



Following are my experiences and comments on a number of different topics:

THE TRAVEL

From door to door, it takes 24 hours to get from Canada to China and yes, I am fortunate to fly in first class but, after over 100 of those flights, I have learned that no matter where you sit on the airplane, it is still a brutal flight! I usually arrive at midnight and more often than not, I am on the track the following morning going all out. The jet lag takes its toll on your mind and body. The real danger about racing in China is getting around once you are there. The taxi drivers are completely insane. I am pretty sure there are no rules to follow, and the number of horrible accidents I've seen over the years is too many to count. Like most people in China, I have a scooter to get around, and it is no safer, but at least you can use sidewalks, oncoming lanes, and split lanes to beat the crazy traffic and remain mobile. Most of my friends that have gotten hurt in China on motorcycles have actually been off the track and on a scooter.

THE FOOD

Some people love the food in China and some people hate it. Let's just say, I travel with granola bars. It is not easy to eat healthy in China since even the vegetables are cooked and soaking in oil. I usually lose three to four pounds each trip mainly due to the food and also because of the heat. Three to four pounds is quite a bit to lose when you only weigh 160 pounds to begin with and you are only over there for five to six days. I run the occasional marathon in the U.S., and I hydrate even more with each trip I take to China. You still cramp up and suffer from dehydration due to the intense heat/humidity. You can't drink enough liquids to stay ahead of what you sweat out.

THE HEALTH CARE

I wish I had better things to say about this topic. We all know that, when you race motorcycles, you will need medical attention at some point. Unfortunately, China is not the place to get it. I've had my share of injuries while racing in China, and the health care facilities at the racetracks look like something out of a 1960's M•A•S•H unit. The bottom line is, if you get hurt, get your butt to Hong Kong. Hong Kong has state-of-the-art medical facilities. I don't want to dwell on this topic, but it is one of the few drawbacks of racing in China.



SAFETY

Not much to say here, either. It's intimidating, at times, due to the different culture and language, but all in all, it's really one of the safest places I have ever been in the world. Once you're comfortable in China, you quickly realize that the people are extremely friendly and, to be honest, are fascinated that you are in their country and are not Chinese. Smiling and laughter is universal.

