

# TALKING TO

PETER OLSINGER & THOMAS UHR



## Evolving without revolutionizing



**Peter Olsinger**, BRP vice President of Finance, and **Thomas Uhr**, BRP General Manager, share the details of how and why the new Rotax 125 MAX Evo engine was developed... and unveil a possible location of the RGF for the next future!

REPORT & MURTAS / PHOTOS D. FANTANELLA

The presentation of the new Rotax 125 MAX Evo engine has caught everyone by surprise. One of the most successful karting products in the history of the sport has been refined, improved, made easier to use for the end customer, after 15 years of outstanding service. We took the opportunity to interview Peter Olsinger, BRP vice President of Finance, and Thomas Uhr, BRP General Manager, the day after the presentation of the new Rotax 125 MAX Evo engine.

**What was the factor that sparked off the need to produce an evolution of the very successful 125 MAX engine?**

**PO** "It's very important for us to keep our customers satisfied, and the way we decided to achieve this is by introducing an evolution of our existing engine which adds

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"EACH INDIVIDUAL COUNTRY WILL DECIDE WHEN TO ADOPT THE NEW ENGINE... BUT THE 2015 ROTAX GRAND FINALS WILL BE RUN ON THE EVO."



only in terms of ease of use and optimized performance.

Organizing this introduction in the right way was definitely a big challenge. It's very easy to make a mistake in the process, so it was really important for us to get everything right."

**How did you tackle particularly the carburettor, which represented always a big concern. Did you work closely with Dell'Orto?**

**PO** "Yes, after we identified the right way forward we communicated our project to Dell'Orto and then we carried out all the testing both at the factory and on track. We were aware of the problems relating to the carburettor and the difficulty to get the set-up right. And we also knew that we had to guarantee an easier carburettor to set-up, and with much less effort a better performance to everybody."

**TU** "It's always a matter of making sure you have a good working relationship with your partners. Dell'Orto is a very knowledgeable company, but one thing is to tell your supplier what you would like, another is for the supplier to be able to come back with something that works very well. And we are happy to say that Dell'Orto did just that."

**The new 125 MAX Evo was not made overnight. How long have you been working on this project for?**

**PO** "The process has been going on for over a year. First we had to assess the situation and get the first ideas for improvement. Then the real challenge was to keep it a secret because we could not risk having the news out in the market. It would have created a lot of misunderstanding, which would have not helped the process. So we knew we had to come out with the news only when the engine was ready."

**Was there ever a phase when you felt you weren't going in the right direction?**

**PO** "We had a clear idea of what to do right from the beginning, but during the development phase it did happen that we realized what we had on paper was not producing the results we expected, and we had to adjust accordingly along the way to get exactly what we were aiming for."

**TU** "To put it in a different way, the engineering capability at Rotax is so big that we would have been able to bring more innovation to the existing engine, and to be honest with you, we did have



Peter Olsinger and Thomas Uhr with the Rotax team in Valencia. The 19th edition of the Rotax Grand Finals attracted once again over 300 drivers from all over the world, something which the Austrian manufacturer is very proud of.

some fights internally to decide how far to go so as to match it with the maximum benefit for the customer. The key issue was to come up with something that would guarantee more reliability, performance without adding too much cost to the end customer, and at the same time making sure we could retrofit the engines already present in the market. And I think we've come out with a very good product, the perfect compromise for the needs of the market. We went through a similar process with our aircraft engines a few years back, with the outcome, we learnt a lot during that project and this helped us massively this time around."

**When did you release the news to your network of distributors?**

**TU** "They actually learnt about the new engine only 7/8 weeks before the official announcement at the Grand Finals. But you have to understand that we listen very closely to the market, our distributors are our ears and the Evo engine is simply the result of all this feedback, if you start telling, you have to be fair and tell everyone, so we presented the news at our Distributor Meeting to everybody."

**"THE EVO ENGINE GUARANTEES MORE RELIABILITY, PERFORMANCE, AND CAN BE RETROFITTED TO THE ENGINES ALREADY PRESENT IN THE MARKET."**

**Which was the first reaction?**

**TU** "It was a mixture of excitement and caution. The main concerns were about the existing engines, how to go about the transition, and when the new engines will be ready. So I was extremely happy to learn that at the official presentation there were only positive comments. It seems that the solutions we came up with have been very well received."

**PO** "Some of our distributors also asked if we could push the changes to 2016, but obviously it's not possible as the news is out. We will most certainly do everything possible to help all our distributors with the transition and manage the situation the best possible way. The real breakthrough happened at the official presentation when everyone agreed that the plan is good."

**How will you manage the transition?**

**PO** "It's up to each individual country to decide when to adopt the new engine,

as rules differ from one to the other. We won't force anyone into the new engine, we will still be able to deliver the old engine to those countries that see it fit, as we don't think it's fair to rush the adoption of the Evo engine."

**TU** "In the long term we will definitely wish to see everyone adopting the Evo engine on a global scale because it's much easier to manage and its reliability has been improved considerably. So to this end, the 2015 Rotax Grand Finals will be run with the Evo engine."

**Will it have an impact on the warranty policy you're so famous for?**

**TU** "Our main concern is to have happy customers. We will make sure all our customers, both racers and hobby drivers are satisfied with our products, whether they run the existing or the Evo engine."



Helmut Voglsam, Rotax Products Sales, and Peter Olsinger at the presentation evening of the 125 MAX Evo engine.

#### What's the next challenge?

**TU** *"Once success is achieved, it's very important and even more difficult to stay at the top. This is already in itself a challenge, and we will look to continue to pursue success as we've done so far, by innovating at a pace suitable to our customers. The same applies to our series, which is a fantastic platform, particularly in attracting the new generations and allow the sport of Karting to renovate itself. Also we have received a lot of interest and enthusiasm from South America, a very interesting market with a lot of potential for the sport to grow. It definitely represents a future challenge, it's certainly a tough one due to national restrictions, but if we'll manage to organize the Grand Finals there in the next couple of years I will be extremely happy."*



**"SOUTH AMERICA HAS A LOT OF POTENTIAL FOR THE SPORT TO GROW... IF WE'LL MANAGE TO ORGANIZE THE GRAND FINALS THERE IN THE NEXT COUPLE OF YEARS I WILL BE EXTREMELY HAPPY!"**