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Endorsing dealers as rider experts

World of Adventure turns to 20 dealerships as Centers of Excellence

BY LIZ KEENER
MANAGING EDITOR

Last year, a customer of Irv Seavers BMW in Orange, Calif., attended a World of Adventure session about adventure riding. He went in an RT rider and could soon call himself a GS owner as well.

That customer, general manager David Diaz said, was thinking about taking an adventure-riding trip to Alaska, and once he heard the World of Adventure presentation, he was ready to make the first big purchase for his journey.

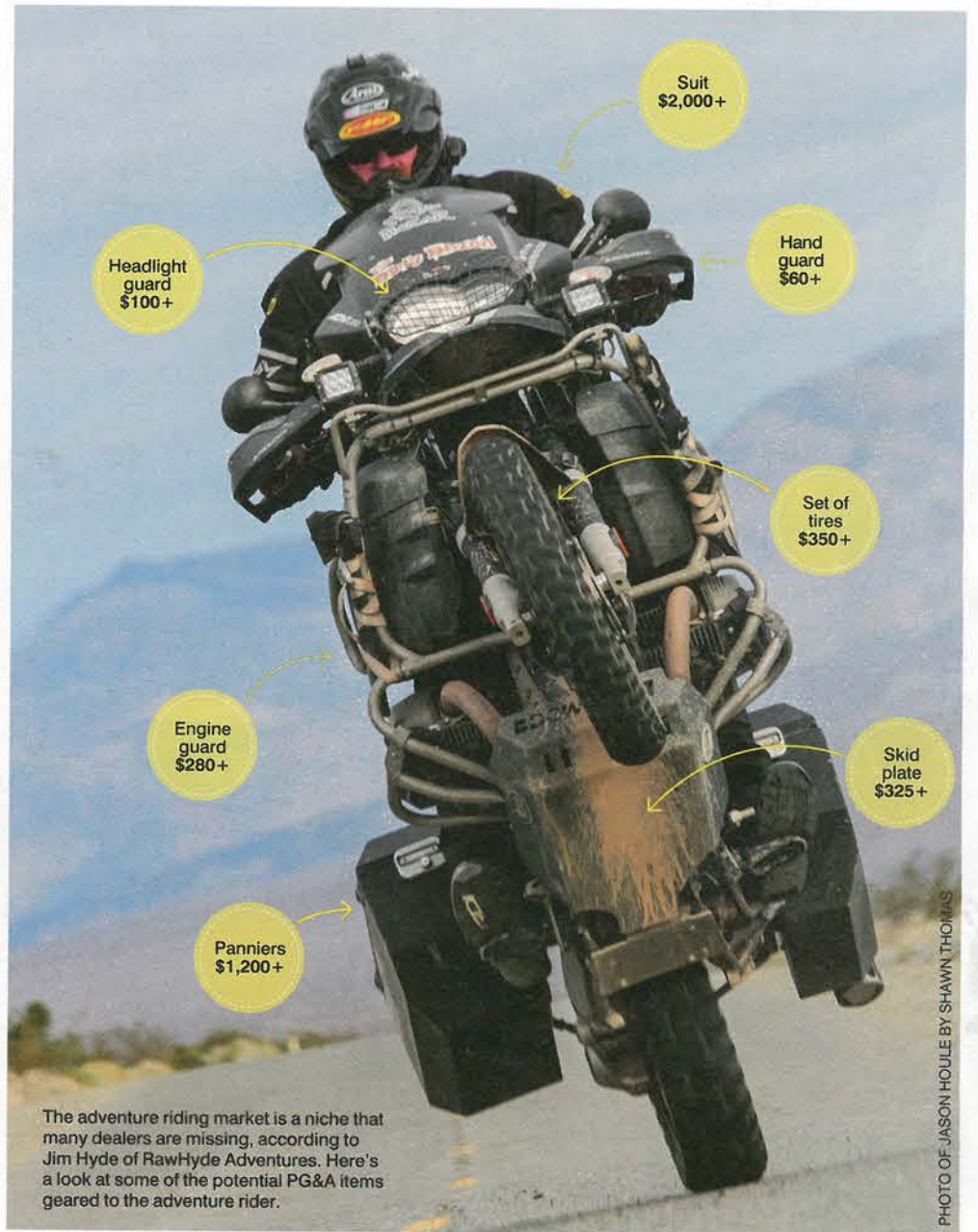
But that sale isn't the only way Irv Seavers BMW has benefitted from its partnership with the World of Adventure coalition. Instead, Irv Seavers and other dealerships are seeing big boosts in unit sales, PG&A sales and service, as they learn to appeal more to the adventure market, a segment in which riders are known to be fully dedicated and more than willing to invest.

