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the Tail of the Dragon

Boys & Their Toys...
Suzuki's GSX650F

Harley Davidson
Fat-Boy Lo

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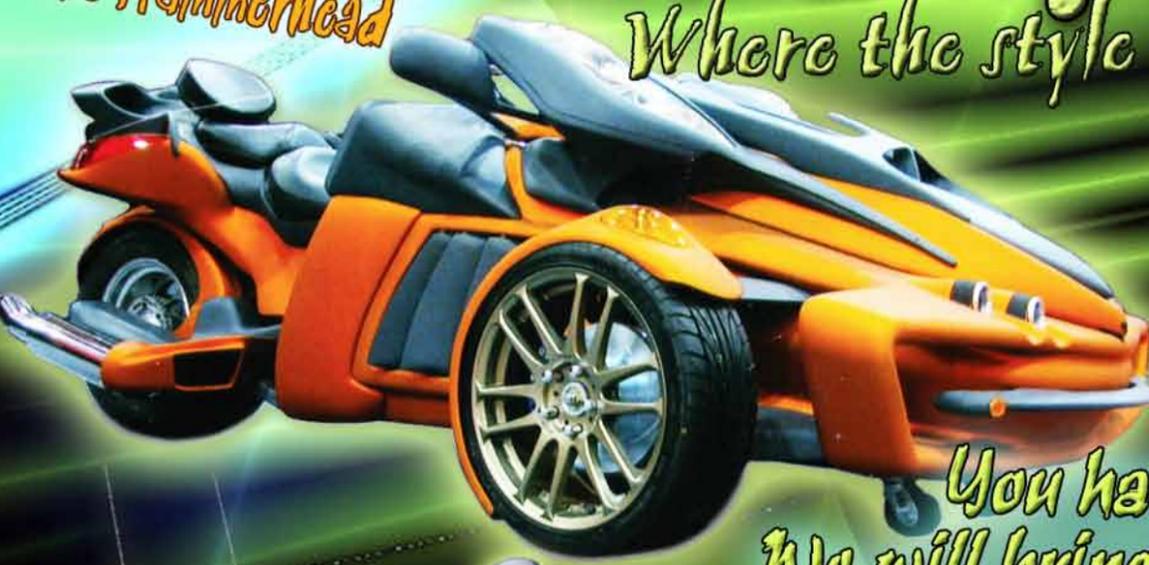
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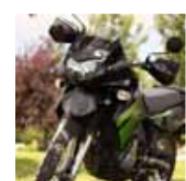
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2Ride



Here we go! Off to another great year. At 2Ride Magazine we have had our challenges this past year and ask all of you for your continued support. We have implemented some new and exciting changes here at 2 Ride, as we grow and continue to improve.

First off, we have joined forces and will be working closely as we collaborate with our good friends at Trackday Hub. All our subscribers will now receive the Trackday Hubs online magazine covering all your racing needs. Trackday Hub can usually be found at your local race tracks and will include the local and national races representing 2Ride Motorcycle Magazine and of course Trackday Hub. Check them online at www.TrackdayHub.com.

Also this year, I will try my hand at racing in SOAR and will write about my experiences in each issue. I can't wait and that will be a blast even though I haven't raced before. I tried once last year and this year I plan to do the whole season and see what I can learn.

We are also introducing a membership program here at 2Ride which will include 5 printed issues a year that will be delivered to your door and a plastic membership card with your own membership number to be used for discounts at supporting sponsors. We will also include rides, events, giveaways, some 2Ride swag, discounts, etc. Check www.2Ride.ca for more details.

Something to look forward to, is that we are working on our yearly Birthday bash which will include dealers, vendors, music and food.

Marc Agozzino
President/Chief Editor

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Ontario's
Trackday Hub

Online Magazine!

Boys will always be boys...

It's just the toys that grow up...



Suzuki's GSX650F, it's like Christmas morning,
without the frostbite...

It was December 20th; a single brass lamp burned a dim buttery glow over the cluttered desktop. Schematics of the latest toys and digital wizardry lay haphazardly in piles as big as birthday cakes. Time honoured consumer beware phrases were etched upon tiny bits of paper that fluttered carelessly about the deep pile carpet around the big oak desk, like confetti after a wedding. 'Not for consumption', 'Ages 3 and up', 'batteries not included' and the like.

After knocking shallowly at the massive door of his CEO's office, Alistair G Littlebob took the seat across the desk from his employer via the use of a footstool. At just over 3 feet tall and in light of the piles of paperwork and schematics Alistair had to stand on the chair in order to make eye contact with the man.

Although his employer had a look of worry upon his round face, he smiled at Alistair cheerfully, cleared his throat and spoke.

'I have read your yearend fiscal report Littlebob and I have a few questions regarding the availability of certain crucial supplies.'

'Of course Sir, any questions you need

answered, I'd be pleased to address any concerns at this time.' Alistair opened the file folder he had been carrying, containing his report.

His employer sat up straight and drained what was left of an enormous glass of milk he had been nursing for over an hour. The man put on his spectacles and opened his copy of Alistair's report and began with a decidedly concerned tone in his usually jovial and melodic voice. Alistair did not like to see his employer in this obviously anxious and concerned manner. Time was running out, Alistair knew it, so did his boss.

'It says here Littlebob that we are running dangerously low on Giggle-fluff and Magic-dust? Alistair's employer retrieved a cookie jar in the shape of a hockey puck with the Toronto Maple Leafs logo on it and after handing Alistair two shortbread cookies, took a chocolate chip cookie for himself and continued.

'We have never run low on these supplies before. As Senior Vice President of Giggles and General Lollygagedness here at HQ, I expect you to keep an eye on such details.'

Alistair took a deep breath and studied his employer's features. It wasn't like

the man to show any type of irritation towards his employees, even under pressure. So saying, Alistair wanted to gage the man's demeanour before continuing. The man was dressed in his trademark red suit; his long shaggy white beard lay atop his round belly. It occurred to Alistair that his employer likely kept the beard simply to hide the constant milk moustache he wore.

'How did we get so dangerously low?' 'Well Mr. Clause', Alistair continued sheepishly, 'I asked young Mr. Snedly to look after re-ordering supplies for the workshop this year, and well Sir....' 'Argh Snedly?' Mr. Clause huffed disappointedly. 'But he's only an Elf 3rd class, what were you thinking?' 'I know, I know Mr. Clause and I feel as daft as a leprechaun and as silly as a garden gnome for trusting Mr. Snedly so blindly.

Mr Clause looked down at the report in front of him. 'What about the little girls Littlebob?'

'No problem there at all Sir', Alistair continued excitedly.

'So all the dolls and doll houses, accessories, tickets to the Oprah show and so forth were all made before running short of magic dust?'

'Yes Sir, even our new "Leave it to Bieber, overinflated ego doll".'

'All the Teddy-Bears and stuffed animals have been filled before running low on the Giggle-fluff?'

'Every one of them Mr. Clause.' Alistair stood straight and victorious, he felt as tall as a 2nd grader as he smiled at his employer.

'And what about toys for the little boys?' Mr. Clause looked over his spectacles questioningly at Alistair.

Alistair shrank like an accordion at the question he knew he would be asked sooner or later. He scratched his button nose with his chubby little index finger and continued.

'Well, we're mostly in good shape on the little boy front Sir.'

'Mostly! Littlebob?' Mr. Clause sat up an eyeballed Alistair.

'Yes Sir, We have all the toy aeroplanes, cars, superheroes, cowboys and Indians and sports gear, Pro Wrestling paraphernalia, even the "Sing along with Stephen Harper - look whose taxing Canada to death now" Karaoke machine and the "Jean Chretien - Lets pull a funny face" Halloween dress up kit.'

'Wonderful', said Mr. Clause happily. 'What about Motorcycles?'

'Well', Alistair sat on the corner of the desk and looked his employer in the eye. 'Permission to speak freely Sir?' 'Of course Littlebob, fire away.' Mr. Clause said with a note of worry in his tone.

'It's like this Santa', Alistair continued. 'Back in the summer we ran completely out of blue motorbikes and without the Magic-dust Sir, well...' Alistair paused nervously, 'Well I had to ask 2Ride Magazine in Toronto for their help'. 'Ah Yes, the new magazine for people who love to ride.' Santa said excitedly. 'I have a copy in my bathroom, vroom, vroom. Did you speak to the nice Frenchman, the one with the Lactose intolerance problem?'

'No Santa', Alistair continued gingerly, 'I had their man Damien do a review on the new Suzuki GSX650F'.

'Not Damien?' Santa said dejectedly and



dropped back into his seat. 'But he wears a funny chequered helmet with big bug eyed goggles. Not to mention he's a Brit and has been on the naughty list since dinosaurs were teenagers'.

'I know Santa, I know, but I couldn't find anyone else.'

'All busy I'm afraid Santa.'

'Well I suppose beggars can't be choosers. We are in dire need of blue motorcycles for the boys. So what were his findings regarding the GSX650F?'

'He says the new GSX650F is Fuel injected, full fairing fun for anyone looking for a bike with a good mixture of sport bike appeal, and standard comfort with overall versatility in mind.'

'Well', Santa stood and smiled at Alistair, 'Since the North Pole is all out of Magic-dust, we'd better load the sleigh with Suzuki's and 2Ride Motorcycle magazine's for the upcoming riding season in Ontario.'

Absolutely true story, no really! If it was made up I would have tried to make my helmet seem cooler!!!

Fiction? Maybe so, but not the comments regarding Suzuki's new GSX650F.

Suzuki is a manufacturer that has a great history making bikes that make sense.

From a performance standpoint, right through to pricing and an overall appeal stance you simply can't go wrong with this particular machine.

Its Fuel injected, liquid cooled, inline four cylinder power plant, inspires instant pleasure as soon as you engage. Its Gixxer inspired cluster is pleasing to the eye and fully functional. The GSX-F is tuned to give you plenty of low to mid range power, and sips fossils modestly from a 19 Litre tank. The chain drive has an inspiring bite to it and I found myself at home in the twisty roads, for that is where the sporty feel of this machine and its more than adequate suspension is most evident. The bars and seating position have been thoroughly thought out by Suzuki's engineering department and its wide, one piece seat is generously padded enough to keep you in it for some time.

Originally derived from the Katana 600cc and 750cc, of the 80's and 90's the GSX650F also shares the same engine with the Bandit. If you have ridden previous year models you will certainly appreciate the vast improvement over the air cooled engine.

Suzuki has designed this bike to be ridden over longer periods. The ergonomics of a less forward ride will inspire novice riders as well as the more experienced set looking for a less crazy seating position of a Gixxer.

As mentioned the GSX-F is based upon many of the same components as the Bandit, such as its chassis, which is more or less the same cost efficient steel tube frame and forks with a better shock for sportier performance and a full fairing. It's a lot of bike for little money, at around the \$9300.00 mark; you get a pretty mean looking bike that behaves like a gentleman. As soon as Santa found out ABS came standard, he immediately traded in Rudolph for one.

If sport without the 'crazy factor' appeals to you, this may just be the bike for you. If you are on the naughty list like me, you may want to try your nearest Suzuki dealer rather than hold out for Santa, no matter how funny your helmet is...

2R



Suzuki GSX650F

Colour	Blue/Silver, White/Black
Brakes Front	Disc brake, twin
Brakes Rear	Disc brake
Curb Weight	245 kg (541 lbs)
Final Drive	Chain
Fuel Tank Capacity	19.0 L (5.0/4.2 US/ Imp gal)
Ground Clearance	125 mm (4.9 in)
Overall Length	2130 mm (83.9 in)
Overall Width	760 mm (29.9 in)
Seat Height	770 mm (30.3 in)
Suspension Front	Telescopic, coil spring, oil damped
Suspension Rear	Link type, coil spring, oil damped
Tires Front	120/70ZR17M/C (58W) tubeless
Tires Rear	160/60ZR17M/C (69W) tubeless
Transmission	6-speed constant mesh
Wheelbase	1470 mm (57.9 in)

Engine

Bore Stroke	65.5 mm (2.579 in) x 48.7 mm (1.917 in)
Compression Ratio	11.5 : 1
Engine	656cc (40.0 cu. In), 4-stroke, liquid-cooled, DOHC
Fuel System	Fuel injection
Ignition	Electronic Ignition (Transistorized)
Lubrication	Wet sump
Starter	Electric

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WRITTEN BY PAUL BALSAMO

PHOTOGRAPHY BY M&M (MIKE & MARC)

When I got the latest KLR, I was climbing off an 1800cc power cruiser with a rear tire wider than those on my car. This bike could not be more different: Where I had just spent days dragging body parts in corners and riding with my feet way ahead of where my rear end resided, no KLR parts but the tires would ever touch the ground.

Like a wasp with a bad attitude, the KLR may look physically smaller than some other bikes, but it packs a serious (and versatile) punch.

