

ISSUE #16

enduro

ILLUSTRATED

SWEET 16

XVI MUST DO PRE-RIDE ESSENTIALS

STEVE HOLCOMBE

FOCUS ON BETA'S UP-AND-COMING STAR

EURO 4
WHY EVER-TIGHTENING EMISSION
RESTRICTIONS WILL CHANGE THE
BIKES WE RIDE



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ISSUE #16

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AT THE 2016 ISDE MOTORCROSS THE FULL FACTORY TEAM



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PRODUCTS
check out the

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EDITORIAL #16

The more things change, the more they stay the same! It's a baffling sentence on the whole. With KTM's 2017 EXC ranged launched, and 2017 Husqvarna's on the horizon, we can certainly say the biggest-selling off-road motorcycle manufacturer has made huge leaps forward with every bike in their line-up. From the unbelievably small 125 two-stroke to the unbelievably easy to ride 500 four-stroke - smaller, lighter, more powerful and easier to ride has rarely been so true.

Every few years life moves forward. A new generation evolves and we take another step forward, as riders, as a sport. New technology is something to genuinely get excited about. Established riders putting in impressive performances are too but isn't it always good to see someone new come along?

Extreme Enduro proved the point as it blasted back into the spotlight, in a bigger way than usual at this year's ErzbergRodeo. Evergreen Graham Jarvis absolutely blitzed everyone, winning in style and finishing 30+ minutes ahead of the rest of the best. Behind him, among the big name stars of the sport, was a newcomer - a switched on, determined-as-hell 18-year-old who first threw a leg over an enduro bike at the end of last year. Some things are changing, some for now at least remain the same.

Jon Pearson

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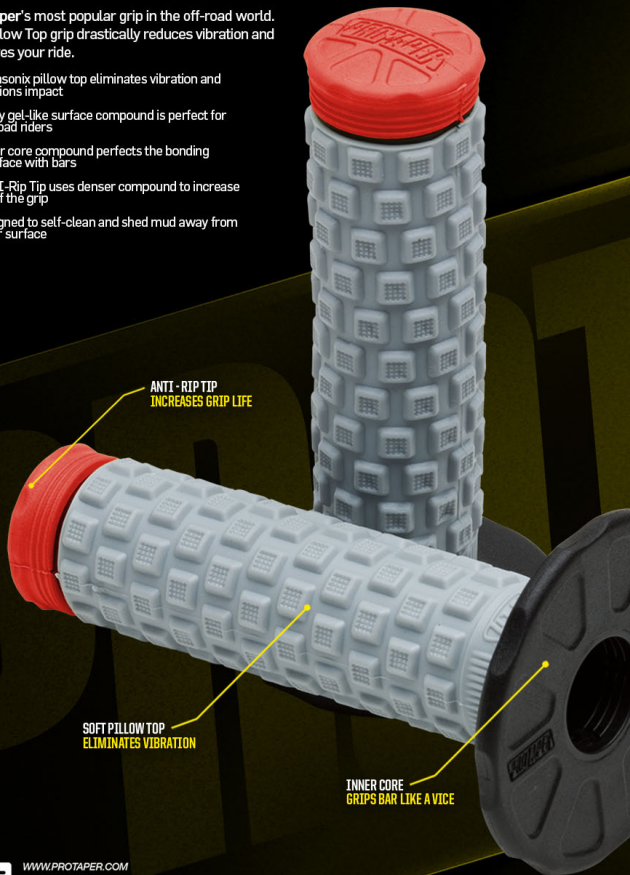
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INNER CORE
GRIPS BAR LIKE A VICE



PILLOW TOP GRIPS

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BIG 3

#3.1 - COMING TO AN END

Italian Simone Albergoni's international enduro career is drawing to a close. For as long as Enduro illustrated can remember Simone - be it on a Yamaha, Honda, KTM or Kawasaki - has been one of, if not the, top performing Italian in the Enduro World Championship. If, or more likely when, he calls time on his international career he'll have notched up a successful, lengthy and largely injury free career. Grazie Simone.





BIG 3

#3.2 - SIX DAYS SPECIAL

15 years ago KTM first upgraded a small number of their bikes so that any one could race the ISDE with little more than a few basic adjustments. The up-specced 2017 bikes they're readying for this year's Spanish event are arguably the most complete and sexiest Six Days models that have ever rolled out off the Austrian manufacturer's production line.

Photo: KTM Media/H. Mitterbauer



BIG 3

#3.3 - TAKING THE WORLD BY STORM

After an incredible fourth place finish in his first Dakar, Kevin Benavides kicked off his 2016 international rally racing campaign with victory at the Merzouga Rally. Making a strong statement in his debut as an official Team HRC rider, the 27-year-old Argentinean won two stages and never finished outside the top five during five days of racing in the dunes of Morocco.

Photo: HRC





1.



2.



5.



6.



THE COLLECTION

THE ART OF CORNERING WITH INSTAGRAM

1. Taylor Robert on his way to claiming victory at Red Bull Sea to Sky's Beach Race.
2. Sherco's Lorenzo Santolino hammering a sandy berm on his 300 SE-R smoker.
3. Colton Haaker getting low during the Two Stroke World Championship at Glen Helen.
4. Berm-blasting action from TM's Eero Remes during the EWC GP of Spain in 2015.

3.



4.



7.



8.



5. Husqvarna's Ryan Sipes turns on the style and shows how it's done.

6. Daniel Milner kicking up a sand storm on his Yamaha at the AORC back in 2014.

7. Who said extreme enduro stars can't get it low? Jonny Walker on the job...

8. Husqvarna's Josh Strang diving into a deep rut at a South Carolina practice track.

QUOTES

INTERESTING STUFF PEOPLE SAID

“I knew Meo wanted to switch to rally racing before it was announced. It wasn't nice to lose a top rider but he'll also do some races with us this year.”

Fabio Farioli, KTM Enduro Factory Team manager

“The global market demanded that we invested in extreme enduro. When the South African dealer mentioned Wade Young I knew he was the right guy.”

Jordan Curvalle, Sherco's sports manager

“The new rules for ISDE made selection much more difficult this season, but I think it'll make the competition even closer.”

USA ISDE Team Manager Antti Kallonen

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“I’ve always wanted to be out there racing the EWC. The decision to accept Yamaha’s offer to manage their Enduro 2 team was obvious but not easy.”

Marc Bourgeois

.....

“For typical offroad riding I find it beneficial to have a bike with no linkage hanging down and catching on obstacles.”

Cody Webb

.....

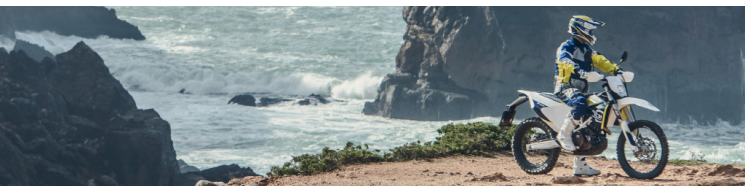
“Erzberg was a race I’d like to soon forget, but I will remember all of it so I can get redemption next time around!”

Colton Haaker

.....

“In MotoGP there’s Moto2 and Moto3, and in MXGP there’s MX1 and MX2. I’m wondering why can’t Enduro 1 be a top class in the Enduro GP series.”

Alexandre Kowalski, Yamaha Motor Europe Racing Manager



KNOW THIS

DONATE USED GEAR FOR A GOOD CAUSE

Going to Sibiu for the Romaniacs? Got a load of riding gear clogging up the cupboard/loft/garage? How about taking it along and giving it away to a good cause?

Romaniacs organisers are encouraging riders, teams and visitors to bring any riding kit or even useful spares they no longer need for a 'Huge Enduro Flee Market' which they hope to make an annual event to raise money for a variety of causes in rural but beautiful Romania.

"There is still a lot of poverty and desperation in the rural areas. Despite the poverty for many years now, people keep welcoming our event in their neighborhoods with hospitality and enthusiastic support for the riders." Said the official release from the Romaniacs team. "Starting this year, we will be raising funds to support those in need - in the remote areas, for example by renovating schools, equipping medical-aid points and delivering supplies."

Gear will be collected in the paddock before the event kicks off with the Prologue on July 12th. But they request, "no used tyres or stuff that belongs in the trash..."

SPOTTED

Spotted on Alfredo Gomez' KTM during the Red Bull Minas Riders Hard Enduro event in Brazil this year was a bit of old school make-do-and-mend (as yer mum used to say). Gomez has it here for rapid access alongside the watch and GPS unit.



Taping or zip-tying an energy bar onto handlebars (or both in Alfredo's case) is a way of getting the weight out or freeing-up space in your bum bag or backpack.

TAKE A LOOK

THREE WEBSITES WORTH CHECKING OUT...

www.riv3r.gr

Language: English, Greek

Type: Extreme Enduro

Featuring one of the coolest teaser clips we've recently watched, the Riv3R Enduro Crossing in Greece proved to be a big success. Following the extreme trails along the banks of river Tripotamos, the race saw 25 out of 67 participants make it to the finish. With plans for the 2017 edition already announced, a visit to the official website will answer all questions about Greece's only extreme enduro event.

www.chrisbirch.co.nz

Language: English

Type: Chris Birch's Coaching Clinics

Three-time Roof of Africa winner and five-time Red Bull Romaniacs podium finisher Chris Birch has bagged a huge amount of experience racing dirt bikes all over the world. For the past few years the New Zealander has been focusing on growing his coaching business both home and abroad. His website is the best source of information on the upcoming 'Coaching Clinics' that run all around the world.

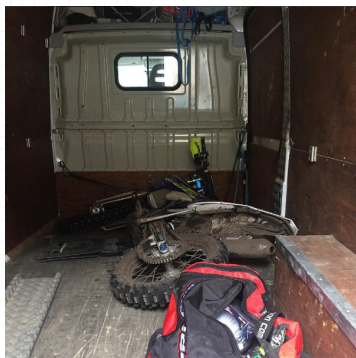
tennesseeknockoutenduro.com

Language: English

Type: Extreme Enduro

The annual Kenda AMA Tennessee Knockout is the closest you could get to ErzbergRodeo's Hare Scramble on the other side of the pond. Set to take place on August 20/21, the sixth edition will once again see some of the best in the extreme enduro business battle for the win and along with it the largest piece of the \$10,000 purse.

5 THINGS THAT...



#1 - MADE US LAUGH

MATT PHILLIPS' CRASH

We've all done it - though maybe not all of us have gone the full distance and actually ended up with our bike's KO'd in the back of the van quite like Matt Phillips did. Was it the straps or was it his driving? You gotta admire his honesty...

#2 - CAUGHT OUR ATTENTION

BMW'S EMERGENCY CALL SYSTEM

Here's an idea - BMW's eCall system (mandatory on new cars in Europe from 2018) is either automatically or manually triggered to send out GPS coordinates of the motorcycle's accident location to a BMW call centre who then initiate the rescue process. The small unit contains a microphone and speaker as well as the SOS button.



#3 - SAVED US TIME

MOTORCYCLE SPROCKET CALCULATOR

Planning to change either the front or rear sprockets on your bike? Check out this super simple online calculator to learn how any change will affect the bike's sprocket ratio, its torque and eventually it's top speed.

www.adventurerider.net/sprocketcalculator/sprocketcalculator.html

AdventureRider.net
Motorcycle Sprocket Calculator

This handy online sprocket calculator tells you the torque and speed differences when you change to different size sprockets.

