



Real Speed and Performance Begins at Mach 1™



My brother and I were fortunate to grow up at race tracks, attending my first Loudon National in 1972 at the old Bryar track when I was 8. My brother and I went with my dad to watch our family friend, Ray Bressette roadrace his Yamaha TD250. I was awestruck by how cool real GP bikes were, clad in sleek aerodynamic fairings and brightly painted. Then, that same year, I saw the sidecars. Totally out-of-this-world to me, even then. They were fascinating to watch as driver and passenger worked the rig in unison through the corners. I would imagine myself onboard as I watched them race, picking my favorite team and pretending I was the monkey as I watched the rig racing on the track.

That year was also when I got my first motorbike, a '68 Suzuki 90cc that I shared with my brother. At that time, my feet would not reach the ground so my dad would hold the bike and run along side of me while I slipped the clutch to get it going and then later, run up along side me when I stopped, catching the bike to hold it upright. Two years later, I was ice-racing a Bultaco 125 Alpina with my brother, dad and his friends. My brother was on a 250 Ossa Wildfire and my dad on a Honda CB350.

Fast-forward to 1992, I had been riding on the street for 10 years, finished college, and finally had a decent job that provided me with enough income to build my first race bike – an early '70's BSA Victor 500cc single. The bike was kicking around in my dad's inner sanctum and he suggested I start out vintage racing because the bike's capabilities – or better said limits – would help me learn more about suspension, handling and braking dynamics than modern bikes. My brother had started a few years earlier riding a Triumph 500 Tiger – which was also kicking around in our dad's garage gathering dust.



My brother began racing with the USCRA in 1989, and I started with the USCRA in 1992. My experience aboard the Victor was always a series of challenges. The very first weekend, I spent the day Friday familiarizing myself to the Loudon circuit getting my license at the Penguin basic school. The very next day (race day) the Victor promptly chose not to start for practice, and I missed all my practice rounds working with my dad to install a battery and re-wire the bike to run total loss. I managed to make the GP500 race and even finished ahead of some of the competitors. I was feeling pretty good about things, again, when the bike locked up tight in turn 1A on the cool-down lap, launching me off over the bars and crashing. We would later find out the primary chain broke. It would be the first of an ongoing string of things that broke...continually on that machine...including rider.

My first two seasons cut my teeth on the full scope of what it was to race, spending money, evenings and weekends fixing and replacing parts, including rebuilding the motor twice (the only thing that leaked more than oil from it was compression), and my left thumb once. The rod snapped in half exiting New Hampshire's turn 9,

punching holes through the case halves, and finally lodging itself in the base locking things up tight, ejecting me over the bars like Superman. I landed on my hands, and folded my left thumb under my palm, breaking my thumb with a compound fracture and dislocation at the Benrus joint).



to a 1980 Yamaha TZ250J.

I spent the off-season doing thumb exercises to regain the use of it once the pins were removed and, rebuilding the engine yet again. This time using a proper Carillo rod, however. The bike promptly paid me back spewing oil and compression out of the head on the opening weekend. Repeated attempts to re-torque the head only resulted in torquing me off – royally. I decided it was time to consider another bike for my racing career. I followed my brothers footsteps (he had parked his Triumph 500 and moved on to Yamaha TZ250's), and moved on

The TZ, while considerably more reliable than my B50 presented me with new challenges, which were considerably narrower power bands, and considerably higher speeds, all which provided considerably harder get-offs. I would eventually get the hang of 2-stroke GP, but not without sacrifices, including breaking my left wrist and arm, and separating my left shoulder – all from high-sides! I could always tell when I was taking a good digger because my fuel tank would pass me while I was tumbling and rolling earth-sky, earth-sky, earth-sky. The TZ was the platform, however, that I learned how to manage and carry speed.



I also migrated to modern racing in 96 with the TZ, racing the LRRS series at New Hampshire International Speedway. I found the skill and competition level challenging, and managed to advance my skills to be a consistent top 10 finisher that year, in addition to my usual assortment of get-offs. At the end of my 1997 season, I was hit with the re-build sticker shock costs to rebuild my J motor. \$400 for pistons, \$900 for the clutch basket, and cranks were not even available!

I decided to start anew, upgrading to an EX500 to compete in LRRS racing. I also decided to build yet a third vintage race bike. One statement kept ringing in the back of my head from on of my dad's friends (Jack Bressette, who also roadraced). "Buy a Honda 350, race it instead of fix it, and blow the doors off of Triumph 500!" I started looking around for a Honda and found it in the club. Rich Barger happened to have a barn fresh CL350 that he was looking to unload, and I was just the person to take it off his hands. This was the turning point for my next evolution. The Mach1 revolution!