My first thoughts concerned my feet being able to connect with the ground at stop lights. The KLR is not as tall as some other adventure bikes, but it still has long legs. Thankfully, the suspension is compliant and

my 180lbs were sufficient to compress the rear shock into submission, allowing my 30" inseam to adequately plant my boots on the ground.

The timing for the bike switch could not have been better. While I was cruising around that day, a city of Toronto destruction crew moved into my street and let loose, generating chaos and causing access to my house to be, at best, very difficult on a bike and impossible with a car.

Not on a KLR though! The bike might have been designed for country dirt roads and adventure in mind, but that day it got me home in the middle of the City of Toronto. Despite the best efforts of three city employees appearing to toil under the watchful eyes of the fifteen others supervising them, I navigated home through ripped up sidewalks, mounds

of dirt and sand. I effortlessly squeezed by countless trucks and heavy equipment parked across the street for the inconvenience of local tax payers. The KLR declared itself the ultimate Urban Assault Vehicle at that very moment.

While the KLR's throne initially felt a bit firm, after a few minutes I quickly realized that the industrial designers at Kawasaki are paid big bucks for a reason: What initially felt like a 2X4 with sharp edges turned out to be quite comfortable while actually riding. The seat feels completely different when one is motoring along rather than sitting on it in a showroom or in a parking lot.

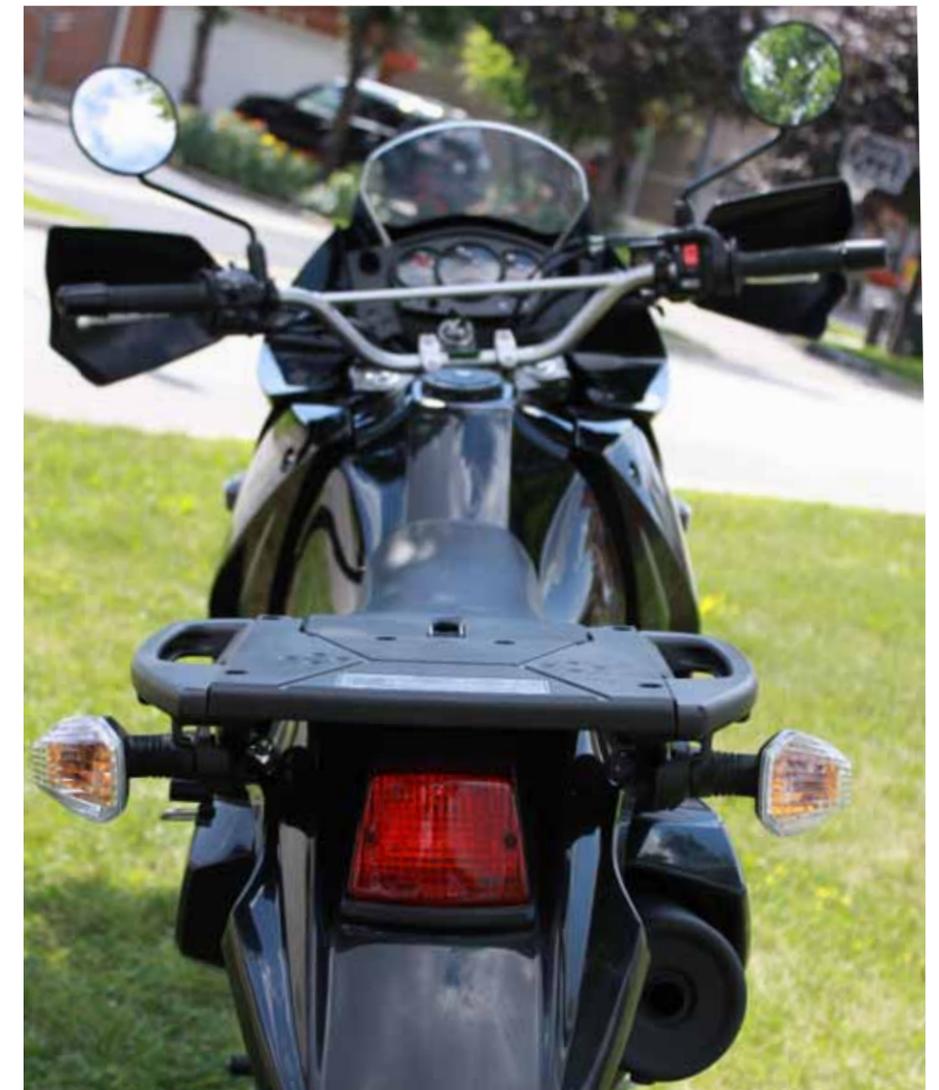
Unlike the dished out seat of power cruisers whose function is to keep the rider from flying off the bike under hard acceleration, the KLR has a flat, dirt bike-style,





Kawasaki KLR 650

Engine Size	651cc
Transmission	Five-speed
Final Drive	Chain
Suspension Front	41mm 4 telescopic fork / 7.9 in.
Suspension Rear	UNI-TRAK® single-shock system with 5-way preload and step less rebound damping / 7.3 in.
Brakes Front	Single 280mm petal-type disc, two-piston caliper
Brakes Rear	Single 240mm disc, single-piston caliper
Tire Front	90/90x21
Tire Rear	130/80x17
Wheelbase	58.3 in.
Seat Height	35.0 in.
Curb Weight	432 lbs.
Fuel Capacity	6.1 gal.
Colors	Ebony, Candy Persimmon Red, Candy Thunder Blue



seat that allows the rider to adjust his position depending on the kind of terrain he is negotiating. Being a bit of a purist, I found the KLR to have an inordinate amount of plastic wrapping, which set off warning bells in my mind. Anyone who has had to replace plastics and stock stickers on their bike after an unfortunate incident will attest to, nothing about this process is cheap. The radiator shrouds contribute to giving the bike a visually enjoyable volume and certainly provides some protection for the legs. However, I fear for its condition should a

quick forest romp were to include an unscheduled slide into the underbrush.

The bikini fairing has also morphed over the years. It has progressed from a very basic enduro-style to a sport bike-inspired design. Aesthetically, it's a wonderful advance. Bearing in mind most KLR riders will never really use the bike on serious dirt, it seems justified. Despite that consideration, I do find it a bit offensive to the memory of the original KLR. Much like a 4x4 with dubs and low profiles, I find the combination confusing.

Overall the KLR is a real bargain and a serious catch. In an era where even riders are conscious of gas mileage, the Kawasaki would make a camel envious. The bike is big enough to go 2 up with luggage on serious road trips that can include dirt roads along the way without ever missing a beat. In town, it is nimble enough to navigate traffic and the occasional mayhem caused by road crews.

No bike is ever perfect but the KLR certainly gives a taste of the possibilities that are out there when one is willing to compromise a bit on displacement for the benefit of maneuverability and operating costs.

2R

New Zealand on Two Wheels

by Gene Lee
Edited for 2Ride Magazine by Neda Skific-Lee
Photos by Gene Lee and Neda Skific-Lee

Hello 2Ride Readers! Gene and I spent a couple of weeks riding the south island of New Zealand back in the winter of 2009. I've taken some excerpts of a daily blog that Gene kept and recorded on our website and formatted them for you. If you want to view the entire blog with lots more pictures, surf on over to <http://www.ridedot.com>. Enjoy! -Neda

February 14, First Ride in NZ!

Alright, screw this snow and ice stuff. We're going to New Zealand to ride motorcycles. We check in at Eliza's Manor, which is a nice English-style B&B just outside the downtown core. Ann, our hostess, cooks up a great breakfast and shows us to where the rental company has parked our motorcycles! How's that for service! Neda has rented a 2006 Triumph Sprint ST 1050, and I've got a 2007 BMW R1200GS. We fire up the bikes and mentally prepare ourselves for a day of left-hand-side riding. Every lane-change

and turn is a constant reminder to "KEEP LEFT!" There's even a "KEEP LEFT <---" sticker on the handlebars of the bike that the rental company has put on, just for North American tourists!

February 15 2009

Up at 5:30 A.M. this morning; kind of nice to get a head start for the day. We take the main Hwy 1 north from Christchurch and notice lots of wineries along the road about half-an-hour into our journey. We've heard of one called Pegasus Bay and decided to drop in. We can't really be imbibing while riding, especially



we spent a good hour walking around taking in the scenery. Heading out of Amberly, we see a police stop check every vehicle that passed through. Because of its proximity to the wineries, the police were cracking down on drunk driving in the area. At 10:30AM!

Next is Kaikoura; it has a feel of a Hawaiian surf town. Lots of touristy shacks catering to wind surfing and boarding and all the youth culture around it. As we ride to the end of the peninsula in search of a seal colony, we're



a bit disappointed that we don't see a lot of them. In fact, walking around, Neda laments the fact that there aren't any around, and then almost stumbles on one as the seal barks a warning to Neda not to step on it!

February 16, Hanmer Springs to Kaikoura

Our destination today is Nelson, which is in the NW tip of the South Island. There are some mountains off in the distance to the interior and to our right we watch the violent surf hitting the rocks along the shoreline, due

to the stormy weather. You can taste and smell the sea-salt in the air where the road cuts in close to the waters. It's all got a very Vancouver Sea-To-Sky highway feel to it. We take spectacular Hwy 6 all the way into Nelson, which itself boasts 35-55km/h >180 degree turns as it runs through the northern tip of the Mt Richmond Forest Park. The most common cause of accidents that tourists experience is not trying to keep left on the road or drowsiness due to jet-lag - it's trying to keep their eyes on the winding road ahead of them instead of the incredible scenery around them! How true!



February 17, Motueka Valley Highway

Kia Ora! That's a native Maori greeting, similar to "Aloha" in Hawaiian. The only difference is that I've not heard anyone say or use it once the entire time we've been here. I suspect this is really a ploy for the locals to identify the tourists:

"Kia Ora!"

"Right then, that'll be \$25.50 for the Pepsi!"

If they don't speak Maori here, at least most of the street and city names are still in Maori. This is not necessarily a good thing. During breakfast, Jon, our host at Grampian Villa, helps us chart our route for the day, "Just take Waimea till it joins up with Whakatu, then take that till you reach Motueka..." BTW, those were the actual directions. *Sigh* I miss my GPS...

Our first nice road of the day is Motueka Valley Highway, a very picturesque road winding



through the middle of two mountain ranges. Orchards and farmland line the valley floor giving us some great sights as we leaned our way left and right through 80km/h and 100km/h posted roads. This is my favorite road of New Zealand so far, and we've hit some pretty nice routes in the last few days.

We stop for lunch at The Mussell Inn; a funky shack, with its part-bait-store/part-psychedelic decor and large flags providing shelter over the wooden benches outside where customers sit down with their bowls of mussels. We arrive late and Neda scoops up the last portion of mussels, which are the biggest I've ever seen.

February 18, West Coast Adventures

We've now reached Cape Foulwing on the west coast of

the island and the vegetation has turned distinctly tropical, as if we had crossed a border or some line on the map. Gone are the Alpine pines and firs, immediately replaced with lush ferns and broad-leafed trees. At one of our stops, Neda took a walk around and took some pictures of, what she thought were Kiwis; the national bird of New Zealand! They were actually Western Wekas. What a disappointment! It turns out Kiwis are 1) an endangered species and quite rare 2) are nocturnal and are rarely seen during the daytime and 3) not really found in this part of the island. Our new mission now on this trip is to find a Kiwi!

February 19, Glaciers!

Today was a fairly light day of riding, about 175 kms south from Greymouth. We've struck

a fairly leisurely pace during this trip, averaging around 250 kms a day, with a good ratio of riding and sightseeing. About 40 kms into our ride, we stop in Hokitika where we found the Kiwi Preservation Society; mission accomplished! We saw two different types of Kiwis and they're actually quite larger than I thought; about the size of a small chicken. They are flightless and quite endangered because their food sources are being eaten by other species. It seems they're not very good Darwinian candidates for survival, but being the national bird has its privileges as they are a sheltered species now.

Another hour of riding, we stop for the day at a town called Franz Josef; well known for being situated beside quite a number of glaciers in the region. Due to the westerly winds, the western coast gets a phenomenal amount

of precipitation, mostly snow near the peak of the mountains - around 16m a year! The snow gets crushed under its own weight and becomes ice, and the accumulation slowly pushes this sheet of ice, a glacier, down the mountain at the rate of about 2-5m a day. It takes about 70 years for snow that has fallen at the peak to work its way down to the bottom of the mountain. We have to see this for ourselves, so we hop on a chopper (the whirlybird kind, not the motorcycle kind) and make our way above the cloud cover to land on the glacier and walk around.