Current Sprocket Setup

Front Sprocket Teeth: 17T
Rear Sprocket Teeth: 27T
Current Sprocket Ratio = 2.8

New Sprocket Setup

Front Sprocket Teeth: 16T
Rear Sprocket Teeth: 27T
New Sprocket Ratio = 3.125

Torque & Speed Differences

Torque = +7.7%
Speed = -7.7%

A negative (-) torque means less acceleration but higher top and speed. A positive (+) torque means more acceleration but lower top and speed. Copyright 2012 [AdventureRider.net](#)

#4 - WE ENJOYED WATCHING

RED BULL HARE SCRAMBLE 2016 - 26min race recap

No question the annual Erzberg festival of madness raises its game each year but without doubt this year was a good one. Red Bull's TV crew get in the mix with this highlights package from and capture possibly Jarvis's most impressive victory ever. Check out how damn steep those hills are (and realise why the likes of Blazusiak struggled up them) but mostly just sit back and take in the immense atmosphere of this legendary event without getting a sweat on.



Toby Price Racing
12 mins · 18

I'm so proud to be taking part in the The Childhood Cancer Association Ultimate Pie Challenge to raise money and awareness for children with cancer. If I can raise my target by the Tatts Finske Desert Race, this is where I'll get the pie in the face!
Please help do your part in and donate below 🙏

Help Toby Price make a difference
Hey everyone, I want to use my reach to do my part in bringing awareness to help find a cure for Cancer.
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KTM Factory Racing Nice one Toby Price Racing, looking forward to your pie in the face pic!
Like Reply · 27 mins

#5 - SERIOUSLY IMPRESSED US

TOBY PRICE'S ULTIMATE PIE CHALLENGE

KTM Factory Racing's Dakar winner Toby Price switched to four wheels for this year's Finke Desert Challenge. Impressive that Price set about the legendary Central Oz event in a 4x4 Mitsubishi race truck (though he promptly crashed the hell out of it during testing). More impressive though is that Toby was raising money for Childhood Cancer Association and taking part in their 'Ultimate Pie Challenge' to help raise 1 million for kids.

GOOD NEWS

BECAUSE WE'RE ALL SICK OF NEGATIVE MAINSTREAM NEWS...

In its first edition under the Dakar Series, the Merzouga Rally enjoyed media exposure in 190 countries this year.

47.5% of the 500 ErzbergRodeo Hare Scramble competitors this year were on a KTM. 25.4% were on a Husqvarna and 10.8% on a Beta.

Kailub Russell, Taylor Robert, Thad DuVall and Ryan Sipes will represent Team USA at the 2016 ISDE in Spain.

Runner-up in the Ladies Cup Prologue, Sandra Gomez also gave the ErzbergRodeo Hare Scramble a go. She made it past Checkpoint 5 to earn 315th position in the final standings.

At 69 years of age, Britain's John Trevor will be the oldest competitor at this year's Red Bull Romaniacs.

Britain's Jane Daniels won the Ladies Cup in the Iron Road Prologue at Erzberg. Her time would have also earned her 151st in the overall standings.

Yamaha announced the release of a new YZ125X woods racer for the Japanese market. We'd love to see the blue smoker across the world.

Geoff Aaron is the new Promotions Manager for Gas Gas in the US and will also continue to race the AMA EnduroCross series for the Spanish brand.



TCX COMP EVO MICHELIN BOOTS

OVERVIEW...

A new range of bold colours from Italian boot specialist TCX is matched by a bold all-new boot and a tie-up with French tyre giant Michelin and a moulded, softer sole. Designed for better feel and improved durability the molded construction, hybrid sole is an evolution of offroad boot design.

The 'Double Flex Control System' restricts front and rear leg movement to 18° and 15° respectively while maintaining flexibility when riding. Leather inner has improved comfort and protection is completed with a plastic outer.

OUR TAKE...

An evolution of a well-established and quality off-road boot from TCX. The venting is improved, as well as overall comfort partly because the boot does away with the inner boot used in the Pro-2.1 model. They're externally smaller.

Wrap-around leather inner boot layer is comprehensively over-lapped by the shin protection when you do up straps, which gives a protected feel and a large range of adjustment. The shin plate is adjustable to accommodate different calf sizes and/or knee braces and guards as well which, in our experience, makes the boot work for different sized humans.

The biggest difference by far though is the feeling on footrests - simply there's a stack more grip and feel on the footpegs and levers. The feel's more precise and, wet or dry, if not glued to the pegs they at least feel like they're held in place by Blu Tack.

A rubber heat guard on the inside of the leg also helps the grippy feeling too by having a bit of bite on the frame. Quick release buckles are easier to use than previous model, too. Overall, it's a comfier, lighter and easier to wear boot, easier to walk about in than previous TCX models but with the same high levels of protection.

Really liked: Footpeg feel

Colours: 6 different

Sizes: 35-49 (euro)

Price & Availability: www.compevotcx.com

LEATT GPX 5.5 COMPOSITE HELMET

OVERVIEW...

Lightweight Composite offroad helmet for head and brain protection. Race-Ready, lightweight, super ventilated and equipped with 360 Turbine concussion and brain rotation safety technology. Improved multiple impact protection care of 360° Turbine technology, reduced outer shell volume, 3D molded inner foam, compatible with neck braces.

OUR TAKE...

You need confidence in a helmet and the GPX 5.5 delivers that from the first try on. Cool, light, agile and while we're yet to test the protection technology it's fair to say we trust what we read. The 'Turbine Technology' has us looking closely at the design tech behind it - small turbines inside the shell absorb direct impact and deflect rotational impacts to reduce concussion by up to 40% Leatt claim. It's innovative stuff.

Noticeably more compact in your hands than many other helmets, by design it has a smaller helmet shell, which "reduces forces transferred to the neck". The multi-density molded inner foam is also designed to reduce the forces transferred to the head and brain in a crash. It's comprehensive safety, which is what we expect from Leatt products.

The moisture-wicking, inner liner works and is easily removed from its poppers for a wash. Cheek pads are emergency/quick release too and from an hour blast around the woods to eight hours in a day testing the MY17 KTM EXC range the GPX 5.5 was certainly comfortable.

Really liked: Quality feel, size and weight

Colours: 15 different

Sizes: XS-XXL

Price & Availability: www.leatt.com www.apico.co.uk



USED AND
REVIEWED
PRODUCT TEST



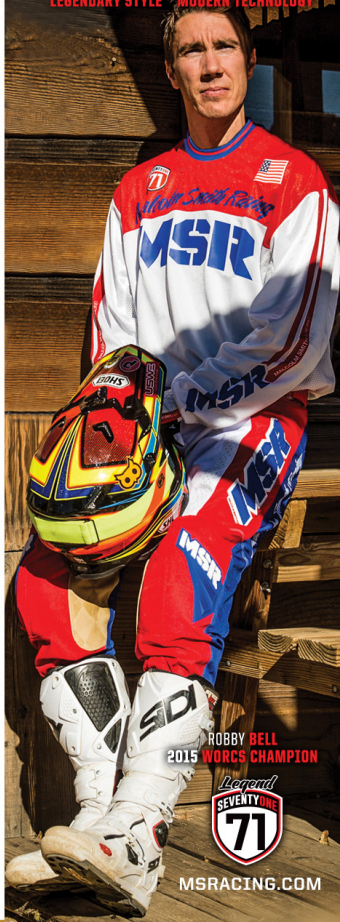


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HIGH FIVE BILLY BOLT

A fifth place finish at your first ErzbergRodeo attempt isn't half bad? Even more spectacular if you only stepped onto an enduro bike in December 2015. Has Britain spawned yet another ex-trials riding Extreme Enduro specialist?

Words and photos: Future7Media



British youngster Billy Bolt was almost as much a talking point post-Erzberg as winner Graham Jarvis was. Switching from a promising career in the World Trials Championship to jump on an enduro bike for the first time in December 2015, Billy has had a dramatic and incredibly steep learning curve in the hard enduro world. Enduro Illustrated caught up with Bolt fresh back from his remarkable fifth place Erzberg finish to ask what's up with trials, why he switched sports and what it's like getting to grips with enduro?



“...after checkpoint 21, so really near the end, my chain came off and wrapped around the front sprocket so I had to take the swingarm out to free it.”



Fifth at your first ever Erzberg Red Bull Hare Scramble is one hell of a result, you must be pleased with that?

Billy: "I'm definitely pleased with it. We went with no great expectations but knowing that a good result was possible if things went well. We went with the aim of learning as much as possible for next year really.

"To be as high as fifth was probably our real top-end expectation if everything went well. When I didn't qualify on the front row for the main race it didn't look so good, but I was still confident I could come through quite well. Fifth was still higher than I expected from the second row though, I'm made up."

You lost a lot of time overall in the main event though, what happened?

Billy: "We had quite a few problems along the way, yeah. My bike over-heated and lost some water a couple of times, so we had a couple of water fill-ups in there. Then after checkpoint 21, so really near the end, my chain came off and wrapped around the front sprocket so I had to take the swingarm out to free it. Looking at the check point times I lost about 35mins doing that alone so that was a shame, but I don't think we can have too many complaints."

How was the event overall? Did it seem bigger than anything in trials?

Billy: "Definitely, in terms of the scale of the event - I'd never been to anything like it. Not necessarily the place just how much effort goes in from an organisational point of view. The media coverage and everything just blew us away completely."

How did the whole switch to extreme enduro come about, when did you make the change away from trials?

Billy: "I started speaking to Julian Stevens (Jonny Walker's manager) in the middle of last year but at the time I was fully committed to the Trials World Championship, I was still sitting second in the junior class of the series at that stage so I said I was going to finish that and see how things went, and that we'd speak at the end of the year.

"The Scott Trial was the last proper trial I did last year and I spoke to Julian after that. We then made a plan together and I got on an enduro bike for the first time in the second week of December and just loved it from there. That was the first time I'd ever ridden one."

So what happened with trials? What made you change sports like that when you were on the rise in trials?

Billy: "It had been on my mind for a couple of years but I never really had anything pushing me to change, if you know what I mean. The World Trials Championship is getting smaller and smaller and is dying as a series if I'm honest, which is a shame. It's a sport that is dominated by Spain - their governing body is putting so much into it and there's no other country doing that or who can compete with it. Extreme enduro is growing and growing as trials is dying. I didn't want to leave it too late. When Julian approached me it couldn't have been timed any better."





You've been mixing up the events and results so far in your short enduro career, are you finding it a steep learning curve?

Billy: "The reason for doing so many different events from the start (British Extreme, British Sprint Enduro, Ales Extreme, etc...) was to gain experience. I've seen a lot of riders come over from trials to enduro and they just rely on the fact they can ride well through the technical stuff for a good result.

"I think now hard enduro has become so specialised, it's become more of a race as opposed to a speed trial, so you've got to learn to ride fast. It was a real steep learning curve to start with but I enjoyed the challenge and I'll hopefully just keep racing and learning."

So is speed the area of your riding you still have to work on then?

Billy: "Yeah, kind of. But just riding an enduro bike is the main thing because it's all still so new to be honest. Every time I ride I'm still learning. I've been riding over rocks for 12 or 13 years and I'm not going to forget how to do that overnight so focusing on corner technique and carrying speed as much as possible is the main aim from now."

Are you training by yourself or is someone helping with that?

