

WHO'S WHO? In the Zoo



Juan Bultó

By Ron Melton

Francisco Xavier Bultó was a founding partner of Montesa Motorcycles, technically-minded with a passion for racing. When others at Montesa expressed the desire to cut-back on racing activities in 1958, Don Paco Bultó left the company, taking some of the engineer and design personnel with him. A new Spanish motorcycle company – Bultaco – was soon formed, all for the love of racing.

The skilled team at Bultaco enjoyed an abundance of success on stages across the world, in all forms of motorcycle competition. Their machines could be found winning roadrace world titles, racking-up motocross GP wins, collecting gold in ISDT competition, and even making a mark in American dirt track racing. With the help of British and European trials champion Sammy Miller, Bultaco was instrumental

in the industry's move to lightweight observed trials machines in the mid-1960s; their Sherpa T model would be dominant all through the '70s.

So, it's no surprise that Paco's family would be into racing in a big way – it's just in their blood. The genetic seed for speed would push son Juan Bultó to seven classic roadrace and Supermoto titles.



While Juan was growing up, it wasn't uncommon to have at the Bultó dinner table the likes of Barry Sheene, Jim Pomeroy, Miller or any other of a number of legendary, world-class racers. The conversations were almost always about how to make the bikes better.

In Spain, racing is a whole 'nother ball-game. The country's first World Roadracing Champion was Ángel Nieto, who took the 50cc title in 1969; it was his first of 13 titles (two with Bultaco). This laid the groundwork for what is now Spain's ravenous appetite for racing. If you're a very fast kid, you get plucked up and trained by world champions like Sito Pons. Roadracing stars are groomed from an early age, and the program works; it's almost as if the country is a racer factory. MotoGP-level riders include Paco Bultó's own grandson Sete Gibernau, Àlex Crivillé, and current



(Above) Two-time Formula 1 world champion Emerson Fittipaldi astride a Pursang at the Bultaco factory, circa 1973.

(Right) Custom T-shirt featuring an actual x-ray of Juan Bultó's fractured hand.

(Below) Bultó, smooth as silk.



stars Jorge Lorenzo, Marc Márquez, Dani Pedrosa and Maverick Viñales.

This year, 58-year-old Juan Bultó has come to America to capture AHRMA's 250 Grand Prix-class road racing title, and he is well on his way. (A Bultaco hasn't won the 250 GP series since 1999, with some guy named Melton aboard...)

With the help of his mechanics, the Romero brothers, the 250cc air-cooled single Bultaco road racer is very-well developed. The combination of that potent machine and the expertise of a seasoned Spanish racer has made Bultó nearly impossible to beat thus far this season. Everyone at the races has enjoyed the show; well, except the guy he just passed on the brakes...

The next race is July 15-16 at New Jersey Motorsports Park – if at all possible, don't miss a chance to see where the Bultaco motorcycle and the Bultó race gene has ended up after all these years. With a big smile and knee on the ground, Juan Bultó is "one of the boys" in AHRMA at the moment, and it's a beautiful thing...▲

