cobra jacket also sports a fixed mesh liner and CE approved Omega shoulder and elbow protection. The Cobra also boasts a buckled waist fastener, a neoprene collar and lots of pockets; four outer, two inner and even a wallet pocket.

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RSV4	\$31,530	×
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TRK 502 X	\$10,690	✓
Leoncino Trail	\$10,390	✓
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TNT 600i	\$11,790	✓

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RR 250 2T Racing	\$14,995	✓
RR 300 2T	\$13,695	✓
RR 300 2T Racing	\$15,695	✓
RR 350 4T EFI	\$13,695	✓
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K 1600 B	\$43,825	×
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S 1000 R	\$22,695	×
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R 18	\$27,390	×
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Multistrada V2	\$22,500	×
Multistrada V2 S	\$25,200	×
Desert X	\$24,200	×
Hypermotard 950	\$22,300	×
Hypermotard 950 RVE	\$23,900	×
Hypermotard 950 SP	\$28,300	×
Streetfighter V2	\$22,600	×
Streetfighter V4	\$31,700	×
Streetfighter V4 S	\$36,400	×
Streetfighter V4 SP	\$48,400	×
Monster	\$18,500	×
Monster +	\$19,100	×
Monster 659	\$13,500	✓
Supersport	\$20,000	×
Supersport S	\$22,400	×
Scrambler Urban Motard	\$18,900	×
Scrambler Icon	\$15,600	×
Scrambler Icon Dark	\$14,900	×
Scrambler Desert Sled	\$20,000	×
Scrambler Nightshift	\$18,300	×
Scrambler 1100 Dark PRO	\$19,100	×
Scrambler 1100 PRO	\$20,390	×
Scrambler 1100 Tribute Pro	\$21,300	×
Scrambler 1100 Sport PRO	\$24,200	×
Panigale V4	\$31,690	×
Panigale V4 S	\$40,890	×
Panigale V2	\$23,000	×
Diavel 1260	\$31,800	×
Diavel 1260 S	\$37,700	×
XDiavel Dark	\$30,900	×
XDiavel S	\$38,300	×
XDiavel Nera	\$44,900	×



## GASGAS

gasgasaustralia.com.au

All prices are ride away

EC250	\$14,390	✓
EC250F	\$14,390	✓
EC300	\$15,655	✓
EC350F	\$15,250	✓



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## H-D

harley-davidson.com.au

All prices are ride away

MODEL	PRICE \$AUD	LAMS
Iron 883	\$18,250	x
Iron 1200	\$18,995	x
Forty-Eight	\$19,995	x
Softail Standard	\$21,495	x
Street Bob 114	\$23,995	x
Softail Slim	\$26,495	x
Sport Glide	\$27,750	x
Low Rider S	\$27,995	x
Fat Bob 114	\$29,995	x
Heritage Classic	\$30,250	x
Heritage Classic 114	\$33,995	x
Fat Boy 114	\$33,995	x
Breakout 114	\$34,250	x
Road King Special	\$36,995	x
Road Glide Special	\$39,750	x
Sportster S	\$26,495	x
Street Glide Special	\$39,750	x
Ultra Limited	\$41,995	x
Freewheeler	\$46,495	x
Tri Glide Ultra	\$56,495	x
CVO Street Glide	\$55,495	x
CVO Road Glide	\$55,995	x
CVO Limited	\$57,995	x
CVO Tri Glide	\$73,750	x
Pan America 1250S	\$31,995	x



## HONDA

hondamotorcycles.com.au

All prices are ride away

MODEL	PRICE \$AUD	LAMS
GL1800 Goldwing DCT	\$39,499	x
GL1800 Goldwing Tour Prem DCT	\$46,999	x
CBR1000RR-R SP	\$49,999	x
CBR650R	\$11,399	✓

MODEL	PRICE \$AUD	LAMS
CBR600RR	\$25,999	x
CBR500R	\$9449	✓
CB125E	\$2699	✓
Grom	\$3999	✓
Monkey	\$6249	✓
CB500F	\$8949	✓
CB650R	\$10,849	✓
CB300R	\$6749	✓
CMX1100 DCT	\$18,499	x
CMX1100	\$17,499	x
CMX500	\$8599	✓
NSS350A Forza	\$8999	✓
ADV150	\$5799	✓
PCX150	\$4999	✓
C125 Super Cub	\$6249	✓
CT125	\$6999	✓
NSC110 Dio	\$3149	✓
MW110 Benly	\$3749	✓
CRF1100 Africa Twin	\$20,999	x
CRF1100 Africa Twin Adv. Sport	\$24,699	x
CRF1100 Africa Twin Adv. Sport DCT	\$25,649	x
CRF300LRA Rally	\$8649	✓
CB500XA	\$9349	✓
CRF300LA	\$7499	✓
AG-XR	\$5099	✓



## HUSQVARNA

husqvarnamotorcycles.com.au

All prices are ride away

MODEL	PRICE \$AUD	LAMS
Vitpilen 401	\$7875	✓
Svartpilen 401	\$7875	✓
FS 450	\$15,985	✓
701 Supermoto	\$18,795	x
701 Enduro	\$18,795	x
TE 150i	\$14,735	✓
TE 250i	\$16,520	✓
TE 300i	\$18,025	✓
FE 250	\$16,520	✓
FE 350	\$17,610	✓
FE 450	\$18,025	✓
FE 501	\$18,655	✓



## INDIAN

indianmotorcycle.com.au

All Indian prices are ride away

MODEL	PRICE \$AUD	LAMS
Scout Bobber	\$21,995	x
Scout Bobber Twenty	\$23,495	x
Scout	\$22,995	x
Scout Rogue	\$23,995	x
Chief Dark Horse	\$26,995	x
Chief Bobber Dark Horse	\$28,495	x
Super Chief Limited	\$30,995	x
Springfield Dark Horse	\$36,995	x
Springfield	\$37,495	x
Chieftain Dark Horse	\$40,495	x
Chieftain Limited	\$40,995	x
Challenger Dark Horse	\$41,495	x
Challenger Limited	\$41,995	x
Roadmaster Dark Horse	\$43,495	x
Roadmaster Limited	\$43,995	x
Roadmaster	\$44,995	x
Pursuit Dark Horse	\$44,995	x
Pursuit Limited	\$45,495	x
FTR	\$19,995	x
FTR S	\$22,995	x
FTR R Carbon	\$25,995	x



## KAWASAKI

kawasaki.com.au

MODEL	PRICE \$AUD	LAMS
Versys-X 300 SE	\$7159	✓
Ninja 400 SE	\$7429	✓
Ninja 400	\$7129	✓
Z400	\$7029	✓
Ninja 650L	\$11,159	✓

MODEL	PRICE \$AUD	LAMS
Ninja 650	\$10,959	x
Versys 650L	\$10,959	✓
Z650L	\$10,759	✓
Z650RS	\$11,759	✓
W800 Cafe	\$14,159	x
W800 Street	\$13,659	x
Z900 Supernaked	\$13,109	x
Z900RS	\$16,759	x
Ninja 1000SX	\$17,459	x
Versys 1000 S	\$20,459	x
Z1000	\$16,459	x
Ninja ZX-6R (636) KRT	\$15,359	x
Ninja H2	\$37,160	x
Ninja H2 SX SE	\$29,460	x
Ninja ZX-10R	\$26,160	x
Ninja ZX-10RR	\$42,160	x
Z H2	\$23,160	x
Ninja ZX-14R	\$22,559	x
Vulcan S	\$10,259	✓
Vulcan S SE	\$10,459	✓
Vulcan S Cafe	\$10,859	✓
Vulcan 900 Classic	\$12,859	x
Vulcan 900 Custom	\$12,959	x
Kawasaki KLX150BF SE	\$4529	✓
KLX230 S	\$6329	✓
KLX250	\$6829	✓
KLX450R	\$11,329	✓
KLR650 ABS	\$9129	✓
KLR650 ABS Adventure	\$10,129	✓



## KTM

ktm.com.au

All prices are ride away

MODEL	PRICE \$AUD	LAMS
200 Duke ABS	\$5470	✓
390 Duke	\$7885	✓
890 Duke	\$16,185	x
890 Duke R	\$19,090	x
690 SMC R	\$18,595	x
RC 390	\$7515	✓
1290 Super Duke R	\$28,395	x
1290 Super Duke GT	\$32,035	x





# buyersguide

A-Z OF NEW BIKE PRICES

MODEL	PRICE \$AUD	LAMS
690 Enduro R	\$18,595	×
390 Adventure	\$9970	✓
890 Adventure	\$22,550	×
890 Adventure R	\$24,470	×
1290 Super Adventure S	\$30,620	×
1290 Super Adventure R	\$32,130	×
2021 250 EXC-F	\$15,205	✓
2022 250 EXC-F	\$15,900	✓
2021 300 EXC TPI	\$16,670	✓
2022 300 EXC TPI	\$17,400	✓
2021 350 EXC-F	\$16,265	✓
2022 350 EXC-F	\$16,985	✓
2021 450 EXC-F	\$16,570	✓
2022 450 EXC-F	\$17,300	✓
2021 500 EXC-F	\$17,175	✓
2022 500 EXC-F	\$17,925	✓



KYMCO	kymco.com.au
Agility 50	\$2390 ✓
Like 50 4T	\$2690 ✓
Agility RS 125	\$3490 ✓
Agility Carry 125	\$3190 ✓
Agility 16+ 125 (w/ top box)	\$3290 ✓
Agility 16+ 200i (w/ top box)	\$3990 ✓
People S 150 (w/ top box)	\$4950 ✓
Super 8 50 2T	\$2690 ✓
Like 125 (w/ top box)	\$3090 ✓
Like 200i (w/ top box)	\$3990 ✓
Like 150 R ABS (w/ top box)	\$4990 ✓
Like 150 S	\$4990 ✓
Agility 16+	\$6490 ✓
Xciting S 400i ABS	\$9490 ✓
AK550 ABS	\$12,490 ✓

LAMBRETTA	lambrettaaustralia.com.au
V50 Special Flex	\$3590 ✓
V200 Special Flex	\$4990 ✓



MOTO GUZZI	motoguzzi.com.au
All prices are ride away	
V7 Stone	\$18,030 ×
V7 Stone Centenario	\$19,030 ×
V7 Special	\$18,930 ×
V9 Bobber Centenario	\$19,330 ×
V85 TT	\$22,230 ×
V85 TT Evocative	\$22,830 ×
V85 TT Travel	\$24,330 ×
V85 TT Centenario	\$22,830 ×



MV AGUSTA	mvagusta.com.au
All prices are ride away	
F3 800 Rosso	\$31,990 ×
Brutale 800 RR SCS	\$32,990 ×
Brutale 1000 RR	\$58,990 ×
Rush 1000	\$68,880 ×
Rush 1000 (+race kit)	\$74,880 ×
Dragster 800 RR	\$35,990 ×
Dragster 800 RR SCS	\$37,990 ×
Dragster 800 RC SCS (+race kit)	\$44,490 ×
Superveloce 800	\$38,990 ×
Superveloce 800 S	\$43,990 ×
Superveloce 800 S (+race kit)	\$45,990 ×
Turismo Veloce Lusso SCS	\$39,990 ×
Turismo Veloce Lusso RC SCS	\$43,990 ×

PEUGEOT	peugeotmotorcycles.com.au
All prices are ride away	
Kisbee 50 2T	\$2990 ✓
Tweet 125	\$4290 ✓
Tweet 125 Pro	\$4390 ✓
Django 50	\$4190 ✓
Django 150	\$5490 ✓
Belville 200 RS	\$5990 ✓
Metropolis 400	\$14,790 ✓

PIAGGIO	piaggio.com.au
All prices are ride away	
Typhoon 50	\$4140 ✓
Medley	\$6540 ✓
Medley S	\$6640 ✓
Beverly 400 S	\$12,440 ✓



RIEJU	rieju.com.au
All prices are ride away	
MR Ranger 200	\$12,790 ✓
MR Ranger 300	\$12,990 ✓
MR Racing 250	\$13,990 ✓
MR Racing 300	\$14,290 ✓
MR Pro 250	\$15,690 ✓
MR Pro 300	\$15,990 ✓



ROYAL ENFIELD	royalenfield.com.au
All prices are ride away	
Meteor 350 Fireball	\$7890 ✓
Meteor 350 Stellar	\$8290 ✓
Meteor 350 Supernova	\$8690 ✓
Classic 350 Halcyon	\$7990 ✓
Classic 350 Signals	\$8290 ✓

MODEL	PRICE \$AUD	LAMS
Classic 350 Dark	\$8690	✓
Classic 350 Chrome	\$8790	✓
Interceptor 650 Classic	\$10,790	✓
Interceptor 650 Custom	\$11,090	✓
Interceptor 650 Chrome	\$11,390	✓
Continental GT 650 Classic	\$10,990	✓
Continental GT 650 Custom	\$11,290	✓
Continental GT 650 Chrome	\$11,590	✓
Himalayan 410	\$8190	✓



