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Media Information  
BMW Motorrad Motorsport  
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### **Behind the scenes of BMW Motorrad Motorsport: An interview with Eugene Laverty in Portugal in advance to first Portuguese WorldSBK round 2021 in Estoril.**

- **Portugal is a second home for Irish BMW Motorrad Motorsport rider Eugene Laverty, who turns 35 next week.**
- **In the first part of the interview, Laverty and his wife Pippa speak about their life in Portugal and why they decided to move there.**
- **In the second part, they give a very personal insight into the ups and downs one can experience in motorcycle racing.**

**Estoril. Next Thursday, 3rd June, Eugene Laverty (IRL) celebrates his 35th birthday. He has been following a family tradition since childhood and is one of the most experienced riders in current motorcycle racing. The Irishman has been riding for BMW Motorrad in the FIM Superbike World Championship (WorldSBK) since 2020. After his debut season in the BMW Motorrad WorldSBK Team, Laverty is deployed for the Italian BMW satellite team RC Squadra Corse in 2021. Furthermore, in his role as a BMW test rider, Laverty is helping to advance the further development in the supersport-segment bikes of BMW Motorrad.**

At the end of 2019, Laverty and his wife Philippa 'Pippa' Laverty moved to Portugal. Ahead of the first Portuguese round of the 2021 WorldSBK season, we took the opportunity to conduct an interview with the 'Portuguese by choice' pair and visited them at their property near Portimão. In the conversation, both give a very personal insight into their new life in Portugal and describe the sunny and dark sides of the dynamic motorsport world.

#### **Living in Portugal.**

**After the first race in Spain, Portugal is the next country in the WorldSBK calendar, a kind of 'home race' for you. How did you come up with the idea of moving to Portugal?**

**Eugene:** "In a way Portugal has always been like a second home to us after my first years in World Supersport. I was with the Parkalgar Honda Team, which is the team that was

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formed when the Portimão circuit was built. So I spent a lot of time here and felt in some way Portuguese and I always liked it here. So after seven years in Monaco we started to search around; we wanted to move. We really love the way of Portuguese lifestyle – so luckily we found a place and settled in the Algarve area."

### **Would you call Portugal your new home and what does home mean for you?**

**Eugene:** "Well, it's difficult to tell what home is because my family are back home in Northern Ireland so in a way that will always be home, but for us personally, I think Portugal is our new home. That's where we based ourselves. We have our little dog Bruce there now so that's where our little family is based."

**Pippa:** "I think home means to us where we are together. Me, wherever Eugene is, I feel like home."

### **Before moving to Monaco, you both travelled together with a motorhome, right?**

**Pippa:** "Yeah exactly! That was our home for many years when Eugene first started racing. We were travelling around in a small European campervan. Anywhere can make a home as long as you are together."

### **And how much Ireland did you bring to Portugal?**

**Eugene:** "The quarantine has given us the chance to make it home as well so a lot of stuff made its way from Ireland and we had some time in the first months during quarantine, then of course after a few months we were getting bored but in the first months it was good in a way."

**Pippa:** "Yes, because a lot of stuff has been in storage for many years, as in Monaco we did not have much space, we kept it all in Ireland. But now we have the space, so we had it all shipped over and it was boxes with Eugene's old racing gear, all of his trophies, everything that has been accumulating over the last years. So it has been really nice to look back at old memories and really appreciate the time that we had together."

**You just came back from the first round in Aragón and you are about to leave for the next race in Estoril, which gives you the chance to stay at your private place between the races. What do you do between race weekends? How does your daily routine look like when you are here in Portugal?**

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**Eugene:** "Between a double-header like this week, I am trying to recharge my batteries after the last and prepare for the next round. That means mainly training. During the race season I always back it off a little bit more than in the winter time when I do more hours. But for me at the moment I ride a bicycle for two, two and a half hours and then return home and do some station training for 30, 40 minutes. And of course, the stretching to keep the flexibility. But I think most important during the racing season is to get to bed early. We walk our dog Bruce at sunset, maybe 20:30, and then try to be in bed by ten o'clock so that I can get up at 6:30 in the morning. And if I am not training I try to switch off and enjoy the benefits of Portugal."

**Pippa:** "Even if our time at home is quite limited between the travel to the races, it is nice to actually use the time and go out to explore the area. In Portugal they do for example a lot of local food produce, so once Eugene comes up from training it's nice to go out in the mid-afternoon, go to shops, pick up some fresh produce and maybe have a walk along the beach, a nice lunch and then come back in the evening and have a relaxed evening at home, and just enjoy the sunset from the balcony. We are really lucky that we live in a place that is so relaxed and easy-going, we have the sea and we have so many beautiful landscapes around us. That gives us power for the upcoming weekend."

**Do you have any favourite place? And Eugene, riding the R nineT, where do you prefer to go?**

**Eugene:** "I like to go up in the hills around Monchique, I have discovered some beautiful roads there. Mainly on the bicycle. Having the bicycle is the best way to discover, you can really look around. Riding the motorbike or driving the car it's not the best idea to be looking around at the scenery. So, you can go up above looking down on the racetrack of Portimão, where we are going to be racing for the second Portuguese round in October."