WORLD OF ADVENTURE

Irv Seavers BMW is one of the initial dealership partners of the World of Adventure, a coalition of companies in the adventure-riding segment launched by Jim Hyde, founder of adventure training company and official BMW training center RawHyde Adventures.

"One of the things I hear most frequently from people that have shown up here for training is, 'I don't have anybody to ride with because there aren't very many guys who own GSs where I live, and I don't know any of them,'" Hyde said. "I also am continually peppered with questions, me and all my trainers. When people look at our bikes, they say, 'Hey, where'd you get that?' and 'Who makes this?' and 'Wow, I didn't know about that."

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On the move

Namura Technologies' growth pushes the company to move into a larger facility.

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Historic return

Indian Motorcycles is back in Sturgis as a new dealership is opened.

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Still kicking

Sloan's Motorcycle & ATV has served as a pillar in Murfreesboro, Tenn., for more than 50 years.

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PWC sales grow in April PAGE 26

Tucker Rocky, MAG complete merger

Biggest change for dealers will be enhanced product lineup

BY DAVE McMAHON
EDITOR IN CHIEF

When Tucker Rocky Distributing/Biker's Choice and the Motorsport Aftermarket Group (MAG) finalized their merger in mid-May, dealers might not have noticed much difference in the way they do business with the companies.

And that's exactly what executives from both organizations expected to happen when the new company, now operating under the MAG name, was formed. J.A. Lacy, president and CEO of LDI, Ltd., the majority shareholder of the combined company, is the chief executive officer. Leonard Green & Partners, L.P. and other legacy MAG shareholders



DAN COURTNEY

ers retain a significant minority interest in the combined company.

Brian Etter, president of MAG's branded product, media and online retail operations and Dan Courtney, president of Tucker Rocky/Biker's Choice, discussed the new operations with Powersports Business following the announcement of the merger.

PSB: What were the origins of the transaction, or how did the thought process originate that a MAG

See **Merger**, Page 5

HOT NEWS

Jordan out, Twomey back in as CEO of Arctic Cat

Arctic Cat Inc. announced on June 2 that Claude Jordan has stepped down

as chairman and chief executive officer. Chris Twomey, who served as Arctic Cat's CEO for 24 years, and also is a former chairman and a current member of the board of directors,



CLAUDE JORDAN

has been named interim chairman and CEO. The board is beginning a search for a permanent CEO.

Commented Twomey: "On behalf of the board, I want to thank Claude for nearly six years of service to Arctic Cat, first as president and chief

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ADVENTURE

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Wow, that's great,' and it became very clear to me that there's so much more that the owners of these adventure bikes ought to be connected with than they are. They don't have a sense of community. They don't know where to get all the gizmos and gadgets that allow them to personalize their bikes, and thus, we started this program."

World of Adventure first launched about three years ago when Hyde held an Adventure Bike Summit. He asked a number of aftermarket companies to send representatives to a free three-day event at RawHyde's Southern California facility.

"I invited all the companies to come together here at my place for a meeting on how we could

collectively leverage what we know and who we know to further the sport," Hyde said.

He then asked the group to form a coalition to help them reach out to the niche adventure riding market. The World of Adventure has since swelled to nearly 50 member companies, from GPS providers to apparel manufacturers to motorcycle luggage companies. Rev'It is one of the group's most recent members.