PROMOTION

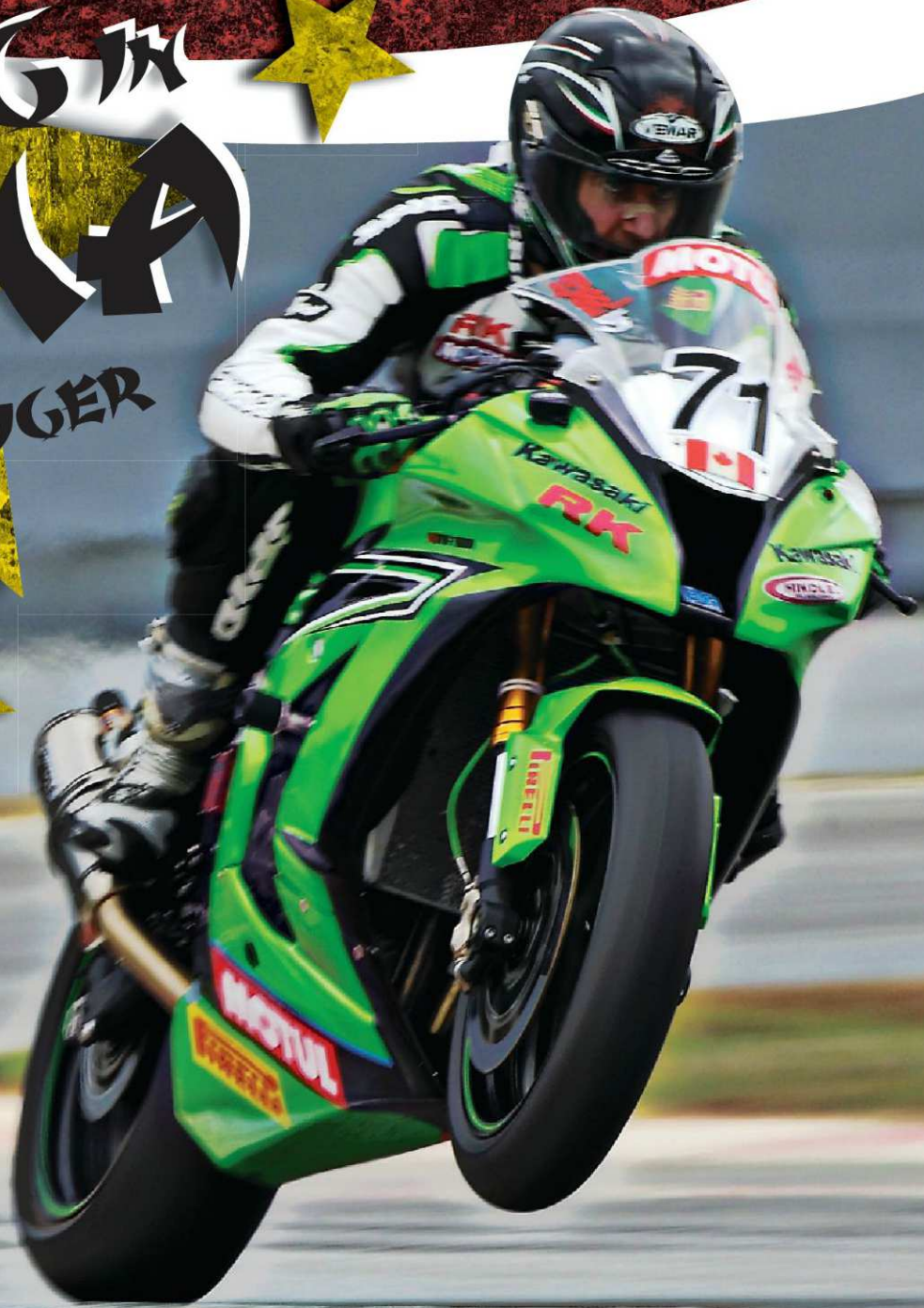
If you ever want to feel special and would like to have your ego stroked on a regular basis, learn how to race motorcycles and head over to China! From live national TV interviews to average race crowds of 20,000 fans, huge lines to get your autograph or a photo, promo girls, magazine covers--you name it--race a superbike in China, and you will be recognized. I'm sure it's not quite the same as what Valentino Rossi experiences in Italy, but it certainly keeps the ego pumped. To be honest, after a while, you don't even really notice any of it. It is there, and you are obligated to be involved in a lot of promotion, but a racer's passion is to ride motorcycles, and that doesn't change no matter where you are in the world or what your name is.

THE COMPETITION

The main series I race in is called the Pan Delta Championship. It is located exclusively in the south of China, but it gives you a ranking within all of China. It has become somewhat of a feeder series to the FIM Asia series where a number of current Moto2 riders participate. A typical race has entries from Spain, the UK, Australia, Malaysia, Japan, China, and I remain the only rider from North America. The series continues to evolve just like China is, in general. With this comes increased competition, and the series now has close to 40 entries, plus you have to qualify within 108% of pole.

