



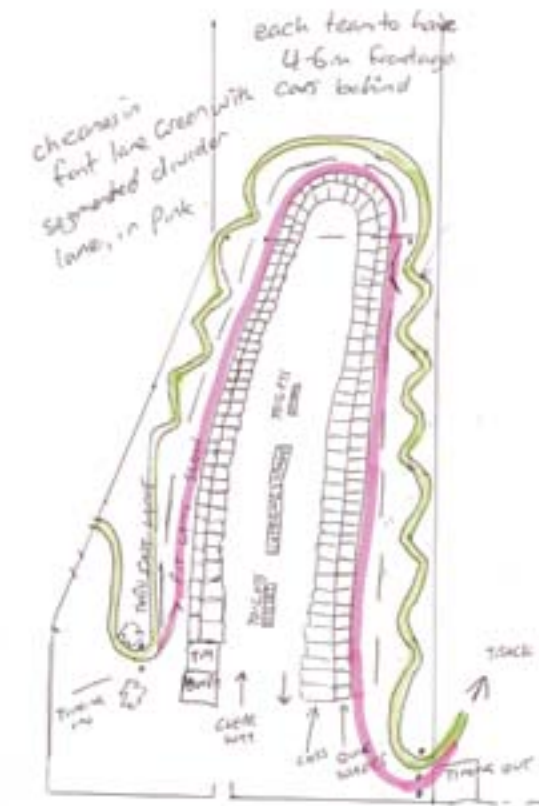
BY THE DOZEN

The fourth running of the Transmoto 12-Hour took a proven team formula, wrapped it in barbecued bacon, drizzled it with Bunda bling, coated it in diamond dust and doused it with a lashing of laughs. So sink your teeth into these 12 talking points of the 2014 12-Hour, powered by the caring crew at Insure My Ride...

ANDY WIGAN
BEN McCALLUM, KURT TEAGUE, BEN HEIDRICH, JUSTIN BUSH

Blessed by the loam gods in 2011 and '12, the Transmoto 12-Hour has confronted its fair share of dry conditions in the two years since. And while the 2014 event may have been viewed through a dusty prism, we were widely informed that it was the best and most enjoyable event yet. But with 100 teams, 400-odd competitors

and countless support crews – all of whom descended on the picturesque Buckenbowra Valley, 30km inland from Batemans Bay on the NSW south coast – how do you single out a just a dozen stories to shed light on? Well, here are the topics that dominated talk in the *Transmoto* office, and the 12-Hour's website and Facebook pages, in the weeks after the event.



GENITAL PITS

When Lyndon Heffernan first mentioned he'd had an epiphany about the pit layout for the 2014 12-Hour, we all shared his enthusiasm. "They used something like this at the Hattah Desert Race," explained the man responsible for running the event over the weekend. "It's basically an elongated U-shape. Everyone gets six metres of pit-lane frontage. Their 'plot' runs 12 metres deep, so they can set up their tents and park their cars. It works a treat because it leaves a 'neutral zone' in the middle where traffic can get in and out, where the food and coffee vans are situated, and where everyone can mingle more safely," he went on to explain. To ram home the point, Heffo then illustrated his concept with a hurriedly drawn sketch, which he emailed through to *Transmoto* HQ in the week leading up to the 12-Hour. Featuring a pink prong wrapped in a frilly green lady garden, it was one part diagram and nine parts juvenile dunny-wall humour. But, by Jesus, that thing worked a treat!



A BREWER'S BRIEFING

The success of the *Transmoto* 12-Hour has a lot to do with the fact it has filled the gap between recreational trailrides and full-blown race meets. And while it's important that the event ticks all the regulatory boxes to keep Motorcycling NSW and their insurance people happy, the 12-Hour is about fun, not officialdom. It's about commonsense and courtesy to fellow competitors, rather than prima donnas and protests. That means there's a little more latitude when it comes to some of the more pedantic rules that dictate behaviour at serious race meets. Perfect case in point: the Saturday afternoon riders' briefing, when 400 entrants gathered around the main staging area for an insight into Sunday's racing. Unlike most riders'

briefings - which occur the morning of the race, and are home to nervous yawns and death stares - the 12-Hour's equivalent is ... well, anything *but* equivalent. "Mate, this is pure genius," whispered enduro racing vet, Damian Smith, during the get-together. "If you hold the riders' briefing on Saturday like this, the pits are not yet 'the pits', right? That means open-toe footwear, booze and bangers are not yet banned. Just look at that," he continued, gesticulating to the laid-back crowd, backlit by the 6pm golden light. "There's hundreds of people here, and yet I can only see a handful who *aren't* in thongs and having a quiet arvo beer. No wonder everyone's so into this event. Tell me again, why haven't I been before?"

