

Road Race
Newsflash

The Shows Must Go On For Kawasaki Riders

Top riders from the Superbike World Championship paddock have been flying the flag for the Kawasaki family over the winter months - and not only on the racetracks - but at major shows and exhibitions.

Being a top professional rider is a demanding job. In some unusual ways as well, as it happens. The intensity of competition, the need to perform every time out and the travel involved in racing and testing are all part of the job for these remarkable people. But there is also another side to their role, an important one for the factories and manufacturers they represent, but also an important one for the fans and media.

Over the past few weeks riders like Tom Sykes and Loris Baz (Kawasaki Racing Team) plus WSS champion for Kawasaki in 2012 Kenan Sofuoglu have been attending shows and exhibitions as representatives of Kawasaki, meeting visitors and enthusiasts as well as local media and industry figures.

Soon after the race season had been completed both Sykes and Sofuoglu headed to the first big show of the winter, Intermot in Cologne, while French pairing Baz and Fabien Foret appeared at the main French Kawasaki dealer convention immediately after the final race of the season in Magny-Cours.

For Sykes, a flurry of testing has been punctuated by visits to the EICMA show in Milan, Italy, and - not one but two - visits to the Motorcycle Live show at the NEC in Birmingham, UK. His team-mate Baz had a similar schedule, while Sofuoglu was another star for Kawasaki at the EICMA show, and at numerous events in his native Turkey, where he is a true sporting star of national significance.

Sykes, who moved from being 'merely' a top SBK rider to an SBK Superstar after missing out on the championship title by only half a point in 2012, said, "I was at the EICMA Show in Milan and the Kawasaki stand was very busy there. We got a lot of attention, which was nice to see. I enjoyed the day and spent a lot of time doing autograph signings at the show. I was very flattered by the amount of Italian fans that I had. It was awesome to be honest. I also did the NEC show in the UK at Birmingham, not once but twice, and also a Kawasaki Riders' Club session at the NEC. The Kawasaki Riders' Club night was really good because the fans got the chance to ask us all - Loris Baz, Chris Walker, Danny Buchan, all those guys - some questions one-by-one. It was good fun and it went on for a long time, to the point that much longer and I would have stayed the night, because they would have locked us in at the NEC! It was really relaxed and I hope it gave the Kawasaki Riders' Club members something a bit extra. It was good to meet the fans away from racing too. I also got the chance to hand over the Joan Lascorz tribute helmet I wore at the final round of the year to Colin and Sharon Williams, who put in the highest bid for it on the online auction. It was really good to manage to hand it over personally and we spent a bit of time together with them. We added in another couple of gifts from myself, a nice set of gloves and a Kawasaki leather jacket - they deserve it for the great gesture of making the highest bid, with the money it made going to my team-mate Joan."

Sofuoglu, who made his first Kawasaki season a championship-winning season, said, "I did the EICMA show in Milan and I have had a very busy time after winning the title. When you are world champion they want to see you! I have also been to the FIM Gala in Monte Carlo, to collect my championship award, and have been doing many things at home in Turkey. I was really busy with so many PR things and public appearances."

Kenan, along with his 2013 team-mate Fabien Foret, had the launch of his Mahi Racing Team Kawasaki squad in India recently too. This was an event which pulled in a lot of media attention and also broke some ground for the first visit of the SBK and WSS classes to India, for the inaugural bike race at the Buddh International Circuit in March next year.

Loris Baz, at only 19-years-of-age, found 2012 a huge learning experience, off track as well as on. "I also did some shows for Kawasaki, the EICMA show in Milan and then the NEC in the UK," said the tall Frenchman. "I am also going to Japan for Kawasaki as well. The EICMA Show was good and I live only two or three hours drive from there, so it was not so difficult for me to get to it. I was glad I went because it was a good experience and a really big show."

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Kawasaki
Racing Team

The top riders will now get a chance to kick back before the season starts in earnest again, and in the SBK world that is a very early start. The first round of the series takes place in Australia in late February, after the final European tests, starting immediately after the winter testing ban lifts in mid-January.

High resolution images are free to download at press.kawasaki.eu.

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