RACING IN CHINA

BY DAN KRUGER



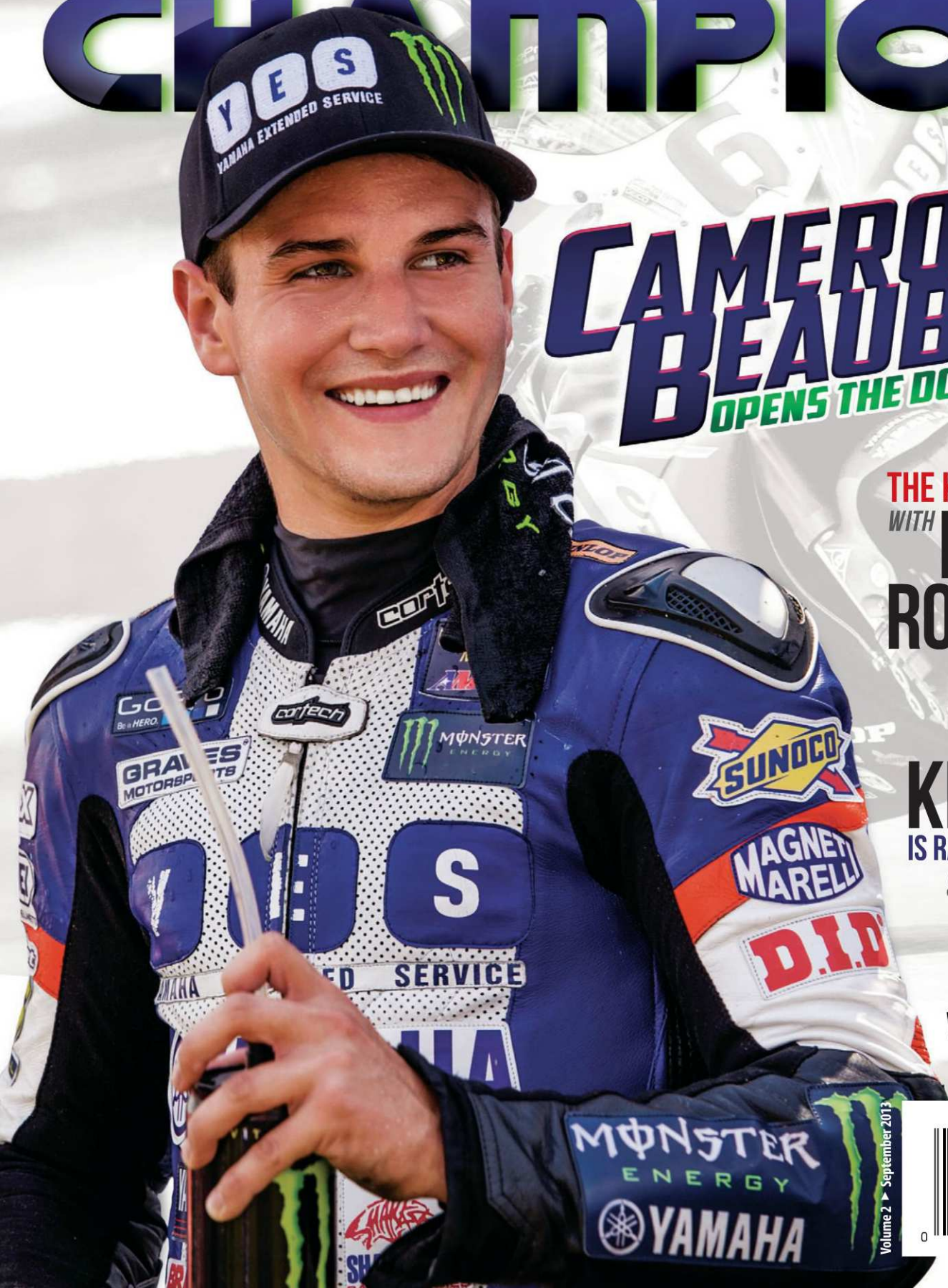
CHINA. Believe it or not, it's not just that place were iPhones and iPads come from. It is actually one of the fastest-growing regions in the world for motorsports competition. If you think about it by sheer numbers, it makes sense. Racing is expensive, ego-driven...and did I mention, expensive?!

China has plenty of money and, generally speaking, they love to show it off. Like many other racers, I started riding dirtbikes when I was very young and have been racing competitively since age 12. However, it was only five years ago that I first raced in China, and I quickly realized that there are still places in the world where you can race and make money doing it without being top 10 in MotoGP or top 5 in WSBK. The whole "pay to ride" concept is about as foreign in China as eating shark fin soup is in North America.

It is a classic "in the right place at the right time" story. About five years ago, I was in Hong Kong having dinner with a friend, and the conversation turned to motorcycles. I was telling him about my racing career and how racing had changed so much over the years in North America and how tough it was for riders to make a career out of it due to budget cuts, the economy, etc. He told me that he had a close friend who is the exclusive distributor for Kawasaki motorcycles in Hong Kong and Macau. He put me in contact with him, we met, arranged a test, and before I knew it, I was flying from Canada to China monthly for testing, promotional appearances and, of course, races. There is a little more to the story, and it wasn't quite that easy but it really was like a fairy tale come true.