SHERCO	Sherco.com
250 SE Racing	\$12,899 ✓
300 SE Racing	\$13,299 ✓
125 SE Factory	\$13,299 ✓
250 SE Factory	\$14,599 ✓
300 SE Factory	\$14,999 ✓
300 SEF Racing	\$13,999 ✓
250 SEF Factory	\$15,299 ✓
300 SEF Factory	\$15,799 ✓
450 SEF Factory	\$16,399 ✓
500 SEF Factory	\$16,799 ✓



SUZUKI	suzukimotorcycles.com.au
All prices are ride away	
Address 110	\$3790 ✓
GSX-S125A	\$5590 ✓
DR-Z400SM	\$10,490 ✓
V-Strom 650XT	\$14,490 ×



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MODEL	PRICE \$AUD	LAMS
V-Strom 650XT LAMS	\$14,490	✓
SV650	\$10,490	×
SV650 LAMS	\$10,490	✓
GSX-S750	\$14,390	×
GSX-R1000	\$24,490	×
GSX-R1000R	\$27,990	×
GSX-S1000	\$17,290	×
GSX-S1000GT	\$19,090	×
GSX-S1000 Panorama GT	\$20,590	×
Katana	\$18,990	×
V-Strom 1050XT	\$21,490	×
Hayabusa	\$27,690	×
Boulevard M109R	\$21,990	×
DR200S	\$6090	✓
Trojan	\$5690	✓
DR-Z400E	\$10,390	✓
DR650SE	\$10,390	✓



### SUPER SOCO

supersoco.com.au

All prices are ride away

TC - Cafe	\$5490	✓
TC Max (alloy wheels)	\$7990	✓
TC Max (wire-spoke wheels)	\$8290	✓
CUX Scooter	\$4990	✓
CUX Scooter - Ducati	\$5490	✓
CPX Scooter	\$7690	✓



### SWM

swmmotorcycles.com.au

RS 300 R	\$8590	✓
RS 500 R	\$9290	✓



### SYM SCOOTA

symscooters.com.au

Crox 50	\$2490	✓
Mio 50i	\$2890	✓
Classic 125	\$2790	✓
Orbit 125	\$2790	✓
Orbit II 125i	\$3190	✓
Symphony ST 200i	\$3990	✓
Classic 200i	\$4090	✓
HD300i	\$6690	✓
GTS300i Sport	\$7690	✓



### TRIUMPH

triumphmotorcycles.com.au

All prices are ride away

Bonneville Street Twin	\$15,990	×
Bonneville T100	\$17,950	×
Street Scrambler	\$18,340	×
Bonneville T120	\$20,500	×
Bonneville Speed Twin	\$20,890	×
Bonneville Thruxton RS	\$25,590	×
Speedmaster	\$22,090	×
Bobber Black	\$22,090	×
Scrambler 1200 XC	\$23,090	×
Scrambler 1200 XE	\$24,490	×
Speed Triple RR	\$32,490	×
Rocket 3 R	\$33,690	×
Rocket 3 GT	\$34,690	×
Trident 600 LAMS	\$12,840	✓
Street Triple S 660	\$14,990	✓
Street Triple R (and Low)	\$18,140	×
Street Triple RS	\$19,950	×
Speed Triple 1200 RS	\$27,900	×
Tiger Sport 850	\$17,990	×
Tiger 900 GT (and Low)	\$21,150	×

Tiger 900 GT Pro	\$24,190	×
Tiger 900 Rally	\$22,390	×
Tiger 900 Rally Pro	\$24,790	×



### URAL

ural.com

CT	\$25,299	×
Gear Up	\$28,599	×
Sportsman SE	\$30,599	×
Sahara SE	\$30,599	×



### VESPA

vespa.com.au

All prices are ride away

Primavera 50	\$6490	✓
Primavera 125 i-Get	\$7690	✓
Primavera 150 i-Get	\$8490	✓
Primavera 150 S	\$8590	✓
Primavera 150 Red	\$8990	✓
Primavera 150 SE Picnic	\$9040	✓
Primavera 150 75 Anno	\$9890	✓
Sprint i-Get	\$8590	✓
GTS 150 i-Get	\$9590	✓
GTS 300 Super Sport	\$12,290	✓
GTS 300 Super Tech	\$12,890	✓
GTV 300 'Sei Giorni'	\$12,590	✓
GTS 300 75 Anno	\$13,590	✓

### YAMAHA

yamaha-motor.com.au

All prices are ride away

D'elight 125 White	\$3849	✓
NMAX 155	\$5899	✓
XMAX 300	\$9149	✓



TMAX 560	\$19,849	✓
XV250 Virago	\$8849	✓
YZF-R15	\$4999	✓
MT-03	\$7849	✓
YZF-R3	\$8199	✓
MT-07 LAMS	\$12,749	✓
MT-07 H0	\$13,599	×
XSR700	\$13,699	✓
MT-09	\$15,699	×
MT-09 SP	\$18,099	×
XSR900	\$17,299	×
Tracer 9 GT	\$23,999	×
Niken GT	\$28,199	×
MT-10	\$23,649	×
MT-10 SP	\$27,349	×
FJR1300	\$32,649	×
YZF-R6 (Race only)	\$19,049	×
YZF-R7 LAMS	\$14,049	✓
YZF-R7 H0	\$15,049	×
YZF-R1	\$28,199	×
YZF-R1M	\$37,099	×
WR250F	\$14,949	✓
WR450F	\$16,549	✓
Tenere 700	\$19,399	×
Super Tenere	\$25,949	×





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# Old School

HAMISH COOPER



## Back to the future

**ON THE SPUR** of the moment I decided to phone an old friend. He answered straight away: “Hey, I haven’t heard from you for a while. We’ve just got to Tocumwal.”

“Tocumwal?” I replied.

“What the hell are you doing in Tocumwal?”

“On our way back home from racing in the Roaring Sporties at Broadford, mate,” he replied.

“What the hell are you doing on the racetrack; you helped invent that series last century, surely it’s time to move on?”

“Oh, mate, it’s still a heap of fun,” Chris Beattie said.

A former editor of AMCN back in the 1980s, Beattie founded *Heavy Duty*, a magazine devoted to all things involving Harley-Davidsons, in 1991. Together with ‘Fast’ Eddy Garner and Peter ‘Pedro’ Russell, Chris persuaded H-D importers, dealers and fellow enthusiasts to kickstart a race class for Harley-Davidson Sportsters. He registered the name Roaring Sporties and even designed the distinctive cartoon logo.

The series was an instant success and one of its most fervent supporters was AMCN editor Ken Wootton. Ken competed on his own Sportster around Australia while filing major race reports as the series ran at selected rounds of ASBK and even the Phillip Island round of WorldSBK.

It was hugely popular, with freight-train-like close racing and fastest lap times of around 1m50s at Phillip Island.

I remember in the late 1990s standing in the Phillip Island media centre hearing a wall of sound erupt opposite the finish line, drowning out the WorldSBK machines warming up for their second race.

Hundreds of Harley riders were heading home after the final Sporties race had been run and won. For them, the weekend was over. They’d seen 30-plus Sportsters being punted around by the likes of Robbie Phillis, John Allen, Len Willing, Robbie Hermans, Wayne Clarke and Kirk McCarthy.

Hermans went on to race a Sportster at Daytona, finishing in the top five on debut at the famous speed bowl. By now, similar series were running in the US, UK and around Europe.

As well as retired international racers, the class also attracted young riders. One of the most famous was Kiwi TT legend Bruce Anstey.

I was at the 1998 BEARS Sound of Thunder meeting in Christchurch in February when he raced in the Twin Sport class as part of his preparation to return to the Isle of Man TT that June. Anstey had made his TT debut in 1996 but testicular cancer had kept him out of racing for the next 18 months.

After Ruapuna, Anstey finished 26th in the wet Lightweight TT race and 20th in the Senior. But it was his fifth fastest time in practice that fast-tracked his TT career. And to think that wrestling a big old Harley around was preparation for that!

But Roaring Sporties are all about corner speed. Sure, many kilos are stripped off these air-cooled, 45-degree, 883cc, pushrod V-twins but they still weigh well over 200kg. Progressive front fork springs and longer rear shocks quicken the handling.

Some headwork and a two-into-one exhaust could liberate more power but many racers ended up fitting 1200cc kits, so eventually the formula was changed to allow the larger capacity. In fact, adding a 1200cc kit was better than using a standard 1200 engine, as the 883’s cams allowed the engine to rev harder.

Over in New Zealand, the country’s H-D dealer network sponsored the class and ensured engines were actually 883cc by dyno testing the top three finishers. Interestingly, this is the process being used in the upcoming new-format WSSP class.

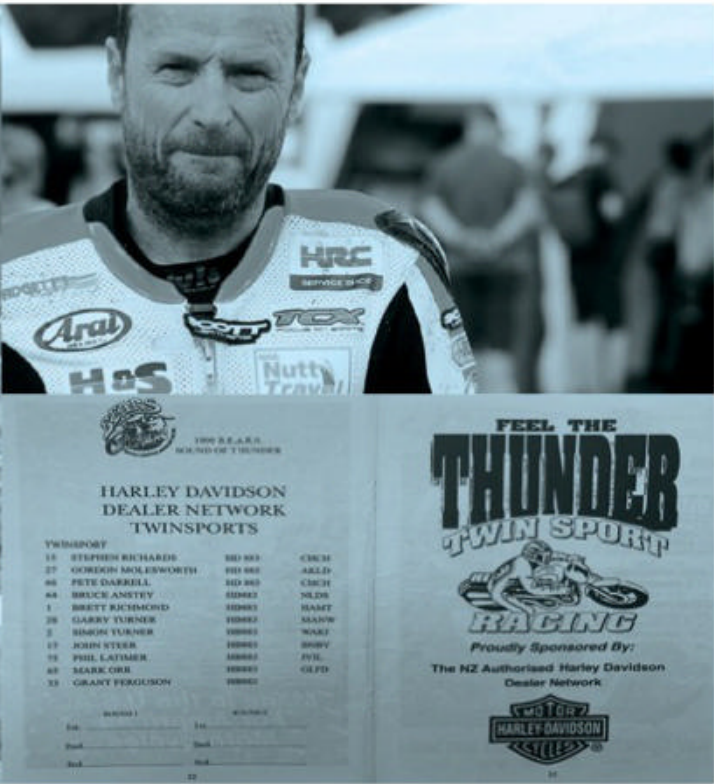
A journo makes the ultimate gamble by going racing with the pros, as Ken Wootton found out as he ran at the back of the field. Beattie used rat cunning and consistency to finish all his races and lead Harley legend Denis Ackland, who DNF’d race one, in the points.

Chris’s race team is called the Over The Hill Gang. Its website ([othgang.com.au](http://othgang.com.au)) gives a thorough and entertaining insight in Sportster racing circa 2022.

It you want to see the next round, head to South Australia’s Mac Park over Easter. ■

Hundreds  
of Harley  
riders were  
heading  
home

Kiwi TT legend Bruce Anstey is a graduate of the Roaring Sporties







1

2

1. Johnson has been preparing for his return to the TT on a Yamaha
2. The Bend is not quite the Creg but any practice is important
3. Um Davo, you're not going to *race* on that rear tyre, are you?

3



# Revolving Racer

DAVID 'DAVO' JOHNSON



## Return to the Island

**AFTER TWO YEARS** away, I'm on my way back to the UK and about to jump into the deep end of BSB racing, followed by the North West 200 and Isle of Man TT. My team, Rich Energy OMG, has stuck by me over the Covid shutdown period and bought some awesome motorcycles for me to race.

The team wants me to do the first two rounds of BSB to get up to speed on the Yamahas. We have the YZF-R1s that won last year's BSB Superbike championship and WSSP-spec Supersport YZF-R6s.

People ask me what it's going to be like sitting on the start line at the TT's Bray Hill after two years away. It's going to be freaken awesome! And I'm pumped up just thinking about it. The event is unique in that because there is no chance to test it at speed outside the TT, it's sort of a level playing field for all of us.

But there is no doubt that experience, at least two years, is needed to get your head around racing at 200mph (320km/h) on a narrow, bumpy road circuit. Stuck in my brain is every bump, every manhole cover, so I'm totally familiar with it all. I've raced it for many years now on a variety of motorcycles and engine configurations. I think the cross-plane crank setup of the YZF-R1 will give me torque as well as revs.

Set-up is always a compromise at the TT. The surface changes so much. For example you can get your elbow down at the Creg-Ny-Baa corner, the surface is so good, but the section from Ginger Hall to Ramsay is really bumpy and you have to let the bike dance around under you.

