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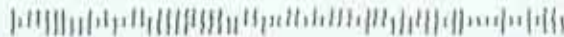
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# TT WORLD SERIES

**John McGuinness battles Guy Martin around The Green Hell? Could happen if the Isle of Man TT's plan for a new world series comes off**

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP MOTORCYCLE racing is having a hard time. Sponsor budgets are drying up or have disappeared completely, and manufacturers are dropping out or scaling back. There are healthy grids in some classes, but every flagship series is looking at how to cut costs without losing its unique selling points. And they're all struggling to agree about how to do that. Against this grim backdrop, the old man of bike racing has seen an opportunity.

In late 2011, London-based The Sports Consultancy was commissioned by the Manx government to look into the feasibility of an Isle of Man TT World Series. While this might seem oxymoronic—a world series for a race so inextricably linked to a tiny island in the Irish Sea—the Isle of Man thinks the proposal has great potential.

"There has been a lot of discussion about a world series," says Isle of Man Government TT and Motorsport Development Manager Paul Phillips. "The economic development department I work for, that owns the rights to the TT races, is looking at ways to generate income. The TT contributes to

the island's economy, and the question is, how do we get benefit from the TT outside those two weeks?"

A report is due to be delivered about the time you read this, addressing the feasibility of the series. A timescale has yet to be decided, but there are already some preferred criteria if it were to go ahead.

A schedule of five or six races, run between the fall and spring, would end with the Isle of Man TT as a double-points finale. This time frame would take advantage of the fact that there is little in the way of televised motorsport (worldwide) in the winter and wouldn't force teams to choose between their domestic championships and the proposed series.

Perhaps the most exciting element is some of the possible venues the consultants are considering: Bathurst in Australia; former and current Formula One city road circuits like Valencia, Spain, Montreal, Canada, and Long Beach, California, and, perhaps most exciting, the Nürburgring's *Nordschleife*. All of these sites are being considered. Who wouldn't want to camp at the side of The Green Hell and watch Robert Dunlop, Guy Martin,



Ian Hutchinson, John McGuinness and Conor Cummins go at it for 10 laps?

Given the TT's mythical status and more than a century of history, you have a brand with which few can compete. The big question yet to be answered is if the series can attract the money needed to take the TT show on the road. And only time will tell on that one.

—Gary Inman

## Husqvarna Concept Baja

**Retro desert sled with a modern heart**

THERE IS NO SHORTAGE OF IDEAS AT HUSQVARNA these days. Just look at all the concept models the Italian-based, BMW-owned company has released over the last few years. Some of them, like the Nuda 900 naked sportbike, have already gone into production (a bike that, sadly, isn't yet sold in the U.S.). Husky's latest prototype, unveiled at the New York stop of the Progressive International Motorcycle Shows, is called Concept Baja and is a machine much closer to the company's heart and heritage than the Nuda 900.

Concept Baja is essentially a more dirt-worthy riff on the Husky Moab concept that debuted at the EICMA show last fall. As such, Concept Baja is basically a modern interpretation of the off-road models that made Husky a household

name in the U.S. during the 1970s. Powered by a 650cc, liquid-cooled, fuel-injected Single, the Baja reflects a simpler time in motorcycling without sacrificing modern convenience and reliability.

Other features include a five-speed transmission, Brembo disc brakes, an "approachable" seat height (to invite a wide range of riders) and semi-knobby tires on 19-inch front and 17-in. rear rims. As on the Moab, a very cool LED-array headlight is incorporated into the front numberplate, and a long, slim LED instrument setup is crossbar-mounted.

No word if the Concept Baja will make it into production, but using Husky's recent history as an indication, it wouldn't be too surprising to see it in dealerships at some point in the future. If you like it, let Husky know.

—Blake Conner