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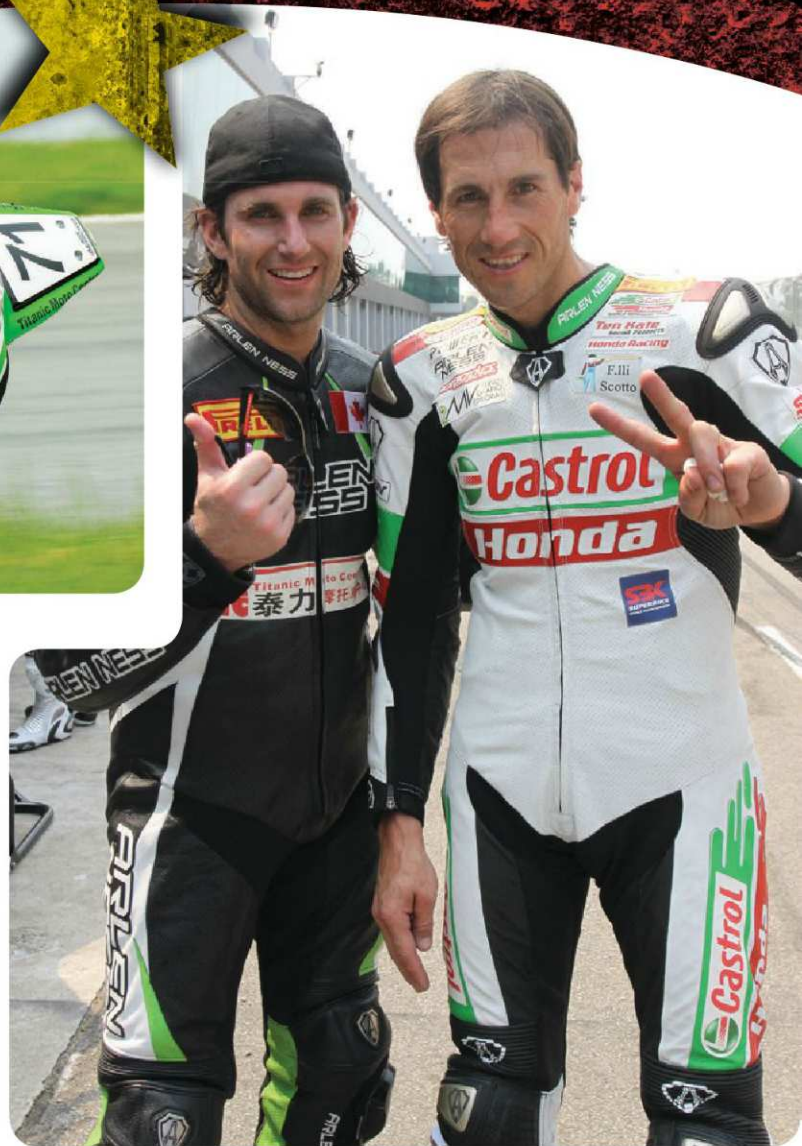


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I started out racing 600 Supersport in China with a fairly standard, race-prepped Kawasaki ZX-6R. I got on the podium frequently, so I moved up to Superbike where I started winning races. And, as that happened, I started getting some pretty trick race parts from Kawasaki in Japan. I now have two full-blown Kawasaki ZX-10R Superbikes and full race support from many of the top manufacturers of race parts.

Like anything else, once you reach the highest level of your sport, you start getting all the cool stuff that you really needed during your struggle to reach that level. I am definitely not complaining because I am VERY fortunate with the level of support I receive. The nice thing about where I am now is that we are no longer begging for stuff like a set of free brake pads. We have the luxury of choosing the helmet brand we want to promote, negotiate financial deals between competitive companies and, in general, make choices that are best for the team and not just take whatever is dangling in front of us. Again, I am VERY fortunate and remind myself of this each time I get on a race bike.



