



Days before embarking on his 2015 African motorcycle trip where he and other riders would travel 10,000 km through six countries, DRIVEN was able to keep the engines at bay for an exclusive one-on-one with Charley Boorman: British actor, travel writer, adventurer, TV personality, and, of course, an absolute motorcycle fanatic.

Report by SARAH-CLAIRE PICTON
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A face and name that many motorbike enthusiasts would recognise from the *Long Way Round* documentary TV series with his friend, actor Ewan McGregor, Charley Boorman has life experience as vast as the roads he has travelled. Boorman talks with candour and poignant passion about his adventure travelling, early passion for motorbikes, the gems you'd find in his garage, why BMW is the natural choice for motorcycles, some of the best routes to ride in Africa, and his epic 2015 *Long Way Down* African journey.

Sitting comfortably next to Boorman at the DoubleTree by Hilton, Woodstock, Cape Town, I read an extract from a quote by British journalist Ted Simon: "I think the motorcycle is best, because it puts you so much in contact with everything. You experience much more closely the nature of the terrain and almost taste the cultures' that you're riding through." Simon is one of Boorman's most iconic explorers, and his book *Jupiter Travels* was the mental fuel behind his and Ewan McGregor's 2004 *Long Way Round* journey. Despite it being over a decade since the epic 2004 event, Boorman continues to learn, every day, from that journey. "It is this type of travelling that really broadens mental horizons and makes you much more accepting of people, and it made me a much more patient person – I now feel I can go anywhere in the world and fit in very easily... Travel is the spice of life."

The map of Boorman's life stories takes you on a voyage

all over the world. But, let's route back to his first motorbike. When he was 11 years old, Boorman starred in *The Great Train Robbery*, and used the money from the role to buy his first motorbike, a Yamaha DT 100. The bike is not only still around, but is still in use. "I was just on it the other day," smiles Boorman. On the topic of his personal collection, Boorman reflects: "People always say: 'do you have any regrets in life?'" Well, Boorman's answer to this difficult life question is that the only ****real**** regrets he has are the bikes he has sold. And he can remember them all, "One being the Honda XR 600R, which is a beautiful bike that I had to sell to buy a sports bike."

Boorman is not a fan of any "biker snobbery" and his love for riding all types of bikes is reflected in his current collection. He has a couple of dirt bikes because he does a lot of Enduro racing (he braced the treacherous Dakar Rally in 2006, but unfortunately did not finish). "I have a Beta 400 (Enduro bike) and a beautiful Husqvarna 350 4-stroke – I use these and race throughout the year whenever I can." In his collection are also some sports bikes and track bikes, "including BMW's latest sports bike, a BMW 1000 RR, and a BMW HP2 Sport, which is a very odd boxer engine sports bike that is kind of cool." Boorman also has an old 1959 Triumph that he made into a café-racer, a W650 he made into a flat-tracker, and "a big old replica, knucklehead 1.6-litre Bobber."