

Yamaha Motor Monthly Newsletter

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Under the “Yamaha Motor Product Orchestra” theme, the Yamaha Motor booth at the 44th Tokyo Motor Show 2015 was designed with a harmonious blend of Yamaha Red and Racing Blue.

The Core of Yamaha Motor

Yamaha Red and Racing Blue

Visually Sharing and Communicating
the Unique Style of Yamaha

In our daily lives, we are surrounded by a veritable barrage of colors. From these colors we unconsciously make intuitive choices, arriving at colors that suit our tastes, colors that may bring good luck, colors we find soothing or colors we feel are fashionable. And based on these choices, we decide the colors of the clothes we wear and the things we buy. Colors also take on symbolic or iconic significance. For example, in the world of football, blue is typically associated with the Italian or French national teams while yellow is the representative color of the Brazilian national team. Many companies also make use of this iconic potential of colors to help promote their brand. In this issue, we want to take a look at Yamaha Motor’s focus on and dedication to the colors used for its corporate identity since its founding.

Yamaha Red: A Corporate Color to Inspire the Heart

Back when most of the motorcycles made in Japan were all-black, Yamaha's first motorcycle, the YA-1, was designed with a novel two-tone color scheme of ivory-white and a reddish-brown evocative of the chestnut coat of a fine horse. It simply stunned the Japanese motorcycle market. The company's second model, the 175cc YC-1, had a grayish brown body inspired by the wet pavement of the Champs-Élysées in Paris and a red fuel tank, and the YD-1, Yamaha's third model and its first with completely original exterior design, had a light-gray body and dark brown fuel tank. In short, from the very beginning Yamaha had an unprecedented concern for the importance of coloring as a design element to go hand in hand with a machine's styling.



With continued technical development, the RD56 brought Yamaha consecutive World GP 250cc class Rider and Constructor titles in 1964 and 1965. Its white/red livery helped spread recognition of Yamaha throughout the international racing world.

Entering the 1960s, as Yamaha Motor grew its lineup with colorful models designed to bring forth images of the fun and enriching lifestyle motorcycling offered, it was strengthening its international racing efforts in line with its business expansion into overseas markets. The RD56 and RA97 factory race machines and the TD-1 production road racer sported coloring inspired by Japan's national flag, with a red stripe running through a white body. These machines racked up victory after victory in the Road Racing World Championship (World GP) and other categories, and in the process they would help build a strong foothold for Yamaha overseas, especially in Europe and the United States. Then in the 1970s, Yamaha expanded the scope of its activities to include motocross and trials, where its machines clad in red and white became leading contenders in competitions in Japan and overseas. The achievements of these bikes helped firmly cement the company's "Spirit of Challenge" and the image of Yamaha as a manufacturer of sporty products.

In this way, red and the combination of red and white became widespread not only as product colors but also for storefront decorations, and in the Yamaha Logomark used in advertising and sales tools. As such, Yamaha revisited its Visual Identity (VI) guidelines in 1990 and designated today's "Yamaha Red" as an official color (M100+Y100 for printing and R: 225 G: 000 B: 000 for monitors). Yamaha Red was later chosen as the company's corporate color, for being a strong, vibrant color that stirs the heart and evokes images of passion, a challenging spirit and flames—a color appropriate in standing for Yamaha's corporate mission to be a *Kando** Creating Company.

**Kando* is a Japanese word for the simultaneous feelings of deep satisfaction and intense excitement that we experience when we encounter something of exceptional value.

Traditional Yellow/Black & Speed Block: Legendary Racing Colors

In 2015, Yamaha Motor celebrated its 60th anniversary as well as its 60-year history in racing. During this season, major Yamaha distributors and group companies in Europe, North America, Japan and other markets around the world each ran machines in one top-category race in their areas in yellow/black "60th Anniversary" commemorative livery to celebrate and promote Yamaha's racing tradition before large numbers of spectators and the media. Also, production motorcycles like the



Kenny Roberts was one rider who helped establish the association of the yellow/black color scheme and Speed Block graphic with the Yamaha brand.

new YZF-R1, models from the YZ Series of production off-road competition bikes, certain ATV and ROV models and other main models for each market have been given limited-edition 60th Anniversary coloring, and sales promotions have begun for these models for the 2016 season. This 60th Anniversary color scheme of a black Speed Block graphic on a yellow body is a revival of a traditional Yamaha racing livery that was first used by the Yamaha International Corporation (YIC) racing teams in the U.S. in the early 1970s. These teams fielded star riders one after another, like Bob Hannah and Broc Glover in AMA Supercross and Motocross, and Kenny Roberts in dirt track and road racing. From 1978, Roberts began competing full-time in the World GP and won the 500cc premier class championship title three years in a row on a machine and in leathers with the iconic yellow/black livery. The impact of his achievements made the coloring a Yamaha standard recognized worldwide alongside the existing red/white color scheme. Roberts' team would eventually switch to red/white coloring, and in the mid-1980s, the yellow/black combination would disappear from the American race scene as well. Yet to this day, it has remained an unforgettable part of the Yamaha legacy and of the legendary riders that raced and won with it.



