

# 400,000 MILES, AND COUNTING

Nick Sanders, world record-holding global traveller, eccentric tour host, and two-wheeled philosopher on how Yamaha changed his life

By Andy Davidson

**N**ick Sanders is the fastest man around the world. He holds multiple records, has motorcycled around the world seven times, and the length of the Americas eight. The majority of those miles, now exceeding some 400,000, have been completed on Yamaha. This is why.

**Utterly reliable**  
"In my world I'm not allowed to fail because it's too costly to try again. That's the main reason I went with Yamaha. I knew the firm would supply the best machines for the jobs as they are built on reliability and if their bike was to let me down, I would consequently let them down. I've ridden a Yamaha around the world six times in the last 10 years and I haven't had a single breakdown."

**Above and beyond**  
"People think an RR is unsuitable for long distance, but that's not true. The bike can be comfortable, but you have to fit your body around it and your ride is an art. It's a quick pony and demands respect, but with a few strength-training exercises anyone can ride a thousand miles at a time. I never thought you could take an RR off-road, but I crossed the Sahara Desert (no roads) on an RR in 2009."

**Hard as nails**  
"One of my hardest trips was the Double Transit of the Americas. I led 11 riders from Terra del Fuego in Alaska on my Super Ténéré in 2002. I then pushed on alone to the top of Alaska and started my record ride south in Argentina. I missed the record by eight hours. I was so upset I turned around and introduced my ride north for the Double Transit record, making it back in 24 days and setting a new world record."



Heavy luggage and arduous roads took their toll on Sanders



Nick's answer to Halfords left a lot to be desired



Most RR owners wouldn't dream of riding their bike on this surface, but that's before



Collateral damage in the quest for glory



Sanders at one with his 2001 Yamaha RR



Super Ténéré allows Nick to indulge his obsession with riding the length of the Americas

## NICK'S YAMAHA MILES

- 2002**  
Bike: 2001 RR  
Where: Around the world for a total of 27,000 miles  
Why: The first ride was for my TV documentary *Global Rider*. The second was to lead 22 riders on the first ever short-led world tour  
Difficulty rating: ★★★★★
- 2009**  
Bike: 2000 RR (first cross-plane crash-land)  
Where: Around the coast of Britain  
Why: I'm most of the country so most of each year and needed to do something closer to home  
Difficulty rating: ★★★★★
- 2004**  
Bike: 2003 RR  
Where: Around the world, 15,000 miles  
Why: Led 11 riders on a second around the world journey  
Difficulty rating: ★★★★★
- 2003**  
Bike: 2005 RR  
Where: Around the world in 10 days  
Why: It had not been in for three days, no gears, dropped and big bits. I averaged 5000 miles a day  
Difficulty rating: ★★★★★
- 2008**  
Bike: 2007 RR  
Where: 38,000 miles up and down each continent and around the world
- 2009, 2010, 2011**  
These were 3 trips to Timbuktu on an XT600R Ténéré
- 2012**  
Bike: 2012 Super Ténéré  
Where: Up and down the Americas three times (once solo, 2x 2x2)  
Why: I'm obsessed with the world. I've ridden 4 eight times now  
Difficulty rating: ★★★★★
- 2014**  
Bike: 2014 XT690R  
Where: UK to Mongolia and back via Iran, 18,000 miles  
Why: Leading 10 riders  
Difficulty rating: ★★★★★

## The ubiquitous world crosser

**Ténéré: timeline of an icon**  
The Ténéré, in all its guises, has been utterly synonymous with world travel for 33 years, and the 2014 incarnation of the XT1200E Super Ténéré is the most advanced ever, with the ZE version even bringing electronically controlled front and rear suspension into the game. Neither riders nor Yamaha could have dreamt of such extravagance back in 1981.



**1983 XT600Z Ténéré (3A1)**  
Inspired by the Paris-Dakar racers campaigned to victory by Cyril Nevus, a red Yamaha Motors France in 1979 and 1980. It was basically Yamaha's existing XT550 with an oversized engine, and 30-litre tank.



**1986 XT600Z Ténéré (3V2)**  
The second-generation Ténéré single intended to be even closer to rally bikes. Although fuel capacity was reduced to 21 litres, power was increased to 48hp thanks to new carbs and air box. Electric start.



**1988 XT600Z Ténéré (3A2)**  
Complete redesign with frame-mounted fairs incorporating those trademark twin headlamps. Tank capacity back up to 28 litres, engine completely reworked, and disc replaces drum rear brake.



**1989 XT750 Super Ténéré**  
All-new parallel-twin version also comes complete with twin front discs and a 26-litre fuel tank. Race 750, and then 850, versions went on to win the Paris-Dakar six times. The model was discontinued in 2006.



**1991 XT260 Ténéré**  
All-new, two-valve, liquid-cooled version of single, good for 48hp, is at the heart of complete redesign. 51mm, lime-tipped and more road biased, with stroke 20-litre tank and shorter wheel suspension.



**1994 XT260 Ténéré**  
The 11th generation became the last and final version of the single cylinder Ténéré. It had more streamlined bodywork with dual-beam headlamp inspired by the Super Ténéré twin. Production ceased in 2008.



**2008 XT660Z Ténéré**  
All-new, four-valve single cylinder Ténéré based on 2004 XT660X, complete with updated styling and zinc, plus traditional Ténéré large tank, bearing screens, long travel suspension and race colours.



**2010 XT1200E Super Ténéré**  
All-new bike follows the same basic template as the old XT750 - parallel-twin engine, twin headlamps and a steel frame, but comes with more tech than an RR, including three-way traction control and linked ABS.



**2014 XT1200E ZE Super Ténéré**  
Updated with engine and fuel map mods, gear box improvements, new dash and exhausts, protection and more. The ZE version also debuts Yamaha's electronically adjustable suspension, too.