

» INDUSTRY INSIDER: MOTOSR

DREAM TEAM

WITH TAUPO ARGUABLY BEING THE EPICENTRE OF OFF-ROAD MOTORCYCLING
IN NZ, IT'S THE PERFECT SPOT FOR ONE OF THE NICEST GUYS IN THE
INDUSTRY TO BASE HIS SUSPENSION SERVICING BUSINESS.



Truth be told, Richie Ebbett has been located in Taupo for a number of years now, moving from Whakatane where the business started out. With a workshop nestled underneath his house, his office features a view of NZ's largest lake that many desk jockeys would kill for. But after calling into MotoSR HQ a few weeks back to meet the winner of our Suzuki RM-Z250 subscription prize, Paul bumped into a familiar face who was part of the original MotoSR team – Scotty Brooker.

So how long have you been back here then?

I came back at the start of this year. I disappeared for a couple of years, went to Tauranga for a bit, and then ended up back in America for another eight months where I was travelling and did some riding up through Tahoe and Sacramento. Went over to Wales and saw my friends at Touratech and BMW, went up to the Isle of Man, visited some friends there and did some tiki touring there – just went walkabout. Then I came back to Taupo and ended up working for a mechanical company as a service manager, which was farming based. It wasn't really my cup of tea, so I ended up doing some casual work for Richie and some other people and then ended up coming back full time to here – back to what I know really. Just something more enjoyable, something I'm a bit more passionate about.

How's business going?

Yeah, we're busy. We're always trying to improve things. We've got lots of happy customers and I've got extra drive here as well to try and make things better – it's



exciting. And there's a couple of new directions with the company. We're getting into the off-road market with Can Am, Polaris and also other big off-roaders. That's a whole market in itself that we're only just starting to hit. The toys are a bit more expensive than dirt bikes, but we've already done a few and the gains are massive. There's lots of aftermarket components like bolt-on suspension, which is upgraded from standard suspension, but there's still massive improvement to be made. Like with valving technology which Richie specialises in. Just because you buy something off the shelf and it's better quality stuff, there are still improvements that can be made. The coolest thing about the off-roaders is you can go out and watch them stock and you can see them moving a lot. Then you make a change with the valving and you can just see it improve.

Are many of them getting suspension done?

It's going to be just like it was with the dirt bikes; the trick is educating people. They've gone out and spent a lot of money on a nice machines and they think it's all hunky dory. But hopefully we'll get results. We're doing Ben Thomason's championship winning Polaris, so that's brilliant for us. They can go faster and safer and we're learning with them. We're starting in a good place with the right people to move forward.



But you're not forgetting dirt bikes?

Dirt bikes are still the bread and butter at the moment, but we are seeing a lot of road bikes, too. We've done a few Africa Twins and it's the same thing as with the off-roaders. Because it's a new bike, we've had to do it a couple of times as that's how you learn. But once again, we've seen massive gains, and that's really exciting. Richie and I are both into adventure riding and road riding as well now, so it's something we're enthusiastic about and can get out and try and test.

a customer come in, he'd bought a 250SX and it had our stickers on it, so he assumed the bike would be awesome. But when I pushed on it, I knew this was a freestyle bike, which we had done for a freestyle rider up in Feilding. There was nothing I could have done to it that day that would have made it awesome. He just thought because it had a flash sticker on it, that it was going to be awesome. But everything is kind of personalised. It's the same with all suspension. It doesn't mean it's good just because it's got a name on it.

Rather than just getting something off the shelf and bolting it in, you work with developing what the customer has got, right?

Yes, it's working with their budget really. Can I give you an example? You know the Berm Buster trail rides? We do a \$40 set up at them. We had

And what else is new?

We've started doing more and more with mountain bikes. Richie's mad keen into mountain biking and I do it too recreationally, so we're doing a lot more with them. So now we've got the off-road market and mountain bike market, and those are two markets which is up to us as to what we want to do with them. **DRD**