February 20, Rainforests

We rode through a steady rainfall past the two towns, Franz Josef and Fox Glacier, whose primary businesses seems to be built around organizing tours of the glaciers, and feeding the people who visit the glacier. Today the first part of our ride takes us through the rainforests of the South Island. Next leg is the Haast Pass, which takes us through the valley of the Southern Alps ending in the Otago region; a bit further inland. Again, it is like riding through a border where it seems the previous geography of the rainforests is denied entry to the dry lands of Central Otago. The scenery immediately changes from lush and green plants crowding the sides of the road, to the open orange and brown fields. No wonder many movies

like the Lord of The Rings are filmed here. Where else can you go from snowy mountaintops to rainforests, to dry lands in the space of a few hundred kms?

February 21, Wanaka to Te Anau

Rain. Again. And it's cold! About 9-11C the entire day. Our route today takes us out of Wanaka south to Cromwell, where we follow the Kawarau River on what's called the Kawarau Gorge Highway. It's quite a popular spot for river sports like white-water rafting, kayaking, etc. The Kawarau Valley used to be a site of a lot of gold mining activity in mid-to-late 1800s and there are still a lot of historic museums along the way. After lunch, we follow the winding Oreti River for part of the way and marvel at the mountains across the waters reaching up above the low-hanging clouds. Access to the actual west coast itself is blocked by the system of mountains that make up the Fiordland National Park, as well as Lake Te Anau, which the Oreti River flows into. It's the largest lake in the South Island and is where we're stopping this evening.

February 22, Fiords!

Milford Sound is about 120 kms north of Te Anau, and it takes us about an hour and a half of winding roads, up through the Fiordland National Park towards the west coast. We stopped for

a few minutes at a traffic light at the entrance of a forbidding dark hole set against a steep mountain face. The Homer Tunnel runs for over 1 km slightly downhill towards the west coast and the sparse overhead lighting is insufficient to see just how slippery the tunnel's road surface is from all the rain water that leaks in from the mountain above. We had been advised to let cars go ahead of us because their tail and brake lights are stronger than the tunnel's overhead lighting! When we finally emerged on the other side, it was like entering some kind of fantasy world. Hundreds of waterfalls, from large spouts to tiny rivulets, ran down almost all the mountain faces surrounding us! It was hard to navigate the steep switchbacks into the valley below without your gaze being taken away by the breathtaking spectacle of rainwater running down rocks all around you.

About 20 kms later, we ended up in Milford Sound looking out into the Tasman Sea. It is a fiord that is world-renowned for its natural beauty; often pictured with its peaks in the mist. We hopped on a ship that took us on a two hour tour out the harbour of Milford Sound and part ways into the Tasman.

February 23, Queenstown (Bungee and other stuff)

Spent the day in Queenstown, where tourists pay good money to risk their lives and also get a

picture and T-shirt to remember it by! Quite the adventure town, offering everything from jet boating, white water rafting, sky diving, and of course, bungee jumping! It was originally invented by a Kiwi, AJ Hackett, and he set up the first permanent tourist bungee jump on Kawarau Bridge, about 20kms away. Well, if it all started here, I might as well see what all the fuss is all about! During our stroll around Queenstown, we saw a BMW F650GS Dakar parked on the street. As we were eyeing it, the owner, Rob, came out and started chatting with us. He lived right in Queenstown and was an avid off-roader and we remarked that the F650GS was the perfect bike for a RTW (Round the World, for those in the know) trip. Rob showed us some good roads to hit during the next few days, can't wait to try them out! Its nice talking to locals because they always provide great info on roads and weather, where to go, what to avoid.



February 24, Boulder-dash!

Although the R1200GS I'm riding gets the most looks from non-bikers, Neda's is actually the more interesting one to fellow bikers. The Sprint ST is Triumph's sport-tourer, competing directly with the likes of the heavyweight in this category, the Honda VFR800. Neda was actually considering both these bikes when she got her BMW R1200ST, along with the Ducati ST3, so she was excited to have this bike for an extended test ride. The engine is much stronger than the Beemer's, with linear torque from low-down to red-line. Seating position is less aggressive than the R12ST and Neda seemed to handle the distance quite fine on the bike. What I really admire about the bike is the design. Sport-bikish in its profile, there are little thematic touches that play off the fact that the Sprint has a three-cylinder engine. Although this bike has Givi side and top cases,



Triumph does sell good-looking cases that are more integrated with the bikes lines and colour.

We reach the east coast in the early afternoon and head north for a bit to check out Moeraki. The beach here is well-known for its collection of huge, nearly spherical boulders that seem washed up along the shore.

February 25, Penguins in Scotland!

Our primary objective today is to see the rare and endangered yellow-eyed penguin. We ride back to Otago Peninsula on a very narrow, twisty road that some locals liken to the Isle of Man TT course, it runs right along the edge of the water and one wrong move could put you and your motorcycle in the drink. It's so narrow that a tour bus coming around the corner in the opposite direction almost clips one of my sidebags as he crossed the



centre line! In the late afternoon, we ride to Penguin Place, run by a Peninsula farmer who has dedicated a portion of his land to preserving and growing the population of the endangered yellow-eyed penguin. Only about 3000-4000 exist and they only live in the south-eastern shores of the South Island and the sub Antarctic islands below NZ. The Penguin Place has quite an interesting setup, they don't want to disturb or scare the penguins away, so they've built a system of covered trenches that hide tourists from the penguins. The viewing areas have slats which open up at ground level where you can see them, but all they see is your face or the lens of a camera, and you appear smaller than they are, so they don't feel threatened.



Christchurch. We're back where we started and tomorrow is the last day with the bikes. We're very sad that it's almost over, this country is beautiful and we wish we could stay longer!

February 28, Swimming with the Dolphins...not

We're riding to Akaroa again today, recreating our first day's ride to salvage our failed attempt to swim with the dolphins in Kaikoura. The water was freezing. We went to a couple of spots, and after one unsuccessful attempt to attract any dolphins, I opted to stay in the boat and take pictures instead. It was a bit of an anti-climactic finish to the trip, but at least on the way back it didn't rain!

March 1, Last Day in New Zealand

Despite the constant rain, it's been a very enjoyable vacation, but not quite the adventure we were hoping it would be. New Zealand does offer some amazing biodiversity in such a compact area. In a matter of days (sometimes hours) you can see beaches, fiords, glaciers, rainforests and all sorts of rare and endangered species. I type out my last thoughts of our travelog as Neda prepares for a walk through downtown Christchurch in the brilliant sunshine. Yes, you heard right. Our final day here and it decides to beat down hot summer weather, to tune of 27C! Seriously?!



February 26, Vanishing World Trail

The path we're on is called the Vanishing World Fossil Trail, which has a few stops along the way that highlights different rock formations from different periods in geological history. The most interesting of these formations are called the Elephant Rocks. Not only do they look neat, but they were in a movie! Do you remember in the first Narnia movie, "The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe", when the kids meet Aslan the lion at his camp? I don't, but apparently that lion's camp was situated here.

February 27, Mount Cook

The forecast for the morning is awesome! And by awesome, I mean not raining. Mount Cook is the highest mountain in New Zealand. Perpetually snow-capped, it is the target of many mountain-climbers who seek to conquer the peak, battling the area's frequent storms and the mountain's steep ice and snow faces. On our way to Mount Cook, we run across a herd of sheep being shepherded by a group of dogs. For me, this is the definitive New Zealand scene! After spending the morning hiking at Mount Cook, we hop on the bikes and ride non-stop to



Not Just Another Pretty Face! The Yamaha FZ6R

Written by: Mr. Lee
Photography by: Mr. Lee





Roused up by Yamaha's R6, with a 600cc liquid-cooled, four-stroke, DOHC 16 valves engine the Yamaha FZ6R is designed to be forthcoming to new riders, but also a capable bike in the hands of a competent veteran rider. The all new redesigned cylinder head, crankcase, intake and exhaust system all perk up the engines mannerisms from air and fuel mixture to exhaust while maxed RPM at 11,500 RPM and max torque at approx 9,000 RPM.

With forged aluminum lightweight pistons, vibration reduction, four-hole injectors, a 32-bit ECU, the low to mid RPM engines performance is just right for someone who find joy in commuting or canyon carving during their weekends off. The lightweight forged aluminum pistons are made from an aluminum alloy which is heated and then formed under pressure without having to melt the alloy entirely as in traditional casting method. This keeps the strength of the original aluminum, resulting, in forged pistons which are stronger than cast ones and can be designed for lighter weight, which contributes to a reduction in vibration.

The four-hole injectors, with two-direction and high dynamic-range are controlled by a 32-bit ECU controller for superior injection delivering precise fuel to air mixture which is needed



...designed to be forthcoming to new riders, but also a capable bike in the hands of a competent veteran rider.

for our varying Canadian weather conditions. This system also delivers great smooth power and fuel economy.

Burned exhaust gases find their way out of the engine through into the 4 into 2 into 1 exhaust. The exhaust can and its 3-way catalytic converter are mounted mid bike right before the rear tire giving the bike a clean look and provides a throaty, yet contentedly hushed exhaust tone.

With 41 mm fork tubes with matching aluminum upper triple clamp and forged-steel under bracket front suspension, and the mono-cross rear suspension,

the bike remains steady and safe around the corners, inspiring confidence to beginning riders.

Stopping power is provided by hydraulic disc brakes for both front and rear. With 298mm diameter lightweight discs up front, reducing unsprung weight, and single rear 245mm disc the brakes all feature semi-metallic brake pads, providing stable braking potential.

A high-tensile steel diamond shaped frame uses the engine as part of the structure of the chassis. The design is to provide stiffness and stability which contribute to improved



SPECS

ENGINE
 Type 600cc liquid-cooled 4-stroke, DOHC 16 valves
 Bore x Stroke 65.5mm x 44.5mm
 Compression Ratio 998 cm³ (60.9 cu. in.)
 Compression ratio 12.2:1
 Fuel Delivery Fuel injection
 Ignition Digital TCI: Transistor Controlled Ignition
 Transmission 6-speed; multi-plate wet clutch
 Final Drive Chain

CHASSIS AND DIMENSIONS
 Suspension/Front Telescopic fork, 5.1-in. travel
 Suspension/Rear Hydraulic disc, 245mm
 Brakes/Front Hydraulic disc, 298mm
 Brakes/Rear 860 mm (33.84 in.)
 Tires/Front 120/70 ZR17
 Tires/Rear 160/60 ZR17
 Length 83.5 in
 Width 30.3 in
 Height 46.7 in
 Seat Height 30.9 in
 Ground Clearance 5.5 in
 Wheelbase 56.7 in
 Rake (Caster Angle) 26.0°
 Trail 4.1 in
 Fuel Capacity 4.6 gal
 Fuel Economy 43 mpg
 Wet Weight 467 lb
 Horse Power 78 hp @ 11,500 rpm
 Torque @ RPM 60 Nm @ 8,500 rpm
 Top Speed +/-120mph mph

PRICE
 \$7,090

and smooth cornering without twisting the frame.

Creature comforts sport an adjustable height seat up front and having a separate rear section for passengers. The rider's front seat can be set at 20mm higher for riders with a longer inseam, a change that makes a big difference on longer rides. Adding to rider comfort, the handlebar position can be adjusted up to 20mm forward by rotating the handlebar's clamps. The somewhat large gas tank is altogether integrated into the bike giving plenty room for riders to get their tuck on if need be.

However, having a very neutral seating position makes the FZ6R an all day rider without strain on the good old back bones.

A glance downwards at the dash panel treats one's eyes to the digital display speedometer, analog tachometer, odometer/tripmeter, fuel gauge, and water coolant gauges.

Colour Schemes this year include Raven with gold wheels, Yamaha Blue/White, Pearl White/ Rapid Red with gold wheels, and Pearl White & Vivid Magenta. On all choices the engine, transmission and chassis parts are painted black.

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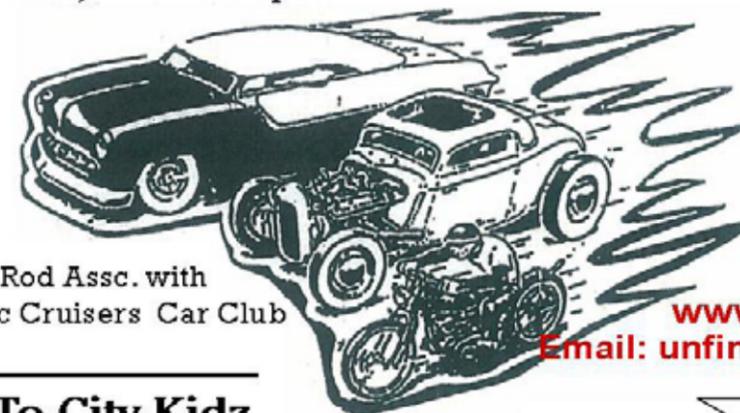
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“When I first started writing for 2Ride they mentioned that there would be hard work involved. One of the work requirements was to test ride bikes and write about them. I did, however, have my own requirements: make sure that I can reach the ground when mounting a machine. Well lo and behold, they wanted me to test ride the Fat Boy. With all the other bikes I had to refuse because they were just too tall; until the new Harley-Davidson Fat Boy Lo® became available for the 2Ride team to test ride.”



