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CHRIS HAINES

HALL OF FAME SHARES
CHAMPIONSHIP BIKE
SET UP TIPS

**SUSPENSION
BUYERS GUIDE**

THE LATEST UPGRADES FOR
OFF-ROAD PERFORMANCE

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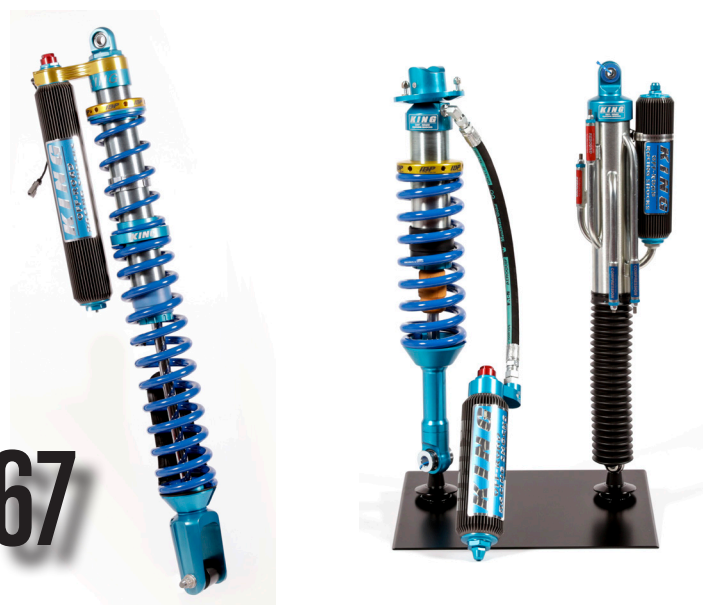
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THE BAJA EDUCATOR

OFF-ROAD MOTORSPORTS AND AMA HALL-OF-FAMER CHRIS HAINES GIVES PEOPLE THE BAJA EXPERIENCE

BY DAN SANCHEZ
PHOTOS BY DAN SANCHEZ

Since the early days of Baja racing, motorcyclists dominated races like the SCORE Baja 500 and SCORE Baja 1000, producing many talented individuals who made history there. American Motorcycle Association Hall-of-Fame and Off-Road Motorsports Hall-of-Fame Inductee Chris Haines, is one of those motorcyclists who made a name for himself as a racer and bike builder but also introduced and mentored many motorcyclists who would go on to conquer the Baja desert and become champions. Haines also earned the AMA Motorcycle Association Golden Wrench Award four-times, during his 40-years of riding and racing in Baja.



JACK WRIGHT



TOP: HAINES AND HEAD MECHANIC JIMMY HOLLY TUNE AND PREPARE MOTORCYCLES FOR FULL BAJA RACING AND TOURS

From working at a lawnmower repair shop in New Jersey at age 15 to building Speedway motocross bikes for Suzuki and Honda, Haines' career included working for AMA Motorcycle Hall-of-Fame Inductees such as Bruce Penhall and Tony DiStefano. "I got injured racing Speedway after I came back from the military, so I began building bikes for a while...lots of bikes," said Haines.

After success with Suzuki, Haines was asked to join American Honda, where he spent 10 years at Honda Racing Corporation working with racers on the motocross side. "It was then that AMA Motorcycle Hall-of-Fame and Baja off-road motorcycle racing pioneer Bruce Ogilvie, came around and asked us for help with parts for his Baja racing team," said Haines.

Haines had liked the idea of racing in Baja and would ultimately begin riding again and teamed up with friend and AMA Hall-of-Fame Inductee Jack Johnson. "We had been riding in Baja for fun but thought it would be great to race it." Over the years, Haines earned three SCORE Baja 500 class wins and 15 SCORE Baja 1000 class wins, as well as a SCORE Class 40 and Class 50 Championships. Haines and

LEFT: RIDING LEATHERS FROM HAINES' INVOLVEMENT IN PUTTING TOGETHER THE 2017 PRO MOTO UNLIMITED CHAMPIONSHIP WINNING TEAM OF FRANCISCO ARREDONDO

BELOW: HAINES' HISTORY IN BAJA RACING INCLUDES BEING ON THE DREAM TEAM WITH JACK JOHNSON AND MALCOLM SMITH IN 2004, WINNING THE PRO MOTO CLASS 50 CHAMPIONSHIP

Johnson teamed up with AMA Motorcycle Hall-of-Fame Legend Malcolm Smith, to win the Vet Class at the SCORE Baja 2000, and again in 2014 at the SCORE Baja 1000 to honor Smith in his last Baja race, winning the Pro Moto 50 class.

Haines eventually began a tour company to share with others the beauty and thrill of riding in Baja. "The tours would eventually compel someone to compete in SCORE and eventually, these same people wanted me to build their bikes to race," said Haines. Some of the latest teams Haines has



assisted with are SCORE Pro Moto Ironman racer Larry Janesky and 2017 SCORE Pro Moto Unlimited Champion Francisco Arredondo. "Both these guys came to us, and we made a turn-key racing team for them," said Haines. "That's now a part of my business too. We take a lot of pride in working with individuals who are not familiar with SCORE events and educate them. We love to see them grow as racing individuals. Arredondo, for example, came to us 10-years ago, then became the 2017 overall Pro Moto Champion. We're very proud of that."

Along with a knack at building racing motorcycles, Haines also applied his knowledge of the sport and the machines and became very good at turning out SCORE motorcycle racers. "I like the logistics part of it and dealing with people and personalities," says Haines. "Identifying their potential and elevating their game is fantastic. I like the camaraderie of it and SCORE events. It's a challenge, every race is different. Figuring it out and having it all come together is what's fun for me now."

