

Ready, steady, go...

With just one week to go before his 17 May departure from Munich, BMW Motorrad's Sebastian Klein is fully prepared for the next seven months, which will see him ride all the way to Bangkok on his new BMW F 800 GS.



Part of the final preparations for the 27-year-old was a trip to the Touratech headquarters in Niedereschach, Germany, to equip his motorcycle with all the parts and accessories to make life 'on the road' just that little bit easier. It was Klein's first time at the factory where the parts used by most adventure travellers are conceived and designed by Herbert Schwarz and his team.

"What a place to visit," said Sebastian. "It's a real buzz of activity and the market for adventure travel is growing very fast by the look of things. It was very interesting for me to meet Herbert Schwarz of course, as he made the first 'big' trip on the F 800 GS when he went to Africa last year with an early prototype to test the kind of accessories that I will be using on my trip. It's great to know that they have been developed in the harshest of conditions by a 'Globerider' with so much experience and one of the best track records in this area."

As well as being fitted with BMW accessories such as hand guards, headlight protectors and aluminium engine protection guards, Sebastian's F 800 GS has been fitted with a variety of Touratech parts. These include a special tank bag to protect his photography and filming equipment: a radiator guard; a windscreen extension and spoiler; crash guards; a new prototype seat; and an aluminium luggage rack.

"It's amazing how quickly this has all happened," said Sebastian. "Herbert really likes the idea of my trip and after I had explained all the details it only took about a week

for the parts to be ready. The F 800 GS now has about 2,500 kilometres on the clock, so will have a big service in the next few days. I've planning to sent a set of Continental tyres to a BMW importer in Turkey and then a couple of more sets to India, where I'll be doing a lot of riding. I'm hoping for around 10,000 kilometres of life from the rear tyre so I hope I'm not being too ambitious!"



Sebastian will be having an official 'send-off' next Saturday with friends and local press. This just leaves him a few days to familiarize himself with all of the Touratech camping and cooking equipment, as well as practice packing and unpacking prior to departure. Schwarz has advised him to get this right before, not after he leaves, as most adventure riders start their big trips with far too many things, and are forced to discard items en route.

Sebastian will be away until mid December, when he plans to return to Germany for Christmas. Enduro fans will be able to follow his progress during the next few months on BMW Motorrad's Enduro World website (www.bmw-motorrad.com/enduroworld) which will be regularly updated with travelogues and video podcasts. Sebastian will also be setting up his own website (www.seppotage.com) which will feature a regular 'blog and satellite tracking information.

Out now – watch *The End of the Rains* on DVD

In May 2007 when the world still speculated about whether or not BMW would launch the new F 800 GS, Touratech Director Herbert Schwarz was already on a secret mission in Africa with a pre-production bike. Accompanying him to photograph and film the adventure, Ramona Eichhorn rode a BMW G 650 Xchallenge.

Herbert tested some of his company's pre-production accessories under extreme conditions off-road. Their journey around Lake Victoria covered 5,087 kilometres of sand, gravel and mud, from the white sandy beaches bordering the



Indian Ocean through the Masai steppe in Kenya, the savannah of Tanzania, the green hills of Burundi and Rwanda, around the extinct Mt. Elgon volcano in Uganda, and back to Mombassa.

As the rainy season was unseasonably late in 2007 the land was still flooded. But though facing tough riding conditions and challenging technical problems, the two also encountered a plenitude of African *joie de vivre* and hospitality. Their visit to see the world's last surviving mountain gorillas around the Virunga volcanoes of Rwanda was quite a unique occurrence.

Travelling self-sufficiently with a tent often resulted in some amazing episodes with the locals. Ramona and Herbert shot all of the footage themselves; capturing images of the roadside and daily life; and the film has a strong documentary character, presenting a realistic picture of the strange and fascinating land of Africa. Topics such as the genocide in Rwanda and poverty are portrayed with tactful sensitivity and understanding as well.

The double disc PAL DVD-set includes 55 minutes of film plus bonus material. Filmed in wide-screen HD format and available in English or German languages, *The End of the Rains* can now be ordered from the www.touratech.com website.