Phat! And all that.

The Harley Davidson Fat Boy Lo®

Story by: Mizz Lucy
Photo's By: M&M (Mike & Marc)

My other Colleagues took turns riding the Fat Boy with much enthusiasm and gave a lot of positive feedback. I, however, am the critic of the bunch, so they asked me to try it out. I thought to myself, "Did you not remember me telling you that I can only ride low bikes?" Oh sure, the Fat Boy was Lo and big in all the right places. I knew from trying other Fat Boys on for size, that I did not want to get on one knowing that I would feel incapable of riding such a monster! But with a little coaxing from the gang, I managed to get on it to see if I could handle the beast. To my ultimate surprise, I had both feet planted on the ground and was able to hold it upright with ease. The attractive features are its body - black with touches of metal on the engine, wheel edges, forks and the gauges/cluster. Fat Boy Lo has been designed to be low hence the name "Fat Boy Lo. Taking him for a ride with that air cooled twin cam 96B 1584cc engine between my legs was a great feeling. Due to the "Lo"-ness and 125mm ground clearance", which is great for those that want to ride a Harley but find many of them too tall and/or wide, . The seat is narrow and claims to be 616mm laden height as per Harley Davidson. With the feeling of being in the bike, the low and narrow seat and a dry weight of 313 kg it's popular with women riders and anyone with a short inseam. The floor boards are a nice touch, making it very easy to switch gears with some heel and toe action. ! I also found that the ride itself was too comfortable to be true, it handled the corners immaculately Add to all that, the stainless steel handle bars

with the wiring hidden (as it's wired inside of the handlebars), and the small black stylish mirrors, low adjustable suspension gives this ride a sporty look and feel.3 words came to mind, Smooth, Strong and Powerhouse! The 'Smooth' shifting that took you into a glide, the 'Strong' feel of how the bike maneuvers and the 'Powerhouse' when flicking your wrist ever so slightly to get him up to speed. I couldn't believe I was actually riding a big bad biker bike!

I can see why the Fat Boy has been around for so long. It only gets revised to keep up with the times, and no matter your inseam, be it short or tall, guy or girl, it is what it has always been, the choice of ride by many. Those who have good taste to know what it takes to experience roads leading to the unknown. Now, let me take you on a mind ride: picture yourself sitting in the seat, balancing the Fat Boy with little effort, adjusting the mirrors and turning the key. The custom stock pipes blow out a soft thunder of sound that seems to have been tuned to lull you into a mesmerizing zone. Crank the throttle a few times and you feel the deep tone of what's to come next. Shift into gear and off you go!

If I am ever to cheat, it would be most definitely with a Fat Boy Lo®.



SPECS

Engine | Powertrain
 Type Air-cooled, Twin Cam 96B™
 Total displacement 1584cc
 Compression ratio 9.2:1
 Bore x stroke 95.3 mm / 111.1 mm
 Engine Torque EEC95/1
 125 Nm @ 3500 rpm

Fuel System Electronic Sequential Port Fuel Injection (ESPFI)
Primary Drive Chain, 46/34 ratio

DIMENSIONS AND WEIGHT
 Length 2385 mm
 Wheelbase 1630 mm
 Saddle height 680 mm
 Ground clearance 125 mm
 Trail 147mm
 Dry weight 313 kg
 Fuel tank capacity 18.9 L



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Out goes the 13

BMW K1300GT

WRITTEN BY MARC ANTONY

PHOTOS BY: MR LEE

As some of you know the trusty reliable BMW K1300GT from 2011 was replaced by the K1600GT in 2012. We at 2Ride thought the K1300GT was a great bike, and thought we would give you a review of both bikes in back to back issues. In this issue, the K1300GT followed by the new K1600GT in the next issue of 2Ride Motorcycle Magazine.

When I first approached the beemer, I liked the styling with some nice sharp lines and how the hard bags seemed to fit well, and the K1300GT looked good as a whole package of a great looking tourer. We got to test the

grey colored model, I think BMW should add some cool and funky color schemes or sticker kits; it has some nice lines and they need to make it stand out more and make it not so plain looking even though it pulls it off so well, just would be nice to have the option. Now let's get her going and try her out. The K1300GT looked like it would be a handful for city riding as the whole bike is big. As I was taking it around downtown Toronto, I was surprised how easily she moved in and out of traffic, as if I was riding a lighter bike and not carrying all the baggage it had, I was impressed. The handling was very smooth and agile as I moved in and out of traffic and when I was out of the city we hit some nice



curves and it almost seemed like I was on a sport bike. At times I was worried that I was going to scrape the road by leaning this bike into the turns so low with ease.

I am not used to comfortable bikes as my personal bikes are mostly sport bikes. I felt I could ride all day but over time I found myself adjusting in the seat more as it wasn't as comfortable. Maybe it is because my butt and inseam have been conformed to hard sport bike riding seat and doesn't know what comfort is anymore. I also found the pegs a bit high and felt like I was sitting on top of the bike not in the bike, which felt weird at first. When riding at highway speeds, I found that for me there was a head buzzing but luckily BMW had a button on the handlebars by which I was able to adjust the windshield and easily raise the wind screen and there was no more buzzing and head

tossing. The heated grips and seat always come in handy on those chilly mornings or evenings. Why is it that when you have a bike that has heated grips and seats, you find the need to have them on more often? I guess that is what happens when you are spoiled by owning a BMW K1300GT. Speaking of being spoiled, the BMW ESA's electrically adjustable suspension can be adjusted as you are riding, from nice soft riding to Sport riding harder suspension, which comes in handy for different road conditions or when loaded with luggage or having a dead weight as a passenger.

From a passenger's point of view, my wife enjoyed the comfort of the back seat and also having a heated seat was nice for her cute little butt. She was easily able to sit back without worries, as I booked it up the highway while she kept texting on her

blackberry (shaking my head at her) and I kept on riding without feeling like she was even there.

I was also impressed about how quickly the K1300GT accelerates, and how smooth and quiet it was with the 1293cc engine and 160bhp and 99ftlb of torque. This bike moved off the line even though I found the transmission to feel rough and loud when changing gears, but that didn't effect its performance or reliability. With two passengers onboard and all the cases full the BMW K1300GT still pulled like a work horse and still carved those curves. I personally enjoyed the K1300GT over the new replacement the K1600GT model, next issue we will have the review on the BMW K1600GT.

SPECS

ENGINE

Engine type : Four-stroke engine
Engine configuration : I-4
Displacement : 1,293.0 cc
Power (claimed) : 160 hp @ 900 rpm
Torque (claimed) : 99 lb•ft @ 8,000 rpm (134 N•m)
Fuel system : Fuel injection
Bore : 80 mm
Stroke : 64 mm
Cooling system : Liquid
Fuel requirement : Premium
Transmission : 6-speed manual
Final drive : Shaft

SUSP. / BRAKES / TIRES (FRONT)

Suspension type : Duolever
Adjustable preload : no
Adjustable rebound dampening : no
Travel : 115 mm (5)
Caliper diameter : N/A
Brake type : dual discs
Brake diameter : 320 mm (13)
Pistons per caliper : 4
Tire : 120/70 ZR17

SUSP. / BRAKES / TIRES (REAR)

Suspension type : Swingarm with monoshock
Adjustable preload : yes
Adjustable rebound dampening : yes
Travel : 135 mm (5)
Brake type : single disc
Brake diameter : 294 mm (12)
Pistons per caliper : 2
Tire : 180/55 ZR17

DIMENSIONS

Wheelbase : 1,575 mm (62)
Rake : 60°
Trail : 112 mm (4)
Seat height : 820 mm (32)
Weight : 255 kg (562 lbs) (dry)

Fuel efficiency : 5.9 l/100km
Fuel tank capacity : 24 L

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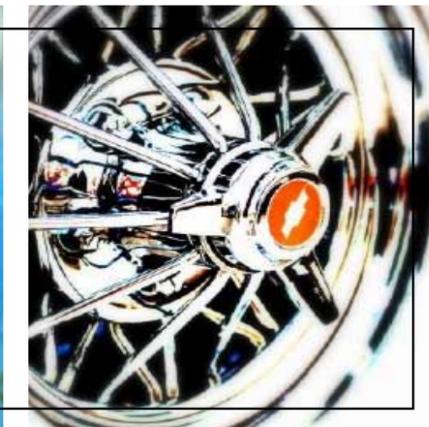
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She's OUT THERE...

WRITTEN BY SARAH TURL
PHOTO BY: TRINA TURL - TRINA TURL PHOTOGRAPHY



A Riding motorcycles isn't just about the actual bikes we ride, long to ride, or have sold, but wish we could ride again. It is also about the adventures we have, the people we meet, and the wacky fun things we all do together. After all, motorcyclists seem to believe that life is to be lived and not just survived. Just because there's snow on the ground, doesn't mean there aren't fun times to be had. This past winter was full of them, including the S.O.A.R. banquet in early March. The banquet is a celebration of the previous season, but also a great way to get excited for the season to come. But more than anything, it's a great party and this year was no exception. It was great to catch up with everyone at the banquet, but I was most happy to catch up with the girls. The Formula Femme class is full of amazing women on and off the track; we have a lot of fun together. It wasn't a surprise that we picked back up where we left off at the S.O.A.R. party. After learning

an interesting new shot from the bartender that involved some of us ending up on top of the bar, we were told about the mechanical bull. Within seconds of hearing that there was a mechanical bull only 4 doors down from where we were, Tracy, one of the S.O.A.R. founders, declared she was "in". Of course I followed suite, how could I say no to the opportunity to ride a mechanical bull? So we gathered our things, a group of participants, spectators, and headed out to the Dallas Bar in Kitchener to try it out. I've never ridden a mechanical bull before, but I had grand illusions of being a natural pro on the bull. Perhaps it was all the beer and shots that made me believe I had some sort of advantage over the bull, but I bought my ticket with excitement of my impending victory. I may not have won a motorcycle race, but I was going to rock it on that bull. Tracy, was on the bull first, followed by Michelle a fellow racer and S.O.A.R. organizer. Both of them didn't last too long on the bull, then I began to re-think

my cockiness. It didn't help that the bar featured a huge screen of the bull rider for everyone to see. I was up next, and learned that it's harder than you'd think to even get on the bull. Once on I grabbed the handle with one hand and waved my free arm in the air as I'd seen done in too many movies. First lesson learned, if you want to stay on, hold on with both hands. I think I managed to stay on for about 6 seconds. I climbed back on and promptly fell off again within 10 seconds. Second lesson learned, I swear that they wax that bull! More of the group followed and it was a great time watching all of the motorcycle racers get thrown off the bull one by one. It was a perfect way to end the night. Soon we'll all be together again for another season, and bikers all over will be once again enjoying crazy fun and adventures. With riders, you never know where the fun will take you and that's what I love about us all the most.

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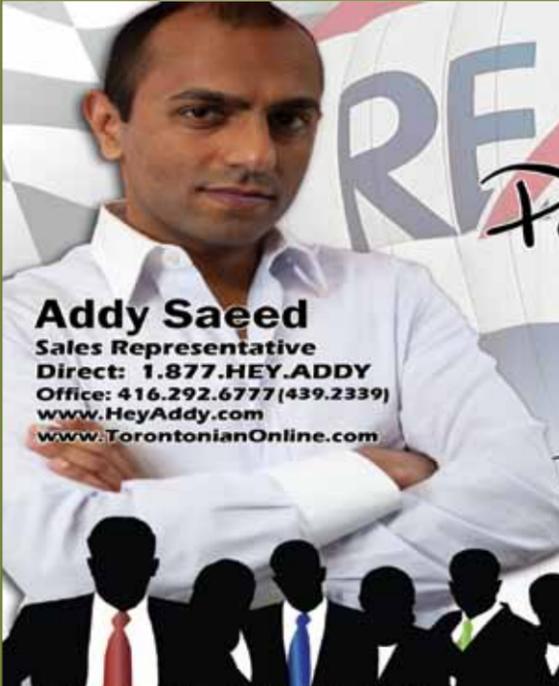
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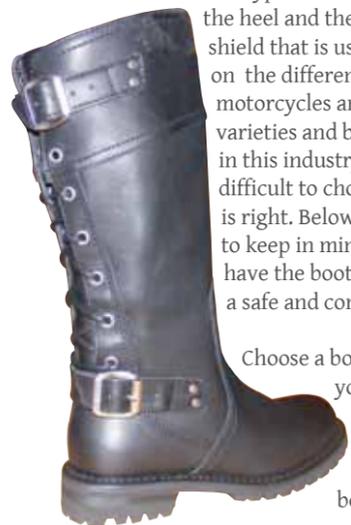
WRITTEN BY MIZZ LUCY
PHOTOS BY MIZZ LUCY



Ever since the invention and the gradual evolution of the motorcycle there have been many changes. This has led to a development of the many lines of products and accessories that are available to cater to the needs that came with this evolution. Every year products like jackets, boots, helmets, gloves and glasses are released into the market for us to purchase. Among the vast amount of accessories the most important are the helmets and the boots.

