

# TEN MINUTES WITH... NICK BROCHA

If you not seen the video of Nick's stretched ZX-10R vs an RX-7 drifting then get on t'internet asap

WORDS: JON URRY PICS: ICON

## It all started when I moved to Vegas.

I used to run a video production company in Washington State making documentaries and that got me interested in sportsbikes. It was the hooligan times of the late 1990s and I did a few films on stunt gangs such as the Star Boyz. I wasn't a stunt rider or a track guy, I just loved bikes and used to commute on my R1 and go for rides at the weekend. Then I moved to Las Vegas and while the sun is out all the time the riding conditions are miserable; the roads are straight and really slick. All the fun of hauling ass around Washington disappeared pretty quickly and I ended up putting the R1 on ice and buying an old CBR600 with the idea of becoming a stunt rider.

## I can't believe that this is my job!

There are a few historic stunt riding roads around Vegas that I used to frequent, but I practiced a lot off-road as well. When I started getting into stunt riding it went from being hooliganism on the roads to more of a sport where people really started to learn how to control the motorcycle. I'm lucky enough to have made stunt riding my profession for the last six years, I've managed to earn a living out of it without getting a proper job! I won't complain, it's not a bad way of making money and makes getting out of bed a bit easier.

## There's no suspension on the rear!

If I was running a stock wheelbase bike I would hyper inflate the rear to about 50 or 60psi, but with the extension you don't need to, especially as the bike doesn't have a rear shock. For the video I ran a solid strut instead of a shock to take out the suspension sag and reduce the chances of it hooking up and spitting me off. It was an idiot's gamble and the first time I tested it was in front of the camera, but it paid off, that thing lights the rear up so easily...

## Drifting is like riding off road.

Drifting is kind of similar to riding a motocross bike I guess. The technique varies depending on the corner but on the faster ones I'd go around at about 40mph and about 30 feet before the apex I'd pin it to kick it sideways and steer the rear with the throttle and counter steer to go around the corner. Believe it or not, drifting isn't that hard, the most difficult thing was having a car behind! That really makes a difference...

## The car behind changes everything.

The car was really intimidating. It would be sitting there sideways on the rev limiter a few feet behind and the noise was so scary. I was exiting some corners as I clicked into third gear and Jim in the car was right behind me.

## It's as close as it looks on screen.

We had a really close call in practice, it's a shame the cameras weren't on us. I screwed my line up really badly. The problem with the drift bike is that you have to pick your line and stick to it. Get it wrong and you have to back off which allows the rear to grip and aims you towards the wall, so you either have to get it sliding again to turn or smash into the wall! I mistimed it and ended up heading between Jim and the wall. I had to get off the gas to gain traction and turn the bike. When I looked back Jim was about a foot behind - sideways with all four tyres smoking. Luckily he's a fantastically gifted driver and somehow he managed to spin the car down the track and not kill me! He saved the day.

**BELIEVE IT OR NOT,  
DRIFTING ISN'T THAT  
HARD. THE DIFFICULT  
BIT WAS HAVING THE  
CAR RIGHT BEHIND!**

## Drifting was just the next stunt.

Most stunt riders can back-in a normal street motorcycle and drift out, it's all part of the act, but I got hired to do a show in Aruba, which is a small island off the Venezuelan coast. Out there they do a lot of drifting. They take older GSX-R1000s and stretch the hell out of them, usually by adding over 12-inches to the swingarm, but keep the stock wheels. They do massive burnouts down the road and swing the bike back and forth. It looked like a lot of fun so I gave it a go.

## My bike started as a wreck.

My friends own a salvage shop and they had a 2005 ZX-10R come in. They didn't know if they were going to tear it apart or repair it and sell it, so I convinced them to give it to me for a short period of time. I still haven't given it back! The ZX-10R is fantastic for drifting, especially that model year. I really like the 2005 bike, I actually have two of them now.





### Jim, the driver, came with benefits.

Jim is a friend of a friend. He owns the race track in Albuquerque that we shot the video at, but he's also a former Indy car racer. The first time I met him was at the track when we tried to kill each other but I looked at his credentials on the internet. Thankfully they weren't bullshit...

### All the practice paid off in the end.

It's funny, that was probably the easiest day's riding I have ever done. It took me six years of devoted practice to become a stunt rider and pull off the more difficult tricks but people come up having watched the video and say 'that's the greatest thing I've ever seen!' I laugh, as honestly it wasn't that hard but I'm fantastically happy as it's really raised my profile. Due to my background I've always shouted about doing more videos on unique bikes, now people pay attention and I'm getting to do more crazy projects!

### This is just the beginning.

The video was a lot of fun and we are planning to do another one. Now I know how the bike reacts a bit better we are going to change the set-up and hopefully get much better results. I want to be able to back it in then take off with the rear sliding, flat track style, so we may have to experiment, and maybe shorten the swingarm a little bit. We'll see!

### The stock bike isn't bad, either.

I've ridden the ZX-10R on the road a few times and it's remarkably comfortable, even with the shock replaced by a strut. Tight corners are a little bit interesting but it's not that bad on longer ones. Unless you're doing a U-turn, you are in good shape, but I probably wouldn't take it for a spirited ride...



See the action at:  
[YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=VYPOFIMB7ZA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VYPOFIMB7ZA)

### THE BIKE:

The bike is a 2005 Kawasaki ZX-10R with a Roaring Toyz swingarm that can be adjusted between 8 and 12-inches over stock, I have it set at 10-inches over right now. The fork is dropped by about an inch through the yokes and I have replaced the shock with a solid strut. The engine is standard but it has a full Leo Vince system to make it sound better. I run either Avon Cobra or Storm touring tyres, set at standard road pressures. Those tyres are so good, they last for ages and sliding doesn't really destroy them. It's the old Garry McCoy theory. **Nick Brocha**

### THE MAN BEHIND THE WHEEL OF THE RX-7

From 1996 to 2001 I was an Indy car racer, I raced in three Indy 500s and was Rookie of the Year in 1997, but a lack of funds put an end to my career. Since then I've helped my son race and recently I've got into drifting. The car is a 1994 Mazda



RX-7 with a Chevy V8 engine that is bored, stroked and supercharged! We took it from about 370bhp to around 625bhp, just about enough to get it sliding. Although I've only been officially drifting for less than a year I learnt to race in the 1970s and back then cars didn't handle so you slid them out of corners. I just didn't know it was called drifting, we called it power sliding. Drifting isn't that hard, I have a hand brake and I step on the clutch and hit that to initiate the drift to give a quick snap to the rear end, from then on you just dump the clutch and step on the throttle. You modify the drift with the clutch, accelerator or brake. During the shoot I could predict Nick's path so I let him be the constant and pulled up as close to him as I could behind him, there were a few near misses but it was a lot of fun to do. Nick's a really talented guy and it was a pleasure to work with him, so I hope we'll do more stuff in the future. **Jim Guthrie**