



SPAIN, FINKE, USA & VICTORIAN ALPS

ISSUE #371 AUGUST 2010

FINKE KTM 350 SX-F DBOTY USA OR BUST SEVEN DEADLY SINS FACTORY SECRETS

Issue #371 AUGUST 2010 \$9.95 NZ \$10.90* inc. GST

australasian DIRT BIKE



STEALING FINKE
PRICE'S ROOKIE RAMPAGE

MID-SIZE MASTERPIECE
MEET THE KTM 350 SX-F AND THE MAN BEHIND IT

USA OR BUST
10 DAYS, 4 TRACKS, VEGAS SX FINAL: BLISS



PRESENTED BY



Insure My Ride
**DIRT BIKE
OF THE YEAR
2010**

**MX v ENDURO
v ADVENTURE**

INSIDE

FACTORY SECRETS: 5 TUNING TIPS **SEVEN DEADLY SINS** RIDE OF A LIFETIME
SHARKY TRIBUTE: REMEMBERING THE MAN **HOW TO:** CLIMB ROCKS WITH KIRK HUTTON

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DISTANCE(km): 138 BEARING: NW

ADB

DREAM TEAM

Nine of the year's best go head to head for the most hotly contested crown of the year

After two solid day's riding there was barely a niggle, hardly a complaint. Nothing but face-wide smiles and awe-inspired fingers pointing at bikes that are, simply put, the cream of the crop.

ADB's second annual Dirt Bike of the Year, presented by Insure My Ride, had gathered nine of the most impressive machines we had swung aboard over the 2010 season's testing. In that sense, each of the nine was a winner already, as just to be nominated is a Big Deal.

The fleet was made up of the major Shootout and Comparo winners: the KTM 250 and 400 EXC-Fs, the Husaberg FE 450 and 570, the Kawasaki KX250F and Suzuki RM-Z450, plus a wildcard in the form of the Yamaha YZ450F, the big mover in the adventure bike field, the BMW R 1200 GS and the best fun bike we rode all year – the Kawasaki KLX110.

To compare each bike on a level playing field, we needed a venue that had it all, and the Lower Mountains Motorcycle Club's Clarence (NSW) venue definitely has that. There's a quality

motocross track with good-sized jumps and variety, an enduro special test track, plus access to kilometres of enduro trails, a kid's motocross track and some impressive adventure riding, which – as the photos prove – was quite handy.

With that smorgasbord of riding available, it was down to the Judging Panel to apply the five judging criteria to each of the bikes to determine the winner.

This isn't a normal Shootout: we judge each bike on the same five points, which apply equally. We could compare a Tiger tank to a

Monkey Bike this way! Check out the judging criteria sidebar, for more info about how we compare a motocrosser to an adventure bike to an enduro bike.

The Judging Panel of Enduro Editor, Adam Riemann, MX Editor, Paul Broomfield, Super Spannerman to the Stars and high-level rider, Charlie Costanzo, tech legend, Dr Ross McWatters and me, as the Jack of all Trades, combined to argue our way to a winner.

Favourites were formed, bribes were ignored, and the toughest job we have all year was tackled – we have declared our 2010 ADB Dirt Bike of the Year.

So, who won? Get reading!

WORDS // SAM MACLACHLAN PICS // CHRIS BENNY

Remember, this isn't a performance-based Shootout: we are looking for the best bike overall, not necessarily the fastest. It's judged on the following criteria.



INNOVATIVE DESIGN APPROACH



HOW WELL DOES A BIKE NAIL ITS DESIGN BRIEF?



BUILD QUALITY



VALUE FOR MONEY



RELEVANCE OF FEATURES

JUDGING CRITERIA



Sam Maclachlan
AGE: 37 WEIGHT: 84kg
PACE: Clubman



Paul Broomfield
AGE: 33 WEIGHT: 91kg
PACE: Pro



Adam Riemann
AGE: 35 WEIGHT: 85kg
PACE: Pro



Dr Ross McWatters
AGE: Secret WEIGHT: Ditto
PACE: Tech Guru



Charlie Costanzo
AGE: 29 WEIGHT: 75kg
PACE: Pro

THE PANEL

3RD
PRESENTED BY
Insure MyRide
DIRT BIKE
OF THE YEAR
2010



MX

YAMAHA YZ450F



INNOVATIVE DESIGN APPROACH

Here's what really helped the Yamaha onto the podium: the marque had a really good think about mounting the engine in the frame, with a reverse cylinder configuration. This gives serious engineering benefits, in terms of air filter placement (at the front of the engine, away from dust), mass centralisation and improved angle for the intake. But, the biggest innovation is the user-friendliness of the optional Power Tuner, which has given the control Pro tuners used to dream about to the average rider. The bike looks different and can act different, too. Sure, the innovations displayed on this bike are a marketing team's dream, but they work.

