



## Charlie Wilkie — motorbike racer.

A Sports Profile by Kevin L. Roberts

At Noosa Head on Australia's 'Sunshine Coast' lives a young New Zealander who harbours an ambition to be the first Maori to ride in the European Grand Prix motorcycle circuit.

With every race this year Charlie Wilkie has edged closer to achieving his dream. He has finished fourth in the Adelaide three hour race, fifth at Bathurst in the unlimited 'B' grade event, and holds the Queensland 750cc production class title. He's now won 'A' grade status at just twenty years of age, and holds two lap records at 'Lakeside Raceway' in Brisbane.

An impressive record, and one that Charlie hoped to add to when he returned home to contest this year's Castrol six hour race at Manfield. In that race he competed for the N.Z. Honda importers 'Blue Wing'. He usually races for Australia Team Honda. Charlie is no stranger to Manfield having finished fifth in the castrol 750cc class race two years ago.

The name Charlie Wilkie is well known to Ruatoria and around the Northern East Coast of the North Island where, until recently, a large transport business was run by a gentleman of that name. The buses in the Wilkie fleet proudly carried names associated with the district above their side windows —

'Atu', 'Hikurangi' and 'Aorangi' being just a few. This Charlie Wilkie is the grandfather of the rising motorcycle star who may well ensure that the family name is a household word within the world's motorcycle circles.

Despite having lived in Australia for three years Charlie remains a staunch New Zealander. Nothing would please him more than to secure Kiwi sponsors in his efforts to break into the European racing circuit. Success on the Grand Prix trail would be more than adequate consolation for Charlie's parents who had hoped for a university career for their son. It would also compensate grandfather Wilkie who has now sold his business to an 'outsider' as neither Charlie junior or his father were keen on taking it over.

Racing motorbikes is both a physically demanding and dangerous professional sport requiring many hours of practising and racing and Charlie finds that Noosa offers a good recreational counter balance in lifestyle plenty of sunshine and opportunity for watersports. He enjoys swimming wind surfing and owns his own jet ski. With his remaining spare time he also plays tennis, squash and badminton.

Over the last few years New Zealand has produced some very talented motor sport competitors: Hulme, McLaren and Ivan Mauger all rising to world champion status. There's plenty of indications that Charlie Wilkie intends to emulate their feats.

**Charlie Wilkie**