The secret to a fast lap at the TT is maintaining momentum so we set the bike up to perform at its best on the Sulby Straight section (320km/h has been recorded along this 1.6km straight). There is a left-right corner sequence (Quarry Bends) before the straight that you need to take at full throttle in fifth gear with your knee down to hit maximum speed down Sulby Straight.

Then there is hard braking for the right-hand turn at Sulby Bridge. All this section has been resurfaced so is smooth and fast, but just after comes the Ginger Hall to Ramsay run, which is unbelievably bumpy.

Bigger guys like me can keep it pinned in fifth gear but riders who weigh 50-60kg really struggle over the bumps. Holding it fifth gear at high revs helps the bike steer easier. You lift your bum off the seat and work your legs as if they were part of the suspension.

Back in Australia for the past two years I've done a lot of laps at Mac Park with Levi Day's rider/racer training schools. The bumps there are similar to what you can expect at the TT.

I've just done half an hour of fast laps there at the end of a ride school, laying darkies on 200-lap-old tyres. For the sensation of speed I've done heaps of fast laps at The Bend with Champions Ride Days, where you can hit close to 200mph down the main straight if you get the entry right. So I feel ready for the real thing and rapt that Rich Energy OMG has left no stone unturned to get me on competitive machinery.

The Honda Superbike I last rode at the TT (Davo finished third in the 2019 Superstock TT on a milder-tuned Honda) was so savage down low that it was difficult to ride it hard out of corners.

By contrast the first year I rode the Norton at the TT (2016) it had a MotoGP-spec Aprilia CRT V4 engine. Its low-down torque made it so stable to ride. I suspect the R1 engine will be similar and I've been training on my standard version to get an idea of what to expect in the UK.

I reckon this could be the best year for Yamaha at the TT and I certainly think I have the best chance of a podium or maybe even a win this year.

You can follow me on the socials and watch a comprehensive live television coverage on the TT internet channel. ■

Stuck  
in my  
brain is every  
bump, every  
manhole  
cover





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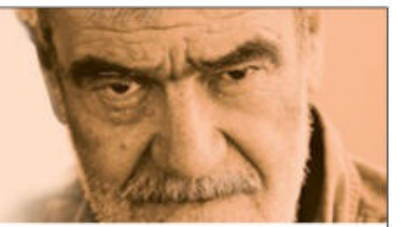
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# In Pit Lane

MICHAEL SCOTT



## The necessity of luck

**"THE BIGGER THEY** are, the harder they fall." This truism comes from boxing, but applies everywhere. Marc Marquez adds a new twist.

"The faster they are, the more often they fall."

It's easy to make light of crashing, when you crash as often as he does. He even joked at round one in Qatar that he obviously wasn't back to his full form "because I only fell off once."

His fifth crash of the new season, on the morning of the Indonesian GP, was far from funny. A very fast and very brutal highside left him visibly dazed and ruled him out of the race.

Worse followed. The concussion became more complicated: vision problems on the flight home. Straight to the specialist, and he was diagnosed with a return of the double-vision syndrome that struck last year, ruling him out of two races and leading to a second successive winter of recuperation.

The same problem almost ended his career back in Moto2 days in 2011. The threat remains... But why should a rider of such manifest genius crash so often? Five times, in the first two races!

Pushing over the limit has always been his way of finding out exactly where it is. He does it better than any other rider in history. So even after missing 2020 because of breaking his arm, he could still make light of it. That was, after all, his first significant fracture in more than 10 years of GP racing, and a huge number of falls.

It certainly didn't change his crash-happy policy. Last year, Marc missed four of the 18 races, but still recorded more falls than any other rider – a resounding 26.

Five so far already leads in 2022. The fifth at Mandalika was spectacular. He was lucky not to suffer worse injury.

Another headstrong crash, another episode of refusing to heed the warnings, raises an uncomfortable question. How long can this carry on? At what point does his inner voice change its tune?

Many years ago I was castigated (indeed, never forgiven)

for suggesting that Mick Doohan's career-ending crash in practice at Jerez was the consequence of pushing too hard in iffy conditions when there was no tangible reward. Perhaps injudiciously, I wrote he had been going "unnecessarily fast", a phrase that has haunted me ever since.

Yet the same phrase applied last Sunday. Going for bragging rights in morning warm-up was both figuratively and literally pointless.

This on a weekend when it was abundantly clear that Michelin's curved-ball hard rear tyre meant all Honda riders were at a disadvantage that such heroics could mitigate only slightly, if at all.

But to Marquez (as to Doohan) the concept of "unnecessarily fast" simply doesn't exist. No matter the agony of the past two years, he won't accept any limits to his determination to be fastest. Even in morning warm-up.

This is why we admire them. But nobody wants to have to pity them.

Contrast Marquez with Valentino Rossi, also precociously talented, but who prolonged his career almost indefinitely by taking the opposite approach, minimising the risk.

At Brno several years ago, Marc survived the most extraordinary moment – the front skating away, the rear following suit, the bike crashing... but the rider picking it up again onto its tyres with his knee and elbow. A technique of crashing without crashing that has become increasingly familiar, even a trademark.

That afternoon I asked Rossi if he could achieve the same feat. He spoke analytically about Marc's different body position and riding technique, then continued with a laugh. "I think it is better to don't lose the front."

Hopefully, Marc will be back. Hopefully the double-vision will dissipate. Will he now add some career-enhancing caution to his all-or-nothing approach?

Almost certainly not. Fingers crossed that his luck continues to hold. ■

Why  
should a  
rider of such  
manifest  
genius crash  
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## Rain supreme!

Miguel Oliveira put on a wet-weather masterclass amid the chaos in Indonesia

REPORT **NEIL MORRISON** PHOTOGRAPHY **GOLD&GOOSE**

**BUILD IT AND** they will come. Never mind that the track surface was coming apart or the grandstands were empty for much of the weekend, MotoGP finally made its long-awaited return to Indonesia. And the trials and tribulations over the three days were such that everyone was just relieved there was a race come sundown on Sunday.

And a pretty good race it was at that. In many ways the deluge of rain that arrived just after Moto2 and delayed the main event by 75 minutes saved the show. Such were the concerns that parts of the track surface of the picturesque Mandalika International Street Circuit would be unable to withstand the various forces put into the ground by grand prix prototypes in the dry, the MotoGP race was shortened from 27 laps to 20, while Moto2 was cut from 25 to 16.

As it was, the rain storm abated just in time so as the lower-than-expected attendance of 62,923 fans

could see MotoGP action for the first time on Indonesian soil since 1997. Despite having barely any running in these conditions all weekend, Miguel Oliveira (Red Bull KTM) showcased devastating wet-weather riding skills to claim a timely fourth triumph in the premier class, while for the first time in 2022 Fabio Quartararo (Monster Energy Yamaha) rode like the world champion he is to come home just behind.

Judging by the noise in the main grandstands throughout, the fans got what they came to see. A brass band, a local rain shaman and the President of Indonesia all made an appearance as the elements, including localised lightning strikes, threatened to prematurely end the event. But there was no getting away from the fact this weekend came perhaps a year too soon. Aside from grandstands and hospitality units being under construction and the roads into the track still being painted as the MotoGP



**“I was touching the elbows on ground in every corner!” – Joan Mir**

paddock rolled into town, there was the small matter of the asphalt.

Filthy and coming apart during a three-day MotoGP test here in mid-February, new tarmac was hastily laid down between Turns 17 and six in the subsequent weeks. On Thursday, several

figures noted how it was coming apart under foot during a track walk. The prognosis was grave. And knowing track temperatures just south of the equator can reach upwards of 60°C, tyre supplier Michelin went conservative, bringing rear tyres with a stiffer,

### Cracker Jack



**MILLER WAS ONE** of the few riders to compliment the stiffer, 2018-spec rear tyre casing brought by Michelin to this round.

Even after qualifying ninth, Miller was hopeful of upsetting Quartararo's victory attempts

early on in the dry.

Considering previous wet-weather form, the 26-year-old was a favourite when Sunday's action eventually got under way.

The fact he had no real time to set up his bike for fully-wet conditions prevented him from

finishing higher than fourth.

“Generally, I find my limit in those conditions quickly,” the Queenslander said.

“I got into the 1m40s lap times and that was about all I had. I was struggling with rear grip. It was just more to do with bike set-up

than anything. I was having to run square lines and not able to let the bike roll in the middle of the corner simply because we were too stiff on the rear.

“No laps on wet tyres over the weekend so it's hard when you are guessing a set-up.”



1. Miguel Oliveira was all class, taking his fourth MotoGP win 2. Once in front the KTM rider dominated the race 3. Jack Miller took an early lead and went on to finish fourth 4. Weather delayed the start by an hour before Fabio Quartararo led the field away 5. Pecco Bagnaia struggled to P15 but at least he got on the scoreboard



robust carcass, last used in Thailand in 2018.

In the dry, Honda and Suzuki riders floundered, unable to recalibrate bike balance and settings to the stiffer rubber underneath. Meanwhile, Joan Mir (Ecstar Suzuki) and Pol Espargaro (Repsol Honda) had genuine concerns they wouldn't finish the race, such were the temperatures reached by their front tyres riding in packs. This had all the makings of a disaster.

With that in mind, the deep breaths exhaled by Michelin on Sunday evening were a match for those let out by the circuit owners. And quite possibly KTM bosses, too, as Oliveira reacted coolly to a late Quartararo charge to take the factory to the top of the Constructors' Championship for the very first time. The factory's shaky preseason is already a distant memory.

A short spell on day two of the Sepang test aside, the sighting lap was the first chance for the MotoGP field to acclimatise to their '22 bikes in the wet. Thus, there was plenty to admire in the approaches of Oliveira and Jack Miller (Lenovo Ducati), who gained two and

six places on the first lap, respectively, to sit behind Quartararo. Jorge Martin (Pramac Ducati) went the other way after bogging down off the line, as did Francesco Bagnaia (Lenovo Ducati), 12th at the end of lap one.

For all the complaints over the weekend, the grip offered up by the track in the rain was noteworthy. Mir was left incredulous as he found the limits early on.

"I was touching the elbows on ground in every corner. And I said, 'Is this really wet?!' Unbelievable."

Yet the exit of the final turn was an exception. Quartararo soon found this at the close of lap one, as he got crossed up, allowing Oliveira to breeze by. Miller followed suit at the first turn before snatching the lead at Turn 4. Alex Rins (Ecstar Suzuki), Martin, Johann Zarco (Pramac Ducati), Franco Morbidelli (Monster Energy Yamaha) and Mir – rising from 18th in an inspired opening – followed just behind.

Those in the pack were disadvantaged by terrible visibility. That's what Miller and Oliveira had in hand, as they eked clear of the rest.

MotoGP

Track attack – Round 2 finishing positions



Mandalika International Street Circuit, Indonesia

Circuit length 4.310km

Race distance MotoGP 86.20km Moto2 68.96km Moto3 99.13km

Most recent (1997) winners

500cc T Okada 43m22.010s  
250cc M Biaggi 41m35.549s  
125cc V Rossi 41m14.511s

Did you know?

Maverick Viñales is having a tough time, and here is a statistic that we find interesting. Since he started his GP career in the 125cc class in 2011, only once has he failed to score a podium finish in the first five races of the season. That year was 2015, his first MotoGP season with Suzuki. After a 12-16 start to the season, we'll be watching the next three races with fingers crossed, Mav.

Round 2



MOTO2 16 LAPS

POS	RIDER	NAT	BIKE	TIME
1	S CHANTRA	THA	KAL	25m40.876s
2	C VIETTI	ITA	KAL	+3.230s
3	A CANET	SPA	KAL	+4.366s
4	S LOWES	GBR	KAL	+7.918s
5	A FERNANDEZ	SPA	KAL	+12.228s
6	A OGURA	JPN	KAL	+12.384s
7	F ALDEGUER	SPA	BOS	+12.696s
8	T ARBOLINO	ITA	KAL	+14.547s
9	P ACOSTA	SPA	KAL	+17.786s
10	A ARENAS	SPA	KAL	+18.327s
11	J ROBERTS	USA	KAL	+18.509s
12	C BEAUBIER	USA	KAL	+18.566s
13	J NAVARRO	SPA	KAL	+19.711s
14	J ALCOBA	SPA	KAL	+19.960s
15	B BENDSNEYDER	NED	KAL	+20.551s
16	M SCHROTTER	GER	KAL	+23.047s
17	M RAMIREZ	SPA	MVA	+23.218s
18	M GONZALES	SPA	KAL	+24.179s
19	R FENATI	ITA	BOS	+25.133s
20	L DALLA PORTA	ITA	KAL	+26.954s
21	F SALAC	CZE	KAL	+27.678s
22	G RODRIGO	ARG	KAL	+29.548s
23	Z VD GOORBERGH	NED	KAL	+31.773s
24	A ZACCONE	ITA	KAL	+32.426s
25	N ANTONELLI	ITA	KAL	+33.974s

DNF J DIXON (GBR, KAL), K KUBO (THA, KAL), S KELLY (USA, KAL), S CORSI (ITA, MVA).

