



YAMAHA



Rory's Race Report - Hells Gate



Hi all



Things started off well in the UK, with a short trip to Dublin to see the cousins and a little bit of sightseeing, then over to Wales, where I'm staying with the Jones family. Geraint Jones is an Enduro legend from the 70's and 80's and his wealth of knowledge has been a great help. The family runs Yamaha Offroad Experience, which is a day in the mud, scooting round on one of Yamaha's Enduro bikes. In the winter they run training schools for the entry level Enduro riders, who are looking at improving their skills in the sport.



Winter here has been cold, very cold, the worst in 40 years with lots of snow and ice. This has definitely slowed down my plans to do endless amounts of riding. The snow has finally gone now but for the first two weeks here it was hard to get a decent ride, without risking broken bones and frostbite. Since then I have done a fair bit of riding in the local forest.



In 2008 the local motorcycle club ran a round of the WEC and the extreme test is still there and within walking distance of the house. So as you can imagine, I have lost count on how many times I have ridden it.



HELLS GATE

We sent the bike, Yamaha YZ250, down to Italy with local extremist Paul Bolton, and we managed to get flights from Birmingham to Pisa, Italy for 8 Euro.

We arrived on Wednesday and did the tourist thing in Pisa, took hundreds of photos, drunk too much coffee and ate loads of pasta. After endless u turns and detours we found the leaning tower, my god has it got a lean on.

The next day we drove to the little town of Barga, the mountain resort where HELLS GATE is run. Not a bike to be seen as we were the first to arrive, so we made the most of our time and walked the special tests. They were tricky but flowing and it was looking to be a really good test providing it stayed dry.

It wasn't to be as on Friday the heavens opened up and it poured down, turning streams to rivers, soil to mud and grippy rock climbs to near impossible.



RACE DAY

The Enduro started off well and I only got stuck twice on the 1st test and posted the 12th fastest time. As the day wore on the rocks became polished making the tests very hard. In the 2nd test we had 20 minutes to do a 12minute special test and lots of riders were losing lots of time, even Taddy dropped a minute. I managed to stay on time until the last check, the 5 hour Extreme Enduro was wearing me down to a struggling trial rider on this anything but easy course. I was finished, I became negative with the track, the bike and myself, all the things not to do, I struggled to the finish, losing 13minutes on the trail and finished up 31st overall. Only the top 30 get into the night race, I was gutted and kicked myself for losing time. But I know if I had made it I wouldn't have had the energy needed to give the night race a decent effort.



My 1st attempt at HELLS GATE was not a good one, but looking back I did learn a lot. I had been riding most days, running and spending time at the Gym, but it wasn't enough. I will have to train doubly hard if I am to succeed with my ambition to be a top Enduro rider and I will succeed.



So I have two weeks until the next event, THE TOUGH ONE, and I will have my head down working hard for a decent result.



A special thanks to the Jones family and Yamaha.



Cheers
Rory

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