Motorcycle boots vary in length, from ones that start just above the ankle to those that end below the knee. The motorcycle boot has the style of a regular boot but has an extended lower heel which can help in controlling a bike. These boots are usually made of thick rubber or heavy leather and may also include metal, energy absorbers, spread padding and plastic. Other materials like Gortex are also used to protect and sustain the rider's legs, ankles and feet from the weather and road hazards.

Some of the boots that fall under the category motorcycle boots are touring, harness, engineer, motocross, racing and police boots. All of these boots come with variations in the type of leather, the size of the heel and the kind of water shield that is used depending on the different kinds of motorcycles and bikes. The varieties and brand names in this industry can make it difficult to choose a boot that is right. Below are some tips to keep in mind so you can have the boots you need for a safe and comfortable ride.



Choose a boot that suits your riding needs. Realize that not all motorcycle boots can meet

your needs; there are boots that will work on you, but there are also those that simply won't help you achieve a good riding experience. So it is important to figure out your needs very early on. Will you need the boots solely for riding? Or do you foresee yourself using the boots daily? What is your riding style? And how comfortable or sturdy do you want the boots to be?

Know the different types of boots. There are three common boot types: race boots, shorty boots and tall boots. Race boots are also called motocross boots and are designed for racing. Commonly the tall, race boots have sturdy foot and calf support and are very good for hardcore riding but are not ideal for everyday use. Shorty boots, on the contrary, are very comfortable even for everyday use. They are also called tactical boots and they are around 6 to 10 inches in height. Tall boots, on the other hand, can be anywhere between 14 to 20 inches in height. They can provide protection to the legs, are comfortable to wear, and can be very fashionable.

Consider the material of the boot. Motorcycle boots can be made from a combination of materials. Some manufacturers, for instance, use leather in key areas and synthetic materials in other parts. Remember that the material your boots are made of should be sturdy, withstand the harsh outdoor elements and can stand the test of time. A good pair of boots lasts for years.

Pay attention to the soles. The soles of the boots should promote traction on the motorcycle pedal and on the ground to prevent any slips. They should be oil-resistant so that you don't slip when you walk on an oily or slippery surface. They should also provide protection from the vibration of the motorcycle. And finally, the soles should be stitched to the boot and not glued, this is to ensure durability. Additionally, the best soles for boots are those made of thick rubber. Consider breathable material. Breathability

actually depends on the materials used. Leather is breathable although it may not be as water-resistant as Gortex and such materials. The latter, on the other hand, can protect your feet from water but cannot provide comfort in warm weather. In this case, choosing which boot to buy depends on when you are going to ride. If you need the boots for cold and wet weather choose Gortex; and in contrast, for hot and dry weather choose leather.

Good quality boots are not cheap and you will have to dig deep into those pockets to get the best boots on the market. In fact, going for known brands is best if you can afford them. If you are on a budget, consider buying moderately priced boots after researching its effectiveness. Never settle for anything too cheap as you might end up compromising your safety if you do so.

There are also a very small percentage of riders that prefer a riding shoe. Sport riders refer to these as lightweight and easier to feel the pegs of the bike with. They may not be as safe as boots but you are more likely to slip them on for short trips and have considerably more protection than running shoes. If you do decide to go the shoe route, again go for quality name brands and choose depending on what your riding style may be.



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A rider in a white and red racing suit and helmet is riding a red MV F4S motorcycle on a paved road. The motorcycle is leaning into a turn. The background shows a blurred landscape with green grass and a yellow archway.

A Fair Maiden on the Tail of the Dragon

1945, MV moves from airplane production, to releasing its first motorcycle to the public ...

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History

MV stands for Meccanica Verghera, which loosely translates to Verghera Engineering. Verghera is a little city just outside of Milan where Count Giovanni Agusta founded an aviation company back in 1907. Fast-forward to 1945, and the company under the direction of Giovanni's son, Domenico moved away from airplane production and released its first motorcycle to the public, the MV Agusta 98, powered by a two-stroke 98cc air-cooled engine.

In the late '50s through the early '70s, MV Agusta dominated Motorcycle GP Racing, winning 17 top-tier 500cc world championships carrying world-renowned riders like Mike Hailwood, Giacomo Agostini and John Surtees to the top step of the podium, race after race. In total, MV Agusta collected an astonishing 37 world championship titles in GP Racing through the 500cc, 350cc, 250cc and 125cc classes before pulling out from racing in 1980.

Throughout the intervening years, the MV Agusta company has had a complex ownership history. In 1998, an Italian motorcycle company, Cagiva (Castiglioni Giovanni Varese named after Claudio and Gianfranco Castiglioni, the two brothers who founded it) bought

MV, who then offloaded the debt-laden company to Malaysian car company, Proton in 2004. The very next year, Proton sold MV to GEVI-SpA, a unit of Banca Carige, bringing ownership back to Italy. In 2008, Harley-Davidson, looking to expand sales in Europe, acquired MV from Carige, only to announce that it would sell the company back to Claudio Castiglioni and to his wholly owned MV Agusta Motor Holding company. Full circle in just over a decade.

What is the significance of all this backstory? There was a certain bike designer employed at the Cagiva Research Center (CRC) named Massimo Tamburini. You may have heard of him: he designed the iconic Ducati 916 and was one third of the ultra-exotic motorcycle firm Bimota (his last name was the TA in bimoTA). Tamburini's other greatest achievement besides the 916 is the MV Agusta F4. The first variants, the F4 750 S and limited edition F4 750 Serie Oro were released to critical public acclaim in May 1999. It is considered to be one of the most beautifully-designed motorcycles in the world, to this very day.

There's this really pretty girl that I've wanted to ask out for the longest time. Here's the problem:

MV Agustas have never been available for sale directly in Canada. Prospective Canadian

owners would scheme and scope every angle trying to sneak one over. Only a few were successful. Over the years, F4s and other MVs have slipped across the US border as rebranded Cagivas, imported as custom-builds or show/race-only bikes. When Harley-Davidson acquired MV Agusta, there was suddenly talk of these hot Italian supermodels finally hitting Canadian shores, with the US General Manager hinting that MVs would be riding on Canadian roads by the fall of 2010. I started saving my pennies. At that time, F4s were selling north of \$20,000 USD stateside, and I realized I should be collecting Toonies in addition to the pennies. When HD announced they were divesting themselves of MV Agusta, the

Canadian import momentum stalled, missing the 2010 deadline. My leaning tower of Toonies looked to be falling onto a newer Ducati or some other mundane, commonplace bike...

Late last year, Canadian distributor, Montreal-based Motovan announced that they were undergoing the process to import MV Agusta. Since then, I've been in constant contact with Tim Massarelli, MV Agusta Canada National Manager, pestering... I mean, inquiring as to the status of the availability of the F4.

Throughout the early spring of this year, Motovan has worked hard to establish a network of sales and service centres across Canada to represent MV Agusta.

I was planning on taking a couple of sportbikes to do a write-up and photoshoot at Deals Gap in North Carolina and asked Tim if it was possible to get an F4 on this trip. Tim came through in a big way, working till the last minute getting Canadian-specific parts couriered to Toronto to prep for MV Agusta's first Canadian customer delivery in Canada. That would be me! After handing over my collection of 19,995 loonies (plus a few more for tax, freight, PDI, etc), I signed the ownership papers around 8PM on Wednesday evening and the next morning we were en route to the Tail of the Dragon for the Easter weekend!

What is the Tail of the Dragon? To many motorcyclists and



sportscar enthusiasts, the Dragon, a stretch of Tennessee two-laner with its 318 curves in 11 miles and pristine pavement, is perhaps the best-known, twistiest road in North America. There are actually more twisty roads in the area, but none have gained the mythical popularity of the Tail of the Dragon. Technically, on the map it's called US129, but my wife,

Neda, remarked with insight, "Give a twisty road a name and people from all over will come to ride it.": Tail of the Dragon, Sea-To-Sky Highway, Million-Dollar Highway. Works every single time.

Even the curves on the US129 are named, with ominous monikers like Beginner's End, Brake or Bust Bend to the

more fun-sounding Gravity Cavity. Several industries have popped up in the area like the photographers who set up camp at certain corners capturing action shots of the passing motorists and selling them on the Internet. One such corner has been renamed Killboy Corner for the very successful photographer who has a permanent camp with large billboards letting you know where to download your photos as you're leaned over mid-corner. Sounds safe? Maybe not, but it's all part of the spectacle and experience of riding the Dragon.

Although the Tail of the Dragon ends at the community of Deals Gap in North Carolina, US129 continues south and we've setup base in Robbinsville, about 30 kms south of Deals Gap. As we've travelled further south, the weather is dramatically warmer reaching the high 20s with a hint of humidity lingering in the air. The vegetation around the Appalachian Mountains is green and lush, in stark contrast to the shivering bare Southern Ontario trees we've left behind just 14 hours ago.

We unload the bikes at the hotel in the evening and I get a chance to admire the gorgeous lines of the F4. It's just called the F4 now, ever since the last model overhaul in 2010 when it was renamed from the F4 1000. New for this year is a more streamlined look, low and aggressive, yet maintaining most of the qualities

that made the original design so appealing. I've opted for the classic red/silver racing colour, but there is a titanium grey/ admiral grey option officially used for show displays, and would make a very close second choice if I had paid more attention. The biggest design change for 2010, and one that has caused some consternation among the F4 purists is the switch from the four-round exhaust "organ pipes" to a 4-into-1 square-tipped system. This might be the first thing I would personally change, however aftermarket manufacturers have been slow to come out with this retro styling option for a reasonable price.

Another styling cue that is unique to the F4 is the 5-pointed star-spoked wheels. The 2010 refresh saw a reduction in unsprung weight in the use of

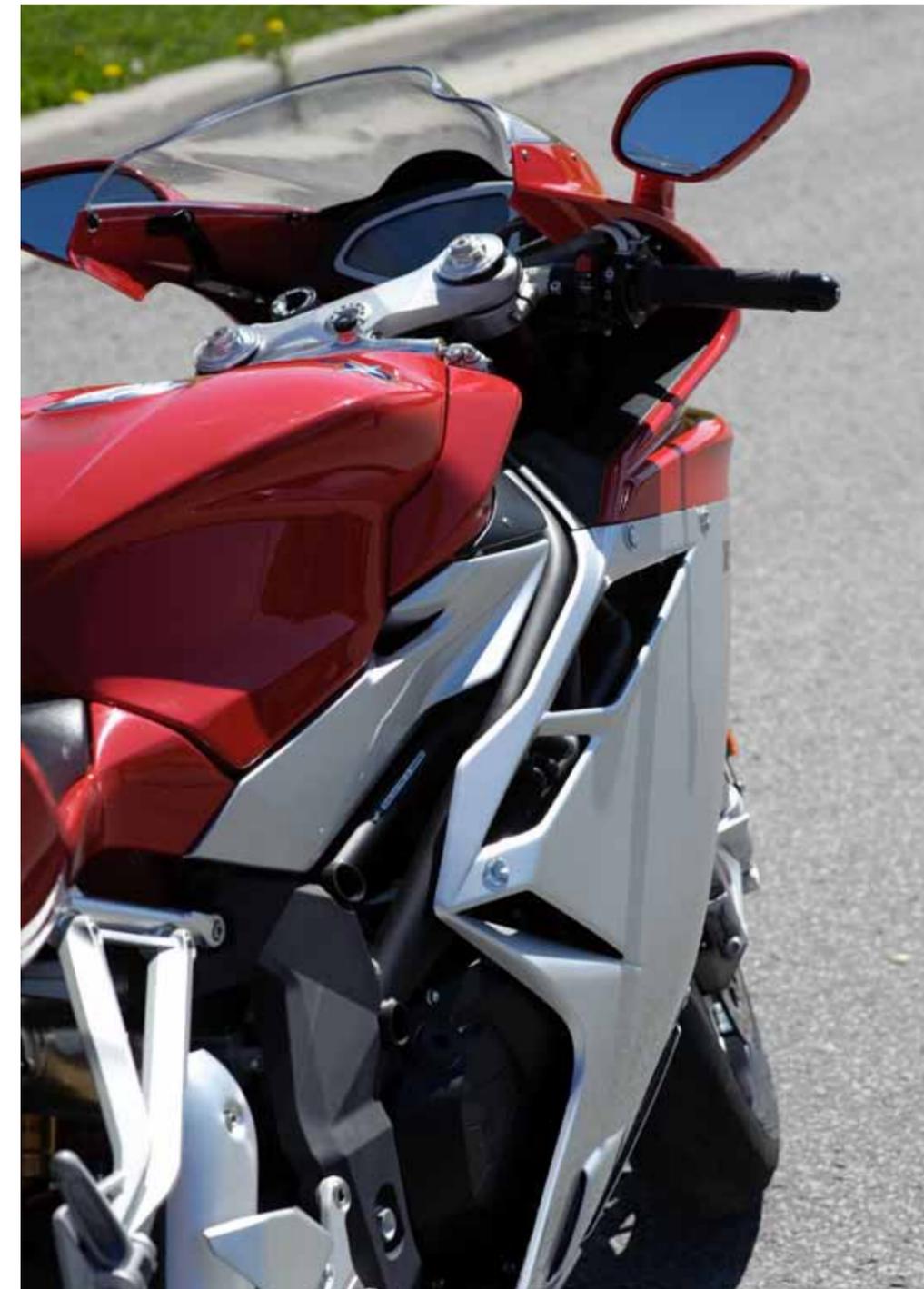
aluminum alloy. However, the wheels are powdercoated black and I prefer the gold/magnesium rims that came with previous higher-end F4s. That colour really highlights the wheel that the single-sided swingarm shows off. The bike is a biposto (pillion) model, which is the only version available in Canada this year. In the past, MV has labeled this a 1+1 version. Another future mod would be to take the passenger pegs off and find a nice solo tail.