POLE POSITION (ESTABLISHES RECORD)

DIXON 1m35.799s

FASTEST LAP (ESTABLISHES RECORD)

CHANTRA 1m35.591s

STANDINGS AFTER 2 OF 21 ROUNDS

1 VIETTI 45, 2 CANET 36, 3 LOWES 29, 4 CHANTRA 25, 5 FERNANDEZ 24, 6 OGURA 20, 7 ARBOLINO 19, 8 ROBERTS 13, 9 NAVARRO 12, 10 ACOSTA 11, 11 BEAUBIER 11, 12 ALDEGUER 9, 13 ARENAS 9, 14 SCHROTTER 6, 15 DIXON 5.



Round 2

MOTOGP 20 LAPS

POS	RIDER	NAT	BIKE	TIME
1	M OLIVEIRA	POR	KTM	33m27.223s
2	F QUARTARARO	FRA	YAM	+2.205s
3	J ZARCO	FRA	DUC	+3.158s
4	J MILLER	AUS	DUC	+5.663s
5	A RINS	SPA	SUZ	+7.004s
6	J MIR	SPA	SUZ	+7.832s
7	F MORBIDELLI	ITA	YAM	+21.115s
8	B BINDER	RSA	KTM	+32.413s
9	A ESPARGARO	SPA	APR	+32.586s
10	D BINDER	RSA	YAM	+32.901s
11	E BASTIANINI	ITA	DUC	+33.116s
12	P ESPARGARO	SPA	HON	+33.599s
13	A MARQUEZ	SPA	HON	+33.735s
14	L MARINI	ITA	DUC	+34.991s
15	P BAGNAIA	ITA	DUC	+35.763s
16	M VIÑALES	SPA	APR	+37.397s
17	R FERNANDEZ	SPA	KTM	+41.975s
18	F DIGIANNANTONIO	ITA	DUC	+47.795s
19	T NAKAGAMI	JPN	HON	+49.471s
20	M BEZZECCHI	ITA	DUC	+49.473s
21	R GARDNER	AUS	KTM	+55.964s

DNF J MARTIN (SPA, DUC), A DOVIZIOSO (ITA, YAM).

POLE POSITION (ESTABLISHES RECORD)

QUARTARARO 1m31.067s

FASTEST LAP (ESTABLISHES RECORD)

QUARTARARO 1m38.749s

STANDINGS AFTER 2 OF 21 ROUNDS

1 BASTIANINI 30, 2 BINDER 28, 3 QUARTARARO 27, 4 OLIVEIRA 25, 5 ZARCO 24, 6 P ESPARGARO 20, 7 A ESPARGARO 20, 8 RINS 20, 9 MIR 20, 10 MORBIDELLI 14, 11 MILLER 13, 12 M MARQUEZ 11, 13 D BINDER 6, 14 NAKAGAMI 6, 15 MARINI 5, 19 GARDNER 1.

Round 2



MOTO3 23 LAPS

POS	RIDER	NAT	BIKE	TIME
1	D FOGGIA	ITA	HON	38m51.668s
2	I GUEVARA	SPA	GAS	+2.612s
3	C TATAY	SPA	CFM	+3.639s
4	S GARCIA	SPA	GAS	+3.759s
5	D ÖNCÜ	TUR	KTM	+3.870s
6	X ARTIGAS	SPA	CFM	+4.962s
7	J MASIA	SPA	KTM	+5.289s
8	E BARTOLINI	ITA	KTM	+5.405s
9	D HOLGADO	SPA	KTM	+5.533s
10	T SUZUKI	JPN	HON	+5.687s
11	R YAMANAKA	JPN	KTM	+16.286s
12	K TOBA	JPN	KTM	+16.921s
13	S OGDEN	GBR	HON	+17.257s
14	M AJI	INA	HON	+24.626s
15	M BERTELLE	ITA	KTM	+24.809s
16	L FELLON	FRA	HON	+31.522
17	R ROSSI	ITA	HON	+31.628
18	J KELSO	AUS	KTM	+32.204s
19	A CARRASCO	SPA	KTM	+41.202s
20	J WHATLEY	GBR	HON	+48.013s
21	G RIU	SPA	KTM	+48.090s

DNF A SASAKI (JPN, HUS), A FERNANDEZ (SPA, KTM), A SURRA (ITA, HON), A MIGNO (ITA, HON), I ORTOLA (SPA, KTM), D MOREIRA (BRA, KTM), S NEPA (ITA, KTM).

POLE POSITION (ESTABLISHES RECORD)

TATAY 1m41.232s

FASTEST LAP (ESTABLISHES RECORD)

MASIA 1m40.197s

STANDINGS AFTER 2 OF 21 ROUNDS

1 FOGGIA 34, 2 GARCIA 33, 3 GUEVARA 28, 4 MIGNO 25, 5 ÖNCÜ 24, 6 TOBA 20, 7 TATAY 16, 8 ARTIGAS 16, 9 YAMANAKA 12, 10 MCPHEE 11, 11 MOREIRA 10, 12 MASIA 9, 13 BARTOLINI 8, 14 HOLGADO 7, 15 SUZUKI 6, 23 KELSO 1.



**1.** Quartararo and Joan Mir both scored valuable points **2.** Johann Zarco recovered from a bad start to race onto the podium **3.** Have Fabio, Monster and Scorpion ever scored a better second place? **4.** It was a tough weekend for Remy Gardner, who finished 21st and last **5.** Both Binders faced their challenges; Brad lacked a shapeshifter and Darryn lacked experience - and his bro did this to him...

**Round 2** Mandalika International Street Circuit, Indonesia, 18-20 March

2022 MotoGP World Championship



"Without this good start, the race could have been a bit different," said the Portuguese rider. "I really couldn't see anything behind the riders, with all the spray and a lot of rain on the visor."

Quartararo continued to have issues on the exit of the final turn, with Rins and Zarco breezing by him at the start of lap four. By then the leading duo were 2.4sec clear.

Meanwhile a number of title favourites were having days to forget. Bagnaia ran off the track on lap six after losing the front at Turn 1. He'd slowly fall down the

order from there. Martin endured another disaster, crashing out when braking upright for the same corner two laps later. And Oliveira's Red Bull KTM teammate Brad Binder was mired in the pack after his ride height device malfunctioned off the start.

"I did the whole race with the ride height device completely down," he said.

Up front and it soon became clear Miller was struggling. As Oliveira built up a handy margin, Rins, Zarco and Quartararo were all faster than the Australian the 10th time around.

## "Seven laps more, I don't know if I'd have won"

— Oliveira

By lap 15, Zarco was not only third, having made made short work of Rins, he was pushing Miller for second, out-braking his fellow Ducati man at Turn 10, only to run wide and lose the place. And now it was Quartararo who was the coming man, rallying after his earlier wobbles, and passing Zarco brilliantly at the penultimate corner and again on the exit of the first turn the following lap.

The Frenchman still wasn't satisfied. A beautiful switch back on Miller at Turn 12 was good enough for second place and off he tore in search of Oliveira. The reigning champion was a full 1.1sec quicker than the leader the following time around as he posted the



### Landscape Gardner

MotoGP 21st



**UNDERSTANDING A MOTOGP** machine in the rain and Michelin's wet tyres for the first time on a sighting lap is far from ideal preparation. That was the challenge facing Gardner and the other MotoGP rookies here. The Moto2 world champ suffered with visibility issues after qualifying 21st, but found some speed in the closing laps as he gained experience in the wet.

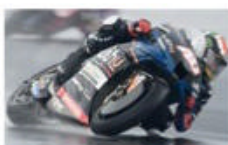
"It was the first time riding a MotoGP bike in the wet. It's not the best situation going into a

race. Honestly, I expected more. I had a small problem with visibility, especially being at the back. There was lots of spray. It was important to get some experience under our belts. Finally, the last few laps weren't so bad pace-wise. I was dead last and had nobody in front and I could see a little better. It wasn't our best day, but we'll try to keep positive and just move on."

Gardner came home 21st, 55sec back from Oliveira.

### BLINDER OF THE WEEKEND

Darryn Binder's 2022 KPI was to look like he deserves a place on the MotoGP grid. Two races in, tick, job done!



### HEARTACHE OF THE WEEKEND

Ai Ogura's task was to win a Moto2 race and look like the man to replace Taka Nakagami in '23. And now, Chantry has beaten him to the win.







fastest lap of the race. But the KTM man responded just in time to win by 2.2sec.

"If the race had seven laps more, I don't know if I'd have won," he said. "Fabio was coming on pretty strong."

After his best wet-weather ride to date Quartararo put his stirring showing down to the rear grip on offer.

"I always ask at every track to have more rear grip, and here it was amazing."

Having pinched a place from Miller on lap 17, Zarco was third for a first podium since last June, while the Australian was lacking wet set-up time to make it count a place behind. Rins and Mir were fifth and sixth, readily admitting the rain had saved them after severe set-up woes in the dry. Morbidelli was a lonely seventh, 16sec behind.

Binder won out a brilliant eight-rider battle for eighth, heading Aleix Espargaro (Aprilia Racing), his inspired brother Darryn (RNF Yamaha), Enea Bastianini (Gresini Ducati), Pol Espargaro, Alex Marquez (LCR Honda), Luca Marini and Bagnaia at the flag.

On 30 points Bastianini leads the championship, but only just from Brad Binder (28), Quartararo (27) and Oliveira (25).

# moto2

## Chantra's dominance

**AS TEMPERATURES ROSE**, concerns grew over the track surface. The tarmac around Turns 2, 3 and 17 was breaking up. Race direction suitably reduced race distance from 25 laps to 16. Things got even stranger from there. For Somkiat Chantra (HTA Kalex) posted the performance of a seasoned contender, rather than the crash-happy, erratic performer we have seen over his three previous years in the class.

Starting from fourth, the Thai rider made an inspired start, passing pole-sitter Jake Dixon (Aspar Kalex) and Sam Lowes (Marc VDS Kalex) at Turn 1 and never looking back. This was no walk in the park, as rain began to pepper the track on lap four. But by then Chantra's lead

exceeded 1.5sec and any fears he may crack under pressure were emphatically shattered on the 12th lap, when he posted the fastest circuit. He became the first Thai rider to win a GP, coming home 3.2sec clear.

Behind, Lowes, Dixon, Aron Canet (Pons Kalex) – rising quickly from 13th on the grid – and Celestino Vietti (Mooney VR46 Kalex) contested second place. Dixon passed Lowes on lap five at Turn 7. Three turns later he tucked the front, ruining what had been a fine weekend until then. Convinced the rain was at play, Lowes, struggling for rear grip, was spooked, which gave Vietti and Canet a crucial gap which they carried to the flag, the Italian and Spaniard finishing 1.1sec apart.



Chantra is Thailand's first GP winner



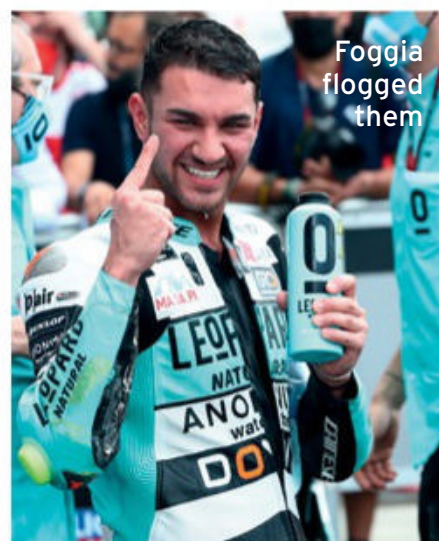
Four seconds behind Lowes, Augusto Fernandez (Ajo Kalex) won out in a four-way fight with Ai Ogura (HTA Kalex), Fermin Aldeguer (Speed Up Boscoscuro) and Tony Arbolino (Marc VDS Kalex). Pedro Acosta beat Albert Arenas (Aspar Kalex) to ninth.

# moto3

## Foggia eases home

**THE LAST TIME GP** racing's junior class raced in Indonesia, a shaggy teenager by the name of Valentino Rossi dominated proceedings, just as he had done right the way through his 125cc championship year. If Sunday was anything to go by, Dennis Foggia could repeat his countryman's feats as the Leopard Honda rider destroyed the Moto3 field at Mandalika to the tune of 5sec.

At times, the Italian was



0.7sec a lap faster than the rest, making a mockery of the claim the high-speed 4.1km track would bring about close racing in the junior class. After breaking clear of battling Aspar GasGas teammates Izan Guevara and Sergio Garcia on the second lap, Foggia was in a class of his own, cruising across the

line 2.6sec clear to assume the championship lead.