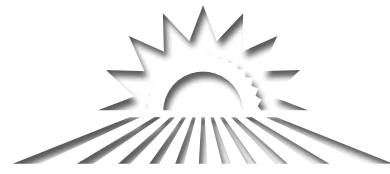


Australians are accustomed to the idea of living in the company of spiders, snakes and sharks. In fact, we regularly wheel out 'our' menagerie of life-threatening fauna to scare the bejesus out of visiting Poms, and we like to use it as a tough-guy badge of honour when differentiating ourselves from the Kiwis - whose most ferocious native animal is a meek little bird that stands six inches tall. But when the advance party sent to set up the staging area of this year's 12-Hour starting stumbling into a number of recently discarded snake skins - most of which had an unmistakably brown hue - even the most hardened I-know-boats ocker started to get a little uneasy about the thought of what we were about to share our campsite with. And when Saturday's night dinner was interrupted by a half-cut character waltzing through the central marquee with a writhing brown snake nonchalantly held in a set of BBQ tongs, the paranoia really set in. "Yep, found this little fella in my swag just now," he casually announced, paying little regard to the fact the brown was doing its best to fang his finger. "They love swags and tents, I'll tell you." Needless to say, the bloke was sent on his way without any refreshments. No one seemed to rush into their tents and swags that night, either. Not without a big torch and a precautionary weapon, anyway!



DJ JOAKIM

With the first magnum-sized bottle of 1992 Coonawarra red making an appearance at 8pm on Saturday night, there was a very real risk that those lurking in the organiser's marquee might contravene the 'generators off by 10pm' rule - the one enshrined in the event's Competitor Info Pack, which had been repeatedly drummed into competitors. But by 11pm, everyone had been ushered off to bed. Well ... almost everyone. Lights-out was interrupted by a lively discussion about the all-important music to which the entire valley would awake on Sunday morning, and a few interested parties dragged themselves out of the sack to take part in it. It was finally settled: we'd blast *Flight of the Valkyries* (the classical battle hymn, made famous by *Apocalypse Now*) through the PA system at 5.45am. Problem was, no one had the song on their phone or iPod or any another device that'd plug into the PA. Thankfully, the same bloke who supplied the high-grade red - let's just call him DJ Joakim, *Transmoto's* 'Spiritual Leader' - charged himself with the responsibility of making it happen. "No problem. Leave it to me," he boomed. "I'll download the song off Spotify and we'll be in business. It'll be a piece of piss ... ahh ... f#%k, no reception!" At that point, DJ Joakim disappeared into the darkness in search of higher ground and a bar or two of phone service. And, according to a handful of insomniacs who crossed paths with the man during his Spotify mission, that's pretty much what he did between midnight and daybreak. Turns out he finally found service on some far-flung ridgeline and, come 5.45am, there he was - holding up the PA, iPhone in hand and a contented smile on his face. With his eyes shut, DJ Joakim conducted *Flight of the Valkyries* like a proud air guitarist, before wandering off to bed - but not before copping a pat on the back from an early riser: "Well done, DJ Joakim. You've already won the 12-Hour, mate!"