I've also met some great people as a result of our strong results. Not to be a name-dropper, but I have to mention one well-known person because the situation with him has morphed into so much more than just a cool experience. My previous leather sponsor Arlen Ness had their annual dealer/importer/distributor event a few years back, and they asked me to participate and show their guests around the Zhuahi International Circuit. They also asked Ruben Xaus to help out, and we ended up riding together. At the end of the day, Ruben and I picked up the pace a little bit, and we ended up having a blast dicing with each other around the track. We later became great friends and now, we occasionally spend time together at one of his summer homes in Europe or sometimes meet up in other parts of the world like Hong Kong just for dinner and to catch up. It is great friendships like that, that make me realize how lucky I am and how much more there is to this sport than simply a 15-lap sprint race.

Over the past few years, the opportunities have started pouring in, and I am taking advantage of as many of them as time will allow. I raced the Phillip Island 8-Hour FIM Endurance race in 2011, and we finished third. I have tested at Motegi, ridden at Suzuka, and have had more cool experiences along the way than a magazine article could ever properly portray.

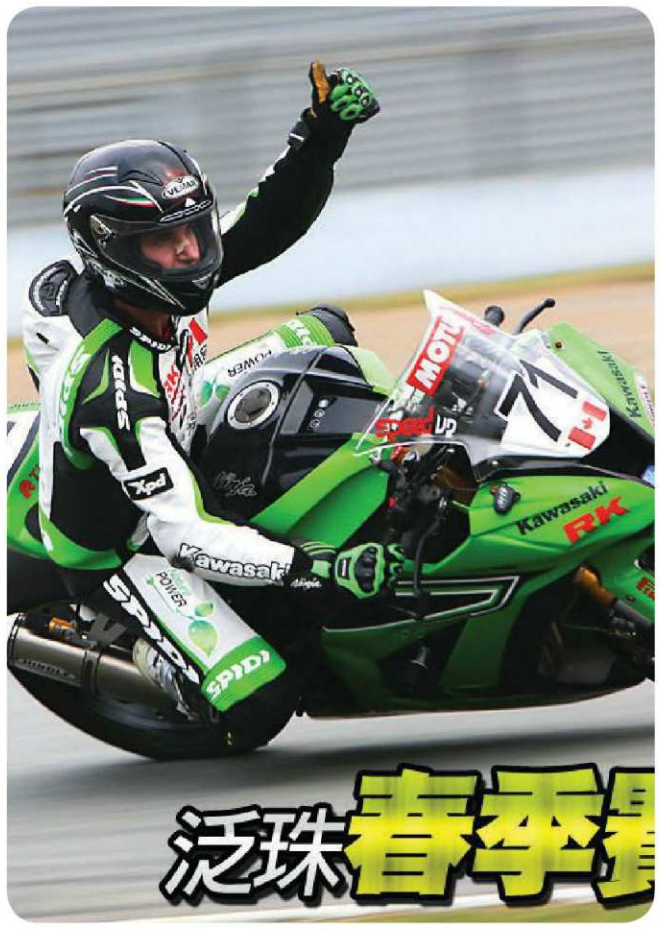




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We now have an established race team and are pretty much on the podium in almost every event. I recently had to pull out of the Suzuka 8 Hours with a well-known Japanese team because my wife Holly was due about a week after the race. At the time, it seemed like a tough choice but, once I withdrew, I quickly realized that it was a no-brainer. Suzuka will be back in a year, but experiencing my baby being born will not. Sure enough, my beautiful baby Kaitlyn was born on July 28! It was the very day of the 8 Hours, and she was born about 10 minutes after the race ended! The team had a great race, and they finished in the top 20 out of over 60 teams, with some pretty big names in the event. I have already been invited back for 2014, and I'm pretty sure I won't be having another baby again next year, so we should be good to go next time around.

In closing, I want to thank all my sponsors for their ongoing support: Motul, Kawasaki, Titanic, RK, Pirelli, Vemar, Spidi, Mototron, Full Spectrum, Oz, Hindle, and Nature Power. None of this would be possible without all of them.



DAN KRUGER, #71.

Check out Dan's blog at
<http://insidemotorcycles.com/blogs/itemlist/category/30-dan-kruger.html>