Second was where the fun was. The Aspar infighting bunched a host of riders together, including Andrea Migno (Snipers Honda), pole-sitter Carlos Tatay (Pruetel CFMoto), Ayumu Sasaki (Max Racing Husqvarna), Xavi Artigas (Pruetel CFMoto) and Jaume Masia (Ajo KTM).

Amid the early exchanges, Tatay was handed a long-lap penalty for taking a shortcut at Turn 9, which he served on lap 10.

The Spaniard's fightback was a sight to behold, as he carved through the pack to sit fourth with a lap to go. Guevara had just broken clear in second, with Tatay taking third from Garcia on the last circuit as Sasaki T-boned Migno at Turn 10. Öncü was fifth at the flag ahead of Artigas, Elia Bartolini (Avintia KTM), Daniel Holgado (Ajo KTM) and Tatsuki Suzuki (Leopard Honda).

**Kelso**



**THE RIDER FROM** Darwin was within metres of scoring a top-10 finish in just his second full-time ride in the class. Kelso (CIP KTM) was 13th for much of the race, but was a benefactor of the final-lap chaos at Turn 10. Attempting a move on Stefano Nepa (MTI Helmets KTM) at the final turn took him and the Italian down.

**Moto3 18th**

"That was bittersweet," said an emotional Kelso. "It was a tough start to the weekend, but I got myself up to 11th on the last lap. I was going for 10th but made a mistake at the final turn. I'm just sorry to my team and Stefano."

"But I have to stay positive. Seeing we have the pace for the top 10, I'm excited to try again in Argentina."





# race report

YOUR FORTNIGHTLY FIX

**Round 2** Queensland Raceway mi-bike Motorcycle Insurance Australian Superbike Championship

**Superbike**



## Keeping up with Jones

Underdog Mike Jones delivered an unlikely double victory for the Yamaha Racing Team

■ REPORT **MATT O'CONNELL** ■ PHOTOGRAPHY **ROB MOTT**

**MIKE JONES AND THE** factory Yamaha Racing Team delivered two knockout results at Queensland Raceway's second round of the mi-bike Motorcycle Insurance Australian Superbike Championship, with a double victory and a new qualifying lap record.

Jones's R1 was fast from the start, possessing incredible stability and drive out of corners, and put the fancied Ducatis of reigning champion Wayne Maxwell (Boost Mobile with K-Tech) and Bryan Staring (Desmosport Ducati) on the back foot.

It had been eight years since the national championship last competed at 'the Paperclip', a six-corner circuit renowned to be hard on machinery.

Staring was off the line quickest in the first race, gaining three or so lengths at the lights to take the holeshot with Maxwell and Jones slotted in behind. Also strong was former Queensland Raceway lap record holder Glenn Allerton, who had been battling engine troubles throughout the weekend.

His Maxima Racing Oils

BMW teammate Josh Waters also looked threatening, the pair pressuring Maxwell to form the top five.

Jones captured the lead by lap two but almost immediately relinquished it to Staring after running wide. A lap later Jones showed his strength, powering past Staring at the tricky Turn 2 as they entered the back

straight. The top five had pulled a gap of over one second to sixth-placed Cru Halliday (Yamaha Racing Team), who was still showing impressive speed but unable to latch on to the leaders.

Behind him the pack was settling, with the YRD-supported Yamaha R1 of Arthur Sissis holding off a rampant Troy Herfoss (Penrite Honda Racing).

It took until mid-race distance for a change in the top order, when Waters pulled off the move under brakes to slot into fourth ahead of Allerton.

The lead pair pulled clear of Maxwell, with Staring applying pressure to leader Jones as fuel loads lightened.

But at the final turn on lap 10, disaster struck for the championship leader. Staring

### Winner's words Mike Jones

"FOR ME THIS is a home round and I had to celebrate! I can't do wheelies so it had to be a burnout! Our confidence for this round comes from testing, that was our strong point. When you test well, it gives you that confidence because you know you can do the job before you even turn up. The psychological aspect, it's so important for any rider and coming here this weekend I had no doubt we could achieve this result. We were challenged along the way, but in every session we were able to respond and take the pace to the next level."





**Main:** Bryan Staring led into the first corner in Race 1 at QR **1**. Mike Jones rewarded YRT with twin race wins **2**. Wayne Maxwell, Jones and Josh Waters were all smiles at the end of the weekend **3**. A Race 1 tumble was a blow for erstwhile points leader Staring **4**. Solid points move Maxwell into fourth in the championship **5**. Waters is looking comfortable on the BMW **6**. Arthur Sissis is closing in on a maiden ASBK podium



pushed the rear a little too hard, putting his Desmosport Ducati into the gravel. The race was shot for Staring, but it opened the door for Maxwell and Waters.

Further back in the field, a pack of Yamahas were fighting out seventh to 12th, including Jed Metcher (727 Moto) and Anthony West (MotoGo Yamaha). Metcher ran wide after attempting a move on West in the final turn and fell after he hit debris from Staring's crash a lap earlier.

As the race wore down, Jones pulled away for a comfortable 5.67sec victory while Waters ramped up the pressure on Maxwell.

It was a scenario Maxwell had rarely faced during his

time on board the Boost Mobile Ducati, but at his least-favourite circuit, he was able to hold on for second, ahead of Waters.

Allerton and Halliday rounded out the top five ahead of Herfoss, Sissis and West. The Yamahas of Aiden Wagner (Addicted to Track) and Markus Chiodo (Alpinestars) completed the top 10.

The physical toll of Queensland Raceway impacted a downcast Halliday, who at one point had been fastest on track.

"I need to be fitter, it's as simple as that," he explained, in no mood to elaborate.

Later in the day, with the track temperature elevated, Maxwell attempted to rebound with a sharp holeshot in Race 2. Jones shadowed him closely, followed by Staring, but it took only until lap two for Jones to strike. It was another precision slice up the inside at the fast turn two, his R1 bringing up dust on the very edge of the track to complete the ultra-confident move.

Jones immediately put

the hammer down, closely followed by Maxwell and Staring, but Sissis was right behind them after a trademark lightning start. Running in fifth, Halliday was feeling the pressure from Waters until a big sideways moment under brakes at Turn 3 let the BMW through.

Waters then applied the pressure to Sissis as the gap between first, second and third widened. Halliday eventually retired with an electrical issue with three laps remaining.

After the disappointment of Round 1 at Phillip Island Herfoss, who had been hampered by a front brake issue in qualifying, was making strong progress and looking better physically on the bike. He looked to build on his encouraging race one result, strongly dicing with Allerton for sixth.

With Jones out front and in a class of his own, Staring comfortable in second and Metcher tumbling out, the main battle focussed on Maxwell, Sissis and Waters. Still keenly searching for his first ASBK podium, Sissis applied the pressure right until the end but couldn't quite show Maxwell a wheel as the defending champion posted a solid third place. Waters held fifth followed by Allerton and Herfoss.

Jones now leads the championship by 16 points from Staring with a further four back to Waters, as the series moves to Wakefield Park over 22-24 April.

## As the race wore down, Jones was pulling away for a comfortable victory





**Round 2 Queensland Raceway** mi-bike Motorcycle Insurance Australian Superbike Championship

## Supersport

# Lytras breaks through

**IT WAS A** weekend of high drama as John Lytras (Caboolture Yamaha) broke through for his maiden Supersport victory and round win, while chief rival Tom Edwards (Bikebiz) faced disqualification for illegal modifications to his Yamaha.

Edwards took pole position, but Lytras converted his pace in practice and qualifying to take the opening holeshot, leading Olly Simpson (Simpson Crash), Edwards and Scott Nicholson (Traction Control Motorsports) through the initial laps. And by lap three, championship leader Tom Bramich had fallen.

Edwards bided his time before taking the lead on lap 7 to take control of the race. Nicholson gapped both Lytras and Simpson as Lytras's steering dampener had broken free of the frame and was causing problems on the bumps.

With two laps remaining there were battles further down the order with Ty Lynch (727 Moto) in fifth leading Tom Drane (CSS), Mitch Kuhne (Shark Leathers) and Troy Guenther (Team BWR). Guenther, a former Supersport

champion, has been making a comeback to racing after several years on the sidelines.

Edwards was riding superbly and took the chequered flag comfortably, but the win was awarded to Nicholson post-race. Lytras was effectively second with Simpson holding on for third despite a 10-second penalty for a jump start.

Later in the afternoon Lytras once again took the holeshot as Edwards struggled to keep his front wheel on the ground, thanks to the shorter gearing required around the 'Paperclip'.

Edwards, Simpson and Lytras made the most of the opening laps to gap the field, while Nicholson, the only Michelin-shod rider in the field, was further back locked in battle with Bramich. By contrast, Simpson was running a combination of Pirelli front and Dunlop rear – owing to the supply chain crisis for many products. Lytras took the opportunity to pass as Simpson faced grip issues, moving by to record what was effectively the race win.

Simpson ended up second with Nicholson third. Bramich salvaged fourth with Drane and Lynch finishing next.

As for Edwards, he now faces an uphill battle to bring himself back into championship contention. His sponsor Bikebiz emphasised he had no involvement with any aspect that contributed to his disqualification, saying, "The Bikebiz team owners wish to make a sincere public apology to Tom Edwards, the Edwards family, Frank Pons (crew chief), our sponsors, supporters, ASBK and fellow competitors."



## Winner's words

### John Lytras

"**IT WAS A** good weekend from the start, finishing top-two in almost every session helped build my confidence. After testing we had developed a decent base setting, but all our settings were calculated with used tyres – we hadn't run any new tyres at Queensland Raceway until Friday practice. It feels great to pick up my first race win and podium in Supersport but I'd really like to win by crossing the line first, hopefully at Wakefield Park."

## Supersport 300

# Captain Nelson

**LOCAL RACER GLENN** Nelson (FuSport) made the most of his pole position in the Supersport 300 class, leading the first few laps before Kawasaki-mounted Hunter Valley rider James Jacobs (X-Lite) worked his way to the front of the field. His strong start was overshadowed by another big mover, another local Taiyo Aksu (XXX Rated Suspension).

Aksu had started last on the grid and worked his way to sixth by mid-race distance. Right in the mix was Cameron Dunker (GTR Motostars) and Henry Snell (Megacycle Race Team) but at the line, it was Jacobs who rode a smart race to claim victory from Dunker and Aksu.

Race 2 saw Nelson grab the

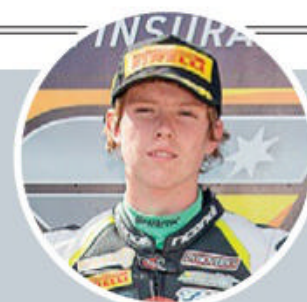
holeshot but it was soon a four-way battle with Dunker, Snell and Jonathan Nahlous (Complete AV) joining in. Jacobs was further back after a change of gearing cost him speed.

Liam Waters (Moto-Shed) crashed out at Turn 2, bringing Aksu down behind him and the red flags.

"Liam crashed ahead of me, someone sat up a bit and I had nowhere to go," Aksu said.

After the restart Nelson took a narrow victory from Dunker, with Nahlous completing the podium.

Race 3 saw Nelson take a thrilling victory from Dunker, with Snell grabbing the final podium spot and championship lead after a fierce eight-way battle.



## Winner's words

### Glenn Nelson

"**IT'S VERY POSSIBLE** to defend out of the last turn here because the run to the line is so short. I'm finding when I'm in front at this circuit I can start to make a bit of pace through the double left handers of Turn 4 and 5, but you need to be smooth. A smooth line there makes it harder for someone to get underneath me on the brakes at the final turn."



1. John Lytras broke through for his first win in Supersport 2. Scott Nicholson has moved to second in the points 3. Glenn Nelson emerged from the pack to win in SS300 4. James Jacobs is now the leading Kawasaki rider in the SS300 points 5. L to R, Glenn Nelson, Cameron Dunker and Hayden Nelson 6. Glenn Nelson is now second in the R3 Cup points 7. The Oceania Junior Cup round podium, L to R: Harrison Watts, Ryan Larkin, Hunter Corney 8. Watts has doubled his OJC lead - to two points! 9. The Sidecars round podium, L to R: Jamie Turner/Shelby Turner, Phil Underwood/Tristan Vercoe and Patrick Clancy/Amanda Williams 10. Underwood/Vercoe were in a class of their own



Yamaha Finance R3 Cup

# Slam Dunker

**CAMERON DUNKER AND** Glenn Nelson showed the way during the first race, dicing back and forth with Dunker prevailing by the narrowest of margins over the line. Taiyo Aksu completed the podium while Henry Snell crashed out at Turn 3.

After six bikes vied for the Race 2 win Nelson took the spoils ahead of Dunker, who saved his race with some daring moves. Sam Pezzetta (Unitech Racing) completed the podium.