Since the World of Adventure began a few years ago, Hyde has been leveraging his reach to bring attention to the member companies. Since 2012, he's been offering sessions at dealerships to help their customers learn more about adventure riding products.

"Our road show consisted of going to dealerships and hosting an evening presentation on a Thursday night and then a free off-road riders clinic the next day for any of their customers, but the point of that was to simply

"I believe the adventure market will grow because it's an authentic way of exploring this planet. You can't fake it. You can't put on a beanie with a fake ponytail and a watercolor tattoo and be an adventure rider."

Jim Hyde, founder, RawHyde Adventures

draw attention to the dealership and also allow customers of that dealership to meet other riders that were interested in the same thing and perhaps begin to form a sense of community," Hyde said.

CENTERS OF EXCELLENCE

Now Hyde is hoping to get dealers more involved with the World of Adventure by creating the Centers of Excellence program. In its first year, the program seeks 20-25 West Coast dealerships to join, but over the next five years, Hyde plans to expand the program to 100 dealerships nationwide. So far, he's halfway to his 2014 goal.

For dealers, the commitment involves paying what Hyde calls a "small fee," choosing a staff member who can attend a three-day training program and become an "expert" on adventure riding, stocking some of the World of Adventure companies' products, setting up an Adventure Corner in the dealership complete with a fully-equipped adventure bike, and promoting a group of customers to train at RawHyde's facilities in California or Colorado.

However, the benefits are plenty. World of Adventure will host an annual in-store presentation about adventure riding at each participating dealership with the option to add a riding clinic; member companies will promote the dealerships as experts to their combined database of nearly 500,000 riders; and each dealership will be given a full page on TheWorldofAdventure.com to tell its story and link back to its website.

Dealers who have already joined the program say it's worth the investment.

"It has encouraged us to meet new riders through this group of aftermarket suppliers to the adventure world, and having an event at our store being advertised by let's say Black Dog [Cycle Works] saying, 'Hey, Irv Seavers is having an event,' the big advantage is we can touch customers that have never been in our store," Diaz, of Irv Seavers BMW, said.

"It's really a no-brainer because once we're a Center for Excellence, these customers get referred to our dealership," added Owen Balduf, sales manager at BMW Motorcycles of Riverside in California.

Though both Balduf and Diaz already considered their staff members experts in the adventure market, they say the Centers for Excellence designation gives them added credibility along with the extra reach.

"With the experience of our staff and the guys here that are riding adventure bikes and going out and living it," Diaz said, "we're an excellent source for people to ask us, 'What's best for me?'"

ADVENTURE RIDING MARKET

Adventure riding has gained momentum in the past decade, especially since Ewan McGregor and Charley Boorman's 2004 TV miniseries "Long Way Round" brought attention and popularity to the sport.

OEMs responded as more have produced adventure bikes. It started with the BMW GS, then came the KTM 990 Adventure, followed by the Triumph 1200 Explorer and the Yamaha Super Ténéré. Kawasaki also has the KLR, and Suzuki includes the V-Strom in its lineup.

Also spurring the market along, many people have shown interest in wanting to explore the outdoors more, Hyde said, and a number of A-list celebrities are also known adventure riders.

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Ackerman named chair of MIC committee

Arnold W. Ackerman, chairman emeritus and founder of Motorsport Aftermarket Group, has accepted the appointment of chair of MIC's Aftermarket/Allied Trade Committee. Ackerman will be replacing the committee's previous chair, Steve Johnson, who was the president and chief operating officer of Tucker Rocky Distributing for 12 years before retiring in 2012.

"As we continue to focus on strengthening our industry's recovery, we are excited to have a key contributor like Arnie Ackerman lead our Aftermarket Committee," said Dennis McNeal, MIC chair and vice president, motor-



ARNOLD W. ACKERMAN

cycle operations at Yamaha Motor Corporation. "Arnie's resume is filled with industry experience, and he's no stranger to the MIC. He's worked with and supported the MIC on a variety of projects and issues over the years, and we look forward to Arnie's leadership as he takes the helm of this industry-critical committee."