THREE SNOOZING 4-SKINS

Having religiously been one of the first teams to enter the 12-Hour, the Flyin' 4-Skins posse are the heart and soul of the event. They might not race much any more, but they're all involved in the industry in some way, shape or form, and the Transmoto 12-Hour has become their one guaranteed annual tip-of-the-hat to the stopwatch. This year, as one 4-Skin 'member' had a date clash with a wedding, they'd drafted FMX legend and South Coast boy, Robbie Maddison, onto the team. Sadly, Red Bull insisted that Robbie spend his weekend at the Melbourne F1, and Jonesy was brought in as an eleventh-hour replacement - a bloke who might not be quite as accomplished at jumping footy fields as Maddo, but who's known for being a stayer. Which came in handy, as DJ Joakim apparently paid the Flying 4-Skins' a visit late on Saturday night, and pretty much refused to go home. At least,

that's the excuse the boys are running with. So it went without saying that the one 4-Skin team member who managed to skulk off to bed at a reasonable hour - Mark "Hot Diggity Brown" Brown - would be the first man to race on Sunday morning. After a couple of laps, Brownie slowed as he passed his team's pit tent, calling out to his conspicuously absent teammates. After the third lap, he stopped and bounced his KX250F off the rev limiter outside their tents. Still, no one materialised. Finally, after six gruelling laps, an exhausted Brownie found a teammate stumbling out of the sack and handed the transponder baton over. "Mate, I got the track at its best," panted Brownie, "but I am absolutely spent. And it's not even 9am yet. Who was that DJ Joakim bloke? He completely derailed the 4-Skins' chances this year. I reckon he was on Team KTM's payroll."



IRON LUKE

The 12-Hour attracts all sorts from all age groups - from the country's top Pro off-road racers to first-time punters, and everyone in between. Given the technical and beat-up nature of the event's 12km loop, most entrants (sensibly) choose to race in a team of four; riding one, two or, at best, three laps, before handing over to a teammate. But in 2014, 29 brave souls entered the Ironman class - one of whom was a woman (Erika Brunhuber, who completed 16 laps and finished a brilliant 10th). Completing an astonishing 27 laps, Luke Tomlinson took the Ironman-class honours this year, and the inaugural Golden Sprocket that went with it. Just stop and contemplate that for a moment ... 27 laps of a 12km loop - only five laps shy of the winning team-of-four's 32 laps. Tomlinson's incredible feat of endurance also placed him 21st Outright! We stuck a video camera in the guy's face 30 seconds after he crossed the line, and the footage (soon to appear on *Transmoto's* website) speaks volumes about his physical exhaustion. Cos Luke sure could speak much at the time!



BUNDA'S BLING

"With more women rocking up to the 12-Hour each year, why don't we *really* give blokes' better halves a reason to come along," argued *Transmoto* shareholder and former Aussie enduro champ, Ben Bunda, in the weeks leading up to the 12-Hour. As one of Sydney's most exclusive jewellers, Bunda decided to donate a \$1200 set of diamond stud gold earrings to be raffled off on Saturday arvo at the 12-Hour. And when the response to the pre-event earring promotion went off the charts, he decided to up the ante. "Okay, I was thinking ... to get through the 12-Hour is one thing," Bunda enthused, "but to get through it and win the Ironman class ... now that is something special. I've had a special Golden Sprocket made for the 2014 Ironman class winner, and I'll be making one every year from now on. That can only add to the prestige of winning the Ironman class." Who were we to argue with a bloke who wanted to hand over a \$2000 lump of beautifully sculpted gold? Benny and his Brazilian mate, Al, also ensured an extended group of 50 organisers, sponsors and officials were pampered with gourmet food all weekend. Show us another high-end jeweller around the world who'd be up for that task. In fact, show us another high-end jeweller who can even ride a dirt bike!





FIRST-TIME FROTHER

There's a classic guy we call Marky Mark, who lives just around the corner from the *Transmoto* office in Sydney. He's a solid surfer, a gun snowboarder, and has recently taken up riding dirt bikes. In fact, Mark was an Australian snowboarding champ and finished sixth in the World Boardercross Tour back in the late 1990s, and still heads back to the States every year to invitation-only Vet snowboard events. Now in his early 40s, he might not be as fit as he once was, but he puts a majority of blokes his age to shame. And we've never seen a grown man froth so much about riding his first dirt bike