With decades of stories of his days prepping bikes, teams, and racing in SCORE, Haines has two very memorable moments. "One is racing and winning our class with Malcolm and Johnson at the SCORE Baja 2000," said Haines. "The other is when I first met Roger Norman who would eventually come to own SCORE International. We met around '96 when my wife became good friends with Roger's wife Elise Norman. I helped Roger with a previous race in Nevada, and I knew a guy that had a pretty good Class 2 buggy that we could race. Roger and I teamed up and we both drove half of the race. We finished fourth in class, and that's where Roger got the bug." **SJ**



**HAINES PREPS
ALL OF THE
MOTORCYCLES USED
FOR HIS BAJA TOURS
AND WILL TEACH
ANYONE HOW TO
RIDE IN THE DESERT**



BAJA PREP TIPS

BY DAN SANCHEZ
PHOTOS BY DAN SANCHEZ

With a winning history in professional motocross and more than 40-years of riding and racing in Baja, Chris Haines is also known as one of the best racing bike preppers in the business. He more than anyone knows that you can't just take a stock motorcycle and ride the Baja desert. He, along with his head mechanic Jimmy Holly, demonstrated some basic set-up tips any motorcyclist can use in Baja racing. These simple modifications also apply to anyone going on an off-road excursion through the desert and prevent simple solutions to common small problems that can turn into big ones during a ride.

SEATS

It sounds simple enough, but preparing your motorcycle for Baja can start with some of the simple things like the seat. According to Haines, some riders prefer the stock seats, such as this factory Honda seat, that offers a durable textured top and rubber sides, allowing the rider to stay on the bike better. Others, like SCORE Pro Moto Ironman competitor Larry Janesky, prefer an aftermarket seat that provides more cushion and is covered in a softer suede.



BELOW: THIS SUEDE COVERED SEAT MAKES FOR A MORE COMFORTABLE RIDE, ESPECIALLY DURING LONGER DISTANCE RIDES



FUEL TANK

One of the first upgrades that Chris Haines makes to his Baja racing and excursion motorcycles is to upgrade the factory 2.5-gallon fuel tank to an aftermarket 3.5-gallon unit. The extra fuel allows racers to go farther between pit-stops. In Baja excursions the extra fuel allows riders to make it to the next gas station.



QUICK-FILL GAS CAP

In Baja racing, time is everything, so even changing out the factory fuel tank cap with an aftermarket racing quick-fill cap is an easy upgrade. When used with a quick fill fuel jug, it makes refueling quick and safe.

WHEN A QUICK-FILL FUEL CAP IS USED WITH A QUICK-FILL JUG, REFUELING IS SAFE AND FAST





EXHAUST MODIFICATIONS

Haines' head motorcycle mechanic Jimmy Holly preps the exhaust system, as it typically gets bent or damaged in Baja racing. Adding thread sealer to the bolts and lubricating the joints with a high-temperature anti-seize makes it easier to disassemble out in the field when necessary.



1 > Holly adds a red thread sealer to all bolts that are attached to the exhaust system to keep them from shaking loose.

2 > Anti-seize compound is added to all of the exhaust tube joints. It makes them easier to remove should it be necessary out in the field.

3 > Holly also suggests elongating the attachment point holes so that it is easier to reinstall the exhaust in the field. According to Haines and Holly, the exhaust should re-attach easily without forcing, otherwise it adds unnecessary tension to the system.



CHAIN ADJUSTMENT

Holly points out the proper position that the motorcycle's rear suspension should be, in order to make proper chain adjustments. According to Chris Haines, off-road terrain makes the rear suspension move up and down along its full range of motion. Making sure that the chain is properly adjusted eliminates it from being too tight, which can break and/or cause the chain to hit the engine and damage additional engine components.

1 > With the rear suspension in the neutral or level position, parallel to the ground, the chain should have two or three inches of slack, according to Haines

2 > Holly demonstrates how the chain is adjusted on both sides equally and also suggests adding silicone to any bolt or screw that attaches to the swing arm. Over time, water and dirt can enter into the swing-arm, allowing rust to form on the adjustment bolts, making it extremely hard to adjust.



RADIATOR SHIELD

Riding through brush and kicking up small rocks can puncture the factory radiator. Haines adds a mesh wire across the factory radiator screen as another level of protection to prevent any punctures that put an end to the day.

RADIATOR HOSE PROTECTION

The Haines team also adds protection to the factory radiator hose to prevent any accidental punctures from debris.



1 > Holly takes a used radiator hose and cuts off about an inch off each end

2 > It is then cut in the middle allowing it to be opened up to make a shield

3 > The new radiator hose is inserted inside and installed so that the shield faces outwards and can be held on with zip-ties

HANDLEBAR & THROTTLE REPAIR

It's common for a rider to go down in Baja and if the bike falls on the right side, it may damage the throttle. Haines and Holly offer some suggestions when adding a new handle and to prevent sand and moisture from damaging the throttle in the future.



1 > Replacing a damaged throttle is a simple enough task, requiring the removal of the throttle linkage bolts

2 > Slide on a new throttle onto the handlebar

3 > Holly likes to add a piece of tape, or in this case a round sticker, to the end to prevent water and moisture from entering into the handlebar, which can mess with the throttle in the future



4 > After glue is added to the new throttle, Holly sprays some silicone lube into the new rubber handle and slips it over the throttle



5 > Holly wire-ties the handle in place to prevent it from slipping off

6 > The end of the wire is tucked back into the rubber handle



FORK SLEEVES

While factory forks have seals to prevent moisture and dirt from entering into the shock, Haines' experience says that silt from dry lake beds and moisture still seeps in. For an added layer of protection, they use aftermarket neoprene sleeves that do the job well.

For any additional information on motorcycle prep or to experience a guided Baja Excursion, contact Chris Haines Baja Adventure Tours, (866) 262-8635.