Race 3 was a rollercoaster for Nelson, who led the pack into lap two and at the fast Turn 2 ran wide and onto the grass.

Somehow he managed to keep it together, rejoining dead last.

Mitch Simpson (Simpson Crash) took his turn leading the bunched field but by mid-race distance Dunker was ready to clear out. While Nelson clawed his way back, Simpson and Pezetta were impressing under brakes, setting up a grandstand finish for second.

Dunker was in a class of his own for victory, but it was Snell who pulled off a late-braking move at turn six to slip inside Nelson, who completed the podium after a fine comeback ride from the rear of the field.



BLU cRU OJC

# Watts on

**HARRISON WATTS HAS** extended his lead in the bLU cRU Oceania Junior Cup after three busy races.

Levi Russo took pole position from Hudson Thompson and Hunter Corney, and in the opening race Ryan Larkin joined Hunter Corney in a tight tussle, which saw the top nine covered by less than a second. Corney claimed the win after penalties were applied, while South Australian Cameron Rende was second and Marcus Hamod third.



In Race 2 seven riders battled for victory. A small mistake from Hamod at the final turn saw him come down and collide with Russo, with Hamod becoming stuck in Russo's machine. The shorter run to the line meant slip streaming wasn't as vital out of the last turn, but the still hectic



sprint was won by Rende from Sam Drane and Thompson.

In the final race Rende put himself out of contention after losing the front on lap four. The race was decided by a perfectly timed inside move at the final corner by Watts, who led home Larkin and Thompson.

Sidecars

# Pair game

**PHIL UNDERWOOD AND** Tristan Vercoe (Firefox Training) swept to pole position and three wins in the Horsell Consulting Australian Sidecar Championship.

After starting Race 1 from the pitlane, they worked their way forward to lead by lap five for an eventual 8.2sec victory from Howard Ford and Corey Blackman, with Des Harvey and Stephen Marshall (City's Panel and Truck Repairs) third.



In Race 2 Underwood/Vercoe led from start to finish, despite a spin and save on the last lap. In a battle for second Harvey spun and Neil and Danyon Turner (Buddah's Motorcycle Spray Painting) had nowhere to go and collided with them, allowing Jamie Turner and Shelby Turner



(Century Pools) to finish second with Jeff Brown and Paris Halsey (APW Motorcycles).

In the final race Underwood/Vercoe won with Neil and Danyon Turner eight seconds behind in second. Jamie and Shelby Turner worked through the field to take the final podium spot.

# Results

SBK ROUND 2			
POS	RIDER	BIKE	POINTS
1	M JONES	YAM	51
2	W MAXWELL	DUC	38
3	J WATERS	BMW	34
4	G ALLERTON	BMW	32
5	A SISIS	YAM	31

**STANDINGS AFTER 2 OF 8 ROUNDS**  
M JONES 86, B STARING 70, J WATERS 67, W MAXWELL 64, G ALLERTON 61

MICHELIN SUPERSPORT ROUND 2			
POS	RIDER	BIKE	POINTS
1	J LYTRAS	YAM	46
2	S NICHOLSON	YAM	43
3	O SIMPSON	YAM	38
4	T DRANE	YAM	32
5	T LYNCH	YAM	32

**STANDINGS AFTER 2 OF 7 ROUNDS**  
O SIMPSON 72, J LYTRAS 67, T LYNCH 62, T DRANE 60, T BRAMICH 55

DUNLOP SUPERSPORT 300 ROUND 2			
POS	RIDER	BIKE	POINTS
1	G NELSON	YAM	66
2	C DUNKER	YAM	60
3	J JACOBS	KAW	55
4	H SNELL	YAM	52
5	J NAHLOUS	KAW	51

**STANDINGS AFTER 2 OF 7 ROUNDS**  
H SNELL 120, C DUNKER 109, J JACOBS 109, G NELSON 103, J RUSSO 71

YMF R3 CUP 300 ROUND 2			
POS	RIDER	BIKE	POINTS
1	C DUNKER	YAM	70
2	G NELSON	YAM	63
3	H NELSON	YAM	48
4	M SIMPSON	YAM	47
5	S PEZZETTA	YAM	47

**STANDINGS AFTER 2 OF 7 ROUNDS**  
G NELSON 125, C DUNKER 113, H SNELL 93, H NELSON 88, J RUSSO 87

BLU CRU OCEANIA JUNIOR CUP ROUND 1			
POS	RIDER	BIKE	POINTS
1	H WATTS	YAM	56
2	R LARKIN	YAM	54
3	H CORNEY	YAM	50
4	H THOMPSON	YAM	48
5	S DRANE	YAM	48

**STANDINGS AFTER 2 OF 7 ROUNDS**  
H WATTS 113, C RENDE 101, H THOMPSON 100, S DRANE 99, R LARKIN 97

HORSELL CONSULTING AUSTRALIAN SIDECAR CHAMPIONSHIP - ROUND 1			
POS	RIDER	BIKE	POINTS
1	P UNDERWOOD/T VERCOE	HON	76
2	J TURNER/S TURNER	KAW	55
3	P CLANCY/A WILLIAMS	SUZ	49
4	D HARVEY/S MARSHALL	SUZ	48
5	N TURNER/D TURNER	SUZ	47



MotoGP



Marquez is grounded for two more races after this warm-up highside in Indonesia



## Marquez KO'd... again

A huge highside rules Marc out of the next two races as his double-vision problems resume

**NO ONE COULD** accuse Marc Marquez of not trying in Indonesia. As his Honda struggled with the revised tyre allocation, the Catalan adopted a cavalier approach that was reminiscent of his earlier days in the class (think 2015). He went all-in, with four crashes, including two within seven minutes (at turns 13 and 12) in Q1.

It was the fourth that was particularly of note. Having vowed to risk it all for a good finish after qualifying 14th, in Sunday's warm-up Marquez suffered a massive highside at turn seven – taken in fourth gear at around 200km/h. A glancing blow to his head from a sickening landing

gave the eight-time champ a concussion, which put him out of the race.

But more worryingly, it's caused his diplopia – the paralysis of a nerve in his right eye, causing double vision, the condition that prevented him from doing training of any kind until mid-January – to return. It's ruled him out of at least the next two races but, not only may it scupper his season, it has the potential to threaten his career for good.

Those close to Honda had mentioned how the former champ was not taking the early season speed of teammate Pol Espargaro lightly, while he struggles

to feel comfortable aboard Honda's radically different '22 RC213V, especially his confidence to push the front tyre so hard.

"Since we arrived here we start to struggle a lot with the rear and we push a lot with the front. I cannot ride with the front and I don't feel well like in Qatar. In QP1 I tried. I did not feel ready but I tried," Marquez said on Saturday.

Team boss Alberto Puig was nonplussed and suggested the harder Michelin carcass in last weekend's allocation, which stripped the Hondas of all their preseason potential, was at fault.

"Marc had these three crashes and we have to try

to understand why, because his crash from today was brutal," Puig said. "Honestly speaking, we need to analyse."

"They [Michelin] brought here a different tyre and we have to understand everything, and at this moment it's difficult."

"Finally, he had a massive crash and we decided it was not correct under the circumstance after this concussion in the head to bring him to the track."

Not only will this recent prang dent his confidence it may, in all likelihood, force a reluctant Marquez to reconsider taking an 'all-in' approach in future rounds.

**NEIL MORRISON**



MotoGP

# BINDER'S BRILLIANCE

**AS GOOD AS** Miguel Oliveira's ride was, it could be argued Darryn Binder was the stand-out performer in Indonesia.

The rookie only had his first taste of fully-wet conditions aboard a MotoGP machine on the sighting lap. Understandably, he felt his way into the contest but soon fought his way through the field from 22nd to sit ahead of brother Brad in eighth with two laps to go. Darryn slipped to 10th at the flag after a stellar ride.

"When it started raining before the race, I thought I may as well attack it. From the out lap to the grid I was really impressed with

the amount of grip the wet tyres had. Every lap I couldn't believe the feeling they gave. Before I knew it, I was catching riders in front of me – and my brother!

"I spoke to my brother after the race. He said, 'well done, that was great. But added he had an issue with the ride height device.'

"And I was like, 'Hey, you beat me anyway! I don't know why you're complaining.'

"He was a bit surprised to see me in the race but he was happy. On the last lap these guys were all fighting – it felt like we were fighting for victory, even though it was for eighth." **NM**



MotoGP

## YAMAHA REVIVAL

**FROM FLOUNDERING IN** Qatar, a place that has historically suited the Yamaha M1, Fabio Quartararo was back out front in Indonesia, claiming a first pole position since last June before fighting back to an impressive second place in the wet on Sunday.

The world champion pointed out the factors working in his favour at the Mandalika International Street Circuit.

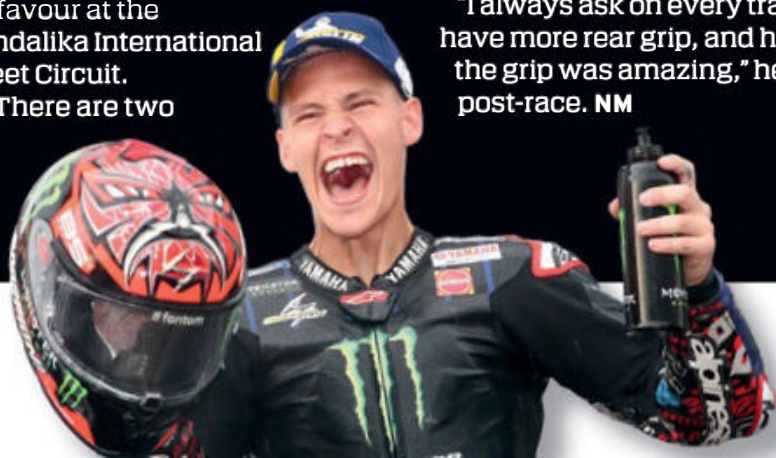
"There are two

things," he said. "(There) is not so much of a straight and the grip is much higher. So, I think it's the most important thing that we need and more than the straight I think is the rear grip.

"When we have that we can be super-fast, but when we don't have, there is a big drop. We can't really have something in the middle. It's really good or really bad. That I think is the biggest step."

The Frenchman also praised the circuit's grippy track surface.

"I always ask on every track to have more rear grip, and here the grip was amazing," he said post-race. **NM**



MotoGP

# MICHELIN CHANGES UP

**PRESEASON TESTING AT** this venue taught Michelin it had to veer on the side of caution for its maiden Indonesian GP weekend tyre allocation.

"We quickly realised that because of a combination of the new track surface, the fast layout and the high temperatures, that the tyres were being stressed too much and overheating," said Michelin's two-wheel manager Piero Taramasso.

"We kept the same compounds that during the test gave very good grip levels and consistency. We have put them on special casings that are designed to control the temperatures more effectively."

The more rigid casing was last used in MotoGP at the 2018 Thai GP and caused several riders into set-up and riding-style adjustments. On day one, Suzuki was the factory most impacted, with Joan Mir outside the top 20. On Saturday he qualified 18th.

"It changes a lot," said Alex Rins of revised set-up.

French tyre supplier Michelin's decision to bring rear tyres with stiffer casing to Mandalika was criticised by many on the grid, with Honda's

Pol Espargaro particularly outspoken, claiming completing a race distance with the current rubber could be an issue.

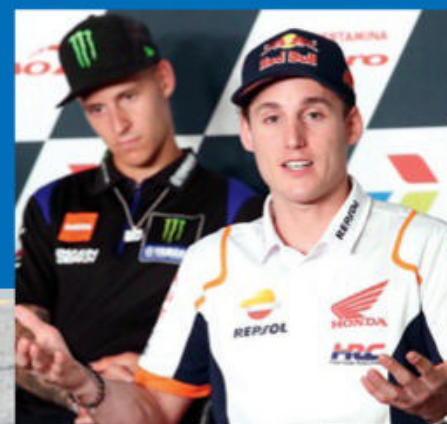
The Catalan acknowledged the rear tyres used when testing here in February were not perfect. His rear suffered blistering after completing a race simulation.

"I agreed it was a problem at the test," he said. "I'm not saying everything was so beautiful. But we could do a race distance."

Instead, he was perplexed by the decision to bring four-year-old rubber when all MotoGP machines have been designed to extract the best from Michelin's current rear tyre profile, first introduced in 2020.

"With four-year-old tyres this bike isn't made for it. We saw Ducati struggling massively at the test here, especially on rhythm. Now they are flying."

"We are especially pissed off with that," he said. **NM**



Pol Espargaro, right, is not a man happy about Michelin's choice of tyres





AFT



Max Whale has been giving the Yanks plenty to think about in the American Flat Track Series

# Aussie Whale third in AFT

Max Whale scores two podiums in first two rounds

**TWO PODIUMS** IN the opening two rounds of the American Flat Track series sees Australian Max Whale (Red Bull KTM) sitting third overall in the Singles standings, as Indian's factory riders have overcome restrictions to lead the Super Twins ladder.

