

Five Minutes With...

INTERVIEW // ANT LYON
RICK ATKINSON



BIO
Who: Managing Director, Motoz
Age: 44
Lives: Curl Curl, Sydney

- TOP-5 PASTIMES**
1. Electric guitars
 2. My kids
 3. Travel
 4. Meeting people
 5. Beer

The next time a sudden loss of traction pitches you unceremoniously into the dirt chances are, like the rest of us, you'll be cursing your rubber instead of your "formidable" talents. Rather than swap brands, experiences just like that inspired Rick Atkinson put his head, heart and hard-earned cash into creating the best-performing, longest lasting hoops on the market. Now proven in desert competition, the Motoz brand is expanding its range to include tyres designed to excel in wet conditions as well. Appropriately, we caught up with Rick in the back of the ADB van while sheltering from a thunderstorm at the Sunny Corner Trail Ride.

ADB: What first got you into making tyres?

RA: Days like today! I've been riding all my life and on those memorable days where you'd have a new tyre on and come flying around your favourite corner and thump! you'd hit the deck thinking 'what the hell happened?!' For me, firstly, it was the personal challenge of how to fix the problem and second, to try to increase a tyre's wear characteristics to make them work better even after they've

lost their edges. I knew the owner of a factory in Thailand who wanted to move towards producing more sophisticated products and together we looked for someone to give us some help. You just can't find people to teach you how to design an off-road tyre so I decided to do all the design and development myself.

How many tyres have you got in your range now?

By next year there'll be five different groups and various sizes within those groups giving us a range of about 30 tyres in all.

Your first batch of tyres impressed in the dry but there were mixed feelings once conditions became a bit damp...

Because we listened a little too much to what the weather was going to do in the future, we designed our first front tyres for too narrow a segment. Originally we used natural rubber which is unreal in the dry but doesn't perform as well in the wet. Natural rubber is more flexible so you have to build the tread block structures to compensate. What we came up with was a knob that was radically wider at the base which carried the added benefit that mud doesn't stick to them as much. We've built a

good reputation for building tough tyres but a few people told us that they didn't work too well in the wet.

Has that feedback changed the way you do things?

Absolutely. It's particularly important to get the front tyre right, so in the last 12-18 months we've focused on developing new compounds for excellent wet-weather traction land redeveloping the pattern on the fronts. Customers will start seeing some of those new products over the next few months.

What else is in the pipeline?

We're now working on a competition motocross range which will be very lightweight and tailored (like everyone else's tyres) to give maximum performance rather than long life. Through our learning process we've come up with some tread patterns that are unique and work a lot better than the standard square blocks.

Are you looking to support riders in the future?

We give away quite a few tyres but have got a policy that we won't pay anyone to use them as that doesn't make our product better. What does is getting them into the field to the people who are doing the most riding and listening to their feedback. **ADB**

SMOKOMETER

Gettin' Smoked



EVERTS'S OPPONENTS

When 10-times World MX champion Stefan Everts lines up for a sand race you can be sure of one thing – the devastation of his opponents. Now Race Director for KTM's world motocross efforts, the Belgian recently came out of retirement for the Weston Beach race where he methodically towelled everyone, including GNCC Champ David Knight!

JAP BIKES IN THE WEC

There's something to be said for the home crowd advantage. As the World Enduro Championship Manufacturer's Title came to a close, KTM stood tallest in both the E3 class with Husqvarna and Gas Gas snapping at their heels. KTM also wrapped up the E2 Manufacturer's title while finishing second to Honda in E1 (okay, so the Red Riders got one on the board!)

YAMAHA YZ450F

After winning more world and national championships than you can poke a stick at, you'd think Yamaha could've at least rewarded the blue beast with a fuel-injected fruit pop. With Kawi and Honda joining Suzuki with an EFI 450cc bike, the YZ-F is the only Japanese bike yet to come out of the carbureted closet.

ADB TUFF BLOCKS

First it was Reardon at Round 1 and now Tray Carroll at Round 2. The ADB Super X tuff blocks are moto magnets happily taking out riders and copping a hammering each race.

Smokin' 'em

MXTV

With seven smokin' seasons under their belt, MXTV kicked off their eighth on FoxTel's Aurora Channel 183 recently. Fast approaching its 100th episode, dirt bike nut and man-behind-the-mayhem Brendan Bell is one justifiably proud guy.

CHAD REED

Speedy Reedy's success has been measured not just in the 20+ seconds he beat everybody by at the Super X series opener, but also by the mountain of coin he's amassed in the bank. The 26 year old's staggering \$25 million fortune recently propelled the reigning World SX champ into the 83rd place on the BRW Young Rich List top-100.



PIRELLI

The Pirelli legend continues to grow with the Italian tyre manufacturer incredibly sweeping all three major FIM World Motocross titles – MX1 (David Philippaerts), MX2 (Tyla Rattray) and MX3 (Sven Breugelmans).

KTM WORLD MX2 RIDE

While KTM are still trying to crack the US motocross market, the Austrian marque's bikes go plenty good on Euro soil! South African Tyla Rattray led a freight train of four orange bikes into the '08 MX2 Championship top five.

MIKA AHOLA

The Finn backed up his '07 E2 title at the WEC clinching the '08 E1 title with a round to spare.