If it sounds like I really want to transform this bike into a pre-2010 F4, you may be correct. However, 2010 did bring about many performance benefits, with the all new 16-radial valve engine upping the base F4 1000's 166 horses to a very competitive 186 hp. To bring back some of the pre-facelift's styling cues in this upgraded chassis and engine

would be the best of both worlds! It's like telling your girlfriend you love her new Pilates-toned body, but you'd also prefer if she'd wear her hair longer, like she used to...

There are girls who know they are pretty and make no secret that they know. Upon turning the key to the on position, the all-LCD backlit display flashes the model name and the subtitle "Motorcycle Art" for a quick second. I chuckle a little but still nod my helmet in agreement. Sometimes the pretty girls who know they're pretty don't measure up in other departments. I was eager to find out.

I discovered my first disappointment as I slowly pulled out of the parking lot. At 423 lbs dry, this beauty is almost 50lbs heavier than competitive 2011 models from the Big 4 Japanese and a certain



Bavarian manufacturer. "But I'm Motorcycle Art!" she exhorts. Okay, you're pretty, let's dance!

There is sweet music coming from the organ pipes behind me. The inline-4 howl is amplified louder than some other aftermarket pipes and my right hand is conducting a symphony of sound and speed. So she can sing, but can she move? When asked, the 998cc engine will stretch your elbows, especially from a standstill. The power is nice and linear until about 8,000RPM where there seems to be a small bump in power till the 13,500RPM redline. The seating position is the typical Italian tuck, knees to

your elbows, frog waiting for an enema. With its high seat height and high pegs, you sit very much perched atop the bike, as opposed to in it. The closest comparison would be a Ducati 1198. Very racey, not very comfortable for an old-touring guy like me,

but I make do for the next four days, and by the second day the "Motorcycle Art" LCD display reminds me that I'm overdue for my 1,000 km first service. Long before that, my knees and lower back have reminded me that I'm overdue for my chiropractors





appointment.

Our first run is called the Tail of the Dragon / Cherohala Skyway loop, and is considered to be an introduction to the two most well-known roads in the area. We start off from Robbinsville and take Cherohala Skyway westwards across the Tennessee border. Although the morning is cool already, about 15C, the mile-high climb up Cherohala means colder temperatures and lots of fog. I threw the F4 through 45mph curves and marveled at how nimble her weight felt. Although other European bikes may have sharper steering, namely the razor-sharp RSV4 and the quick-steering S1000RR, the

F4 is comparable to Ducati's 1198 despite the weight disadvantage. The engine is the real star of the ride, as there is useable power from low revs. I have to admit, being a traditional V-Twin guy, I routinely get caught out in a higher gear, counting on low-end grunt that isn't there when I hop on an in-line four, especially on a 600cc supersport. No such worries on this beast, as I power out of the 45mph-signed turns. Maybe my math is bad, but the km/h conversion on my LCD display doesn't quite match the posted speed limit. I'm sure it's my math...

The view from Cherohala is breath-taking whenever the

dense fog lifts, and Neda and I pull over at many of the scenic overlooks to the Cherokee National Forest and the Natanhala National Forest. In fact, Cherohala is an amalgamation of CHERokee and natanHALA. I check the LCD for the ambient temperature readout, but I can't find any option to display any temperature, ambient, oil, coolant or otherwise. All it says is, "Motorcycle Art": I'm pretty...

Cherohala ends at Tellico Plains, TN, about 60 miles west of Robbinsville. From there we take Hwy 360, a curvey back road north towards Hwy 411, a quick jaunt on a 4-lane highway, and then back to twisty roads again,

this time 72 towards US129, which is the main course: the infamous Tail of the Dragon. The pavement is smooth, the early afternoon temperature has warmed up to about 26C (information courtesy of Neda's bike). The weather is hot and so is my bike, as well as my riding companion! Perfect conditions!

We stop in at one of the roadside stores at the beginning of the Dragon on the TN side to peruse trinkets, T-shirts, mugs, stickers for our bikes, etc. This is yet another cottage industry that has sprung up to cater to the

deluge of two-and-four-wheeled visitors to the area. Upon hearing that this is our first run through the Dragon, the locals warn us of the tight turns and speed traps ahead of us. Being a Friday afternoon, law enforcement is light and we don't encounter any police on our run through. The weekdays are the best time to make a Dragon run because of the lack of traffic as well.

There is a pull-off on the western side of the Dragon in TN just before all the curves start. This acts as a staging area for riders to suit up, turn on cameras,



SPECS

Engine

Type Four cylinder, 4 stroke, 16 valve
Timing system "D.O.H.C.", radial valve
Total displacement 998 cm³
(60.9 cu. in.)

Compression ratio 13.1:1

Bore x stroke 76 mm x 55 mm
(3.0 in. x 2.2 in.)

Max. horse power - r.p.m. (at the crankshaft) Full power version: 137 kW (186 HP) at 12900 - Lim. 13500 r.p.m. / Restricted power version: 73 kW (100 HP) at 9200 - Lim. 10800 r.p.m.

Max. torque - r.p.m. Full power version: 114 Nm (11.4 kgm) at 9500 r.p.m. / Restricted power version: 90 Nm (9.0 kgm) at 5500 r.p.m.

Clutch Wet, multi - disc

Gear Box Cassette gearbox; six speed, constant mesh

DIMENSIONS AND WEIGHT

Wheelbase 1430 mm (56.27 in.)

Overall length 2100 mm (82.63 in.)

Overall width 750 mm (29.51 in.)

Saddle height 860 mm (33.84 in.)

Min. ground clearance 115 mm (4.52 in.)

Trail 100,4 mm (3.93 in.)

Dry weight 192 Kg (423 lbs.)

Fuel tank capacity 17 l (4.49 U.S. gal.)

FRAME

Type CrMo Steel tubular trellis (TIG welded)

Rear swing arm pivot plates: material Aluminium alloy

FRONT SUSPENSION

Type "UPSIDE - DOWN" telescopic hydraulic fork with rebound-compression damping and spring preload external and separate adjustment

REAR SUSPENSION

Type Progressive, single shock absorber with rebound and compression (High speed / Low speed) damping and spring preload adjustment

BRAKE

Front brake Double floating disc with Ø 320 mm (Ø 12.6 in.) diameter, with steel braking band and aluminium flange

Front brake caliper Radial-type, single-piece with 4 pistons - Ø 34 mm (Ø 1.34 in.)

Rear brake Single steel disc with Ø 210 mm (Ø 8.27 in.) diameter

Rear brake caliper With 4 pistons - Ø 25,4 mm (Ø 1.00 in.)

RIMS

Front / Rear (Material and Size)

Aluminium alloy 3.50 in. x 17 in. / 6.00 in. x 17 in.

TIRES

Front 120/70 - ZR 17 M/C (58 W)

Rear 190/55 - ZR 17 M/C (75 W)



brag about how many times they put their knee down, etc. One ZX10R rider in full leathers and scuffed knee sliders suits up as we pass by the pull-off. I have a feeling he's going to catch up to us pretty soon as we tiptoe through our first Tail of the Dragon run.

There is no reason why this road has to be this twisty. I don't complain and neither does the F4 as she attacks every corner with rev-hungry eagerness. My eyes are as wide as dinner plates, focusing on the inside line of each turn as it disappears around the side of a mountain. Spray painted on the road surface are helpful warning signs. I read "SLOW" just as a tight, decreasing radius turn comes up on us. Thanks for that. Several arrows are painted on the ground with the words, "PULL OFF -> -> ->" pointing towards, you guessed it: a pull-off. This happens as I hear the roar of a sportbike come up behind me. I indicate right, slow down and move over as GreenNinjaBoy passes me on the outside, knee-dragging the entire way through a 30mph signed corner. Holy crap! Tennessee plates. Figures...

I'm too preoccupied to count all 318 curves, but I have a feeling this count is accurate as many riders pull off mid-Dragon to take a break from the twisties and to time their restarts between groups of slower riders. There seems to be a whole strategy and etiquette to riding the Dragon.

My body complains as we pass the TN/NC border and as an answer to my aches and pains, we approach a motorcycle oasis on our left!

The Deals Gap Motorcycle Resort has made a name for itself being the most closely-situated accommodation/eatery/gas-station/corner store to the Tail of the Dragon. The parking lot is pitted with kick-stand marks, and there is a paved ramp where pick-up trucks can back up onto to unload their motorcycles. Everything here is catered to two wheels and the covered patio has benches where a weary rider can relax in the shade and look over all the bikes coming in and out. The only drawback is that Deals Gap is in Graham County, which is a dry county - meaning no alcohol is allowed to be sold or served. I'm positive the county founders banned alcohol after discovering what kind of job the road planners did on US129...

Out towards the motel area of the resort, there is a Tree of Shame where riders who have crashed on the Dragon can donate their broken parts to hang up on the branches, serving as both a warning to bold riders and amusement to old riders.

The lone Canadian F4 is the only MV Agusta in the parking lot. The staff tells me that they don't see a lot of MVs come in and a lot of riders circle the bike and nod their heads in appreciation especially when they see Ontario

plates. Then they shake their heads, tut-tutting when they see the size of my chicken strips. "But I'm so pretty...!"

The next few days have us exploring all the roads in the area, most of them with their own names: "6 Gap North Georgia", a figure 8 loop that runs across the Appalachian Trail just across the NC/GA border. Awesome elevation changes, nice smooth twisty pavement. Then the "Moonshiner 28", a southbound run down Highway 28, dipping into Georgia and on through to South Carolina: pavement not as good, some weekend traffic, but some quaint towns along 28 to stop in for lunch or do some window shopping. And then a run through the scenic Great Smoky Mountain National Park, which might be a mistake on sportbikes because of all the slow RV/tourist/cruiser traffic that litter the road on the long Easter weekend.

It was during the Great Smoky that the F4's engine overheated, as we slowly pattered behind a line-up of vehicles. We pulled over to give our aching wrists and lower backs a rest and I noticed a puddle of coolant quickly collecting underneath the bike. The LCD display is once again unhelpful, only showing engine temperature as a series of bars instead of the actual temperature. I removed the right-side fairing and was thankful for the stock Dzus fasteners - nice touch! It



seems the coolant was boiling over the top of the expansion tank. Uh oh.

Maybe it was overfilled? Water pump not working? No fault lights showing up on the display cluster, so perhaps the former. I let a sizeable amount of coolant boil out and replace the cap, start her up and watch for any more signs of boilover on idle. Neda's Bavarian sportbike sat



impatiently behind seemingly chiding us: “Vee are not amused”. The bars on the F4’s LCD readout climbed then backed off as the rad fans did their job. I think we

were going to be okay, but I kept an eye out on the bars for the rest of our slow ride through the park. We end our Smoky Mountain loop with a high speed run through

the Foothills Parkway. During a particularly long straight stretch, I back off the throttle a little just as a NC state trooper appears ahead of us and passes us in the opposite direction. My heart skips a beat and I look anxiously back in my rear mirrors only to confirm that, yes, my elbows are still there... damn Italian sportbikes!