Billy: "Julian and Paul Edmondson have a good relationship from when Paul was racing so I try and go down and train with Eddy as much as possible. Even when he's at events he's always helping me as much as he can, he's been really helpful. And Julian (Stevens), what he doesn't know about enduro isn't worth knowing. He's been invaluable."

Do you like the enduro scene? How does it compare to the trials scene?

Billy: "Yeah, I like it a lot. It's similar but it was the one thing I didn't really want to leave behind because the trials scene, you know, I've been competing in trials for so long I've got a really good group of friends from all over the world. Especially at the world championship, everyone was so close and gets on so well."

"Straight away in the enduro scene everyone was really welcoming and helped me get on really well. It's all the same really you know, the banter's still the same, but everyone's been really good at making us feel more than welcome."



"I think we do well because the conditions we train in can be so tough... through the winter it's so slippery, cold and horrible it's character building putting in a full day of training in this country..."





What about fitness training? Trials is a pretty tough sport physically but how does it compare?

Billy: "After every race I've felt so much better, my fitness improves each time out. The first Fast Eddy event I did was a two-and-a-half hour race, multi lap event and by the end of that I was in a proper bad way. But race-by-race I'm feeling better and better. After my last cross-country race I was pretty much fine. It's been good to monitor my improvement in that way. I've got a good fitness base so I don't need to spend too much time in the gym. The main thing is getting used to being on a heavy bike, which you've got to man-handle around as opposed to a light trials bike.'

Jonny Walker and Graham Jarvis are big shoes to try and fill in Extreme Enduro. Why are British riders so strong in the sport do you think?

Billy: "I think we do well because the conditions we train in can be so tough. You know, through the winter it's so slippery, cold and horrible it's character building to even put in a full day of training in this country. Everyone else in the world is often still on a nice grippy track and in the sun. Difficult conditions to train in definitely make us stronger in the races.

"Yeah, for sure they are big shoes to fill. Techniques have come on so much in trials in the last three years or so in trials. I think

that although many of the riders at the top of Extreme Enduro have come from trials, none of them have come as recently as I have. So I think that's helped a lot and given me a slight edge on some other riders."





*“...indoor events are something I'd like to do, definitely.
At the minute it's difficult financially to make a definite plan...”*

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Any plans to do some indoor events?

Billy: "No plans, no, but indoor events are something I'd like to do, definitely. At the minute it's difficult financially to make a definite plan because we're still relying on bits of help from here, there and everywhere. Plus bits that myself and Julian have managed to pull in. But it's definitely something I'd like to do at some point."

What's your best moment in enduro so far?

Billy: "Definitely the finish line at Erzberg. Especially after the drama and everything that went on in the race. To cross that line felt so good."

Are there any bad moments?

Billy: "No, not really. Because it's all so new to me nothing seems bad. I've had plenty of crashes but I've learnt from every single one of them. Maybe when I start making the same mistake over and over again it could be a bit of a bad one but at the minute everything's fresh and new, even when it goes wrong. I think that's why I'm loving it so much because it's always interesting."

What's next?

Billy: "Romaniacs is the next big one for me and it's not definite yet but maybe then Sea to Sky at the end of the year if we can work it out." **e**

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Standard Height



Tall, 1" taller than stock



I SURVIVED

A 100,000km trip around the world

Five things that helped Turkish adventurer Tolga Basol complete a two-year solo ride around the world.

#1 GO WITH THE FLOW

It's always best not to have any overly detailed plans, time restrictions or commitments while on the road. I've learnt that the more you try to rush things the greater the chances are that you'll run into problems. During my trip I ended up spending several months in places where I wasn't originally planning to go more than just a couple of days. Everything becomes so much easier when you learn how to go with the flow.

#2 GET THE BEST GEAR YOU CAN AFFORD

Choosing the best gear available will save you money in the long run. You'll end up carrying less weight and will be absolutely fine to ride in any kind of weather. From your helmet to your boots, going for a high quality set of riding gear is vital and the same goes with your camping gear. These will be the items that you'll be using most during your trip. For me getting the best pair of boots, the lightest tent and the safest gear you can afford is an absolute must.

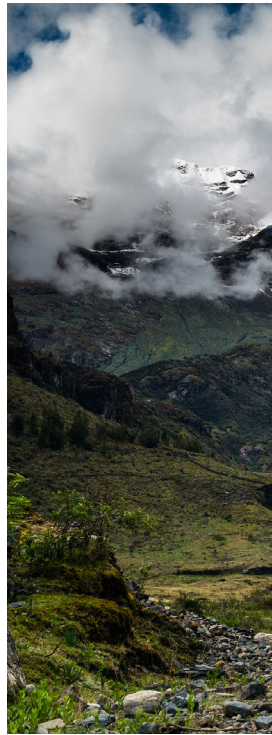


#3 ALWAYS TRAVEL LIGHT

Avoid carrying unnecessary weight at any cost. Travelling light will help you pack-up and move quicker, lift your bike easier and at the end of the day enjoy the riding experience more. You have to carry only what you will need while on the road and nothing more. The less stuff you carry the greater amount of freedom you have to move around. All the stuff I needed for my two-year round the world trip weighed 30kg and could fit in my bike's luggage. If you desperately want a new set of underwear or some new T-shirts, you can always buy some from the next town.

#4 BE YOUR OWN MECHANIC

Learning how to change a flat tire is just the beginning. The best thing to do before any trip is to sit down and read your bike's repair manual. Ideally, you must also do some practise at least with the basic stuff before you leave. Learn how to change the engine oil, how to replace the brake and clutch fluids, how to repair any leaks in the radiator, how to replace the coolant and how to adjust the valves on your bike. Other than possibly saving your life, knowing how to perform all these basic repairs will definitely save you loads of time and money.





#5 TRAVELLING SOLO

Travelling alone is great for making new friends. Embrace it. It's easier to meet local people and quite often you get invited to have dinner with them. For me any trip is all about the experience, so you need to make the most of moments like these. Opting to ride with a buddy is smarter in rugged or dangerous routes, but when in a group you're less likely to interact with others. Travelling alone is more of an eye-opener.



Tolga's Top Five

FAVOURITE COUNTRY:

It's hard to pick one country, but as far as riding goes it'd probably be Mongolia or northern Peru. Then in regards to the people and the experience it'd definitely be Colombia. Every country and its people are unique in their own right. There are just so many different cultures and the feeling you get when you meet people is always unique. Every single person I met in Colombia was helpful and seemed happy. Colombians are wonderful people to spend time with. In terms of riding experiences, northern Mongolia and northern Peru have amazing offroad tracks with stunning scenery. It's the perfect place to ride a bike like my trusty KTM 1190 Adventure R.



FAVOURITE ROAD:

My most exciting ride was through Peru. The section between Jaen and Celendin was both challenging and absolutely beautiful in terms of the scenery. I also enjoyed riding the Vilyuisky Trakt in Siberia, a road that starts in Lensk and ends up in Yakutsk. I must say I'm not a big fan of riding on tarmac as it makes me sleepy.

FAVOURITE BIKE MOD:

It took me two years to complete my RTW trip on my KTM and the best mod I ever did was to replace the intake system with a full Rottweiler Intake set-up. Once I did that I was no longer obliged to buy and replace the air filters. I just cleaned the one I had and went on with my trip. I also replaced the oil filter with a stainless steel one, which helped a lot.

FAVOURITE FOOD:

Being from Istanbul I knew it'd be hard to find any better cuisine than the Turkish food. But I'd say Mexican food was probably my favourite during the whole trip. The variety of tacos and diversity of food you can get there is simply stunning. You could have one of the best meals while sat in a small restaurant by the side of the street. It was also quite cheap to get good food there.

FAVOURITE MOMENT:

After two years of non-stop travelling there are so many memories that pop into my mind. Probably one of my favourite ones would be when I crossed roads completely by chance with Yuichi, a fellow Japanese rider I first saw in Mongolia. We'd met 18 months ago and I had absolutely no idea where he might have been at that moment. Then as I was driving down the road in Patagonia I stopped at a traffic light in El Calafate and there he was standing next to me!





KTM EXC 2017

ORANGE OVERHAUL

The most comprehensive model update to KTM's EXC range in 19 years goes way further than the usual 'more power, less weight' new model headlines. Welcome the biggest and most important 2017 model line-up in enduro...

*Words: Future7Media,
Images: Sebas Romero & Marco Campelli*

Let's get some 2017 KTM EXC facts laid out on the table here - there's huge changes to the looks, chassis, motors and suspension of each of the eight new bikes (14 if you count the Six Days models). One of them is KTM's most powerful enduro bike ever, which is going to become their biggest-selling model globally. Oh, and let's not forget 90% of parts on all models are new with as much as 5kg in weight reductions!

Despite the death of the 200 EXC, which is replaced by a 150 XC-W, KTM are still fully-committed to two-stroke bikes. Plus, at any given opportunity, the good folk at KTM are happy to call the arrival of their new line-up an "outstanding moment" in the history of KTM enduro machines. To re-iterate what they said, "we can't take our foot off the gas, enduro is the core of KTM..."

The legendary Les Comes facility in Cataluña hosted the 2017 EXC model range launch, which KTM admits is the result of joint efforts from world-wide motorsport activity plus R&D departments in Austria and USA. Obvious comparisons with the 2016 MX range are valid - they link directly to the EXC models, and it's there where many of us looked for clues as to the direction the 2017 enduro bikes would take.



KTM EXC 2017



But KTM are at pains to tell us these are new bikes - redesigned specifically for enduro - not just MX machines with different plastic and a heavier flywheel.

From the ground-up every model from 125 two-stroke to 500 four-stroke has a new engine, is drastically reduced in size and pumps out more power. Every bike sports heavily revised but visually instantly recognizable trademark steel, tubular frames and refined, but still very orange, bodywork. Some things, it seems, will never change. Eight bikes is still easily the most comprehensive of any manufacturer and includes the core 250/300 EXC two-stroke models, 250/350/450 and 500 EXC-F four-stroke models, plus the two newly monikered 125/150 XC-W two-stroke machines.



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A buzz phrase “mass centralization” cropped-up loads in the pre-ride press introduction – in essence it’s the concentration of the bike’s weight around a sweet-spot in the centre of the machine (just about where a starter motor ordinarily sits). It helps handling, turning ability and rider control. Mass centralization comes from all aspects of the bike working together to complete the whole, something that’s clear from the long list of updates across the EXC range.

Chassis are lighter, stronger, easier to ride and the numbers are impressive – 20% more torsional stiffness, 30% less longitudinal stiffness and overall 350g lighter. All of that means feedback and feel are improved to the rider, allowing more precision into corners and stability in a straight line. Plus there’s less vibration (particularly on the two-stroke models thanks to new internal counter-balance shafts). Big changes and seemingly a true model revamp, the likes of which we don’t see too often in the lifetime of a model line-up. Arguably, things are now a bit less “Ready to Race” and maybe more “ready for a new generation”.



KTM EXC 2017





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Chris Birch
(Red Bull extreme enduro rider)



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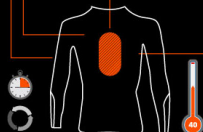
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FRONT



BACK

KTM EXC 2017





KTM EXC 2017
FUTURE-PROOF
TWO-STROKES

*Still committed to two-stroke
development KTM's 2017
woods machines offer minimal
fuss for maximum fun...*

"We would not have made all this effort if two-strokes were not part of KTM's future," Joachim Sauer - KTM's long serving offroad product manager - told Enduro illustrated. It's good to hear after so much pre-launch hype that two-stroke bikes were on their way out, particularly when hearing the 200 had been replaced by a 150cc. The reality is two-strokes aren't going nowhere.

