

CYCLE TORQUE TOURING FEATURE

# JOURNEYMAN



## Two wheeled freedom – on a global scale

**MATTHIAS Schmid (Matz) has spent the last five years exploring the world on adventure bikes. He's found freedom, excitement, pain and even love on his journey. We caught up with Matz at the recent World Superbike round at Phillip Island so you could get a glimpse of his travels.**

But it didn't just happen, it took a desire to explore nurtured over a number of years in the early part of Matz's life to put him on this path. "I grew up on a small dairy farm in Northern Switzerland," said Matz. "The dairy farm had been in my family for generations but I soon realised that it was too much hard work for little pay, and it wouldn't make me happy."

"Early I learned how to use tools to fix my bicycle, and because I prefer contact with people not cows I decided to get an apprenticeship at a bicycle shop."

"When I was 14 I got a 49cc two-stroke Sachs motorcycle. I tuned it to go faster and then in 1984

I went on a big trip with some mates to Italy. It was a big trip in those days on such a bike. On the way back I had the dream of riding around the world.

"After that I did the same to become a motorcycle mechanic. I started to race MX in the Swiss championships. I started to do some trips around South America on different single cylinder motorcycles. Then in 2000 I opened up a bicycle and motorcycle repair shop in Switzerland."

There always seems to be an event which becomes the catalyst for starting a trip, and for Matz it involved a member of the opposite sex. "I had my busy bike repair shop for a couple of years, and then my relationship broke up. When that happened I started to seriously think about doing the 'round the world trip, the one I dreamed of when I was a kid. I sold my shop,

bought a cheap reliable bike, modified it and set off on my loop around the world."

The trip kicked off in Europe and isn't over yet. "I left home in August 2005, through Germany, Austria, Eastern Europe, Turkey, Iran, Pakistan and to India."

"I couldn't get into Burma due to visa issues so I shipped my bike by sea to Malaysia and Asia, then onto Japan by ship. That wasn't such a good idea because my Honda Transalp had to be put back to standard to be allowed on Japan's roads. In Japan you could only buy the 400cc Transalp. It was very difficult because of the language barrier. In Japan everyone is taught English in school but no-one speaks it because they are too afraid to make mistakes."

"From there I shipped the bike to Canada and rode south to Florida."

But while Matz was living the dream, life goes on everywhere else.

"I got a call that the guy who bought my business had gone bankrupt so I had to fly home to Switzerland to get my stuff out and I worked in a factory to make some money to continue my trip. In February 2007 I was back in the USA, just in time for Daytona Bike Week. Then up to the awesome Barber Motorcycle Museum in Birmingham Alabama, New York, Eastern New Foundland and back to Canada."

"I had to go home again because of my divorce but I was back three months later where I headed south again to LA where I met a super chick who was right into bikes. My visa ran out but I didn't care, life was unreal with Wendy at Paradise City and we did trips around the USA, including Bonneville Speed Week."

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