event. Weeks out from the 12-Hour, he'd be in the office or on the phone every second day, asking questions about air filter prep, tyre selection, suspension set-up and all manner of other things we'd never even contemplated. And he absolutely revelled in the event's racing and atmosphere. But as Marky Mark hit the river at the end of his first 12-Hour - his body aching and his dilly-bag apparently undergoing a strange tingling sensation - he turned to a few of the *Transmoto* crew with a wince on his face and said, "Standing up ... that's one thing I forgot to ask you blokes about. I'm really hurting downstairs because I

reckon I didn't stand up anywhere near enough around that rough-as-guts track." Sure enough, he came hobbling into the office a week later, the same pained expression on his face. "Sore balls. Still! They're actually bruised. Black and friggin' blue," he howled. "Wanna see?" He was serious, so we artfully declined the chicken skin vista. Instead, we handed him a copy of the May issue *Transmoto* (which contains the *How-To: Standing Up* feature with Jarrod Bewley). "I know, I've seen it; I just got my subscription copy in the mail. Just what I need," he said. "Only, I needed it a week ago."



THE SHIRT OFF PRICE'S BACK

After serious spinal surgery, months contemplating the harsh reality that he might never ride again, and then many more months dedicated to hardcore rehab, Toby Price couldn't wait to get his teeth into his maiden *Transmoto* 12-Hour. The multiple Aussie AORC, A4DE and desert-racing champion treated the event as an extended suspension testing session ahead of the following weekend's AORC season opener, but still made sure he enjoyed himself in the process. Ably aided and abetted by

teammates Brad Williscroft, David Gilmore and Scott Lees, Price spearheaded the KTM Enduro Team's Outright and Men's Team-of-Four wins. And despite Williscroft (Price's race team boss) referring to the 12-Hour victory as "a bit of fun", Pricey was clearly chuffed to be on the top step of the podium for the first time in nearly a year. Plus, how fitting it was that an image of Toby Price - from *Transmoto*'s first ever magazine cover in 2010 - appeared on the T-shirt that came in the 2014 12-Hour's competitor pack.





THE WATERING (MAN)HOLE

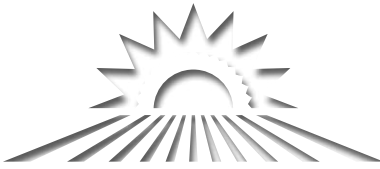
When it comes to how close near-naked men can comfortably stand to one another, an unwritten code of conduct applies. Body surfing at your local beach - okay. Shoulder to shoulder in a skimpy towel at a Turkish steam bath - not okay. You get the picture. And in the ordinary course of business, 100-plus sweaty men descending on a quaint - even romantic - stretch of river in the middle of a rural valley 'retreat' could be treading dangerously close to creepy. But somehow, the scene on the Buckenbowra River at the end of the 12-Hour felt kind of okay. With 12 hours of dust and aching bodies taking precedence over sausagefest concerns, the bare-chested posse kicked back in the freshwater shallows to let the combination of a quiet beer and bench racing perform their recuperative magic.



LUSTY'S CRAUST

Like most industries, the motorcycle game is populated by two kinds of commercial animals: the 9-to-5 goon robotically doing only what he or she has to, or the passionate-as-hell types who 'live' their brands and love what they do. Well, the four blokes making up the Lusty Industries team all sit squarely in the latter camp, and they've fast become 12-Hour aficionados ... if not, addicts. This year, with family and friends helping out the boys in their low-key pits, Johnny McLean, Scott Saul, Matty Macalpine and Jake Devries surprised everyone by banging out 31 laps and rocketing to second place in the Outright results - just a lap behind the winners. It was an admirable effort by a bunch of blokes who only saw themselves as a top-10 chance coming into the weekend.





BONFIRE OF THE VANITIES

Having ridden all day on a dusty track that, by the end of play, was every bit as gnarly as an A4DE or ISDE course, many competitors decided it was wiser to camp on the Sunday night and head off during daylight hours on Monday. And what a Sunday night it was. Under the gaze of the most radiant full moon you'll ever see, the entire paddock was abuzz with fire-lit contentment and soothing sustenance. For most, it was about basking in the glow of achievement; of completing one of the toughest races on the dirt bike calendar in Australia, and sharing the experience with friends and family.



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For a special series of short videos, a full list of results and image galleries from this year's Transmoto 12-Hour, check out the *Transmoto* website.

