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WILD FILE

THINK PINK

Kane Friesen's pretty-tough
Kawasaki Ninja ZX-6R

WORDS: Aaron Frank PHOTO: John Zamora

With the possible exception of a contractor-grade, 15-amp Milwaukee jackhammer, nothing hits the pavement harder or more often than a stunt bike. Known as much for crashworthiness as quick acceleration, Kawasaki's Ninja ZX-6R has become the mount of choice for street free-style practitioners around the world, including Kane Friesen of Las Vegas.

Fitting for a Sin City showman, Friesen's extroverted ZX-6R screams, "Look at me, dammit!" with a hot-pink leopard-print paint job by Buddha Paint in Orange County, acres of chrome from Sport Chrome and even a fuchsia-toned powdercoat on the Marchesini forged racing wheels. It's built to crash, too, retrofitted with heavy-duty Cheetah Racing bodywork protected by a Tygershark crash cage and Powers subframe cage to absorb

the inevitable mousetrap crashes. Other stunt-specific mods include wheelie-enabling two-down/10-up Vortex gearing, Race Tech-stiffened fork, GPR steering stabilizer and a Full Throttle Incorporated rear handbrake for foot-free modulation of wheelie height.

Testosterone-fueled stunters might laugh at Friesen's color choice, but the Kawasaki-sponsored stunter earned the right to rock this rose-colored ride back in '06 when he captured a Guinness World Record for Fastest Stoppie. Filmed during an episode of Discovery Channel's *Stunt Junkies* television program, Friesen jammed on the front brake and lifted the rear tire off the ground at more than 160 mph to reach balance point at a radar-certified 137 mph. With stones that heavy, Friesen can paint his Ninja any color he likes.

5 QUESTIONS WITH...

RANDY GRUBE
OF THE XDL SPORTBIKE FREESTYLE CHAMPIONSHIP

WORDS: Aaron Frank PHOTO: XDL

Q: What is XDL?

A: XDL (www.xdlshow.com) is the sole national stunt-riding championship and sanctioning body. XDL runs stunt riding like the AMA runs road racing—the big distinction is that XDL caters to urban sportbike riders, the fastest-growing segment of the motorcycle market.

Q: How long has XDL been around?

A: We started with three events in 2006, went to four in '07 and for '08 we're up to six events and a national points championship. XDL is present in all major markets including New York and Los Angeles, and four of the events run in conjunction with Hot Import Nights and allow us to tap into a pool of 12,000 to 18,000 18- to 28-year-old fans.

Q: What is XDL's primary goal for the series?

A: Short-term, we're focusing on building strong relationships with the top athletes through the national championship. Medium-term, we want to build the base by sanctioning other competitions and developing a regional ladder system. Long-term, we'd like to work with the motorcycle industry to develop an infrastructure of "riding parks,"

just like we have skate parks today. Our plan is a little bit like what Wally Parks did with NHRA drag racing back in the '50s, when street racing developed into a legitimate sport.

Q: What's the biggest misconception about stunting that XDL encounters?

A: Our challenge is getting people, especially sponsors, to understand that XDL is a quality product and stunt riders are top athletes. The traditional motorcycle industry still looks down on stunt riders as hooligans when, in reality, they are some of the most skilled and hardest-working athletes in the industry.

Q: Why isn't stunting part of the X Games yet?

A: Good question. We need to prove that sportbike freestyle has an active audience on par with BMX and surfing—two X Games staples. BMX and surfing each have an active population of around 2.5 million, something I am sure the urban sportbike market is close to by now. The problem is communicating that to X Games management. I think if we keep doing a good job, then it's only a matter of time until we get there.