9.6

9.2

9.2

8.6

9.4

RATING OUT OF TEN



DESIGN BRIEF NAILED?

Yamaha developed a bike which seems to further their awesome reputation in motocross circles, but they've done it in a way no-one saw coming. Well, not until the "leak" from within the factory had everyone frothing over a bike that may or may not exist. The good news was it did exist, and was the biggest launch of the 2010 motocross model year. Yamaha got the design brief spot on.



BUILD QUALITY

The build quality is superb, and it has to be, as the Tornado-style exhaust and reverse engine layout needs things to "just work" to satisfy tentative owners buying a new-release model. The blue

plastics do scuff easily, but the main components are well built, even sexy. Been a while since that could be said about a Japanese-built motocrosser!



VALUE FOR MONEY

Given all the features of this bike, it's a bonus to see it only marginally more expensive than its Japanese competition. We are hearing plenty of dealers are throwing in the \$400 GYTR Power Tuner as part of the deal, adding to the value. Even if you pay for the Tuner the bike is great value, because you can evolve the engine as your riding progresses, change the bike to suit different tracks and even do without many performance mods, because you can just tune the ignition and EFI to suit. It's great value.



RELEVANCE OF FEATURES

When first launched, it was easy to dismiss the arse-about engine as a gimmick and the Tornado exhaust as eye candy and little else, but once we got our hands on the bike, it was easy to see why that direction was taken. Yes, the EFI could have been fitted to a conventionally configured engine, but the new configuration allowed Yamaha to muck around with lowering the center of gravity in a different manner to anyone else. So while the true advantage of the reverse engine over what everyone else is running isn't immediately obvious, the fact it progresses how people think about an engine is undeniable.

A BIKE WHICH SEEMS TO FURTHER YAMAHA'S AWESOME REPUTATION IN MOTOCROSS CIRCLES

Yamaha went all in with the 2010 YZ450F: innovative engineering and the awesome Power Tuner make for a potent package.

I'm still blown away by this bike. Track performance aside, Yamaha have set the bar for quick and simple engine tuning.

I like the adjustability of the whole bike. I'd have one for that alone.

The gentleman's MXer. It does all the right things in any terrain.

The kind of bike that gets you thinking differently about what to expect from an Open Class motocrosser.

THE JUDGES





No. #6
Getting to Clarence proved a tough ask for Broads' HiLux, which was chopped by the ADB Race Van on the run up the hills.

IT HAD SOME OF OUR HARDEST-CORE DIRT BIKERS ASKING TO TAKE IT HOME

Big bikes like the Beemer usually intimidate me off-road, but with the ABS and traction control the GS is so stable in the dirt you start looking for tougher terrain.

This is the weapon for me, purely because it has all the bells and whistles that will make adventure riding much better for a diverse range of riders.

It's the most technologically advanced bike I have ever had the pleasure of riding!

The luxury 4WD of the dirt bike world. I'd happily ride the BMW off into the sunset.

Two of our test panel claimed "That's not a dirt bike," then rode it. It's a dirt bike alright, and a bloody good one at that.



THE JUDGES

ADVENTURE

BMW R 1200 GS



INNOVATIVE DESIGN APPROACH

It scores highly for innovation in the electronic department, and though the engine is not the newest kid on the block it has been given a new lease of life with a new pair of twin-cam heads – clever thinking. In fact, the whole clever thinking thing can be applied to a bike that looks like it has no business off the bitumen, yet had some of our hardest-core dirt bikers asking to take it home. Broomy and Charlie looked like they'd just discovered a whole new world after they hopped off it.



DESIGN BRIEF NAILED?

For 30 years, if you wanted to cross our big country in style and with confidence the bike

💡 9.4

? 9.6

🔧 9.8

\$ 7.6

✓ 9.8

RATING OUT OF TEN

could do it (even if you couldn't), BMW's GS range has been up there. The design brief was nailed way back then, and has just been evolved to keep up with, then overtake, technology as it presented itself. They've created a transcontinental hauler that can also get through some amazing terrain, and has an array of electronic wizardry to make it all easier.