### **Family and Racing.**

**You just mentioned your family earlier. It seems like everybody in your family is somehow related to racing...**

**Eugene:** "Yes, I was lucky to be born into a racing dynasty. My father Mickey Laverty raced himself for fun. Once my eldest sister Emma was born, then he decided it was too dangerous with the old racing bikes then. But my brothers and I were always riding motorbikes around home and even my elder sister Emma, but it was only John, Michael

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and me that started racing motocross when we were young. My twin brother Eamonn did not really have an interest in motorbikes, but I always had a passion for it. So, we are such a big family, when we were kids we always travelled together so while there was just three boys racing there was generally always six kids in the van going to the racetrack."

### **Even today, you have some relatives, working in the WorldSBK paddock...**

**Eugene:** "Yes, my previous crew chief I was with at Aprilia, Phil Marron, he is now the crew chief of Toprak Razgatlioglu, and he is my brother-in-law; he is married to my elder sister Emma. And then of course with Chaz Davies - my brother Michael is married to Chaz' sister Jody. My brother Michael used to be racing and is now commenting the races. My other brother John became a physiotherapist after finishing his racing career and is now taking care of my physio during the race weekends. So, there is a lot of racing genes in the family so I am sure that won't stop here and we will see the next generation racing motorbikes once again."

### **Champagne and pain.**

**Monaco is still one of the synonyms for motorsport. You mentioned that you had a great time there. Could you tell us a little bit about the racing community you have been part of and especially how you were related to the drivers, not the riders?**

**Eugene:** "I went to visit Monaco in 2012 to cycle with a friend of mine, Nicolas Roche, who is a professional Irish cyclist, and when I was on the bike I noticed that there was this little sports community in Monaco that I didn't know about. There were the racing car drivers, of course, motorbike riders and cyclists, and so this was a big part of why we moved to Monaco. A lot of people live a similar way of life to us and, especially where we lived, there was a lot of British-Irish community, a lot of ex-drivers like David Coulthard, Allan McNish, and a lot of current drivers, Australians, Kiwis, with Brendon Hartley, Daniel Ricciardo, people that speak the same first language as us where naturally you're going to associate yourselves with them. So that is one thing that I am sure that we do miss about Monaco because there was that little group there but like anywhere, I am sure within a few years we'll have a group of friends in Portugal and feel similar."

**Pippa:** "For me personally, the main thing I miss about Monaco is my friends, my group of girl-friends there. Because I had a whole group that understood exactly what it's like to live with an athlete because they are living with athletes also. So, they know it's hectic when they travel, you miss them when they are away, or when you are travelling with

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them, it is nice to come back and relax. Sometimes a lot of people live for the weekend, but in Monaco we would normally go out on a Tuesday or Wednesday, because everyone is usually racing on a weekend."

### **Pippa, how is it for you living with an athlete, being the rider's wife?**

**Pippa:** "It's amazing, really, to be able to support your husband in what he does. There's a lot of highs and a lot of lows, but you've just got to learn how to dance in the rain and celebrate when things are going well. If it wasn't for Eugene, I don't think I would have been able to travel as much and seeing as much of the world as I have and share these many memories as we have together. It has its positive sides but it also has its negative sides especially in injuries and everything. But the important thing is to surround yourself with people and friends who support and understand the lifestyle that you have. Of course, you have sometimes champagne and parties; I am not going to lie, it's pretty fun."

**Eugene:** "Yes, we had things good for let's say 13 years and then unfortunately there was a period where I went through a lot of injuries, so in Thailand when we had to stay two weeks with Pippa sitting beside my bed in hospital and then when I broke both my wrists, that was tough as well where I needed Pippa for more things than I would like to say because I wasn't able to do anything. There are some plus sides but those were the tough times as well."

**Pippa:** "Yes, you could go from literally drinking champagne and party with friends one week and being by a hospital bed the next; it's a really up and down sort lifestyle. You need to be prepared for that."

### **Did our own podcast 'Champain' come out of that?**

**Pippa:** "Yes, the idea for my podcast 'Champain' is that I wanted to highlight the good and the bad times of the people who support the athletes as well as the athletes themselves, what they learn from it and where it has got them in their lives. Because I don't think you really learn how to go through hard times. The podcast sort of highlights how throughout life you can have tough times and how you deal with those tough times. There's no bubbles without some troubles, that's my caption for 'Champain'. And to be a champion you have to go through some pain, you have to sacrifice a lot, you have to dedicate a lot and you have to ... you know, it's not easy. I think people look on social media or on the TV think oh wow, it must be so fun to be a race car driver or this or that, I don't think people

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realise the lot of sweat and tears that people put in to get to where they are. And that's what the podcast is kind of about."

**Eugene:** "From the riders' side it is great and I really get quite angry when I hear some professional riders almost complaining how difficult the lifestyle is. It's got tough times but I think we are very fortunate to be in the position that we are in. There are the tough days but things change and in the past, there have been a lot of tough days but it's worth it then whenever you get the good days."

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