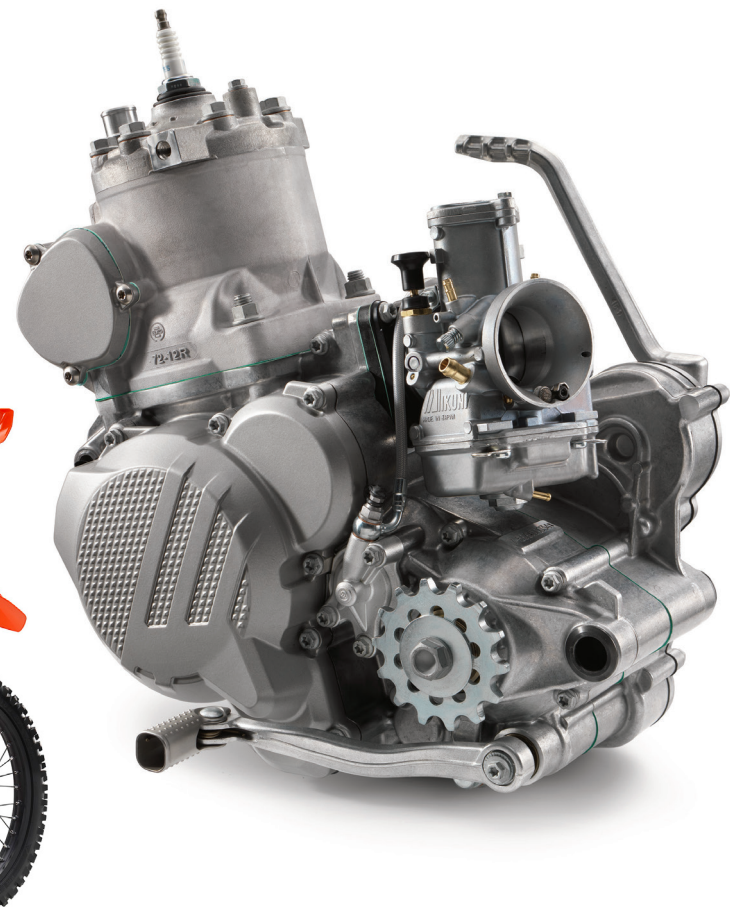
So what's with the XC-W models you ask? Yes, the two smaller capacity bikes are, for 2017 non-homologated for road use and tagged XC-W. Not being officially road legal and sold for 'closed course use' presents problems in some parts of the world, more than in others.

Work on the 125 and 150 engines is centred around smaller, lighter and stronger die-cast crankcases. Considerably more compact, the engines sit up and further back in the frame (closer to that centre of gravity). Internally the high crankshaft and clutch shaft position is also closer to the centre of gravity. Mikuni, 38mm flat slide carb' replaces the Keihin units on the smaller capacity bikes too.

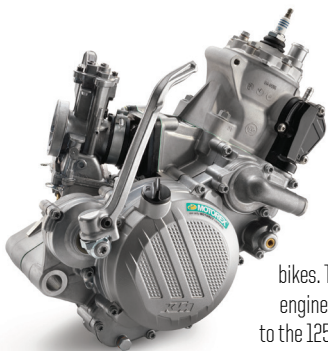
It's hard to take in just how small the 2kg lighter 125 XC-W engine looks sitting in its new frame. It's like someone has dropped the wrong engine in a frame.

The extra space around the engine unit allows the starter motor, now standard on the 150 (though a retro-fit option on the 125), to sit underneath the engine, out of harms way and way-neater. There's also improved, 'semi-bleed' jetting which in theory should need changing less often to suit conditions. Brembo hydraulic clutches now feature on the smaller bikes too (was Magura).

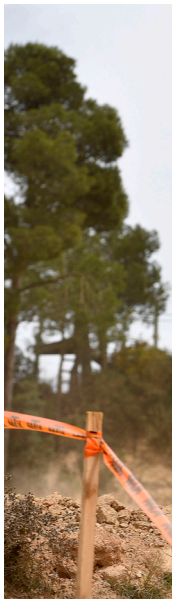




MORE THAN JUST LIGHTNING FAST



For the most part we all know where we are with the larger capacity two-stroke models, don't we? Light, reliable, stalwarts of the enduro scene worldwide and still the choice of every man, woman and boy with a liking for Extreme. They're the definitive enduro bikes. The larger capacity two-stroke engines have received similar efforts to the 125/150 models to reduce weight and size while increasing power. That means smaller crankcases, different crankshaft (27mm higher) and clutch shaft (8mm higher) positions to bring the whole unit closer to the centre of gravity.





Both larger capacity two-stroke machines also have their starter motors swapped from top to bottom of the crankcase, the reduction in overall external size allowing the extra space underneath - a tidier spot for the starter unit although we'll have to wait and see how they hold up to consistent dunking in muddy water.

Both 250 and 300 EXCs have new porting and a tweaked power-valve system aimed at smoothing (even more) the power delivery. You can adjust that further by switching the different power valve springs supplied with the bike.

Among the other details common on both larger capacity two-stroke bikes is a new counter-balance shaft, which drastically reduces vibrations from the engine. KTM claims the knock-on to your feet and hands is 50% less vibes than previous models.

All two-stroke models now feature a Mikuni carburettor instead of the Keihin type previously fitted. The 250 and 300 also have the KTM developed damped diaphragm steel (DDS) clutch with "extremely heat resistant" clutch plates. It's nothing particularly new but the clutch has a diaphragm instead of traditional clutch springs, which keeps the action lighter (helped by Brembo hydraulics) and more consistent under heavy going.

WHAT THEY'RE LIKE TO RIDE - TWO-STROKES

The 3kg lighter (91kg claimed weight) 125 smoker was the first bike we tested and what a way to start. Super-precise along some of Les Comes' dry and mega-rocky streambeds, the new chassis and suspension work well to help this become an incredibly accurate weapon. Fast and light when changing direction and with what feels like no weight to heave up and over, both the 125 and the 150 benefit from the improved front brakes when hauling anchors into corners. Did we miss the extra horses of the 200cc engine when riding the 150XC-W? We can't say we did in all honesty. The test bike we rode was set-up rich, great flat-out but a little fluffy in the technical going. The 150's like the 125 but with a touch more fizz.

The bedrock of KTM's enduro range is still the 250 2T for us and the 2017 model does not disappoint. Still the best middle-ground machine for all-terrain it feels taugt, solid in its new chassis and more accurate. 2kg lighter, suspension and chassis changes help the 250 in fast or technical going. We took some time to play with suspension settings on the 250 to feel the range and it is broad. Don't automatically assume you need upgrades.

The 300 was the surprise package in some ways. All the chassis and suspension changes make it easier to ride. There's softer power at lower revs but you notice it arriving at corners faster than the 250, launching out of them stronger with an improved throttle feel compared to older models. The 50% reduced vibes on the 250/300 bikes was hard to spot on the terrain we rode on - but if we didn't notice it then it probably means there's nothing to notice, which is to say the vibes are gone.





KTM EXC 2017

LIGHTENING THE FOUR-STROKE LOAD

Harmonised names with new engines and serious weight savings, KTM's 2017 EXC-F models offer everything from the nimble to the incredibly powerful...

The 250 EXC-F is 1.5kg lighter, the all-conquering 350-F a whopping 1.9kg lighter, the 450/500 motors an amazing 2.4kg to the good, which amounts to half the overall weight loss on those two models. Another fact banded about on the launch was that since the year 2000 the bigger capacity four-stroke engine has lost 5kg and gained 12hp!

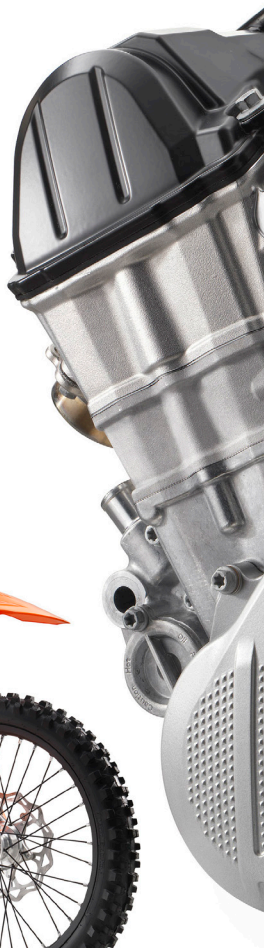
The 500 EXC-F now makes a monster 62hp, the most power KTM has put out in a production EXC. The Austrian manufacture also expects the 500 to take over the mantle from the 350 as the biggest selling bike in its line-up with the release of the 2017 models. Big claims if you live in little, old Europe but in Australia and America, where the larger capacity bikes are more popular, this easier to ride 500 EXC-F is likely to take over the mantle.



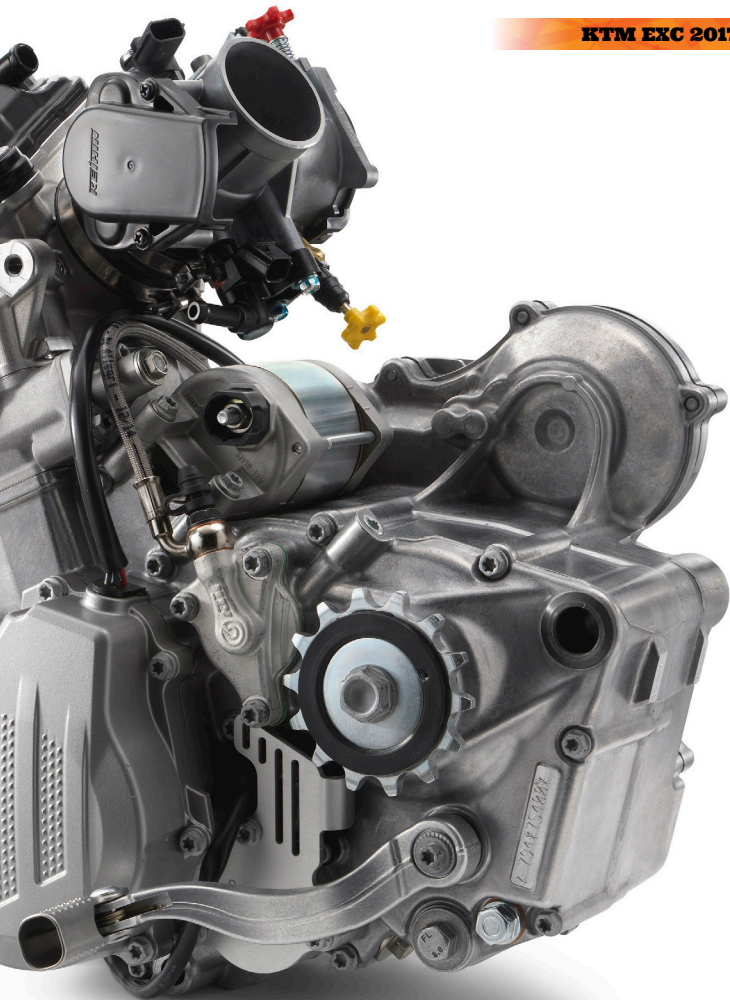
KTM EXC 2017



Traction control and engine mapping on the four-strokes has a new handlebar mounted switch, simplifying things to just two traction and two maps settings, which can be switched on the move. The downside is that the map switch is a KTM Power Parts option, though standard on the Six Days. New gear ratios in the six-speed gear box help drive while clever electronics in the gear sensor adjust the power curve to each gear.



