

VINTAGE MOTOCROSS & DIRT BIKE QUARTERLY

VMMX

No 97
2024

\$19.50
incl GST

NZ \$21.50 incl GST



KAWASAKI SR500 1983



SUZUKI RM125L



JAWA 'BANANAS'



BULTACO PURSANG 200

Farewell Super Hunky Honda XR350 KTM125 RV Sandriders 2023



Diamond Dons 2023 Austrian Trials Museum Honda TL125 Hi-Boy Suzuki RM250T



ZOAR VALLEY, NEW YORK

IF YOU (RE)BUILD IT, THEY WILL COME(BACK) — RESTORING A MOTOCROSS TRACK AFTER FORTY YEARS

Since the early 1970s, just as in many places around the globe, motocross tracks have come and gone. To say that motocross was popular in the United States in those days is quite an understatement. Once closed though, the land is typically repurposed for housing developments or other land use. But here is a case where a track that opened in 1973, ran for ten years, and then closed, was brought back to life, and restored to its original 1973 configuration after forty years of nothing but nature taking over the land.

What started as a simple social media page on Facebook, turned into a dream come true for many old Vintage Motocross riders. The “Zoar Motopark and Bluemont Motocross History and Memories” page was started in January of 2023 and was viewed by over 150,000 people before the decision was made to make it private to prevent unwanted activity. Currently it has over 3,800 members and continues to grow daily. This simple page got the ball



Words & photos provided by Ed Abdo

rolling to bring back a truly memorable track for those who once rode it, as well as those who had heard all the stories of the track, the opportunity to put some laps in.

The track, Zoar Motopark, commonly known as Zoar Valley, is located about thirty miles south of Buffalo, New York. It was opened in May of 1973 and held multiple international MX events in 1973 and 1974. In September of its first year of operation, Zoar hosted an Edison Dye-promoted 500cc Trans-AMA International round and a round of the 250cc National Championship Series. In July of 1974, the US round of the 125cc World Championship and a round of the Inter-AMA 250cc Championship were also held there. The facility held motocross, hare Scrambles, BMX, ATC, snowmobile and off-road truck race events while it was open for ten years, closing in 1983.

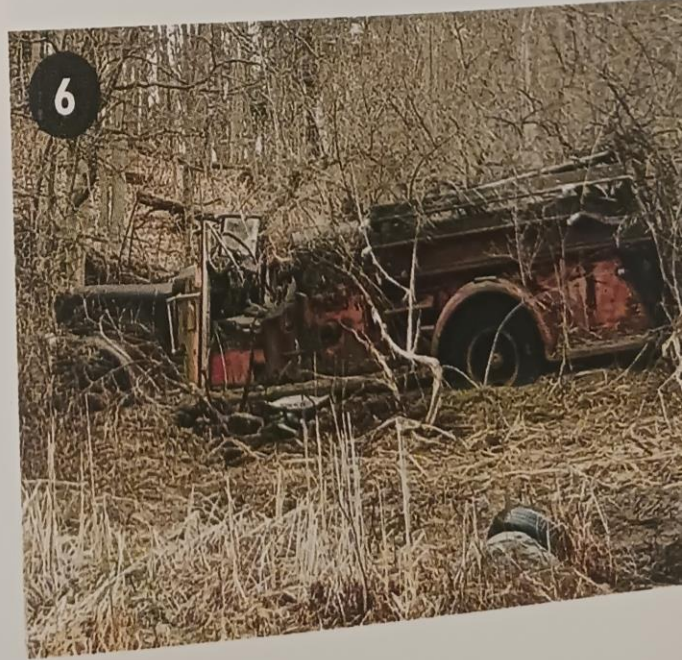
The owner of the historic piece of land that brought amazing memories to thousands of riders and their families over the years gave the OK to Ed Abdo, a rider who raced at Zoar

Main: Vintage action at the track re-opening. Insets: 1. Addressing the crowd for the first time in decades! 2. Zoar in 1973. 3. The 125 GP event at Zoar in 1974. 4. Bikes are back at Zoar! 5. Nice aerial shot of parts of the reborn track. 6. A relic from yesteryear.



from its opening days until 1980 when he moved away from the area, to clear out forty years of trees, built-up brush, and washed-out land. Abdo was fortunate enough to recruit a select group of volunteers to help bring the track back to life.