I had become aware of Pete Talabach in my vintage experiences. I watched with admiration, his string of successes with Greg Nichols riding the amazingly fast Mach1 Ducati 350. I realized my short-comings in terms of engine building know-how when I was replacing the head gasket on my EX (they were prone to blowing), and got the cam chain a half tooth off. The bike ran like it had a hole in one of the pistons. I brought the EX up to the Mach1 garage and asked Pete to fix it. He did, and the following race, the bike ran stronger and faster than it ever had. I asked him what he did to make such a dramatic change. He said, "Basically, Rab, I put it back together to

spec...but did it very carefully to make sure it is spec.” I was sold on Pete’s abilities and know-how.



When it was time to build the 350, I asked Pete if he would consider building it for me to run in the newly formed Formula CB class. He said, “I’ve never built a 350 Honda race bike, but I can’t imagine it would be harder than my Ducs”. What followed was the beginning of an amazing journey of knowledge, skill, success, and most importantly, friendship. Pete’s one of those “once in a lifetime” chance opportunities we get in life. His experience and approach to solving problems and building race motorcycles constantly amazes me. No matter how much I have learned, or think I know, he shows me a new idea, or approach that reminds me why Mach1 machinery performs like it does.

It would take some time to finish the 350. It was in these years, In 1998, when I was given the opportunity to head out for a practice session aboard the Grumble Bumble Bee as a passenger. The owner of the rig, Fitz Sargent needed a monkey as his regular passenger was on the track practicing on his solo bike. I was totally stoked! The idea of actually getting to climb on board a rig and work it through the turns like I grew up watching and imagining. We hit the track (New Hampshire International Speedway), and I quickly learned that the monkey’s job was a lot more involved and difficult than it appeared from watching in the stands. I also knew that moment that I found a new passion.

When we concluded practice, I excitedly told Fitz that I was definitely “in” as his monkey when ever he needed one. He told me he’d hold me to it, as I apparently got the hang of it pretty quickly. I was able to race with Fitz twice that season. At the championship awards banquet that year, Fitz told me his passenger was not interested in running the rig with him and offered me the slot to monkey the Grumble Bumble Bee in 1999. I enthusiastically said yes and we won the class championship in 99!



I had also managed to win the LRRS Production Lightweight Championship aboard my EX in 99 and got my expert license to boot. The EX’s days were numbered however, with the introduction of the SV650’s so, in 2000, I moth balled the EX and bought a Honda RS125 and went back to GP racing in the modern series. The 125 was fast, and the GP Singles class was fiercely competitive. In early May of 2000, on the opening lap of my race, I was hit exiting NHMS turn 4, by another rider which resulted in a pretty hard crash that ended my season with a broken left femur, and shattered left hand. I worked through the injuries that summer and would be back aboard the sidecar and the Mach1 Honda 350 that September.

Fitz and I continued to campaign the Grumble Bumble Bee through 2001 until he decided to retire from racing. He offered me the rig, and my dad bought it for \$5K. Initially, I asked my brother if he wanted to drive the rig, as he was an accomplished solo bike racer. He declined but suggested our dad give it a try.

So, in 2002 my dad took over as the driver. It was an interesting adventure the first season. It was a learning experience for the both of us. For the first time in his life, my dad had to take advice from his son vs. give



it. And for me, I had to learn how to teach my parent a skill he had never done. No sooner than he got the mechanics down, I broke my femur in half in a crash on my RS125, putting an end to my season. My dad picked up another passenger to finish the season.

My dad would drive the Grumble Bumble Bee for a few more seasons, until he took a pretty good digger in 2005 on the warm-up lap at AHRMA's Mid-Ohio Vintage Days event. We went off the track at the turn 7 esses, straight into the jersey barriers and air-fence. The rig got bruised and skinned up, I broke my ribs, and my dad got the ride in the meat wagon to Mansfield Hospital with a broken nose, ribs and shoulder. I would manage to patch up the rig with the help of the Brian Carroll and the collective sidecar community, and did race it the next day (Sunday) albeit sore with Brian Carroll driving.



After that crash, my dad called it quits and my girlfriend Christina said she'd like to try the monkey spot. We attended a track day at New Hampshire Speedway and took the rig out on the circuit at the lunch break. She loved it and was the monkey for our 2006 season! She got up to speed fast and by mid season (Mid Ohio) we got on the box, finishing third.

Christina has remained my monkey since 2006. In 2007 and 2008, she was working in London and I had two other passengers, Will Harding and Marty Yanneralla. Will Harding would be my passenger to win the 2008 AHRMA National Championship, and Christina would return from London and passenger the rig to a 2009 AHRMA National Championship with me.