Ackerman, a lifelong motorcycle enthusiast whose ties to the industry run deep, founded Motorsport Aftermarket Group in 2000. MAG, an MIC member for 12 years, is an assemblage of many brands representing segments in dirt/off-road, street, V-twin, ATVs and side-by-sides.

"Some tough shoes to fill," said Ackerman, referring to Steve Johnson. "Steve has been a vital supporter of aftermarket development programs such as the MIC's Membership Task Force and Revive Your Ride!. He was fundamental in the establishment of the Right Rider Access Fund and has been a big help with defending land access for riders. He will be greatly missed."

"Our industry is facing persistent and ongoing challenges and some never-before-seen threats," continued Ackerman. "A strong MIC is necessary to combat these threats and at the same time be able to offer sensible solutions. The MIC Aftermarket/Allied Trade Committee's cadre of board members represents all

aspects of our industry and is qualified and ready to take on the challenge."

The members of MIC's Aftermarket/Allied Trade Committee are Arnold W. Ackerman, Gary Bryson of K & N Engineering, Joan Dyal of GE Commercial Finance, Don Emde of Don Emde, Inc., Frank Esposito of Kendon Industries, Inc., Kerry Graeber of Marketplace Events, Kevin Hagerty of MotoQuest, Robin Hartfiel of Resmarket, Inc., Dick Lague of Ignition3, LLC, Larry Little of Marketplace Events Motorcycle Group, Tom McCarthy of Motorcycle Management Consulting Services, Inc., Sarah Schilke of Schuberth North America, Tigr Tsujikawa of Advanstar, and Jayson Wickenkamp of Scorpion Sports, Inc. **PSB**

ADVENTURE

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"I believe the adventure market will grow because it's an authentic way of exploring this planet," Hyde said. "You can't fake it. You can't put on a beanie with a fake ponytail and a watercolor tattoo and be an adventure rider. It takes real skill to manage the bikes in the terrain that they were designed for. There's authenticity to it all the way around — a deep level of authenticity."

Balduf explained the lure of adventure riding as such, "When you come to the fork in the road, and you've got pavement going one way and dirt going the other way, the adventure rider 95 percent of the time always takes the dirt because you can go places and see things that people on-road can't."

Hyde expects the adventure market to have a 10-year run of solid growth, and, he says, the segment is only about two years into its path toward that peak. If that's true, it's great news for the industry because besides being the first to head to the road less traveled, adventure riders are known as big spenders.

"I would be willing to bet that the average adventure rider spends \$3,000 to \$5,000 in accessories, not usually through the dealership because they go back home, and they find their way to other companies," Hyde said.

With the launch of the Centers of Excellence, Hyde is hoping to teach dealers how to keep those customers spending in-house. Included in most riders' first purchase are panniers, a skid plate and crash bars.

"You hang more parts and farkles and all that other stuff on a GS than any other motorcycle," Balduf said. "It's more advantageous and lucrative to the dealer overall."

Riders also like to gear themselves up with adventure suits and special helmets designed to take them into a variety of terrain and weather.

"Whether they're buying riding gear for their body or products for their motorcycle, either way their wallet is coming out, and they're buying stuff, so it really does benefit the dealership's bottom line," Diaz said.

Adventure riders who make optimal use of their bikes also go through tires quickly, requiring a new pair and installation about every 3,000 miles.

"The dual-sport adventure riders spend more on tires and maintenance than any other category of rider, period," Hyde said.

So far, both Diaz and Balduf have been enjoying the adventure market. Though they're quite engrained in it, with staff members leading rides frequently, Hyde says it doesn't take an unreasonable commitment for any dealer to join the World of Adventure. Right now he's simply looking for some enthusiastic BMW, KTM, Triumph and Yamaha dealers who are looking to reach a bigger adventure market. **PSB**

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