

## THE YEAR IN REVIEW 2017 WITH NIUGINI DIRT

Another year of adventure on the bikes has come and gone in PNG.

Sadly just one Tour group this year. There is this perception that we ride amongst raskols and are constantly in danger of attack from them.

Every rider who has been here can testify as to how untrue that is

The year started off with a couple of nasty injuries to Rick and myself.

In Jan I clipped the edge of a fallen tree and falling over at 0km per hour my left arm got tangled in a vine – resulting in dislocated shoulder, of which I am an expert at, this being my 3<sup>rd</sup>. The bone was pinching a nerve and it was agony. A 10minute walk through overgrown vegetation was bad; every movement pinched the nerve further. Lying in a cool river while Rick and Chris rode back to get a vehicle dulled the pain, as did the strange combination of drugs Troy gave me.

I'm sure he tried to slip some Rohypnol in there somewhere....

2 hrs later the boys return, surprisingly merry and well fed it appeared. Troy had been holding my arm, trying to rotate the shoulder to relocate it. We heard the car in the distance and the moment we saw it the shoulder clicked back into place...pain completely gone. A carton of beer later we took off for Lae, with me swearing Troy to secrecy about my bubbling and cries to call for the chopper.

Not more than 3 weeks later Rick takes a tumble near the airport, on a off camber trail. Avoiding a dog he falls off the wrong way and does his shoulder in. Too far to walk out this time so he has to ride pillion.

Joel, Ari and Pete visited us in late Feb, and at the same time Cory was here doing some machinery work so was able to put in some hours on refurbish of my bikes. The boys had a ball and are planning a return trip with wives

In early April Chris, Mal and myself talked about riding to Finschaven. Seeing as how this hadn't been done for 30 years, and we had no idea how to get there, our plan to get to Finch and back by 5pm on a Saturday was going to be tight.

So tight in fact that we actually arrived in Lae a full day later than we planned. We had just the clothes we were in (Chris had a toothbrush), and no food or spare fuel so we ended up in a little bit of strife. Riding at night for two hours with no lights, regularly falling over, sleeping on the floor of a hut with wet riding gear on was not fun – but an experience. Getting to Finschaven to find that it's a 3-hour banana boat trip back and its rough as hell – it was the best weekend on a bike ever!

Independence Day in Sept saw the Morobe Motorcycle Club and the Pom Motorcycle Club meet on neutral turf at the old forestry town of Bulolo for the first Southern Cross Enduro. Daniel Hargreaves finished first in the men's individual, while Pom won the Club Trophy. This excellent event will be an annual enduro.

Freestyle riders the world over know Jackson 'Jacko' Strong. The first man ever to land a Front Flip in a Competition, Jacko had been keen to come to PNG for many years. So it was with great pleasure that we saw him in action at the annual Morobe Show. Another new recruit Jake Smith joined long rider Joel Balchin for two days of Freestyle Jumps.

I rode Jacko's bike around the arena and honestly he's got nothing on me, the biggest cheers of the day were for me pulling wheelies in shorts

We planted a rider amongst the crowd, and called out for volunteers to ride one of the bikes. Ian was hoisted over the surging crowd after being selected. After a 2 min training session he is 'suddenly' able to pull wheelies. The crowd erupts as I give him a SP green can to drink, he throws that down in one gulp and the empty is fired into the crowd – and they go berserk.

2017 saw us locate numerous new tracks, meet new people in remote locations of PNG and as usual we kept it safe, had a ball and had a few beers.

We had beers in bars,  
beers in cars,

beers in the water,  
beers with our daughters,

beers on the plains  
beers watching the planes

beers fixing bikes  
and many beers cursing bikes

beers in boats,  
even beers with a goat

beers in the pool  
And beers with many a fool

Merry Xmas / Book your 2018 Tour with Niugini Dirt now.