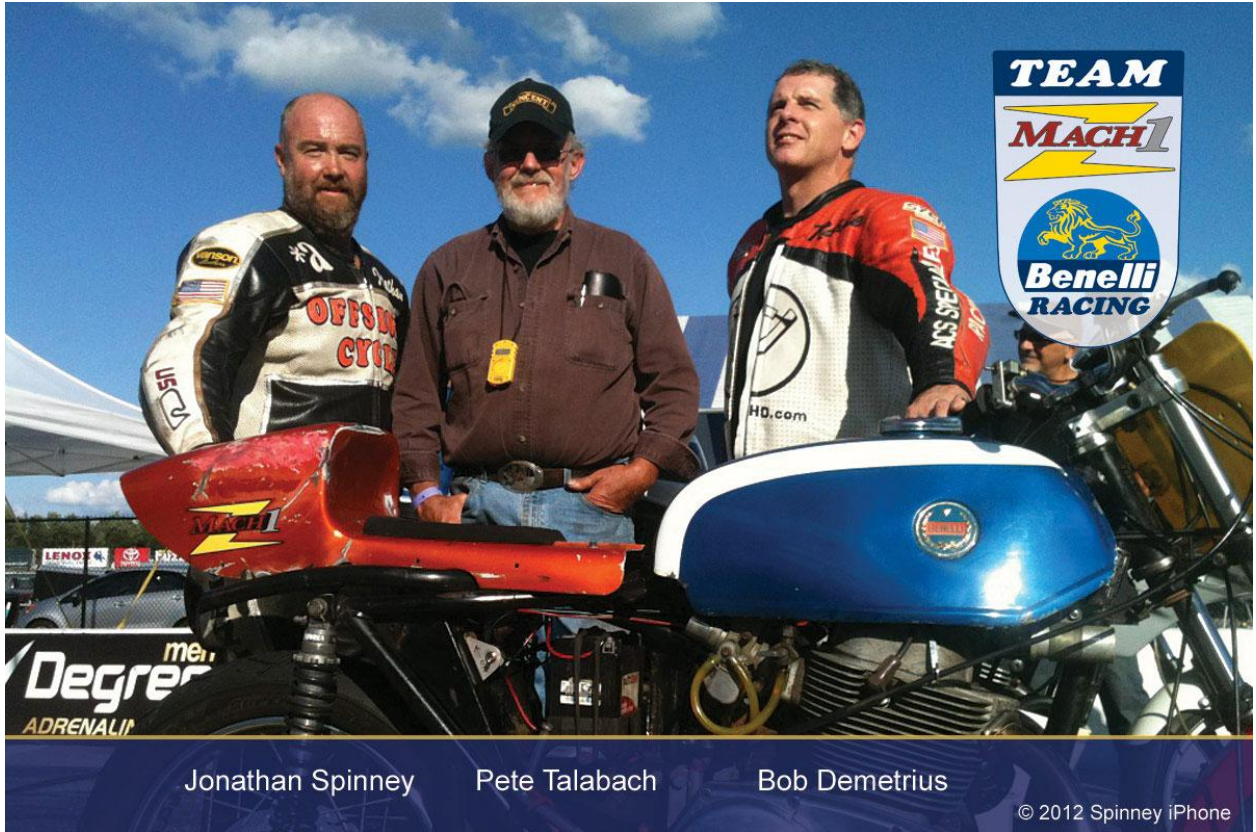
I've been actively working on my race bikes with Pete (Mach1) since 2000. In our journey, I have racked up more than 25 regional class championships, including 5 national AHRMA class championships. There is a lot more to the saying, "Mach1 Powered Victory" than just the statement. Pete's attention to detail, and dedication to ensuring the entire package works (suspension, frame geometry, engine) is, in my humble opinion, unequalled. His vision (the Mach1/THR "Fast\_Attack" Honda CB350), of what a production based Honda 350 racer is, is arguably as good if not better than what the Honda factory pilots had in the day.



bolt on performance power.

Pete is a true master mechanic, engine builder and fabrication specialist. He has taught me volumes about race-performance suspension set-up, engine preparation, and chassis geometry helping me understand what the bike is doing on the race surface, allowing me to advance my skills and capabilities. Understanding how the system works as a package – suspension, tyres, frame geometry, and horsepower – has given me the ability to better interpret and feel input from the motorcycle and make adjustments to these changing dynamics in real-time. In short, he's

His brand tagline could not be more appropriate, "Real Speed and Performance, begins at Mach1"



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