BUILD QUALITY

It's a BMW, so this is an area you know will be scrupulously looked after. Despite their size, they actually crash relatively well (not that we tested this at the two day test!), the switchgear is weatherproof and easy to use with gloved hands, the paint is deep enough to dive into, and it just keeps

going. Basically, it's put together like a tank, a fact which urges you to go deeper, further and fearlessly explore... which is what this bike is about.



VALUE FOR MONEY

This is a hard one to answer. For a dirt bike, \$21,952 is a lot of money, not to mention the additional \$2300 to get the pack our test bike came with (traction control, Electronic Suspension Adjustment (ESA), tyre pressure readout and ABS). If you compare it to similarly equipped roadbikes, it's on par, and you really have to take into account this bike will carve a set of bitumen twisties pretty hard, as well as take on the Simpson. It is two bikes in one in that respect, and therefore good value, but there's no

denying it's a large wedge of coin. Total sum aside, you certainly get what you pay for, which is how the R 1200 GS is judged.



RELEVANCE OF FEATURES

We'd run out of space trying to deliver all the info we could here, but when the ESA allows you to adjust suspension damping on-the-fly (and spring pre-load, too, at standstill), the traction control handles ham-fisted full throttle moments on mud without any wheelspin, or allows enough wheelspin to rear wheel steer, but not highside, and the ABS keeps it rubber side down in the worst conditions, it's hard to argue with the electricricker. Add in the new twin-cam boxer engine, which pulls harder to the top, and it's big scores all 'round!



1ST
PRESENTED BY
Insure MyRide
DIRT BIKE OF THE YEAR 2010

I NEARLY CLIMBED A TREE AS THE IMPRESSIVE TORQUE OF THE BASTARD CAUGHT ME NAPPING

Riding the 570 is like owning a big stereo: you don't have to listen to it loud all the time, but the fun is in knowing it's there when you want it.

Mmmmm, horsepower!

I think it needs a bigger engine.. NOT! This big-bore really rips.

V8 power in a dirt bike chassis. This bike roars like the bush king it is!

Yes, power corrupts, but this thing is the complete dirt bike. It handles, is easy to live with and it goes. Really goes...



THE JUDGES

BIG BORE

HUSABERG FE 570

RATING OUT OF TEN

💡	9
?	10
🔧	9.4
\$	9
✓	9.6

INNOVATIVE DESIGN APPROACH
For the 2009 model year, this bike was about as innovative as you get. For 2010, not so much. But, with the technology being only a year old it still strikes you as a hell of an interesting way to build a bike. The fact the way-out thinking has been all but accepted by mainstream buyers over the last couple of years points to the fact it must work, and that's the important point. There have been plenty of oddbod designs in the past, but few have endured. So far, so good with the Husaberg.

DESIGN BRIEF NAILED?
Husaberg must have looked up the term "big-bore" before embarking on this mission,

because rather than "just" boring out a 450 to something just over 500cc, they took the engine out to 565cc to create the largest capacity enduro bike you can get. And the result is a true big-bore machine in engine character, but with the 70 degree engine layout, it feels like something much smaller – until the chain is yanked. The brief was to create a genuine big-bore that is easy to ride and manageable in a range of conditions. Bingo was his name-o: they did it.

BUILD QUALITY
It's hard to fault the finish of the biggest 'Berg. It combines clever functionality with solid workmanship and design to result in a bike which doesn't look a year old after two rides and hangs together in the

revolting conditions we rub the things through here in Australia. There's been few problems with the lack of kick starter (a torque limiter problem was quickly resolved), and it does clean up well with the pressure washer.

VALUE FOR MONEY
Manufacturers often assign dollar values to certain capacity bikes, even when they cost basically the same to build, so it kind of makes sense the FE 570 is the most expensive of the big-bores, at \$13,995. It is still value for money, though, because you get the highest capacity machine in the group, together with the technology that has made it so successful – namely that 70 degree EFI engine.

RELEVANCE OF FEATURES
The engine mounting configuration means the 570 feels like something much smaller. I was caught out during the constant swapping for the DVD footage when I thought I was on the 450, gave it a handful popping out of a bush rut, and nearly climbed a tree, as the impressive torque of the big bastard 570 caught me napping. It's a bike almost as comfortable in single track as it is wide-open desert racing, and that's impressive. So yes, the features make it work.