After the Volusia Half Mile II and the Texas Half Mile, it's Indian's Briar Bauman who leads the way by a single point from teammate Jared Mees. Bauman, a two-time Grand National Champion, cruised to victory at Volusia II with younger brother Bronson (Latus Motors Harley-Davidson XG750R) runner-up and JD Beach (Estenson Yamaha

MT-07) in third place.

"This one feels so good. With how I ended my 2021 and how hard our bike got restricted this offseason, Indian deserved it," said a happy Bauman.

Rookie Dallas Daniels (Estenson Yamaha MT-07) impressed on debut finishing fourth with reigning champ Jared Mees (Indian FTR750) fifth.

Format changes this year allow the four fastest finishers from the Production Twins class to receive an entry into the SuperTwins Main.

At Volusia the best results came from Jesse Janisch (Harley Davidson XG750R) and Dan Bromley (Yamaha

MT-07) in seventh and eighth, respectively.

Nick Armstrong (Yamaha MT-07) took out the Production Twins class while Red Bull KTM Factory Racing's Kody Kopp won the Singles class on his 450SX. Kopp's Aussie teammate Whale was second with Daulton Gauthier (Honda CRF450R) third.

With the Volusia Half Mile double header cut in half due to bad weather, the next outing was the Texas Half Mile on 19 March. It was a chance for Mees to strike back, and he took the win in decisive fashion.

The podium was completed by the Estenson pair of Beach and Daniels

with Bauman fourth. In Production Twins reigning champion Corey Texter took out the main event boosting him to second in the standings behind Volusia winner Armstrong.

In Singles it was Morgen Mischler (Honda CRF450R) who took the win from Kopp and Whale.

Series organisers hope the presence of Harley-Davidson and Yamaha running near the front of the Super Twins pack at both Volusia and Texas will help bring back parity after rule changes made in the off-season that were implemented to restrict the dominance of Indian in recent years. The main change is that a race-only machine such as the Indian FTR750 simply can't breathe as easily, having to comply with 32mm intake restrictors and a 11,500rpm limit.

The series now takes a one-month break, with the next stop in Odessa, Missouri for the I-70 Half Mile on 23 April.

**MATT O'CONNELL**



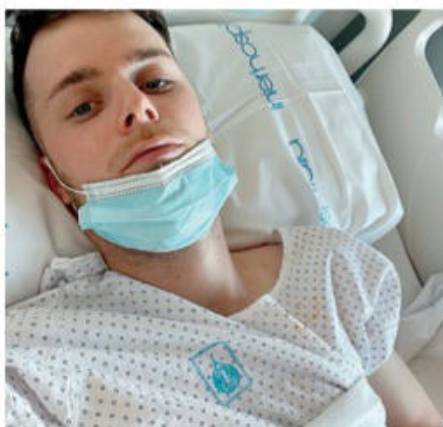
## WorldSSP

# CURRIE IN FITNESS RACE

**AUSSIE BEN CURRIE** has suffered a major setback on the eve of his World Supersport debut after suffering severe spinal damage in a motocross training accident. Currie revealed the accident happened on 16 February in Spain, where he fractured his L1 vertebrae and separated his spine. He was rushed to Barcelona hospital in an unstable condition, but had full feeling in his lower limbs. A bout of anaemia and low oxygen levels in his blood during recovery was another unwanted setback which required further blood transfusions.

"I'm super motivated to be fit enough for the start of the season in Aragon in April, however I can't say for sure if that will actually happen," he said.

"I want to thank my family and friends, including all the staff for looking after me during one of the toughest times of my life. I'm a super lucky boy, but I just have to remember my problems are so much more insignificant with all the tragic things happening in the world." **MO**



## Aussies OS

Jack Miller catches up with ATC rider Marianos Nikolis



# YOUNG RACERS ON THE RISE

**THE 2022 ASIA Talent Cup** was back in action at Mandalika in support of MotoGP, with three Aussies taking to the grid.

In Race 1 Malaysia's Hakim Danish took victory while Marianos Nikolis was the best placed Aussie in seventh. Cameron Swain just missed out on the top 10 in 11th, while Carter Thompson crashed out on the final lap with a big highside while fighting for the podium.

In Race 2, Danish doubled

up for another race win with Thompson able to fight for sixth. Nikolis and Swain were further back this time, finishing 14th and 16th, respectively.

More Aussie young guns are on the move with Archie McDonald completing the first pre-season test for the European R3 Cup.

Harrison Voight has flown out to prepare for a tilt at this year's Red Bull Rookies Cup and Junior Moto3 Championship, while Senna Agius will compete in the Junior Moto2 class. **MO**

## Briefs

### Big changes for QR

Under the new ownership of Tony Quinn, Queensland Raceway was in the midst of redevelopment during the recent ASBK round with construction of new pit facilities well underway. A rumoured change of layout is also edging closer to reality, with the track likely to be redesigned – but still operating within the existing footprint. **MO**

### Walking wounded

Last season's ASBK Supersport 300 and R3 Cup champion Ben Baker made the trip to QR following his round one crash at Phillip Island. "The main damage was to my collarbone but I'm aiming to be back after Wakefield," Baker told us, his arm still in a sling. Laura Brown was another to break a collarbone, this time in qualifying at QR, with the injury forcing her out of action for the weekend. **MO**

### Welcome back Vermeulen

Former MotoGP star Chris Vermeulen was a welcome addition to the ASBK broadcast crew in Queensland. Based on the Sunshine Coast with his wife and kids, Vermeulen splits his time between managing commercial property and working on their small farm. "I love working covering MotoGP in the studio, but it feels so good to be back in a racing paddock," he said, "you can really pick up on the emotion and tension across the weekend." **MO**

## ASBK

# BUSY STEWARDS

**RACE DIRECTION AND** the stewards at Motorcycling Australia have been kept busy at the opening two ASBK rounds. Following penalties for oversized throttle bodies in the Supersport 300 class at Round 1, more penalties were dished out at Queensland Raceway.

Lachlan Epis was disqualified from the first Superbike race after his ECU was found to be running incorrect firmware. He was able to ride in the final race on

his second bike, but retired due to mechanical issues.

Oceania Junior Cup competitors also copped their share of attention from the

stewards, with several penalties being handed down for 'reckless or dangerous riding'. A series of one-second penalties were handed out over the weekend in an attempt to clamp down on some of the swerving in the dash to the line. The result was a much cleaner final race. **MO**





**Main:** Ted Collins totally dominated Round One of the Superbike class **1**. The Roaring Sporties provided a new experience for spectators **2**. Jason Spencer comfortable Superbike winner on his Honda CBR1000RR **3**. Trevor Renton was a crowd favourite, pulling wheelies on his KTM 1290 in the Clubmans class to finish third

Vic titles

# Collins opens Victorian account

The Victorian Road Racing Championship is back for 2022

**TED COLLINS WAS** unbeatable at round one of the Pirelli Motul Victorian Road Racing Championship at Broadford over 19-20 March. He won all his Superbike races on his Yamaha YZF-R1 to lead the championship by 15 points. It's been a challenging couple of years for racing in

Victoria with Covid stopping most racing. The sport was also hit hard by the death of respected rider Jeff Hill at Broadford late last year. Now the State titles are firmly back on track and Preston MCC President Lauren Weaver said it was fantastic to see racers from Tasmania, NSW and South

Australia back in Victoria and sponsors returning to support the championship. A new support class is the Roaring Sporties Australia Harley-Davidson racing. Spectators agreed that seeing a full grid of Harleys was something special. Round 2 will be held at Mac Park over the Easter long weekend. **HC**



## STANDINGS AFTER 1 OF 5 ROUNDS

### SUPERBIKE

POS	RIDER	POINTS
1	TED COLLINS	75
2	BRAD SHAW	60
3	STEPHEN TOZER	53

### SUPERSPORT 600

1	TIM LARGE	75
2	HARLEY SIDE	58
3	BRENDAN WILSON	53

### SUPERSPORT 300

1	MATTHEW RINDEL	75
2	OLLY SHORT	58
3	JAKE SENIOR	56



## TASSIE, TOO!

**JASON SPENCER (HONDA)** easily won the Superbike class at Round 2 of the Tasmanian Road Race Championships at Symmons Plains recently from Scott Campbell and Scott Honeychurch.

First-timer John Allen impressed on debut racing a Honda CBR1000RR after winning the previous round's Clubman race at his first attempt. A notable absence was Jason Wyllie, who high-sided his Ducati V4 on the warm-up lap for the first Superbike race, smashing his hip.

As usual the Supersport racing was the closest of the day with Mitch Hawksley (Honda CBR600RR) again winning after close tussles with Marcus Delaney (Yamaha R6), Mathew Long (R6) and Jesse Woods (R6).

Several Tassie racers then travelled to Victoria for their state titles while others headed off to South Australia for the national historic championships. **KEN YOUNG**



Ken Young

speedway

## SIDECARS TAKING SHAPE

**THE LEAD-IN** to the Australian Speedway Sidecar Championship at Gillman over the Easter weekend has continued with feature

meetings at both Mildura and Gillman in recent weeks. The Bob White Cup at Gillman saw former national champion Mark Mitchell with passenger Tony Carter pull off a last ditch pass on Brodie Cohen/Jesse Headland with Byren Gates/Eli Bock third. Shane Hudson/Adam Constable matched Cohen with 14 points from the heats, one up on Mitchell, but ran infield after making a good start in the final.

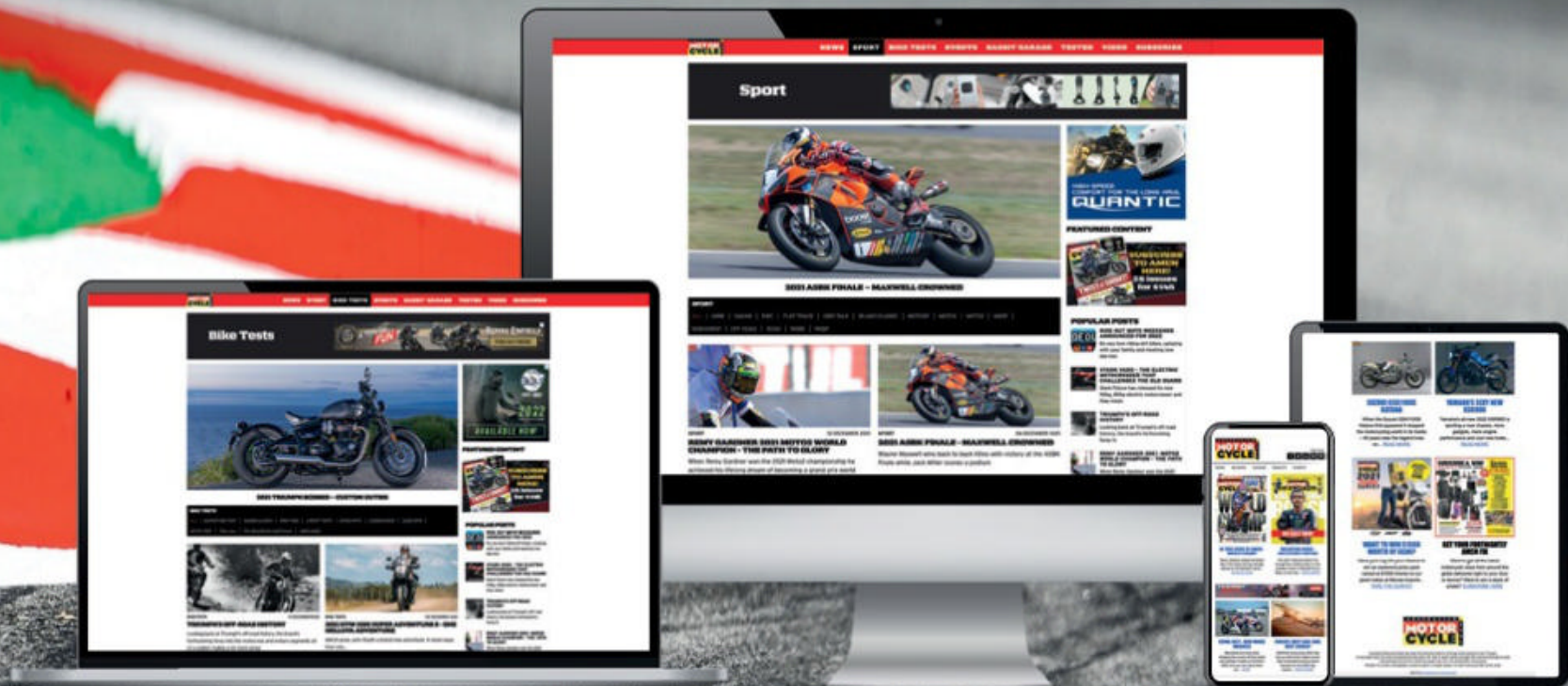
The 45th staging of the Mildura Sidecar Spectacular produced a win for comeback 'kids', former national champions Justin Plaisted and passenger Simon Cohrs ahead of Chris Walker/April Cottrell and Steve Fowler/Willy Walker. Mick Headland/Brenton Kerr won all the heats in which they they finished but again experienced mechanical gremlins in the final. The second round of the

Sidecar Super Series at Gillman last Saturday provided a reminder that Darrin Treloar/Blake Cox are still the benchmark with a dominant display through the heats and then the final. Behind them were Justin Plaisted/Simon Cohrs, Brodie Cohen/Jesse Headland and Kym Menadue/Shane Dolan. The final round of the Sidecar Super Series at Gillman is set for 9 April. **PETER BAKER**





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## Did you know?