KTМ EXC 2017



The SOHC cylinder head is "completely redesigned" with new camshafts, porting, combustion chamber, rocker arms and shorter timing chains. The four new engine displacements feature the same throttle bodies as the MX bikes with smaller intakes for enduro-specific, low-speed response plus a new ECU with faster processors, chiefly to facilitate the tweaked traction control. While the EXC range borrows heavily from the MX range KTM claims, "every part is EXC specific". That means stiffer crankshafts, stiffer and 6mm shorter con-rods to produce a more compact engine layout and 5% more inertia, and side-mounted counter-balance shafts.

There's a neat cold start solution too, which has separate electronic systems for cold start and idle adjustment - throttle back when the engine is running smoothly and cold start disengages.



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WHAT THEY'RE LIKE TO RIDE - FOUR-STROKES

Still mighty impressive and an increasingly popular choice, the 250F weighs 2.5kg less for 2017 and was admittedly a favourite for us at the launch. Agile, friendly when the going got tougher and despite sharing so much with bigger four-stroke bikes, the 250F feels like a half-way house between other models, plugging a gap between two-stroke and four-stroke bikes.

The 350 EXC-F is currently the biggest selling bike in the KTM range, with good reason - it's all things to more people. A decent weight saving of 3.2kg is a huge amount on a dirt bike weighing just over 100kg. New hydro-stop suspension to prevent bottoming worked well for our 73kg test pilot. Huge clicker range works just as well on the heavier four-strokes as it does on the two-stroke bikes. Overall, the 350 feels more lively for 2017.

A whopping 5kg weight saving brings the mighty 450 closer to you as a rider, making it easier to ride and less of an arm-wrencher when tired. Although it's still an arm-wrencher if you get too giddy with the throttle for too long. Switchable traction and mapping settings are easy to use and flick between on the go but we're looking for a test in a boggy, horrible mudfest to truly try the new settings - bone-dry Spain wasn't too enlightening. Of all the bikes in the line-up the 450 displays the new bodywork smartly - it sure is a looker.

The 500EXC-F is "our most powerful enduro bike ever," KTM says. The 62hp 106kg machine is also 5kg lighter and features the same new traction/mapping controls on the bars but, like the 450, it'd be great if this was standard on all models not only the Six Days. It is surprisingly easy to live with, like the best trail bike ever, just so long as you knock it back a little and treat the 500 with respect.



FRAME CHANGES

KTM's trademark tubular steel frames are lighter for 2017 with 20% more torsional stiffness, 30% less longitudinal stiffness and are 300g lighter. Big numbers and shouldn't be underestimated in the grand scheme of things...



The cast swingarm on all models is now 220g lighter and has a slightly tweaked (5mm further forwards) PDS shock mounting position to make it more progressive with the new shock.

The subframe is constructed from a "revised" aluminium and is an impressive 20% lighter than previous models.

At one end of the scale the chassis changes show themselves loud and clear on the 125 XC-W, which whipped its way through Les Comes' dry, rocky-as-hell, river beds like the proverbial rat up a drain pipe. Accurate to each individual rock and refreshingly easy to recover yourself on - by that we mean when things go wrong and you bounce off-line - the new chassis was seemingly easier to muscle back on track.



At the other end of the scale the 500EXC-F, all 106kg of it, lapped up an "extreme test" KTM laid on for us. Naturally more stable, the big fella was a surprise - an easy going trail blazer of a bike if you hook a higher gear and let the motor do the work.

SUSPENSION CHANGES

A major upgrade to the 2017 WP suspension sees the front forks and rear shock lose weight and gaining more progressive settings as well as improved 'hydro-stop' to soften those heavy landings...

They're lighter by 200g and better performing with improved range and control whether you're on a special test or ripping round a technical section is all to the good. The Xplor PDS-type shock is redesigned for 2017 - smaller piston, larger reservoir, 600g lighter overall. Internally the piston is smaller by 4mm, to 46mm, 2.5mm shorter and the shock stroke is 4mm shorter, too. There's also an optional easy-to-use clicker adjuster at the bottom of the shock.

The relative arguments for linkage or PDS-type shock are still not resolved and won't be helped by 2017 KTMs having one system and 2017 Husqvarnas having the other.

Lighter WP 'Xplor' PDS-type 48mm open cartridge forks feature separate adjustment on each side - compression left, rebound on the right. There's an optional click adjuster (standard on the Six Days models) for easier preload adjustment on the fork tops too. Not having air-forks is a good thing in our experience.





One thing's for sure, the 2017 EXC models feel lighter and easier to ride, which lands squarely on the shoulders of improvements to chassis and suspension.

Better hydro-stop resistance is a clear improvement and lets you have quite a soft setting for good feel over technical terrain but not compromise too much over jumps or when flat-out and hitting bumps hard. 30 clicks of adjustment is a genuinely meaningful amount of range to play with if you want to make things stiffer for faster riders.

SMALL DETAILS, BIG DIFFERENCES

There are some saucy, smaller details on the 2017 EXCs, partly aimed at the perennial targets of lighter, faster bikes that are easier to ride but just as importantly about making life easier for the everyday owner and rider.

A neat but super-practical detail is the 'textured' left and right-side engine cases, which scuff-up less doing away with the boot rub marks inside the foot controls and so keep the new bikes looking sweet for longer.


You can remove the headlight and air filter single-handed now too, new forged triple clamps have four settings for handlebar position to suit the rider, 'no dirt' footpegs and gear lever shouldn't get clogged with crud and a 10mm longer rear brake pedal helps foot control. It's all good.

The new models have dramatically smaller and lighter batteries too - at least 1kg lighter (1.2kg on the four-stroke bikes). Don't worry though, KTM are "100% sure the battery will always work." Plus there's a stronger radiator material and a new mounting position on the inside (frame side), which KTM claims is "bulletproof" and no longer needs radiator bracing. The electronics are all self-contained so you can remove the air box and rear subframe without having to unplug or disconnect any cables.



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JUST SAYING...THREE THINGS WE'D LIKE TO SEE

1. The neat as a neat thing in a neatness contest starter motor underneath the new engines is one of those ideas you wonder why no-one has engineered it that way before. We're wondering why though, if the 150 is allowed it, why isn't it standard on the 125? The kids are going to fall out in the playground over this one.
2. On the same note it seems like more and more things are crossing over to the Power Parts catalogue - fans aren't standard on any EXCs except the 450/500, traction control switches on the four-stroke bikes are extras too. A cynic would say it is KTM trying to get a bit of extra money out of you. A club enduro rider will be asking why he or she hasn't spent enough money already to get a decent sump guard?
3. It's all very well making the most comprehensive range of bikes in enduro world but where's the truly novice enduro bike? We know the Freeride fills some sort of a hole but it's not an EXC with an EXC chassis. What about a true novice-friendly bike with lower seat height, soft engine and softer price tag? 



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GALLERY #16

Words and Photos: Future7Media

GALLERY #16.01

Start

The final moments before the Red Bull Hare Scramble begins are surreal. The quarry floor basks in an eerie silence. After three days of constant noise and commotion, everyone waits with bated breath for the starter's flag to drop. You can hear a pin drop during those precious last few seconds. Then the craziness begins - 50 engines roar into life and all manner of madness is suddenly unleashed.





The only way is up

Dynamite is an iconic Erzberg section, feared by the riders for very good reason. It's big, bold and mean. But the manner in which rookie Billy Bolt tackled it on his very first attempt was equally impressive. There's no doubt about it, the kid's got skills. From 51st to fifth, Bolt tore his way around the Iron Giant better than the majority of his peers, even schooling Taddy Blazusiak on Lazy Noon. Erzberg 2016 proved to be one hell of an event for Billy Bolt.



GALLERY #16



GALLERY #16

GALLERY #16.03

Enduro's elite

Erzberg's 1,500 starting places were filled within minutes of entries opening way back in November 2015. While the majority of those snapping them up were enthusiasts who make the Rodeo their annual enduro party, at the pointy end of the list this year's entry read like a who's who of extreme enduro. With the exception of the injured Jonny Walker, the best in the business come out in force. This year's race saw some of the most closely fought battles for many years.



Prologue



Alfredo Gomez

Mario Roman

 **amped**
thisisamped.com



Cody Webb

GALLERY #16.04

Lazy noon

Lazy Noon was the final sting in the tail of the Hare Scramble. A relative newcomer in the 22-year history of Erzberg, it's a climb that's never really troubled anyone until now. A game changer in 2016, it stopped the majority of the finishers in their tracks. Cody Webb and Alfredo Gomez needed 10 attempts to clear it and both Taddy Blazusiak and Paul Bolton almost ground to a halt. Jarvis and Bolt were the only two exceptions, both clearing it in one go.

GALLERY #16



Paul Bolton



GALLERY #16.05

The wolf of Erzberg

There's no two ways about it, Graham Jarvis aced Erzberg this year. Whenever the Husky rider's winning credentials are in question he instantly silences the doubters. Laying his competition to waste, by winning the Hare Scramble by over 33 minutes Jarvis didn't just destroy his opposition he destroyed the Iron Giant, too. Ok, so Jonny Walker wasn't competing, so things could have been different. But Graham, with seeming effortless ease remained super composed, silky smooth. It was near dirt bike perfection.







Cody Webb



Taddy Blaszziak



Wade Young

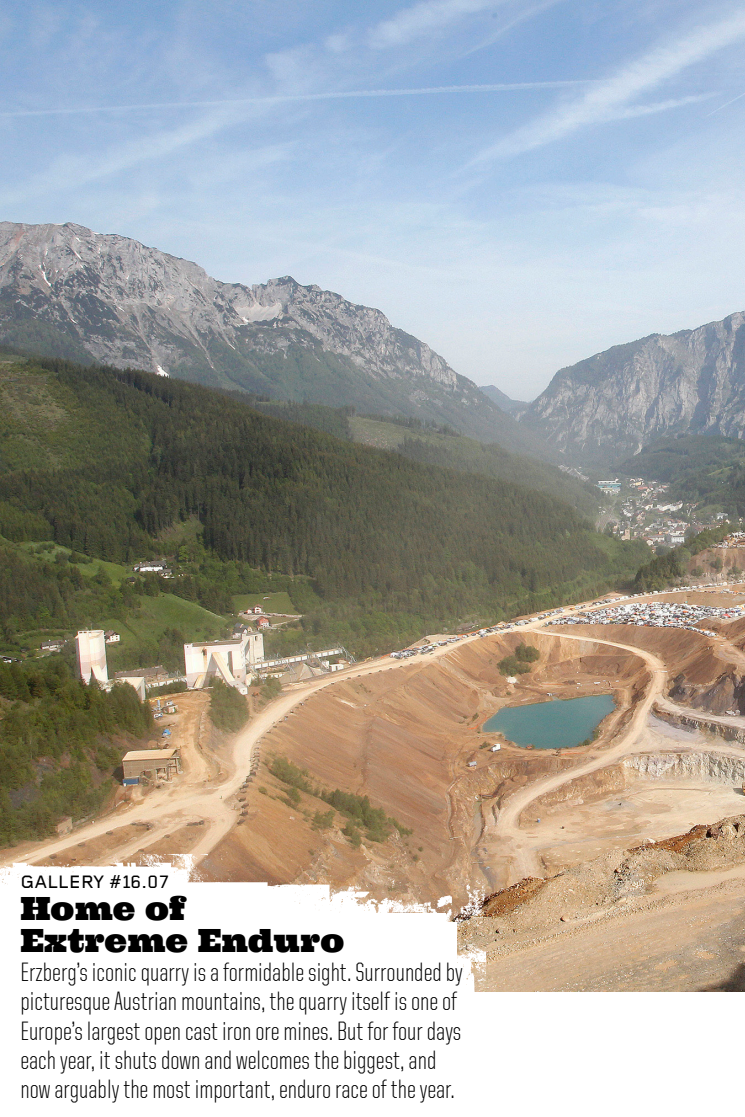


GALLERY #16.06

Hell and a hard place

This year's course dished out a beating. 35 kilometers long, it packed punch after punch the harder riders pushed. There was no rest. There was no forgiveness. Sections like Dynamite and Carl's Dinner continued to live up to their fearsome reputation, but it was the hidden sections lurking in the forestry where some of the real hurt lay.





