

2008 – a year to remember

2008 has been a sensational 12 months for BMW Motorrad with so many success stories to celebrate, from individual motorcycling achievements all the way to factory team victories. There just isn't enough room to list them all, but here are a few that are well worth remembering.

January

BMW Motorrad Motorsport team riders Andreas Lettenbichler and Jean-Francois Goblet compete in the Indoor Enduro World Cup – the first ever FIM sanctioned indoor enduro series – on the factory G 450 X.

February

BMW Motorrad Motorsport presents its 2008 off-road team, with riders Anders Eriksson, Jean-Francois Goblet and Bert Meyer set to compete in the Enduro World Championship. As an added bonus, the team also presents Simo Kirssi as an extra rider for the WEC and the European Cross Country Championship series.

BMW Motorrad's Chris Pfeiffer successfully defends the Streetbike Freestyle World Championship in Zurich, once again dominating proceedings aboard his BMW F 800 stunt bike, winning each of the four rounds to retain the crown he won at the inaugural event in 2007.

March

Team BMW Motorrad Motorsport riders Richard Cooper and Brian Parriott finish a sensational fifth and sixth respectively on the HP2 Sport in the AMA Formula Xtreme Daytona 200 at the historic Florida circuit.

Markus Barth and Jürgen Fuchs of Team Motobike achieve a class win in the prestigious 1,000 km Hockenheim race, as the BMW HP2 Sport passes its test in series production sports racing with flying colours.

Two BMW-riding Dutchmen win the third edition of the Heroes Legend classic off-road rally from Paris to Dakar. Riding for the Bert Duursma Motoren dealership team, Jos Bourgondien and Harrie Jacobi beat all challengers to win this tough 'rallye-raïd' event.

Seven-times World Enduro Champion Anders Eriksson gets BMW Motorrad Motorsport's participation in the 2008 WEC series off to an extremely promising start at the GP of Sweden by claiming two fourth place finishes in the competitive Enduro 3 class, showing that BMW is ready to challenge for podium positions in its first full season in the WEC.

April

Factory rider Simo Kirssi gives BMW a victory at the first German Cross Country race of the year at Tollwitz, much to the delight of the whole BMW Motorrad Motorsport team, who have prepared intensely for this off-road series.

Five-times World Motocross Champion Joel Smets races through the Australian Four-Day Enduro field to finish 6th overall on his showroom-ready G 450 X. The result,

against a top field of riders on factory-prepared race machinery, is a stunning endorsement of Joel's talents and that of the new BMW G 450 X.

May

BMW Motorrad intern Sebastian Klein leaves Munich for a seven-month enduro trip on an F 800 GS that will see him ride approximately 25,000-kilometres from Munich to Bangkok.

BMW Motorrad Motorsport's Anders Eriksson adds another win to the growing list of victories for the BMW G 450 X by finishing in first place at the '12-Timmars' enduro team race that takes place at Skövde in southern Sweden.

June

The tough terrain of the notorious Erzberg Rodeo turns out to be a perfect playground for the two BMW Motorrad factory riders, Andreas Lettenbichler and Gerhard Forster, who finish in second and seventh place respectively (out of 500 starters) on their BMW G 450 X sport enduros.

Gerhard Forster celebrates an emphatic victory in the third round of the Austrian Cross Country Championship at Ampflwang. Following on from his excellent performance at Erzberg, the 'extreme' riding specialist wins the ACC enduro in spectacular style, beating his nearest challenger by a massive seven minutes!

Simo Kirssi makes it two wins out of two for the BMW Motorrad team in the second race of the 2008 German Cross Country Championship in Walldorf. In fact, there was no way past factory rider Kirssi and team-mate Bert Meyer, with the pair completing a fascinating one-two finish with a dominating display on the G 450 X in difficult conditions.

The BMW Motorrad Motorsport team has much to celebrate following the fourth round of the 2008 World Enduro Championship staged in Kwidzyn, Poland, as Enduro 2 class rider Simo Kirssi claims BMW's first ever enduro world championship podium with a well deserved third place finish.

July

BMW Motorrad UK's Off-Road Skills Chief Instructor Simon Pavey enters the first Transorientale Rally from St Petersburg to Beijing and the Great Wall of China. Riding a virtually standard BMW G 650 Xchallenge, he finishes the 11,000-kilometre rally in 18th place, achieving five top-ten stage finishes along the way.

Thousands of motorcyclists from all over the world pack their panniers and head for the picturesque Alpine resort of Garmisch-Partenkirchen for the annual BMW Motorrad Days festival. The event is the culmination of a year's work behind the scenes by a dedicated organisation team that is determined to make sure that this free festival celebrating all things BMW gets better every year.

August

Team BMW Motorrad Motorsport takes a superb 1-2 in its class at the fourth round of this year's Qtel Endurance FIM Championship at Oschersleben. Twenty-two teams contest the Open Class in the 8 hour race, but BMW Motorrad Motorsport defeats

them all, with Richard Cooper and Thomas Hinterreiter taking first place, and Stéphane Mertens, Rico Penzkofer and Gregory Fastré taking the runner-up spot.