The price of electronics used to be very high. When Troy Corser won the 2005 WorldSBK title his Alstare Suzuki's Mitsubishi ECU and sensors cost more than the rest of the bike.

# Stewart Winton

With ECUs playing a critical role in ASBK this year, we talk to YRD's experienced support rider coordinator about the complexities involved

## ***Tell us about your experience and role within YRD?***

YRD is all about helping to make it affordable for riders to be on track. We work closely with John (Redding), but specifically I look after the technical side of things. If somebody has a question about engines, suspension or electronics, it's my job to answer all of that.

In the Superbike paddock, my role is to develop the MoTeC electronics. I've aligned myself with a few riders that want to run it, so that I can help them answer their questions and give assistance where I can. My wife Janice works with parts, we have a lot of OEM parts on track and a lot of the time YRD can be the difference between somebody continuing racing for a weekend or having

to pack up and go home. The whole purpose is to facilitate keeping people racing.

## ***What's your experience with MoTeC? Is it something new to you?***

Definitely not. With Josh Brookes in 2015 in BSB, I worked with MoTeC there. I also used MoTeC before in Australia when we were allowed. Then I used it in world Superbike with BMW in 2016 and then 2017, with TAG Racing with Josh again. In 2018 it was with McAMS Yamaha and in 2019 the RAF Reserves Team and Ryan Vickers, so I've acquired a little bit of knowledge about MoTeC and how it works. The system we have here is a bit different; it's a bit more complex in that it has traction control, wheelie

control and rider aids that the BSB championship doesn't have.

## ***This year in ASBK we have Anthony West, Jed Metcher, Daniel Falzon, Max Stauffer and Broc Pearson running MoTeC for Yamaha. There is a mix of rookies and experience there obviously, but how is the development going? Are we anywhere near the potential?***

I think it's working reasonably well for the short time we've had it. A lot of the teams haven't used the system until this year. It's a long way from being sorted, and you can see the factory team with the YEC system winning races. Sure, the YEC system lacks some capability that you have with the MoTeC system, but there are still things to work

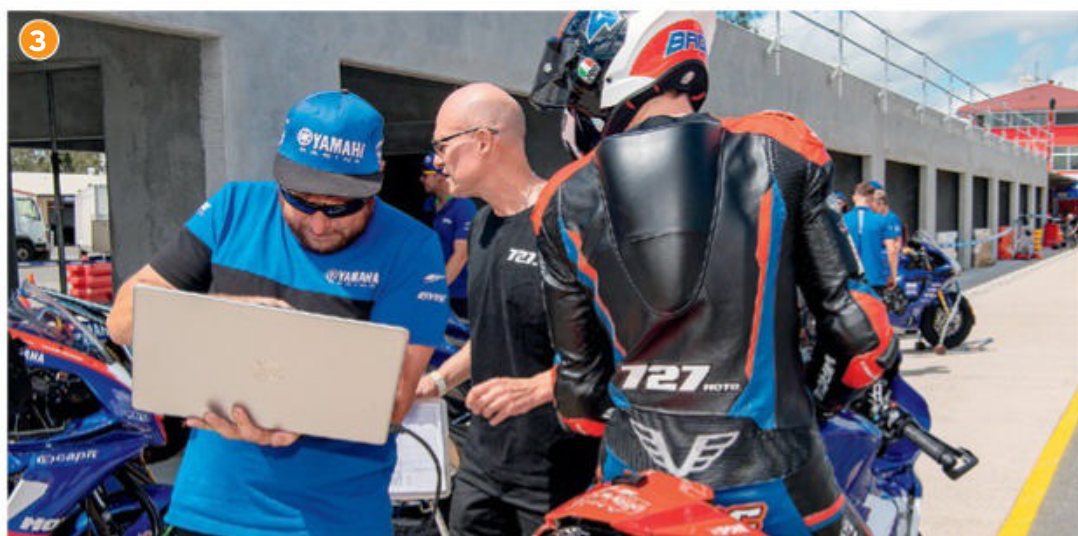
out with the MoTeC to get it where it needs to be. When you purchase a MoTeC system, you get what they call a 'base map' for the ECU. That base map is nowhere close to what you need to go racing. So you've got to understand that when you get a YEC ECU, you can basically plug it in, make a few little tweaks and go racing. The MoTeC system is much more complex; you need to enter gearbox ratios, your tyre circumferences have to be just right, a lot of layers of information need to be put into the system before it starts spitting out the right tune.

## ***What are some of the challenges?***

The main issue is that it is so undeveloped off the shelf. So, for example, you have to build



**MAIN:** Stewart Winton (left) is helping riders progress with the MoTeC system **1.** Superbike rookie Max Stauffer is benefitting from Winton's experience **2.** Daniel Falzon is another MoTeC user on the CAT Yamaha R1 **3.** To be at the front of ASBK right now, the bloke on the laptop is arguably more important than the mechanics twirling the spanners



## *“[The MoTeC] mightn’t be perfect, but it’s a starting point and we know every function is working”*

your own throttle connections and your own engine-brake strategy. Then you have to try things, get rider feedback, and that can be a very individual and time-consuming thing in itself. With the YEC unit, you get 27 throttle translations, you pick a number and off you go. Try this, try that, until one works. With the MoTeC, you have to build these maps from scratch, then you have to build your engine brake, make sure your quickshifter works, your autoblip. Then make sure the fuelling is right, traction control – when does it come on, how does it work, how each part of the strategy can be manipulated for what you require. Do you use lean angle, g-force, throttle?

Then different riders are on different tyres, so you need really accurate tyre information. As you can see, the complexity builds very quickly. The idea is to get

every function working to a reasonable level, and that’s when we settle on as a base map. It mightn’t be perfect, but it’s a starting point and we know every function is working. We are not at that stage yet here.

### ***How precise do you need to be with inputted measurements? Are manufacturer specs reliable enough?***

You’ve got to measure it yourself. They have a closed-loop fuelling system with the exhaust, it uses a lambda sensor to measure the fuelling. If you want any change in the fuelling of your motorcycle to be accurate, you need to know how long it takes the exhaust gas to get from the cylinder head to that O<sub>2</sub> sensor at every point of RPM of every throttle position.

It’s not a case of plugging it in, autotune and off you go. With a closed-loop system, the

gases you are sensing and want to adjust have just come from the chamber and you need to adjust at the right point. That in itself is complex. That takes hours on the dyno, working out exactly how long the gas takes to come from the head to the O<sub>2</sub> sensor at 4000rpm, then 5000, 6000, 7000 and so on. Each rpm is a different setting. That base set-up is the complex bit.

With tyre sizing, your traction control strategy works on differences in wheel speed. If you don’t have your tyre dimensions exactly right, you could be looking at too much slip or too little slip. It’s quite important and it all takes time.

### ***What about corner to corner, where settings adjust on the fly? Is that possible with the ASBK-spec MoTeC unit?***

No, we don’t have the ability to do ‘corner to corner’ (like the Magneti Marelli system,

for example), and at this stage I don’t think it would be an advantage. If your base map was 100 percent and you were at a track like Queensland Raceway where the corners are all quite unique, it could definitely be an advantage. Any tool is only an advantage if you know how to work it.

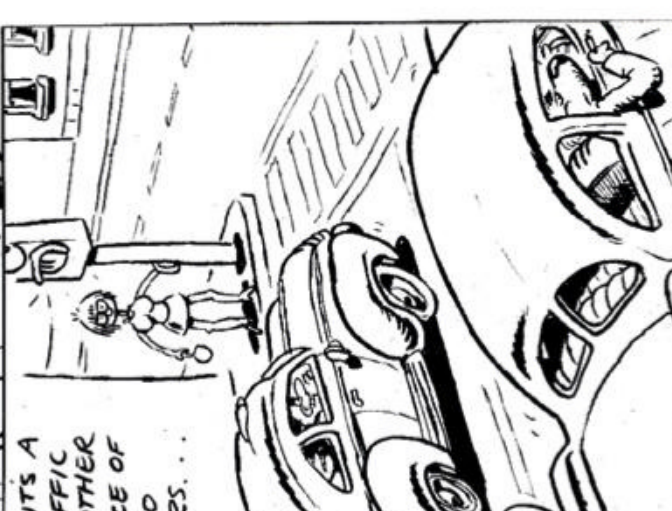
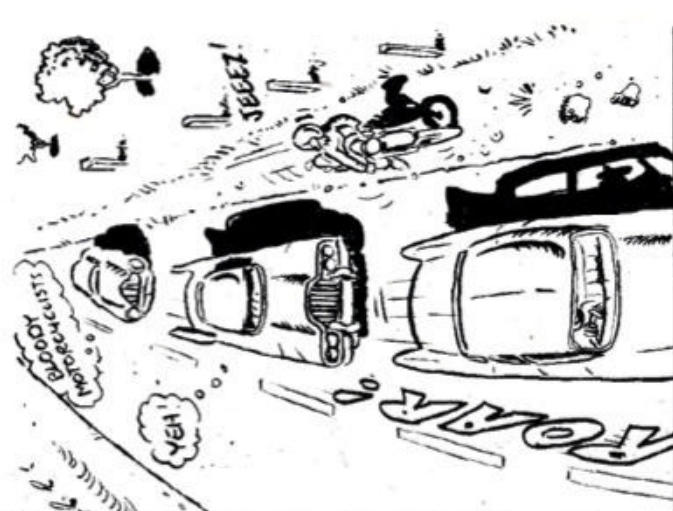
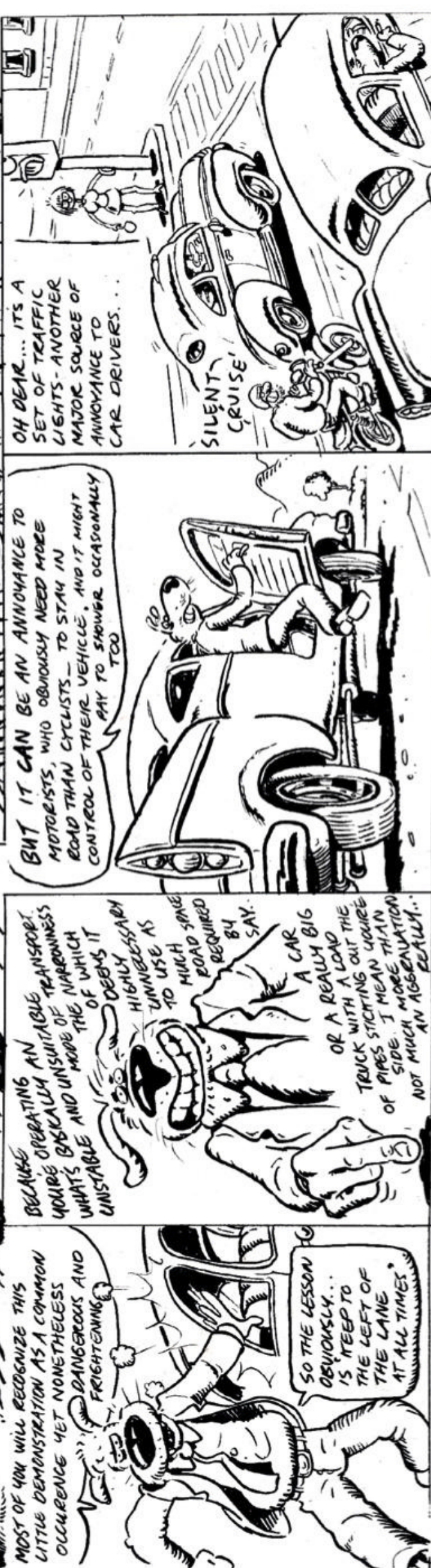
### ***There’s a strong rumour that ASBK could switch to a control MoTeC ECU as early as next year. Is your work right now in preparation for that?***

It makes sense to get on board early and get at least some development done. My personal opinion is that where we are at now with the MoTeC is not that far away from where the YEC level is, and it still has a lot to be developed. Everybody has a different opinion, but if it’s going to become a control ECU, then we need to know how it works and how to use it successfully. ■



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