Thankfully no performance certificates on this run. We head back to do a final trip through the Tail of the Dragon, let the MV Agusta F4 do her farewell curtsy in the parking lot of the Deals Gap Motorcycle Resort and then pack her up for the trip back home. This whole area is a playground for motorcyclists; a place for riders who actually ride (and ride well!), instead of hang out and polish their chrome bits and talk about all the riding they used to do or will someday do. We resolve to make this an annual trip for us. The F4 really enjoyed herself while she was down here, turning heads wherever she went and proving that sometimes pretty girls can have a little substance too.

2A

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QC

An interview with Aubrey



WRITTEN BY ALEX COLLINS
PHOTOGRAPHY BY WOBBLY CAT PHOTOGRAPHY

Stats:

Age: 17

Hometown: Parry Sound

Started out on a: Honda Z50 (age 5)

First race was at 8 years old

A.C-I am pretty sure that was the age I

was allowed to go to the park by myself

Spent 3 years in super Moto

Started racing CBR125's

Current standings:

R.A.C.E: 3rd place in Am600 class

Parts Canada Super Bike: 6th overall

in the Am600 class

2011 Aspirations: We never really got around to discussing this but I am sure I can guess. His 2011 goals are to get us to both to drop a knee at the same time on our scooter, during the M.B.S Rally; or a few 1st place podiums at the Nationals.

2RIDE: Watching you race Aubrey, one might think that you were born riding. Can you take us back to your first riding memories?

Aubrey: Some of my first memories go back to riding around on the Z50's with my Dad

and brother; taking the whole day and riding the Seguin trails out to my great grandma's house. This is something we still do except that now we take the roads.

2RIDE: Racing at such a young age must give you some interesting stories; can you share a few of them with us?

Aubrey: I don't have any great stories of my own yet, but from hanging out around the track I certainly heard some interesting ones from the people that have been around longer.

2RIDE: I recently found out that back in July 2009 you broke your knee cap! That could not have been pretty, how did it happen and what was your recovery like?

Aubrey: I broke my knee in turn 4 at Shannonville; I pushed the front a bit far and had a small low side. We didn't think there was much wrong with it until we got the x-rays done. That put me in a cast for 6 weeks, which wasn't so bad. I got to rip around the halls at school in a wheel chair, which was pretty sweet.

2RIDE: How do you do in school, Aubrey? It must be difficult balancing racing and academics.

Aubrey: It's not as bad as you would think, last semester I missed 31 days but still managed to keep an 85% average.

2RIDE: What about your personal life? I imagine being a teen in Parry Sound is difficult enough, and then to add the heavy schedules of racing.

Aubrey: It makes life busy, especially when you throw in cross country skiing, a missionary trip to Camden New Jersey and hanging out with friends. But I can't think of anything I would rather be doing.

2RIDE: I am sorry; a missionary trip to Camden, NJ, what type of missionary trip is it?

Aubrey: It's organized by Urban Promise and The Meeting House. A bunch of us youth are heading down and we are going to be working with the kids there, doing before and after school programs and helping out with other things in the area.

2RIDE: How do you get involved with something like that?

Aubrey: I got involved through my local youth group and church; but there are lots of other ways to get involved with Urban Promise.

2RIDE: What would you say are your everyday life goals?

Aubrey: Every day I really just try and have a good time. Live my life as a good role model and go to bed happy every night.

2RIDE: That is an amazing outlook; I wish we all could adapt such a personal philosophy. Where do you see yourself (racing wise) in 5 or 10 years?

Aubrey: I would really like to see myself winning races in the AMA on a factory team.

2RIDE: What about outside of the race industry?



Aubrey: Next year, I plan on coming back to high school and doing a co-op with the local paramedics. After that I want to attend the paramedic program at Fleming College.

2RIDE: Paramedics eh? That is a difficult field to find gainful employment in; do you think your racing career will help you prepare for a career like that?

Aubrey: Being around the track I think will help out a lot with any career; you learn a lot of things there that you can't learn in any schools.

2RIDE: What advice can you give to the readers about the track or racing?

Aubrey: Once you try it, you get hooked. It's so much safer than ridding on the street and anyone can come out to a track day and give it a shot without doing much to their bike.

2RIDE: Aubrey thank you so much, it is always such a pleasure.

There is always the running joke that behind every great man is a woman, and in Aubrey's case it's a great supportive family and one amazing Father. I took a few moments to speak with the Dad behind the Racer, which was hard to do. He is so supportive that when I asked how he would like his name used he replied with "You can call me Aubrey's Dad (It's not about me)". His name for the record is D'Arcy, and sometimes it is about the Dad.

2RIDE: You have to dedicate an

awful lot of time and money to be able to do this with your son, is it worth it?

Aubrey's Dad: We've always been motorcycle enthusiasts, so we rode almost every weekend anyways; this is just a different direction. As a parent it's nice to see a child excel at their chosen sport; this one being a higher end sport (cost wise). I hear other sports such as hockey are also expensive. I feel it's worth it; spending quality time as a family and seeing him having fun. My parents said that I spent just as much on fines and lawyers when I was young. People have been so generous with their time, money and products over the years; especially in our circle of friends and family, so that all amounts to making it easier.

2RIDE: How did you get him involved in racing?

Aubrey's Dad: He started riding at a young age. Racing seemed like the next step. I wanted to get him a venue to sow his wild oats and not get into trouble. You can't do on the streets now what



you could do a generation ago. So Aubrey rode Super Moto for a few years and that evolved into road racing when they introduced the CBR125 series for young riders.

2RIDE: Your son is probably one of the nicest and most honest people I have ever met; which side of the family does he get that from?

Aubrey's Dad: His Mom, of course. (That's the smart answer)

2RIDE: From a parental perspective, how do you balance these crazy schedules and manage to keep your sanity??

Aubrey's Dad: What sanity? We are fortunate to be able to work part time during the summer. We spent over 50 nights sleeping in the camper at race tracks last year.

2RIDE: That is a lot of love! Do you have any advice for would-be future race parents?

Aubrey's Dad: It should be fun. In our case, Aubrey is self motivated and passionate so it makes our job easy.

2RIDE: Thanks so much D'Arcy for taking the time to speak with me.

"A special thanks for pro star and bridgestone"

Aubrey Bailey is currently sponsored by: ProStar, Ripp Racing Bridgestone Tires, H.T. Motorsports, Black Sheep Motorsports, Velocity Sports Gear, Blue Streak Racing, and McCormack Auto Body.



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4th RACE SMP Superseries Long
5th RACE SMP Superseries Long
6th RACE SMP Superseries Long
7th Pro6cycle SMP Nelson
10th Riders Choice SMP Fabi
12th Pro6cycle Calabogie
13th Pro6cycle Calabogie
14th Pro6cycle Calabogie
15th Pro6cycle Calabogie
15th FAST SMP Nelson Phase 1
16th FAST SMP Nelson Phase 1/2
17th FAST SMP Nelson Phase 1/2
21st GPBikes Mospport RDT
24th Riders Choice SMP Fabi
24th Racer5 GBM Long Track
25th SOAR GBM Long Track Rd #1
26th SOAR GBM Long Track Rd #1
26th DOCC Mospport members rally
27th DOCC Mospport members rally
27th SOAR GBM Long Track Rd #1
28th DOCC Mospport members rally
29th Pro6cycle Mospport VIP Day
29th FAST SMP Nelson French only
30th FAST SMP Nelson French only
31st FAST SMP Nelson School

JUNE

1st VVRA SMP Nelson
1st Track Fever Calabogie
2nd Track Fever Calabogie
2nd VVRA SMP Nelson
3rd VVRA SMP Nelson
3rd Track Fever Calabogie
4th SMP SMP Long Track
4th Pro6cycle Calabogie
5th Pro6cycle Calabogie
9th Pro6cycle Calabogie
10th Pro6cycle Calabogie
11th Pro6cycle Calabogie
12th Pro6cycle Calabogie
14th Riders Choice SMP Long



14th Racer5 GBM Modified
15th SOAR GBM Modified Rd #2
16th SOAR GBM Modified Rd #2
17th SOAR GBM Modified Rd #2
17th Track Fever Calabogie
18th Pro6cycle SMP Long
19th FAST SMP Nelson
20th FAST SMP Nelson

JUNE

21st FAST SMP Pro Phase 3
22nd FAST SMP Pro
22nd NATIONAL SMP Pro
23rd NATIONAL SMP Pro
24th NATIONAL SMP Pro
25th Pro6cycle Calabogie VIP
26th Pro6cycle Calabogie VIP
27th Riders Choice SMP Fabi
30th Pro6cycle Calabogie

JULY

1st Pro6cycle Calabogie
2nd GPBikes Mospport RDT
2nd DOCC Calabogie members rally
3rd DOCC Calabogie members rally
3rd FAST SMP Nelson School
4th FAST SMP Nelson School
5th FAST SMP Nelson School
9th SMP SMP Long Track
9th Pro6cycle Calabogie VIP
10th Pro6cycle Calabogie VIP
12th Riders Choice SMP Long
13th RACE SMP School
16th Pro6cycle Calabogie VIP
17th Pro6cycle Calabogie VIP
20th SMP SMP Long trackday
20th RACE SMP Superseries Long
21st RACE SMP Superseries Long
22nd RACE SMP Superseries Long
26th Racer5 GBM Tech Track
27th SOAR GBM Tech Track Rd #3
28th SOAR GBM Tech Track Rd #3
28th Pro6cycle Calabogie
29th Pro6cycle Calabogie
29th SOAR GBM Tech Track Rd #3
30th Pro6cycle Calabogie
31st Pro6cycle Calabogie

AUGUST

1st GPBikes Mospport RDT
2nd Riders Choice SMP Fabi
3rd RACE SMP Superseries Fabi
4th RACE SMP Superseries Fabi
5th RACE SMP Superseries Fabi
6th GPBikes Mospport RDT

6th Pro6cycle Calabogie
7th Pro6cycle Calabogie
8th Pro6cycle Calabogie
8th RACE SMP Nelson School
9th RACE SMP Nelson School
15th Riders Choice Mospport
16th Riders Choice Mospport
17th VVRA Mospport
18th VVRA Mospport
19th VVRA Mospport
20th Pro6cycle Mospport
21st Pro6cycle Mospport
22nd Pro6cycle Mospport
22nd FAST SMP Nelson School

AUGUST

24th NATIONAL Mospport
25th NATIONAL Mospport
25th DOCC GBM members rally
25th Pro6cycle Calabogie
26th NATIONAL Mospport
26th DOCC GBM members rally
26th Pro6cycle Calabogie
27th Riders Choice Mospport
27th Pro6cycle Calabogie VIP
28th Pro6cycle Calabogie VIP
31st SMP SMP Long trackday
31st RACE SMP Superseries Long

SEPTEMBER

1st RACE SMP Superseries Long
2nd RACE SMP Superseries Long
3rd GPBikes Mospport RDT
3rd Pro6cycle.Calabogie
4th Pro6cycle Calabogie
6th SMP SMP Long Track
6th Racer5 TMP Reverse track
7th SOAR TMP Reverse Rd #4
8th SOAR TMP Reverse Rd #4
9th SOAR TMP Reverse Rd #4
9th Riders Choice SMP Long
15th Pro6cycle Calabogie
16th Pro6cycle Calabogie
17th Pro6cycle Calabogie VIP
18th Pro6cycle Calabogie VIP
27th Racer5 GBM Screaming Alien
28th SOAR GBM Screaming Alien
29th SOAR GBM Screaming Alien
30th SOAR GBM Screaming Alien

OCTOBER

11th Racer5 TMP Regular Direction
12th SOAR TMP Regular Direction
13th SOAR TMP Regular Direction
14th SOAR TMP Regular Direction



SOAR Schedule 2012

Round #1 May 25-27
Grand Bend Motorplex Long Track

Round #2 June 15-17
Grand Bend Motorplex Modified Track
With Thunder by the Beach all bike drag races

Round #3 July 27-29
Grand Bend Motorplex Technical Track

Round #4 September 7-9
Toronto Motorsports Park Reverse Direction

Round #5 September 28-30
Grand Bend Motorplex Screaming Alien Track

Round #6 October 12-14
Toronto Motorsports Park Regular Direction

Upcoming Events

TORONTO MOTORCYCLE SHOW
DECEMBER 07-09 2012
METRO CONVENTION CENTRE, TORONTO WWW.TORONTOMOTORCYCLESHOW.CA

NORTH AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL SUPERSHOW
JANUARY 6,7,8 2012
INTERNATIONAL CENTRE, TORONTO WWW.SUPERSHOWEVENTS.COM

WORLD OF MOTORCYCLES EXPO - HAMILTON SHOW
JANUARY 27,28,29 2012
CAREPORT CENTRE, HAMILTON WWW.WORLDOFMOTORCYCLESEXPO.COM

WORLD OF MOTORCYCLES EXPO - LONDON SHOW
FEBRUARY 10 - 12, 2012 - WESTERN FAIR AGRIPLEX
LONDON, ONTARIO WWW.WORLDOFMOTORCYCLESEXPO.COM

WORLD OF MOTORCYCLES EXPO - TRI-CITY SHOW
MARCH 10,11 2012 - BINGEMANS PARK
KITCHENER, ONTARIO WWW.WORLDOFMOTORCYCLESEXPO.COM

NATIONAL MOTORCYCLE SHOW - BETTER LIVING CENTRE EXHIBITION PLACE TORONTO, ONTARIO
MARCH 31 AND APRIL 1, 2012 WWW.NATIONALMOTORCYCLESHOW.COM

TORONTO SPRING MOTORCYCLE SHOW
MARCH 17 & 18 2012 AT THE INTERNATIONAL CENTRE, 6900 AIRPORT ROAD
TORONTO, ONTARIO, CANADA WWW.SUPERSHOWEVENTS.COM

FRIDAY APRIL 13, 2012
PORT DOVER, ON - VISIT [HTTP://WWW.PD13.COM](http://WWW.PD13.COM) FOR DIRECTIONS.