Around 3,000 BMW Motorrad enthusiasts from across Japan visit the 2008 Japanese Bikermeeting. Staged for the fifth time in Hakuba, high in the mountains of Nagano, the Japanese version of BMW Motorrad Days provides a fantastic mix of attractions and proves to be a huge success.

BMW Motorrad Motorsport's Simo Kirssi enjoys a tough, but well deserved victory at the fifth round of the German Cross Country Championship in Mühlhausen. After a two-hour duel with French Supercross star Cyrille Coulon, the BMW factory rider claims the victory that keeps him at the top of the 2008 championship leaderboard.

The 8 Hours of Spa endurance race takes place with a special appearance by the factory BMW HP2 Sport, which is entered and used by private Belgian team Herpigny Motors. Team riders Stéphane Mertens, Thomas Hinterreiter and Sébastien Legrelle finish in a fantastic fifth place overall at the historic Francorchamps circuit.

Gary Orr, the co-owner of California dealership, San Diego BMW Motorcycles, accomplishes a longstanding dream to ride from California's west coast all the way to Florida on a modified BMW K 1200 LT – a distance of more than 3,500 kilometres – without stopping!

BMW Motorrad's Chris Pfeiffer reigns supreme at the 2008 European Stunt Riding Championships, taking the title for the third consecutive year in emphatic style. Just weeks after sustaining a broken vertebra, Chris wows the judges in Roethis, Austria, with an array of stunts designed to achieve maximum points.

September

BMW Motorrad Motorsport team rider Anders Eriksson, along with Finnish enduro legend Kari Tiainen and Spaniard Xacob Agra successfully put BMW's G 450 X through its toughest ever competitive challenge and complete the 2008 International Six Days Enduro event without any problems to claim gold medal finishes.

The HP2 Sport's first race in Japan leads to victory at the Motegi 7 Hours Masters' endurance race. Held at the world-famous Motegi Twin Ring racing circuit, close to Tokyo, the Tras/PIAA Racing's HP2 Sport beats 46 other privateer teams to finish first in its debut race appearance in the land of the rising sun.

After five gruelling days, BMW Motorrad Motorsport's Gerhard Forster achieves a fantastic runner-up finish at the 2008 Red Bull Romaniacs. Riding a BMW G 450 X approximately 620 off-road kilometres over four days in the toughest conditions imaginable, Forster beats 207 starters from 29 nations, with only one rider finishing in front of him in this hardest of enduro rallies.

BMW factory rider Simo Kirssi guides his BMW G 450 X to a dominant win in the XCPro class of the penultimate round of the German Cross Country championship at Schweinfurt. Team-mate Bert Meyer finishes in the runner-up position after two hours of racing under tough conditions.

More than 4,500 motorcyclists turn up to participate in the many events and activities on offer at the sixth, annual Encuentro BMW Riders 2008 event (EBMWR08) that takes place in Andalusia in southern Spain.

The G 450 X success story continues, but this time, it has nothing to do with the Enduro World Championship, cross-country racing, or even 'extreme' hard enduro. The latest success is achieved in the German Supermoto Championship, where a young rider called Fabian Bachmann rides a modified BMW G 450 X to two podium places.

The Unstoppable off-road success story continues as BMW Motorrad opens enduro parks close to Korea's capital city Seoul, and Buenos Aires in Argentina.

October

Simo Kirssi becomes the new German Cross Country champion in the XCPro class. The 'flying Finn' takes the title one day after his 29th birthday at the final round in Schefflenz. Team-mate Bert Meyer secures third place in the championship standings.

After more than two years riding his BMW R 80 GS around the world, Felix Bergmeister returns home safely to Austria. The final challenge sees Felix ride from Vladivostok all the way back to Europe, experiencing some of the worst road and weather conditions imaginable in Siberia.

As the 2008 enduro-racing season draws to a close, the great results continue to roll in for BMW Motorrad. On the same weekend that Simo Kirssi claims the 2008 GCC title, G 450 X chassis designer Stefan Krause secures the 2008 ADAC Pirelli Enduro Cup at Reutlingen in southern Germany.

After six months of preparation, the inaugural BMW Motorrad International GS Trophy finally gets under way, and teams from Germany, Italy, Spain, USA and Japan compete against each other during several days of challenging enduro riding and physical tests. Team USA takes the honour of becoming the first GS Trophy champions but every team makes history by competing in the inaugural event.

Simo Kirssi and his BMW G 450 X dominate in the European XCC final at Mattighofen, Austria, taking a convincing start-to-finish victory against some of the world's best cross-country riders to claim the 2008 title.

November

San Jose BMW Racing's Brian Parriott wins the American Federation of Motorcycling Open Twins Series on the BMW HP2 Sport, with an emphatic victory at the 2.7-mile Buttonwillow circuit in California. After six months and seven race meetings of the series, the BMW rider secures the title against a grid of race-tuned Ducatis at the very last round of the 2008 championship.

The BMW Motorrad Motorsport team announces an extremely competitive rider line-up for the 2009 World Enduro Championship. Next season, Manxman David Knight and Finns Juha Salminen and Marko Tarkkala will spearhead the team's assault on the eight-round world championship and together will surely form the most exciting rider line-up of 2009. Watch this space!