After six months of seemingly impossible work by Abdo and his crew, both the MX and BMX tracks were brought back to life and a fifty-year VMX reunion and ride weekend was held. Bikes from the mid '60s and no later than 2000 came to ride on September 23rd and





24th 2023. It was fifty years to the day since the track held its first international event.

The weekend was a remarkable success, bringing back the opportunity for riders aged from 16 to 82 to get (back) on old bikes and enjoy great memories, meet up once again with old friends from years ago and do some great bench racing, as well as put in some laps on the track. Over 1,200 bikes rode the track over the two days and riders came from around the globe including from Canada, Newfoundland, Panama, United Kingdom and Australia! An interesting note was that over 75% of the bikes on the track were air-cooled and had drum brakes!

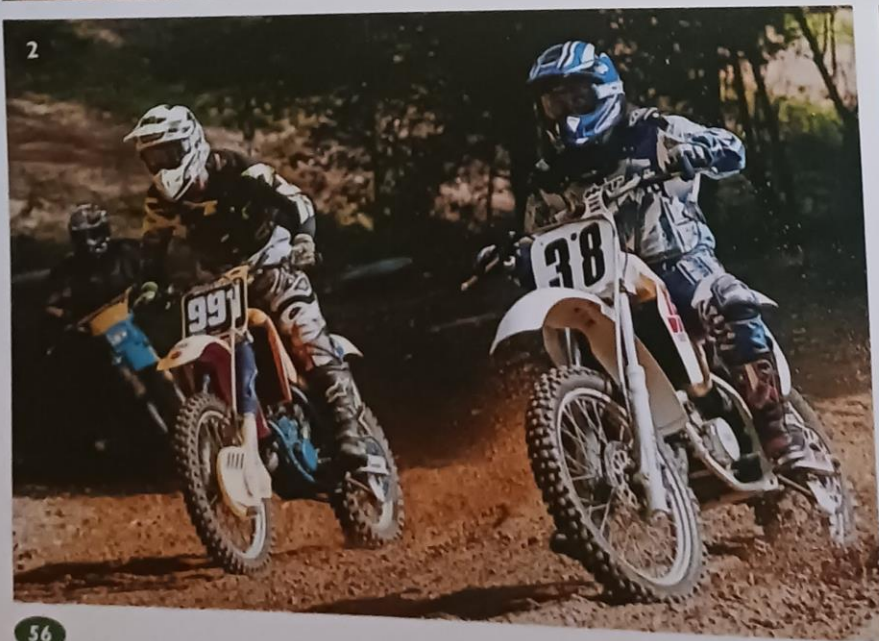
All the costs to make this event happen were 100% Abdo's responsibility and required tremendous resources. Besides his own bank account, Abdo received some assistance from some wonderful sponsors and donations to help make it all happen. His only goal was to get back the money that he had invested in the project, and he would then donate any money above that amount to the local fire department that handles all the calls in the





area where the track is located. A hundred percent of the net proceeds from the weekend event were donated to the Mortons Corners Volunteer Fire Department as promised. That amount? It was \$37,200.09!

While the intent was to make this event a one-time thing, the event went over so well that the owner of the property asked Ed to do it again in 2024! So, on September 28 and 29 in 2024 it will all happen again and Abdo is planning so that it will be bigger and better than the first one.





Captions: 1. Hundreds of bikes showed up for the event. 2. Most bikes were twinshock but some more modern bikes also attended. 3. Good to be back. 4. It was popular. 5. Rokon, I assume? 6. Husky hero. 7. Everyone was eager to get out on the track. 8. A momentous occasion. 9. Modie, and red, green, yellow.

