



World champions Päivärinta/Kainulainen: “This title is something very special.”

Pekka Päivärinta and Kirsi Kainulainen wrote history this season when they were crowned sidecar world champions in their BMW S 1000 RR powered sidecar. In an interview, the two Finns speak about the meaning of this title, the fascination of sidecar racing and the close co-operation with BMW Motorrad Motorsport.

Munich (DE), 21st October 2016. The two “flying Finns” wrote history this season: Pekka Päivärinta and Kirsi Kainulainen won the title in the FIM Sidecar World Championship (SWC). Thirty-year-old Kainulainen was the first woman ever to be crowned world champion in road racing. Their 44-Racing sidecar is powered by a BMW S 1000 RR engine, and the BMW Motorrad Motorsport experts supported Päivärinta/Kainulainen in setting up the components. Together with the team, the specialists modified and set up the powerful BMW engine in order to perfectly match the special requirements in a modern sidecar.

Päivärinta and Kainulainen – a couple also in private life – finished all nine races of the season on the podium. At the Hungarian round at Pannonia-Ring, they claimed an historic victory, with Kainulainen being the first woman ever to win a world championship race in road racing. At the season finale in Donington (GB), they finished second on the podium and secured the world championship crown with an advantage of 18 points over their closest rivals. For Päivärinta, it was his fifth world championship title, for Kainulainen it was the historic first one.

In an interview, Päivärinta and Kainulainen speak about the meaning of this title, the fascination of sidecar racing and the close co-operation with BMW Motorrad Motorsport.

Congratulations on this historic world championship title. What does this title mean to you?

Kirsi Kainulainen: “Of course it feels great! It is amazing and something very special for me that my name will be written in the history books.”

Pekka Päivärinta: “This title has a very special meaning for me because I won it together with Kirsi.”

Can you describe your emotions after you had won the world championship title?

Kainulainen: “I could do it and I did it! What a relief!”

Päivärinta: “It is really us! We are the world champions!”

Your sidecar is powered by a BMW S 1000 RR engine and you worked closely together with BMW Motorrad Motorsport in preparing and setting up the engine. How important was the support from Munich?

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Päivärinta: “The support from BMW Motorrad Motorsport has really been important for our career. We are very thankful for that. This co-operation has been the best we have enjoyed in our career so far.”

Kirsi, do you feel like a role model for other young women in motorsport?

Kainulainen: “I have heard that there are concerns about women in racing that they would be too unsafe and not as good as men. But this is not true, and I am happy to have proven the opposite. I see myself as a good role model for male passengers as well: they came to me and asked about tips and advice for training after they saw the good shape I am in.”

What is the fascination of sidecar racing?

Kainulainen: “Sidecar racing is very exciting, and it is also hard work. You also have to be smart if you want to perfectly understand what your partner plans to do next. This is not easy, but the driver and the passenger need a kind of blind understanding.”

Päivärinta: “Well – sidecar racing is my life, what else can I say?”

How important is it in sidecar racing to fully trust your partner?

Kainulainen: “You need to trust each other 120 per cent. And you also must be committed by 120 per cent. If this is not the case in a team, it can be dangerous.”

Pekka, why is Kirsi the perfect passenger?

Päivärinta: “For many reasons. She is lightweight and physically fit. And, as she is a motorcycle racer herself, she has an enormous understanding for the driver and knows the perfect lines in corners.”

Kirsi, why is Pekka the perfect driver?

Kainulainen: “Pekka is a great driver because he is very fast and clever. He has a very flowing and smooth driving style and makes no mistakes”.

You are a part of the BMW Motorrad Motorsport family and always among the top positions in the BMW Motorrad Race Trophy. How do you like the worldwide community and this special competition – and how did you invest the prize money you won last year?

Päivärinta: “The BMW Motorrad Race Trophy is a very good concept, and we are very grateful that we are a part of the BMW family. That all this is possible makes us very happy and it is important for us.”

Kainulainen: “And the prize money we won last year went completely into our sidecar. We invested it in parts, tyres, fuel and everything we need to go racing.”

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