

WORDS // WOLTER KUIPER PHOTOS // MITCH LEES & STEPHEN TUFF

Main: GoldenTyres to the rescue
1. No we don't know what it means
2. Digital dash looks modern



BACK IN THE SWIM

SWM has made a welcome return to the dirtbike market, but not with the same fare that sent it broke in 1984



When German brand BMW sold 'Swedish' brand Husqvarna to Austrian brand KTM in 2013, it left behind a state-of-the-art factory north of Milan. It also left behind a bunch of Italian engineers and workers and a range of motorcycles that neither

BMW nor KTM wanted to produce. One of the angry unemployed was ex-Husqvarna chief engineer Ampelio Macchi, who pulled together a deal with Chinese manufacturer Shineray to buy the former Husky factory in Briandronno and defunct Italian brand SWM, famous for its world championship-winning two-stroke trials and enduro bikes. We figure he might have had trouble trying to acquire the Husaberg brand name off KTM.

The first bike we're seeing out of this strange union is based on the last real Husqvarna dualsport model produced before BMW took over and insisted on selling a revamped F650GS as the Husky Terra. The new SWM RS650R is a modernised version of the Husqvarna TE630 and there's nothing wrong with that.

In 2010, Husqvarna said the TE630 would widen its range to benefit riders who used their bikes for daily transport. "Combining comfort and practicality with the

thrill of owning and riding a race bike, the TE630 truly is a machine with muscle and class and represents an outstanding example of how a racing bike can be transformed successfully into a very road worthy motorcycle," it said.

The TE630, which was actually 600cc, didn't exactly set the world on fire here but it did pretty well. There are plenty of motorcycle mechanics who know their way around the design and are pleased to see it back, while there are already some aftermarket parts made here for the TE630 that will fit the SWM, but more on that later.

Macchi, who is now SWM's CEO, certainly thought the old Husky range, including the 310 and 510 DOHC enduro singles, deserved a reprieve. "These are my bikes. I know them and I know the staff building them. I am proud and very confident with the future," he says.

Certainly, looking at the new RS650R there's nothing that makes you scream in horror. The build quality looks very high and the red, white and yellow paint scheme is a nice tribute to the colours of the old SWM range.

The switchgear appears to be Japanese, the brakes and hydraulic clutch are made by Brembo, the handlebar looks like a Tommaselli tapered unit and the grips are by Domino. The Marzocchi fork is a 45mm USD unit, the shock is Sachs while the engine castings are beautifully pressure cast and bolted together with quality fasteners.

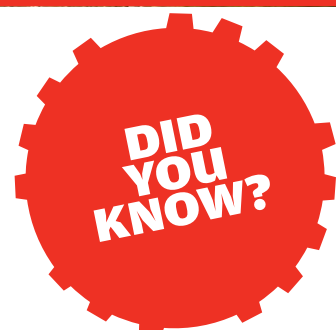
australasian DIRT BIKE

CATCH TANK

The coolant overflow bottle is on top of the gearbox. The black screwtop lid is just visible below the airbox and to the left of the rear brake reservoir.

Main: Check out the view

1. Locking petrol cap
2. Rubber inserts get rid of the last of the footpeg vibes
3. Pipe is a two-into-one-into-two
4. Remote fluid reservoir for the rear brake is very remote



SWM

Stands for Speedy
Working Motors

25L

Is the capacity of the
Safari tank that fits

TWO

Ex-racers started SWM in
Milan, Italy, in 1971

900

Is the largest size bike
currently being planned

Handlebar, handgrips and
switchgear are all quality items



GRABRAILS

There are lots of nice touches, like the removeable grabrails and pillion peg brackets. The only glaring oversights are the cheap-looking, chrome-plated steel gearlever and the absence of any engine protection, not even a skidplate to match those on the RS300R and 500R. That red frame is a definite rock magnet.

Okay, so let's keep that exposed crankcase in mind during our test ride. Mindful of this, Editor Mitch Lees of course takes us up one of his favourite rock-strewn hillclimbs in Labertouche State Forest, Vic, where he promises stunning views over Gippsland as a backdrop for our photos (see previous spread).

This hill is a borderline exercise for any 650cc dualsport, but with road-biased rubber from Korea running street pressures it is bound to be hard work. In fact the RS copes surprisingly well, despite the relatively tall first gear.

On more suitable gravel tracks, the SWM is a tractable companion. The relatively light claimed dry weight of 145kg is assisted by a wheelbase of 1505mm to make this bike a lot easier to flick around than you might expect.

There's a good spread of power and a gear for every occasion. The low handlebar won't suit some taller riders but it does put you in the attack position, driving that front wheel into the ground with your body weight.



