

Great Australian F 800 GS

In 1981 The Great North Run half marathon was first held in Newcastle-upon-Tyne in England. It has now grown to be the largest of its kind in the world and has expanded into other 'Great Run' races in the UK. Founded by former British athletics champion, Brendon Foster, The Great Run has now gone international with races in Australia and Ethiopia.

The Great Australian Run was recently held in Melbourne, one of the world's great sporting cities. The 15km race started and finished in the main straight of the Albert Park F1 street circuit. The picturesque course through the streets of Melbourne gave the 400 runners a unique view of such iconic Melbourne landmarks as the MCG, home to the 1956 Olympic and 2006 Commonwealth Games; the Melbourne Tennis Centre and the impressive Flinders Street railway station.



It was a run for the masses but with a full international field headed by twice-Olympic gold medallist Haile Gebrselassie. The 35-year-old Ethiopian is also the world marathon record holder (2.03.59) and is arguably the greatest distance runner ever. The women's field contained Romanian Constantina Dita-Tomescu and Catherine Ndereba of Kenya, gold and silver medallists in the woman's marathon at the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

However, the best seat in the house for The Great Australian Run was on an F 800 GS supplied by BMW Motorrad Australia. The dynamic and nimble travel enduro was the ideal mount for local journalist Damien Cook as he carried the course photographer into the heart of the action. The former Australian marathon representative – who had previously ridden the F 800 GS in the Australian bush – was impressed with the way it took to the city.

“It was all action from the gun, keeping up with both women’s and men’s races,” said Damien. “It was important to give the photographer the best opportunity to get the images that would take the race to media around the world. The manoeuvrability and tractability of the bike at slow speed – even with the photographer moving about – was impressive, as was the ability of the long-travel suspension to cope with the occasional kerb that need to be mounted!”

The Great Australian Run victories were celebrated by Haile Gebrselassie, who won the men’s race and Catherine Ndereba, who was fastest in the women’s. It was a great success and the F 800 GS was a vital part of the event, helping take the images of these legendary athletes to a worldwide audience.