GALLERY #16.07

Home of Extreme Enduro

Erzberg's iconic quarry is a formidable sight. Surrounded by picturesque Austrian mountains, the quarry itself is one of Europe's largest open cast iron ore mines. But for four days each year, it shuts down and welcomes the biggest, and now arguably the most important, enduro race of the year.

GALLERY #16



GALLERY #16



Sandra Gomez



Hailstones

GALLERY #16.08

Weather storm

When it comes to weather, expect the unexpected at Erzberg. Over the years the mountain's welcomed every type of extreme weather imaginable. Luckily, 2016 was a little more subdued. However, while race conditions were pretty much on point, each evening the heavens opened, bringing thunderstorms and hailstones the size of golf balls.



GALLERY #16



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The Unbreakables

1,500 entered, 500 qualified for the Red Bull Hare Scramble but only nine made it through to the finish line. There's no two ways about it, the ErzbergRodeo knows how to whittle down the pack. With 25 checkpoints to pass, the rate of attrition

was hard and fast. Given four hours to complete the course, Graham Jarvis stopped the clock at two hours 18 minutes and 47 seconds, while Philipp Scholz, the ninth and final finisher, squeezed through at three hours 56 minutes and 11 seconds. Along with Graham only Cody Webb and Alfredo Gomez dipped under the three-hour mark indicating just how tough conditions were. **e**



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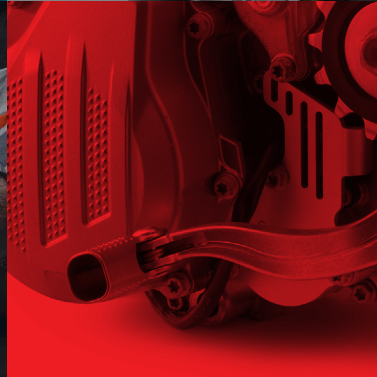
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HOT TOPIC

UNDERSTANDING EURO REGULATIONS

The future is now! Well, almost now. Increasingly stringent European standards - particularly with regards emissions - are set to have a direct impact on the bikes we buy and use in the years to come. With fuel-injected two strokes just around the corner Enduro illustrated quizzed Joachim Sauer, KTM's Offroad Product Manager at their recent 2017 EXC launch to get a clearer understanding of exactly what Euro 4 regs are and their expected impact on tomorrow's enduro bikes...

Words: Future7Media, Photos: Future7Media & Sebas Romero



Firstly Joachim, most enduro riders will be aware of "Euro 4" but what exactly is it?

Joachim: "The Euro 3, 4 and 5 regulations for homologation are standards that manufacturers must meet, but aren't just limited to emissions. They also relate to things like noise, evaporation rules and in the future on-board diagnostics. All of these things will make it much, much tougher to build offroad motorcycles that can be road registered. The bikes of the future will have to be more complex because manufacturers will need to fulfil more rules, stricter rules. The most demanding parts are noise and emissions. Meeting the Euro 4 regulations will be a very real challenge for two strokes."

Are these ever-tightening regulations the reason KTM no longer offers the 125 EXC?

Joachim: "It's the major reason we don't continue with the 125. Regarding the 125 there's an additional anti-tampering rule, which states that there can't be any chance of overriding the restriction of the power. We wouldn't be able to have any aftermarket parts designed specifically to improve the performance of that bike - things like removable airbox inserts that reduce noise wouldn't be allowed. The 125cc bikes would need to remain exactly as they'd be sold because they can be used by 16-year-old kids."

So just to be clear, it's the imminent arrival of the Euro 4 regulations that will have the most profound impact on enduro bikes?

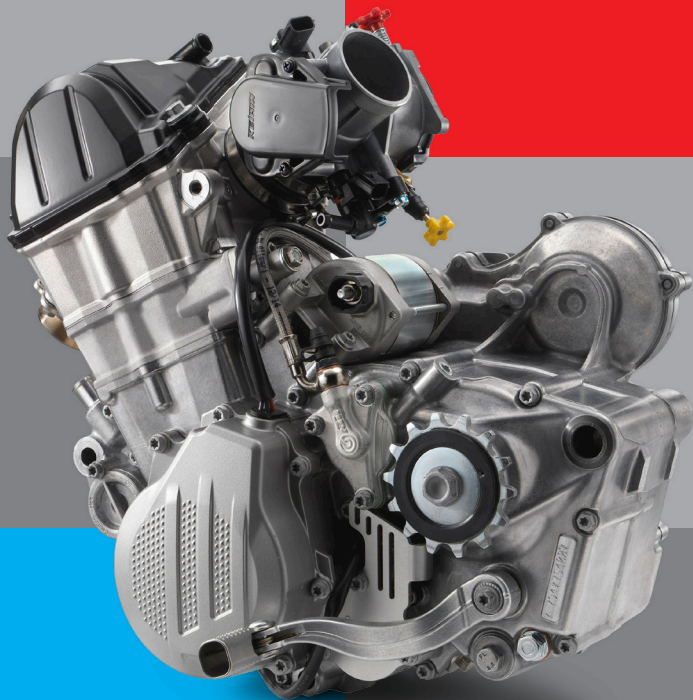
Joachim: "Yes. KTM's current EXC-F models meet the Euro 4 regulations. The two strokes currently meet Euro 3 regulations. To fulfil the Euro 4 rules, and especially the Euro 5 rules that come into play in 2020, we don't see the chance without fuel injection. We are intensively working on fuel injection for the 250cc and 300cc two-stroke bikes. It's a technology that will definitely change the history of the two-stroke. Historically all you needed was fuel and a spark - if the spark plug wasn't wet then no fuel was getting through the carb'. Fuel injected bikes need five sensors for things like temperatures and pressures. You also need a fuel pump, an oil pump and a much more complex ECU system. That's a very complex layer of new technology that needs to be applied to the relatively simple two-stroke bike."

Will all of the additional electronic gadgets and gizmos change the feel of power delivery of mid-sized two strokes?

Joachim: "The two-stroke EFI bikes we're running in the R&D department now are surprising a lot of people. We too were unsure about things but the bikes run so well - they're always clean, they don't hesitate, you don't need to worry about jetting. You don't even have to turn on the choke when the bike is cold in the morning."



"We are intensively working on fuel injection for the 250cc and 300cc two-stroke bikes. It's a technology that will definitely change the history of the two-stroke..."



Will KTM try to make two strokes fitted with EFI feel as much as possible like today's carburettor fitted two-stroke?"

Joachim: "We've run a lot of test on fuel injection on two strokes and at the end of the day we decided to try and keep the characteristics as you have them today on a bike with a carburettor. What I can say is that if I jumped on one of our bikes not knowing if it had a carburettor or was fuel injected I wouldn't be able to tell the difference when riding. We are very close with our final settings. The main difference with the EFI bike is that it always runs clean. Where a carburettor bike can load up on a long downhill, an EFI bike is always crisp and clean running."

Knowing what lies ahead we're guessing KTM's latest generation EXC engines are ready to adopt everything that's needed to meet the next set of Euro regulations?

Joachim: "Yes, everything is prepared."

"We too were unsure about things but the bikes run so well - they're always clean, they don't hesitate, you don't need to worry about jetting. You don't even have to turn on the choke when the bike is cold in the morning..."

Are all enduro bike manufacturers - Beta, Sherco, TM, Gas Gas, etc - going to have the same problems regards getting two strokes pass Euro 4?

Joachim: "Yes, all manufacturers will have the same issues regards Euro regulations. There are some transitional rules, for instance if you want to sell a motorcycle with old emissions standards after the new deadline a manufacturer would be able to import and register 100 of each model into any country. Of course for KTM that's a very small number, so it doesn't work for us."

Are the additional pumps and sensors, and more complex ECU systems, going to increase the costs of two strokes?

Joachim: "There are clear pros and cons with these new technologies, just like with the four strokes. We've learned a lot from running fuel-injection on our four strokes. The bikes will become slightly more complex, but with a more comfortable riding characteristic. Our objective is to give the bikes the same feeling as a carburetted bike. With a simple map switch you could make a completely different bike, using the same engine. In terms of costs, with specialist components made in relatively small quantities, there will be increases. We expect two strokes will get closer to four strokes in terms of price."

Does Anti-lock Braking Systems (ABS) feature in the Euro regulations?

Joachim: "Yes, but fortunately we pushed hard to get an exemption for offroad motorcycles, both for trials and enduro motorcycles. There are five features that clearly define an offroad competition motorcycle, things like seat height, ground clearance, gear ratios, etc. These bikes don't need ABS."

Bikes are continually getting more technologically advanced, but emission regulations are equally getting tighter and tighter. Looking further ahead, is it possible for dirt bike manufacturers to keep pace with these ever-stringent regulations?

Joachim: "In general, there is a point at which technology will slow down. But I've been with KTM since 1987, and discussions about how much longer two-stroke enduro bikes could be produced have been around since then. I thought we had come to the end of a dead-end road then, and that was 28 years ago. From year to year there are new developments, evolutions and solutions for future rules. Even with the tighter rules of the future, Euro 5 and beyond, I think we will always find solutions to keep bikes as competitive as they are now."

Finally, if you look to the future can you see a time when EFI two strokes will be more desirable than non-EFI two strokes?

Joachim: "No one talks about putting carburetors back on four stroke bikes nowadays, and I think it will be the same with two strokes soon - no one will want to go back to using a carburetor. Also, fuel consumption on two strokes will dramatically improve with EFI. Compared to a 350 EXC-F the fuel consumption will be much lower, when out trail riding. This is a huge advantage, with reduced running costs..." **e**



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Joachim Sauer – KTM Offroad Product Manager

“There are clear pros and cons with these new technologies... The bikes will become slightly more complex, but with a more comfortable riding characteristic. Our objective is to give the bikes the same feeling as a carburetted bike...”





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PERFORMANCE ENHANCING PRODUCTS

Roaming around...

PORTUGAL



AL



Sun, sea and epic trails are seemingly the order of the day in South West Portugal. All of which should add up to a nigh on perfect dirt biking holiday. So Enduro illustrated went to explore this little known corner of Western Europe to see if it really is as good as it sounds.

Words & Photos: Future7Media

Roaming around...