The Yamaha Motor Corporation, U.S.A. (YMUS) 60th anniversary [special website](#) shows not only models with the commemorative coloring but also introduces information about Yamaha's history and race activities.

Racing Blue: Connecting the Racetrack to Our Products

In Yamaha's racing activities today, "Racing Blue" (Pantone 287 for printing and R:010 G:045 B:130 for monitors) is the company's official racing color and the Speed Block is the symbol mark, both designated and standardized in Yamaha's Race Visual Identity (VI) guidelines in 2007. From the 1980s, using the main colors of team sponsors became more widespread in the World GP and other racing series, and it became commonplace to see everything from the machine and rider gear to the team and circuit itself in sponsor colors. This trend not only stimulates the entire racing world but also boosts its popularity, and Yamaha actively seeks interested sponsors and cooperates with them to incorporate their corporate colors into the machine. Meanwhile, the white/red and yellow/black versions of the Speed Block graphic symbolic of past Yamaha teams have been continuously updated with extensive rearrangements of the graphical elements and numerous color variations and to keep them relevant with the times and to ensure that they are not overpowered by the colors of a sponsor.



Racing Blue is a familiar color on racing bikes in MotoGP and other championships. It is sometimes used on production models to promote and strengthen Yamaha's sporty image.

But, team sponsor colors are essentially present for a limited time only. Shortly after our 50th anniversary, there was a growing companywide emphasis on reviewing what made something uniquely Yamaha from a design standpoint. While having a unique visual identifier for each area, racing category and team is an excellent thing to have, the fact that the defining image of "Yamaha Racing" was becoming vague and with Yamaha conducting racing as a corporate activity, the meaning behind the effort would become vague as well without a globally unified platform and rules to follow. So in 2007, Yamaha created its Race VI guidelines and designated design-related elements for use, such as the official racing image color, symbol mark and logos.

One key point in particular was the image colors for the YAMAHA Logo and Speed Block. All kinds of colors were considered, including the white/red and yellow/black, but what was chosen was the intelligence, calm and depth expressed with the color blue to complement the “Yamaha Red” corporate color. Blue had long been used for Yamaha’s marine business and was already a color closely associated with the company. Also, Yamaha’s Paris-Dakar Rally effort headed by Yamaha Motor France had used blue as their team color during the 1980s and 1990s. Furthermore, Yamaha Motor Corporation, U.S.A. had been looking for a replacement for the traditional yellow/black color scheme and chose to actively use blue in their motocross efforts in the mid-1990s under the “Blue is Fast” campaign slogan to differentiate Yamaha from the competition. From these events, deep blue paint (Deep Purplish Blue Metallic C) and material coloring (Deep Purplish Blue Solid E) came to be used across a wide range of sporty Yamaha motorcycles, from the XT Series to the YZ and YZF Series. Then, with the establishment of Yamaha’s Race VI standards in 2007, Racing Blue and the Speed Block were used on the YZR-M1 MotoGP machine.

From 2008 onward, Yamaha’s Race VI has become much more closely tied to production sport bikes and taken on a more global presence. For example, in 2015, the all-new YZF-R1 was given a matte silver and Racing Blue color scheme to accentuate the impression of its cutting-edge technology and connect the R-Series to Yamaha’s MotoGP machines by using the same colors. For the more urban-oriented models of the MT Series and FZ Series, the “Race Blu” color scheme available in markets around the world takes a base of matte silver with touches of Racing Blue on the front fork, wheels and more. What’s more, a new Race Blu color scheme using matte silver and another color has been prepared for 2016 models. In other words, Yamaha’s corporate stance of carrying on traditions, creating new ones and endlessly pursuing new horizons is also reflected in the symbolic “tones and shades” that make it unique.

Message from the Editor



Run by the Japan Fashion Color Association (JAFCA), the Auto Color Awards recognizes excellence in color design in automotive industry products. For the 2015 event held in December, the Yamaha MT-25/07/09/09 Tracer models were among the nominees. Yamaha's Race Blu color series strategy won one of two Special Awards for using Yamaha's brand color while implementing CMFG (color, materials, finish, graphics) to give each motorcycle noticeable differences.

Yamaha Motor typically brings to mind the red company logo and blue race bikes. These colors are the familiar standard today, but in fact there was a history of clear intentions that brought us to these colors. I'm sure that the message Yamaha wants to communicate through the power of color will continue to live in and bring *Kando* to the hearts of Yamaha fans around the world.

Over the past twelve months, we have looked at the history and values that have shaped "The Core of Yamaha Motor." From next year, we plan to delve into the Unique Style of Yamaha from the standpoint of various Yamaha products and technologies from the past to the present, and how they have been shaped by what one might call our "*Monozukuri* Pedigree."

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