Main: The airbox is a bit low
1. Marzocchi fork
2. Sachs shock

The stock seat is relatively flat, so you're not jammed into the tank when you're searching for more traction and the suspension is firm.

To be honest, we were expecting the RS to be a bit of a pain on sealed roads. The rubber-mounted handlebar and rubber footpeg inserts had us expecting lots of vibration but it wasn't there. The bike cruises happily at 110km/h without appearing to need those soft, black additions.

The six-speed gearbox is a definite help here, with both fifth and sixth gears being overdrive ratios. The RS650 adds to its street cred by having the grabrails for your pillion plus seat and fuel cap locks.

It will be interesting to see if the SM650R motard version comes in. There's no helmet hook under the seat and not even enough room to put anything valuable, so the seatlock may be a little pointless.

It is good to see that there is easy access to the fuses and battery under there. The latter is important as there is no kickstarter, although there's a plug in the crankcase where one could be.

Another good point is the side-mounted air cleaner, a traditional Husky feature which lets you clean out all the gunk from your filter without pulling the seat. It is regrettably not the best position for river crossings.

But now, about the availability of accessories for

**'THESE ARE MY
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BUILDING THEM'**

A HELPING HAND

Dave from Mt Buller Motorcycle Adventures shifts some bulldust and lends his services for the camera. Thanks Dave!

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**DIRT
BIKE**

this bike. Safari Tanks is probably heaving a sigh of relief that they don't have to make a mould for the SWM, as their tank for the TE610 should fit straight on, more than doubling your range.

The stock fuel capacity is only 12 litres and the Safari tank has a secondary benefit, it avoids the issue of wrecked sidepanels, especially if you wear kneebraces.

Similarly, Barrett Products has mufflers listed for the TE630 and B&B Off Road has a bashplate, so no waiting around while the industry tools up to protect your SWM.

We're also thinking there has to be a genuine Husqvarna alloy shifter to replace SWM's steel stocker.

RESURRECTION

While it might appear that SWM is resurrecting old models this is the quickest and cheapest way to get back in business. There are already a string of new models on the way, including the Superdual adventure bike, which appears to use the underpinnings of the RS650 but comes standard with a large steel tank, windscreen, crashbars, large wave disc brakes and hard panniers.

That's not due here until August at this stage but Mojo Motorcycles already has an order on its books, with the customer paying his local dealer a healthy deposit. Guess not everyone wants to modify a DR650. But we're still going to run a comparo... stay tuned. **ADB**

THERE ARE ALREADY A STRING OF NEW MODELS ON THE WAY, INCLUDING THE SUPERDUAL ADVENTURE BIKE

SECOND OPINION

A bike like this is not designed to go where we took it. But I love snotty, technical terrain, that the chewed out 4WD tracks in Labertouche provide, so I couldn't resist.

The first technical rock garden exposed the mouthwatering torque the single 650 produces. While the gearing was a little off for technical hillclimbs and would be better served going down a tooth, the SWM could be ridden in first gear slowly, finding traction even with a road going hoop on the rear.

The Brembo brakes and clutch were quality, the suspension satisfactory considering the slow speeds, and the only thing I'd like to see is defence gear. Overall, impressed.

Mitch Lees



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Main: Poised and confident, but what about that Editor?

1. Rear Brembo is 220mm
2. Grabrails will double as bungee hooks until you find a rack
3. Front of the tank is wide

| SWM RS650R | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| ENGINE | |
| Type | Single-cylinder, four-stroke |
| Displacement | 600cc |
| Bore x stroke | 100 x 76.4mm |
| Cooling | Liquid with fan |
| Compression ratio | 12.4:1 |
| Fuel metering | Mikuni D45 EFI |
| Fuel tank capacity | 12.3L |
| Transmission | Six-speed |
| Clutch | Wet multi-plate hydraulic |
| DIMENSIONS | |
| Wheelbase | 1505mm |
| Seat height | 900mm |
| Ground clearance | 249mm |
| Dry weight | 145kg |
| SUSPENSION | |
| Fork | Marzocchi 45mm USD |
| Shock | Sachs Soft Damp monoshock |
| BRAKES | |
| Front | Brembo 260mm disc |
| Rear | Brembo 220mm disc |
| RUNNING GEAR | |
| Handlebar | Tommaselli tapered |
| Front | GoldenTyre 90/90 x 21 |
| Rear | GoldenTyre 140/80 x 18 |
| PRICE & CONTACTS | |
| RRP | \$9490 |
| Distributor | swmmotorcycles.com.au |
| Phone number | (03) 8363 1600 |
| Warranty | 12 months parts and labour |