



Triple play

Newcomer Lagace the star at Shannonville

Story and photos by Peter McLeod
At only 19 years of age and in his first season of competition, St-Mathias, QC's Yves Lagace captured the 2009 Pro Open, Pro 450 and Pro 250 championships in the 408Racing RACE Shannonville Motorsport Park Supermoto series.

Lagace started riding motocross back in 2002 on an 85cc Suzuki.

"All my friends had a bike so I finally convinced my parents to allow me to get one too," he explains.

He took to the sport quickly and soon had his first championship under his belt. He moved into the Junior 125cc level in 2005, even though he couldn't yet touch the ground while seated on his bike! He later took the title in both 125 and 250 Junior in 2007 in the Eastern Ontario series.

In 2008 Lagace found Supermoto and decided to change disciplines. He began to practice in empty parking lots his dad would find, eventually taking classes and riding with Pros from this sport.

He had his first Supermoto experience at X-FEST in Mecaglisle, QC in 2008 and from there he has never looked back. The excitement of the fast, smooth riding style, the

track layout with the pavement to dirt transitions, and the speed were all definite draws for Lagace, but the control and skill needed to back it into a corner with the slicks he had never ridden on before sealed the deal.



"I was drawn in by the way we race, the different track configuration," he says. "You get to try the full speed of your bike and drift into the corners with the slick tires, you have to have so much control. I love doing this."

With the help of the great crew and sponsor at Supermoto St-Hilaire he was able to locate the parts he needed for his bike to make the switch, and his mom "called all over the place" searching for what he needed. Making the switch was fairly easy with the help of his friends and sponsors, guys like Christian Gagne, Robin Frechette and J.P.

Then he discovered the 408Racing RACE Shannonville series, where he spent the last year collecting his three titles.

Lagace practices whenever he can, and practicing with a Pro "Allows you to push yourself and see what needs improving and where you are strong. I like riding with a better rider and practice until I get it right. I found my concentration improved and was surprised at how fast I progressed compared to motocross.

"I practice as much as I can. I have found that as I get older I evaluate a race instead of being so eager to just go out and ride, so for me, I find that a perfect practice makes a perfect race. When I raced with Canadian Pro Dave Arnold Oct. 17 on the Nelson circuit I learned a lot. Dave pushed me hard, which I think made me a better rider over-

all and allowed me to see what I could achieve with other fast Pros."

His first time on a large paved surface, Lagace was able to see the power and feel the sense of speed, which he had never done before on an open track with these bikes, and proved he is ready for the challenge anyone brings. The temperature was a bit cool at that event so this was an opportunity to try out tire warmers for the first time, supplied by Supermoto Specialties, a new dealer in Ontario. This proved a definite benefit dicing with Arnold, who showed no mercy.

"I would like to see more riders out to add to the challenge," Lagace points out. "This was awesome, and maybe some support from the manufacturers to move the sport forward."

With the Shannonville series now established thanks to the hard work from the group at 408Racing and RACE Park this is not unreasonable, as it is sure to grow next season.

"We need a willingness for people to try it out," Lagace adds. "This is a clean, fun sport and all ages can get involved."

If there was any downside to the season for Lagace it had to be the rain. The mid season dampness represented a new challenge. Lagace ran full slicks in the wet rounds and quickly learned a lesson: "Slicks are inadequate for the rain!" Riding



Yves Lagace (opposite page, centre) took three Pro titles at Shannonville in 2009. Adapting to wet conditions (above) proved a big challenge while ace racer Dave Arnold (below) helped in his development.

a wet muddy MX track is one thing but never riding a paved circuit on slicks in the wet before was a challenge unto itself. Not being fully prepared with a set of rain tires Lagace found out how slippery that is, learning very quickly that having a good set of rains on hand or a tire groover is not such a bad idea in Supermoto.

In the off season Lagace likes to have fun on the pit bikes and go ice racing when not

working in the body shop of a local automotive dealership.

So what's in store for Lagace in the future?

He will return to defend his titles in 2010 at Shannonville.

"I plan on defending my championship in the series and trying out a few races in the Can/Am series in 2010 with a few trips into the US," he says. "I'm looking for new challenges and more riders to dice it up with."

With the 2009 season over and 2010 approaching, Lagace is looking forward to the new year in Supermoto and would like to thank a few important people that have helped him out along the way.

"The crew at Supermoto St-Hilaire, and the great guys that have been there these past years have been a big help," he says. "And I especially have to thank mom and dad, for devoting so much of their time and money in my riding career. I could not have done this on my own. My mom always makes sure we eat well and comes out to every race, my dad makes sure my bikes are running in top shape. And the racers from the series who were there with tips and suggestions all year. Finally a new found supplier, Supermoto Specialties, who offered helpful tips and supplied some parts last minute. Thanks guys, see you next season."