PORTUGAL





Imagine a dirt bike holiday destination with almost endless possibilities, where you can learn to read road books and push your riding and navigation skills to the limit. Alternatively (if that's not your idea of a holiday!) how about a couple of hours cruising about at your own pace with the coastline on one side and mountains on the other, then sitting on the beach or by a pool and relaxing for the afternoon? You can choose to sleep in and ride 80 kilometres in a day or get up at the crack of dawn and take on a full 260. Whatever your preference is - or somewhere in between - Portugal offers it all. As we found out, one visit is enough to experience some breath-taking landscapes, meet friendly locals and enjoy a heap of great riding.



Where were we riding?

We were staying just outside Boavista dos Pinheiros, a sleepy rural town in the Beja District in the region of Alentejo on the South West coast of Portugal. Situated around one and a half hours drive North West of Faro, this laid back part of the world is ideal for trail riding with huge rolling hills, lakes, cork trees and endless forestry tracks. It is bordered to the East by a National Park leading down to the coast, which although you're not allowed to ride in we got to see plenty of it on our travels. In early May it's surprising how green and lush the surrounding countryside is. That said the green and pleasant land we got to enjoy, with its abundance of wild flowers, does, so we were told, become very Moroccan when summer arrives.



What's it like?

By 21st Century European standards, Portugal offers a bit of a step back in time - which we like. Boavista is a quiet town where nothing happens fast and is all the better for it. The bar we stopped at to grab some food on our first evening of riding looked unchanged since the 70's with an atmosphere to match. A couple of old boys watched the footie on a small TV in the corner whilst eating seafood sourced from the local market. Out on the trails we didn't see many folk about but the ones we did come across seemed friendly enough with one local farmer even opening a gate for us as we headed past his land. In Portugal - even if you own the land - you aren't allowed to lock gates on the tracks between your fields, allowing easy access across large distances. If only the rest of Europe was like that!

On our 140km road book route on day two, for the most part we followed flowing forestry tracks - some looking rarely used - up in the hills above the town of Odemira. Crossing a few small streams we also took on a number of challenging, loose rock climbs and descents to keep things interesting. The highlight of the day was the ride around Santa Clara Lake with its stunning views across to the hills away in the distance. Parts of the ride felt like we were in Morocco or Spain, but there were a couple of tracks through woodland that could have had us back in the UK on a summer's day!

PORTUGAL

When is the best time to go?

Spring through to early summer is the ideal time to ride around much of Portugal, as the landscapes are still green and lush. It's also pleasantly warm, as opposed to the searing 40-degree heat that's commonplace later in the summer. As seen at the Portuguese EnduroGP back in March conditions can get properly muddy - the day we left we experienced one of the heaviest rainstorms we've seen for a while. The airport roof was leaking - enough said!

Who are WIM Motors Academy?

WMA is owned and run by a Father and son setup, Wim and Clint De Cramer. Originally from Belgium, Wim owned a bike dealership and ran a race team for 25 years before founding WIM Motors Academy in in 2014. He describes himself as a mechanic first and rider second, although having been riding with him in his back yard he would put more than a few younger guys to shame on a dirt bike! Between these two business ventures he decided to take some 'time out' and did a 40,000-kilometre bike trip around Russia, Mongolia and Eastern Europe on a KTM 990, camping and spannering his own bike along the way - not bad for a guy in his 50's! He is also a single malt whisky aficionado and will treat you to a tasting session of some of his favourites after your day on the trails.





Why ride with WIM?

Wim is an ex bike shop owner and the bikes and facilities reflect that. The BMW-era Husky 310's are kept in top order by Wim himself and mechanic David who each have their own dedicated workshops. They offer bike maintenance and repair workshops in the evenings. Clint has his own office where he designs and prints the road books. Currently there are seven set routes from 75 km through to 260 km but he is working on new routes all the time and will tailor you one to your specifications. Whilst we were there Sebastian Buhler and Max Hunt were putting in some hard training for the then upcoming Merzouga Rally. All that plus the fact that you'd be hard pushed to find a friendlier, more hospitable couple of guys...

What sets WIM apart?

WIM offers the full spectrum of dirt bike holidays and training. You can turn up with your own bike, grab a road book and head on out just as fast as you like. Or break yourself in more gently on the enduro loop set in the grounds around the house whilst your other half enjoys the pool, has a drink at the bar by the lake or even takes a quad and heads off to the beach, which is only 15 minutes away - the choice is yours! The accommodation is top notch as well. On many tours you'll find yourself staying in the cheapest local hotel or bar with rooms above. At WMA the house, pool and lake are part of the whole experience, it can also be a holiday for the whole family while you get your dirt bike fix!

How do I get there?

Cheap flights are available from most European countries to Faro or Lisbon. Both are under two hours drive from the Beja district. Our flight from the UK, including a kit bag and a hire car for three days, was well under 200 Euros.





THREE QUESTIONS TO WMA:

What is the concept behind WIM Motors academy?

The idea behind WMA is that we want to cater for all kinds of riders and offer a genuine learning experience with road books and also bike mechanics that is why we called it the academy. The name was chosen because people can actually come here and gain knowledge on the trails and in the workshop. People asked us if we could offer basic mechanical training for dirt bikes, we have the knowledge and facilities, so why not? Alternatively, you can just come and be guided around the trails and sit by the pool in the evening - it's entirely up to you what kind of holiday you want to make it!

Why did you choose Portugal?

We chose Portugal firstly because of the many kilometers of suitable dirt tracks. The country is also fairly dirt bike friendly, the food is simple but very good and the people are nice. It also has a great climate, varied terrain and we are close to the beach. This is also a rural area without many people living out in the countryside so we don't disturb too many people when we are out riding.

Why do you offer road book tours?

Well, we wanted to give WMA an extra element that other companies don't offer. We know there are other companies in Portugal who offer guided tours and we wanted to take that one stage further and to introduce people to road book navigation. We are passionate about it ourselves and enjoy teaching people the basic skills needed to navigate themselves.



FIVE THINGS WE DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT PORTUGAL...

- 1 Portugal was founded in 1128 making it one of the oldest nations in Europe. Portugal and England have the oldest alliance in the world, since 1373.
- 2 Portugal is home to about half the world's commercial cork-producing oak trees, spread out over more than 1.6 million acres of forest some of which we rode amongst on our trip.
- 3 The Portuguese Empire spanned nearly 600 years making it the longest ruling Colonial Empire, more so than even the Spanish, British and Dutch.
- 4 The Portuguese invented Piri-Piri sauce after discovering the ingredients during their Colonial rule of East African countries.
- 5 Portugal is a great destination for surfing. The largest wave ever surfed - 30m tall - was caught by Hawaain surfer Garret McNamara in 2011 near Nazare.

Thanks to:

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SWEET 16

Essential, sugary nuggets of wisdom to see you sweet from the moment you wake up on race day, to the moment the flag drops...

Words & Photos: Future7Media

You make your own luck, some people say. It's one of those phrases older guys come out with, which can leave you thinking - 'what the hell is he on about?' It doesn't make much sense until that day when you forget to bring pre-mix for your fuel. Or that spare chain link you always carry in your bum bag isn't where it normally lives when your chain breaks three miles from the van. Suddenly, that old guy is waving his 'I told you so' finger.

Not all 'luck' is uncontrollable is what we're saying. Some things are within your control if you get on top, sort them out and get yourself and your bike ready to go. We've learned plenty of lessons the hard way, through decades of our own race experience. We've also watched and learned a lot from working with pro-riders around the globe...

SWEET
16



It might taste good but it's not what you need for a day in the saddle. Save the sausages and burgers for the end of the day.



1. Food and drink

What you eat and drink before a race is important. Coffee and carb's? Eggs and a protein shake? What's important is that you get what you know works for you and get it down your neck early on in the morning so your body can process it.

Sure, drinking plenty of fluid means you'll need to pee more but slugging plenty and often, all morning (and the day before), is money in the bank later in the day when your heart rate starts to rise.

If you want particular things to eat then make sure you shop on the way, or take them from home. It's no good foraging in the woods for baked beans. And lay-off those gut-buster breakfast baps, too. They might smell and taste good but it's not what your body needs. Have one as a treat after the race.

2. Go for a shit

Sorry if that's a little direct. At the other end of your body there are other vital human functions to take care of. Lighten the load and stop yourself feeling uncomfortable while you're riding by taking a dump. We all feel better when we've relieved ourselves don't we? Make sure you've got a loo roll among the other 'vital' equipment in the van because not all portaloos have the necessary. And while you're in there don't forget to wash your hands. When you wash your hands don't leave your gloves/goggles next to the sink like a numpity!

3. Do a final nut and bolt check

Assuming your bike is ready to go at least the day before then there's no need to do this - or is there? What about that slightly loose clutch lever clamp which falls round the bars the first time you drop-off something steep? Or that brake caliper bolt that's not quite nipped-up?

A simple and methodical check around your bike might prove fruitless but if it does, then mentally you'll be in the right place. If it doesn't and you find a spoke loose, then you've made some more luck for yourself.

Don't forget your bum bag either. It's no good leaving it as it was from the last event with that ever-decreasing stash of zip-ties or that spare clutch lever missing.

4. Check the weather forecast

It's a simple one but an important aspect because of the differences it makes to your riding kit and spares. Have you got roll offs on your goggles or will you need a tinted lens? Do you need spare sets in the service area, for that pit-stop you know you're going to have to make at some point? What about spare gloves in case your grips get all muddied-up. Have you got some rag to wipe the grips if they're muddy?

It could all be a dust bowl in which case you might need extra rehydration drinks or spare air filters lined up. Make sure you've got enough drink, energy bars or whatever you need to consume to keep your body going.



Check, check and if needed check again.
Better to be safe than sorry.



5. Get your bike on the start line

Take a leaf out of David Knight's book, get there early and make sure your bike is on the start line where you want it. It's all about ticking the boxes to make sure things work in your favor. That better start position could be the smoothest line, the shortest distance or the least rutted. Whatever, make it yours and don't be that person rocking up late wondering where all the space went.

It might mean getting up earlier or arriving at the venue sooner and then having to hang about a bit longer before the start but all that will be long forgotten when you're the rider blasting the best line into the first turn.



SWEET
16

Start r
It might



6. Walk the course

Ideally this means getting to the event / venue the day before and going for a walk. The reason is simply to give you a notion of what's coming - where the technical bits are, how far the single line through the woods lasts, what lines can you take?

If you can't walk the whole course (because it's too far round) then at least take in as much as you can to get an idea what's coming. The first few hundred meters are a must at the very least, to get an idea of how things will pan-out from the flag drop.

If your race has a multi-rider start then check out a few different lines too, so you know where you could go if someone else is on the line you wanted. Is there a technical section to the lap? Instead of sitting in your van go and have a look at it.

7. Know the rules

Don't be that person who didn't know you were doing three laps or needed to finish having reached 23 check points, not 25. Find out what you should be doing and where you should be doing it in advance so you have a clear idea. A game plan as to say how many minutes or laps there'll be before fuel stops gives you physical and mental targets to aim at, too. Don't leave your team in the dark on details either, particularly if you're relying on them for a bit of help in the service areas. Discuss things with them and make sure they know timings, what you want, where you want them (out on the course or in the service area) and where things are (goggles, filter etc). They can also be positioned around the course, if allowed, to help shout line choices/offer protein bars, etc.

ight by getting to the start in good time.
t make all the difference later in the day.

