Schooled

## THE CALIFORNIA SUPERBIKE SCHOOL IS ONE SCHOOL WE WOULDN'T MIND SPENDING TIME IN

WORDS: **ASHOK GEORGE** / PHOTOGRAPHY: **CSS / ADITYA BEDRE**

If you think about it, it's quite ridiculous. Over the fifteen years that I've been riding motorcycles, lots of what I have learnt has come from mistakes made, instructions from peers/colleagues and reading. But over the three days that I spent at the California Superbike School, I managed to learn so many new things that it left me wondering what it is that I knew to begin with. When it comes to motorcycling, I've concluded, most of us know very little.

CSS is one of those things that need to be a must-do if you're serious about riding motorcycles. Of course, there are other track schools all over the country. But none of them benefit from the years of research and development as well as the continuously evolving curriculum that Keith Code himself designs. The lessons are rooted in science and not in the obvious way. They are lessons that once you apply

This is Marigo Lainopoulou. She's course control at CSS. Always listen to Marigo!
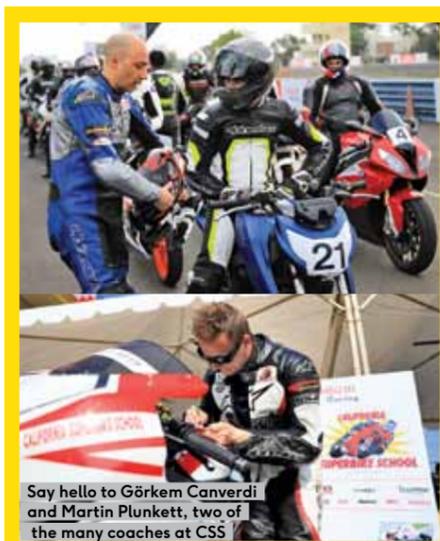
Say hello to Görkem Canverdi and Martin Plunkett, two of the many coaches at CSS

on track, make you suspect witchcraft. Until the coaches explain the physics behind it, that is.

For example, I've always known that staying on the throttle gives me more stability. But I hadn't bothered to think about why or how it gave me more stability. The first thing that the coaches explained to us was that as the throttle input increases, the suspension rises and transfers more weight to the rear which is the end with the larger tyres and, hence, larger contact patch. And the more throttle you give, the more weight the bike puts down on the rear tyre, making the contact patch even larger. Ergo, more grip.

And from throttle control drills, the school then moves on to more advanced techniques. The

second day, for instance, is all about getting your vision right. Coaches spend the entire day getting you to look where you want to go, set correct reference points and not get distracted even if there are other motorcycles around you. The days are divided into five lessons and each lesson will have one classroom session and one on-track session. The coaches follow you around during the on-track session, watching you and correcting you as required. And as soon as the on-track session comes to an end, they call you in and give you feedback about what you were doing right and wrong. And since every group has one coach looking after a maximum of three students, personal attention is guaranteed.

And personal attention is much needed. Especially when the concepts and drills get more advanced, like it did on the final day.

Once the basics were all taken care of, the real stuff began. Day three was the most physically taxing day of the school. It was all about using your body to make the bike do what you want.

Gary Adhsead was the head coach at CSS. He facilitated all the classroom, theory sessions
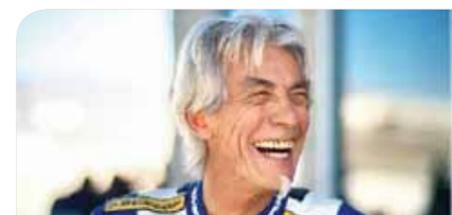
Keith Code

Meet the man behind the California Superbike School – Keith Code. A former motorcycle racer, Keith's research forms the basis of the curriculum at the California Superbike School. Some of the most successful motorcycle racers (Wayne Rainey, for one) in the world have been trained by him. His books "A Twist of the Wrist" and "A Twist of the Wrist II" have long been regarded as holy books for motorcycle riders the world over.

Concepts such as hook turns, hip flicks, power steering and attack angles were introduced. Wondering what they are? I won't tell you.

No, not because I'm mean, but because you really should go attend CSS. After having spent most of my motorcycling life not attending riding schools, I now understand why it needs to be a part of your growth as a motorcyclist. The skills you pick up at the school not only make you blisteringly fast on track, but also makes you a much safer rider. From lagging behind the big bikes on my little RTR 200, by the end of day three, I was overtaking them in corner exits. I was noticing things that I had missed for all the years I've been to the MMRT. I was also reacting faster, more aggressively yet more accurately to all the information coming my way. And I've realised that these skills have massive benefits on the street. Imagine a car jumps out from a side lane as you're doing 100kph on a highway. For every half a second, you will have lost 15 metres. And in such situations, it could mean the difference between going your way or ending up in a hospital bed. Yes, CSS might be expensive. But Keith Code's years of scientific research is worth every penny. ▰