8. Work out your fuel

Is it single lap or multi-lap? What are the distances? Where is the fuel service area? Have you filled your fuel dumper? Stop relying on that clear tank and a reserve tap while you're riding and do some simple math to work out what you need and when. It's about knowing a game plan, which will take away the stress of running out of fuel half way around a lap.

It's vital to get your can to the fuel truck if the event organisers are putting on a van or trailer to carry fuel to a service area. Make sure you get to the event in time to get your fuel to the organisers, too. And make sure your name is on the can.



9. Stretch and warm-up

We're not saying stand there lunging away at the start line like a goon but take a few minutes, in the last half an hour/45 minutes before start time, to stretch out the forearm muscles, loosen up shoulders, stretch hamstrings, loosen back and thigh muscles and so on.

Stretching increases blood flow to the muscles, which basically warns them that they're about to do some hard work. It also stretches out ligaments to get your whole body physically warmed-up and looser. The whole process is a great way to shut all other distractions out and hone yourself in on the race ahead. A way of getting your race-face on if you like. Shows those around you that you're ready for business, too.



Don't ignore injuries. Ever. Take a little time to get things right if survival's the name of the game.

10. Injury preparation

From making sure your knee braces are fitted properly to taping up your thumbs, getting your body sorted out is as much a part of the job as prepping your bike. We all like to think of ourselves as hard-as-nails enduro riders but in reality a massive bunch of blisters, or all the skin rubbed off your thumb, makes a hard task all the harder. Tape your hands properly and even if things turn into a whooped-out rut-fest your hands (at least) will cope.

11. Get ready in time

Don't be that guy running to the start who everyone else turns to look at. And then laughs. Get your gear on and ready to go so the build-up to start time is a stress-free event - a gentle walk and not a rush. If you've got someone helping you then let them help, if help's needed. Keep dry, stay out of the sun, don't decide to do something that'll take longer than you think it will.

Sort your kit out properly too. Are your knee guards/braces sitting comfortably, when you squat do your riding pants pull tight? Is there a stone in your boot? Sort it all out.



Essentials like air filters need to be readied in advance.

12. End of day essentials

For most of us that doesn't mean team podium shirt, Red Bull hat and autograph posters. It means getting everything that you're going to need ready for the end of the day. What are you going to eat? Do you need to fit a new tyre if it's a two-day race? Do you need to eat, walk a special test, get a ride to the hotel? Whatever needs to happen at the end of the needs to be planned in advance. There's a lot to get right before a race or ride starts, but always be mindful that the end of day one is also the start of day two!

13. Get yourself ready mentally

Firstly, if you do all or most of the above it'll be a good start. Secondly, getting your mind into the right gear will eliminate stress. Knowing everything's as ready as it possibly could be removes worry.

Run through a regular pre-race ritual - music through your ears, gassing mindlessly to friends, 10 mins sitting alone. Whatever you need to do allow time to make sure your head's right. Clear your thoughts so you can think clearly about racing or the ride ahead. Nerves? They're normal and not a bad thing. Busy yourself by running through a mental checklist. Get ready to have the ride of your life.



14. "I always find it difficult to sleep the night before a race, my mind is always busy processing all the information I have, thinking about lines in the special tests, things like that. But the most important thing for me is breakfast, and to feel energized in the morning. Getting up with enough time to do the things you need to do is important. I'm always thinking about the race - always. Whatever else I'm doing - eating, getting my riding gear on, talking to my mechanic - I'm always thinking about the race. It makes me feel settled and prepared." **Ivan Cervantes**

15. "Two things are very important for me - that everything is ready and I know what the weather is going to do. I don't like to be rushing on the morning of a race. I want to know that all of my gear is ready the night before. I also check the weather forecast. I do that a lot. I need to know that I will be prepared for whatever the weather is. I always go to the toilet before the race, that's important for me. I don't want to go during the race. I have a system to make sure I do that." **Christophe Nambotin**

16. "I always like to have a shower - sometime hot, sometimes a little colder - to make sure I'm really woken up. It also helps to loosen me a little. Breakfast is important for me. I'm not like some of the Italians in the paddock that'll eat next to nothing and wash it down with an espresso. Eating and eating a good amount is important. Refueling is difficult during any race. Being relaxed and having some laughs with the team is really important. Everyone works hard, but we all need to enjoy what we do, laughing and joking is important. If you can start the day that way you'll likely be able to keep things relaxed during the day." **Matt Phillips**

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SELFIE:

STEVE HOLCOMB

Words and Photos: Future7Media

Age: 22

D.O.B: 16.05.1994

Height: 160cm

Weight: 76kg

Team: Beta Factory Racing

Lives: I'm from a small town in the UK called South Molton. The area there is pretty nice but the enduro riding around my house is very limited. This year I jumped ship and spent a good three months living with my team-mate Alex Salvini near Bologna in Italy! It's been a really great step forward for my career and I'm looking to move to Italy full-time next year.

BE



Rides: My current ride is a Factory Beta RR 300 two-stroke (official model name). This year I'm racing the full Enduro World Championship, as well as the full British enduro and sprint championships. I'm also doing some one-off events, whenever I can fit them in.

Guilty pleasure:

Desserts. I guess I have a pretty sweet tooth. Whenever I eat out at a restaurant I'm always tempted by the desserts on offer, especially panna cotta or crème brûlée. It's not easy for me to walk away from them!

Trains: This year, with turning professional, I've been able to seek advice and take my training to the next level. It's mostly short intense bursts of exercise twice a day. The training I most enjoy is cycling. It's great for endurance and I find it really peaceful. It depends on my schedule and what events are coming up as to where and how long I ride my bike. I aim to train two or three times a week. I always aim for quality not quantity when training.



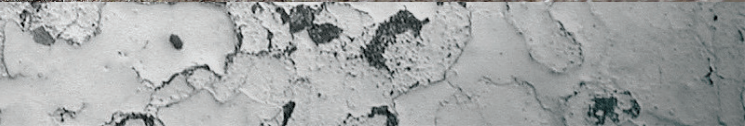


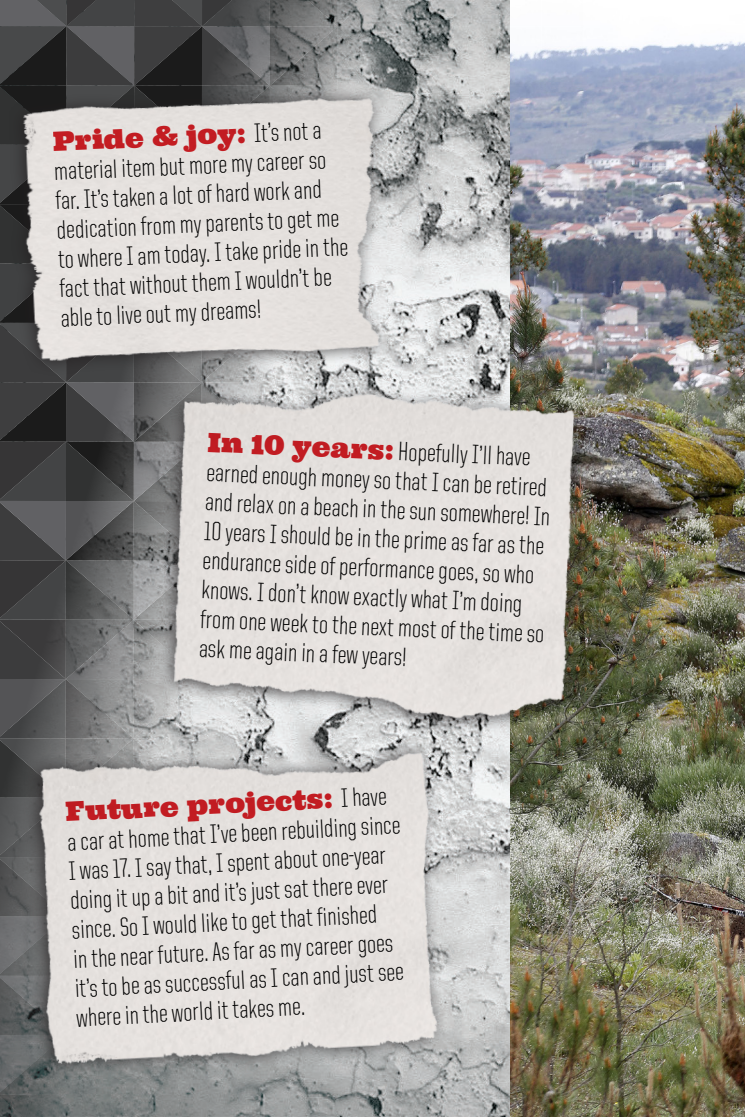
Injuries: A dislocated shoulder at the end of 2012, which I had an operation on at the start of 2013. Little niggles here and there, pretty much like every other rider I guess.

Goals: Short term it's to do all I can to become Enduro 3 World Champion this year. Long term it's to stay as healthy as I can and enjoy my career on two wheels as I know it won't last forever.

Likes: To Win! No, I really enjoy cooking. It's an important part of being an athlete as you need to eat the right food at the right time to get the best performance out of your body. I also have a big interest in cars. This comes from my father, he's a car mechanic in the UK. Cars have surrounded me all my life.







Pride & joy: It's not a material item but more my career so far. It's taken a lot of hard work and dedication from my parents to get me to where I am today. I take pride in the fact that without them I wouldn't be able to live out my dreams!

In 10 years: Hopefully I'll have earned enough money so that I can be retired and relax on a beach in the sun somewhere! In 10 years I should be in the prime as far as the endurance side of performance goes, so who knows. I don't know exactly what I'm doing from one week to the next most of the time so ask me again in a few years!

Future projects: I have a car at home that I've been rebuilding since I was 17. I say that, I spent about one year doing it up a bit and it's just sat there ever since. So I would like to get that finished in the near future. As far as my career goes it's to be as successful as I can and just see where in the world it takes me.

Hidden talents:

I can make a lot of weird noises from my mouth. Does that count?



Childhood memory:

Nearly every weekend we used to load up the van and go racing as a family. I've raced since the age of 6 and had some awesome times and made some great friends along the way. There have been so many great times it's too difficult to pick out any one in particular.

Motivation: I have a lot of self-motivation but it also comes from the desire to win and be the best. I don't understand it when young riders say they're struggling for motivation. I love what I do.

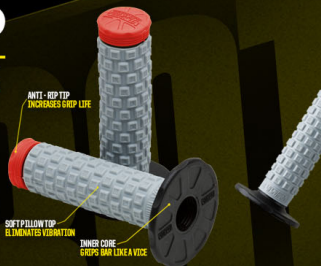
Regrets: Everyone has regrets about something in life. Probably right now I regret not going to the first round in Chile last year as I believe I would've had a real chance of winning the junior title if I had gone. But then if I had gone would I be in the position I am now and have the drive to win this year? I'm happy where I am and what I am doing!




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Next year: I'm currently on my first year of a two-year contract with Beta. For sure the goal is to continue in the EWC and maybe try my hand at the Italian championship. Also to continue including one-off races that take my fancy. **e**

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PROTAPER

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ILLUSTRATED

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ON THE COVER:

Featuring massive weight savings, new frames and new engines all across the range, the 2017 EXC model line-up is the most heavily updated in KTM's recent history. Introducing eight new machines from 125cc two-stroke to the 500cc

four-stroke, it's safe to say KTM has the biggest and probably most significant line-up in enduro for 2017.

EVENT: KTM 2017 EXC launch

PHOTO: KTM/S. Romero



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