CANADIAN ARMY VETERAN (CAV) HOSTED MOTORCYCLE SHOW
APRIL 28, 29, 2012 CFB KINGSTON ONT
[HTTP://WWW.MOTORCYCLERIDEFORADAD.ORG/APP/WAMEDIAENTRY?MEDIAENTRYID=9663](http://WWW.MOTORCYCLERIDEFORADAD.ORG/APP/WAMEDIAENTRY?MEDIAENTRYID=9663)

MOTORCYCLE RIDE FOR DAD
CHECK THE SITE FOR A RIDE IN YOUR CITY WWW.MOTORCYCLERIDEFORADAD.ORG

B.A.D. RIDE 14 •
SUNDAY MAY 27, 2012 WWW.THEBADRIDE.COM

HEROS HIGHWAY RIDE & RALLY
SATURDAY JUNE 2, 2012 - TRENTON, ONT WWW.HEROSHIGHWAYRIDE.COM

GTAMOTORCYCLE.COM TRACKDAY
SATURDAY JUNE 9 2012 GRANDBEND RACEWAY WWW.GTAMOTORCYCLE.COM

THE LANSDOWNE CHILDRENS CENTRE FOUNDATION 8TH ANNUAL CHARITY MOTORCYCLE RIDE
SATURDAY JUNE 9TH 2012 [HTTP://WWW.LANSDOWNERIDE4KIDS.COM/](http://WWW.LANSDOWNERIDE4KIDS.COM/)

WROAR RIDE
AUGUST 19, 2012 WWW.WROAR.COM

REACH OUT 'N RIDE - PORT CARES 1ST CHARITY RIDE FOR POVERTY REDUCTION.
SATURDAY, JUNE 12, 2010

RIDE FOR SIGHT - TUDHOPE PARK IN ORILLIA
JUNE 15, 16, 17, 2012 WWW.RIDEFORSIGHT.COM

RIDE FOR PROGERIA 2012 - ELMIRA, ONTARIO
JUNE 23 2012 WWW.FYTFITNESSFANATIK.COM

REALTORS CARE CHARITY MOTORCYCLE RIDE - TORONTO, ONTARIO
JULY 4, 2012 [HTTP://REALTORSCAREONTARIO.CA](http://REALTORSCAREONTARIO.CA)

9TH ANNUAL R.O.C.K RIDE SARNIA WWW.ROCKRIDE.COM
SATURDAY JULY 7 2012

GEORGIAN BAY THUNDER MOTORCYCLE RIDE 2012
SATURDAY JULY 7, 2012 [HTTP://WWW.COMMUNITYLINK.CA/THUNDER.HTML](http://WWW.COMMUNITYLINK.CA/THUNDER.HTML)

FRIDAY JULY 13, 2012
PORT DOVER, ON - VISIT [HTTP://WWW.PD13.COM](http://WWW.PD13.COM)

NIAGARA MOTORCYCLE SHOW - SCOTIABANK CONVENTION CENTRE, NIAGARA FALLS
JULY 20-22 2012 [HTTP://WWW.NIAGARAMOTORCYCLESHOW.COM/](http://WWW.NIAGARAMOTORCYCLESHOW.COM/)

THE 7TH ANNUAL GTA HOTTEST BABES & BIKES
JULY 21, 2012 WWW.GTAHOTTESTBABESANDBIKES.COM

CORRECTIONAL OFFICERS RIDE
SUNDAY AUGUST 12 2012 VAUGHAN WWW.HCMONTARIO.COM

GTAMOTORCYCLE.COM TRACKDAY
SATURDAY AUGUST 25 2012 GRANDBEND RACEWAY WWW.GTAMOTORCYCLE.COM

RIDE2REACH SEPT 2012
WWW.RIDE2REACH.COM

2012 RIDE FOR MS POKER RUN
SEPTEMBER 16, 2012 WINDSOR, ON
[HTTP://WWW.LONEWOLFCLUBHOUSE.COM/RIIDE-FOR-MS.PHP](http://WWW.LONEWOLFCLUBHOUSE.COM/RIIDE-FOR-MS.PHP)

cross-roads

noun / krôs rōdz/

WRITTEN BY SUNNY PARK

PHOTOS BY TAYLOR MCMILLAN, MARY MCCARTHY,
NEIL CAMERON-COMPETITIONIMAGES

An intersection of two or more roads
-A point at which a crucial decision must be made that will have far-reaching consequences.
A road that crosses a main road or joins two main roads.

Hello everyone, I just wanted to introduce myself to you. My name is Sunny. I am a female motorcycle road racer. In 2010, I completed my first season of racing, placing 3rd overall in the Women's Cup Challenge and winning the very first Formula Femme Championship at S.O.A.R. (Southern Ontario Association of Racing). It didn't come easy, as nothing worthwhile ever does. Many factors can come into play but nothing can test you like your own self. The fine line between victory and defeat can be something as simple as what you carry in your heart, and if you can allow yourself to feel what's in it. When I was asked to write an article for the awesome guys at 2RIDE magazine, and possibly more, I wanted to start at the beginning. I hope my story finds you well.

There comes a moment in everyone's life where you have to choose which path to take in life. A turning point, so to speak. It could be the most important decision you ever make and you can never go back because it changes you in a way that you never thought could happen. It's a life altering, destiny changing, timeline drifting kind of moment. Sometimes a moment is all you get. Just

one moment, and it changes you forever...

“ The greatest hazard of all, losing one's self, can occur very quietly in the world, as if it were nothing at all. “
-Soren Kierkegaard (The Sickness Unto Death)

It's funny when you think back to that specific time in your life. I don't know where you were, but I can sure as hell tell you where I was sitting in an empty garage, staring at a wrecked bike for hours. Actually, I had been there for months. Devastated, not knowing what to do, or what was going to happen to me, since I had just lost the most important person in my life. This was someone who I was going to spend the rest of my life with. I cannot describe the type of pain someone goes through during a loss like this. It's something that destroys everything in your soul and everything that you once were is gone.

Two months prior, it was a beautiful summer day in July of 2008 I had just entered into my second year of motorcycle riding. It had already been the start of an unbelievable season, just having visited Deal's Gap and finished a 2 day course at FAST riding school. It was a lifelong dream that my husband and I shared. Ever since I was young, I've always wanted a motorcycle. Specifically, a sport bike but coming from a very chauvinistic upbringing, I was discouraged right from the start. My husband offered support,



encouragement and strength while I took on this endeavor. We went into this adventure together for one reason: we both loved it.

It's one of those things that you never expect could happen to you. One minute you were so happy, full of hopes and dreams. Then the world suddenly comes crashing down on you. Hard. This only took about 15 minutes for me. On that beautiful July afternoon, my husband and two of his friends left for a ride. I remember looking at him when they left, and just as he normally did, he turned around on his bike and gave me a quick wave goodbye. I got the call 15 minutes later. I knew something was wrong right away. I was told he had lost control of his motorcycle, ran off into the ditch and collided with a tree.



I won't go on too much about the next few days because, as you can imagine, did not go very well at all. Since the first day he was admitted to the hospital, he never regained consciousness again. He died 2 days later from his injuries. The tree had impacted with the base of his neck and severed his spinal cord. At the end, I was sitting by his side, holding his hand with my head buried into his shoulder. I felt a sudden squeeze from his hand. I quickly looked up to see his eyes partially open looking at me. There was a tear running down his face. Even though the doctors told me that he was unconscious and completely paralyzed from the neck down, he had summoned all the strength he had left in him to say goodbye. He loved me that much. He died 2 days before his 31st birthday.

Still to this day, I don't know how or why this happened. He had died needlessly and without reason. The answers are out there, but I've given up trying to find out what they are. It doesn't matter anymore. Right now, it would be meaningless.

A part of me is still there on that shop stool, sitting in an empty garage and

staring into nothing in silence.

“ The road that is built in hope is more pleasant to the traveler than the road built in despair, even though they both lead to the same destination.” -Marion Zimmer Bradley (The Fall of Atlantis)

The decision didn't come easy or even right away. But what is most important is that it did finally come and I realized that I couldn't let this stop me. I hated the thought of never being able to take enjoyment ever again from something that I loved and had once brought me so much joy. I was not willing to settle for that. Then I stood up from that shop stool.

First thing was to make a list and gather what damaged parts I needed to replace. EBay took care of most of that. Then it was disassembling the bike, which took a bit of time because I had to mark every piece that I removed so that it would go back to its proper place. I did the majority of the work myself, and got some advice/help from some great friends when I needed it. So, in the matter of about a month,

the bike was done. In a lot of ways, the bike represents me. Trying to put back together all the broken pieces so that I could live once again.

At the end of that year, I knew I needed to carry on and needed to do something for myself. So the day before Christmas, I packed up my newly finished bike and headed for Deal's Gap. Nick, a very good friend of mine, dropped everything to join me for this trip. When we arrived, I placed my husband's ashes in the exhaust pipe of my bike and rode the length of highway 129. Every time I would apply the throttle, the ashes would scatter. I buried the remainder of his ashes on the hill of the overlook and placed a cross I had made to mark the spot. It was a fitting place. On our first trip to Deal's Gap, my husband referred to it as 'sport bike heaven.'

“ There are only two mistakes one can make along the road to truth: not going all the way, and not starting.”-Buddha

My entire outlook about riding on the street changed for me and it just never felt the same again. That's when I looked



at the racetrack. It started off by being a spectator, but then I was talked into participating. To be honest, I hated it at first. But despite fear, doubt and tears, I kept going. Then things began to make sense. You see, being a 'one season' rider on a motorcycle, I barely had the skills needed to take this on. It took everything that I had inside me, and most of the time, I ended up surprising myself.

I owe a lot to those who believed in me more than I did in myself. Drew is one of those people. I met Drew at the end of 2009. He knows it's a constant struggle each time I get out on the track, but tells me most days I win because I get myself out there. We already have had quite a racing adventure together. There's more of that story to come and I am excited to experience it with him.

"Anyone can give up, it's the easiest thing in the world to do. But to hold it together, when everyone else would understand if you fell apart, that's true strength."-unknown

To this day I have a very different outlook on life. I smile and laugh as much as I can. When I greet a friend, I am genuinely happy to see them. I hold my loved ones as close as to my heart as possible. But most importantly, I try to live for the ones that can't anymore. Live furiously, love passionately and forgive effortlessly. You never know the next time we will meet. I would like to take the time to say a special thank you for all those who have helped me along the way so far: Drew Morrissey, Mark VanDongen, Fawaz Ahmed, Tony Blue, Lindsay Thomson, Scott Rupert, Ann Deschenes, Vanessa Gareau-Dominguez, Riley Dawe, Kevin Graham, Nick Anguish, Jason Calcutt and all the fans who cheered me on all season. Thanks to my many sponsors who believe in me: Bluestreak Racing, Racer5, Uber-Racing, Armour Bodies, Elka Suspension/Accelerated Technologies, Hindle Racing, Rocket Fireworks, 2RIDE Magazine, Motion Pro Inc., AGV/Dainese, Woodcraft/CFMotosports, Lockhart Phillips, RK Racing Chains, WIZ Racing and Slightly Stoopid Racing.



Some call it a fork in the road and others prefer the phrase, the road less taken or the path of life. I like to look at it as a type of cross roads, with many different results for the decisions we make. What we choose to do may not be right, or may not be the best for us, but we do have choices. I hope that you find something that inspires you, and moves you to do it. You will win every time.

“What we call the beginning is often the end. And to make an end is to make a beginning. The end is where we start from.”-T.S. Eliot

This article is dedicated to the memory of Garth Tyson Howell 1977-2008.

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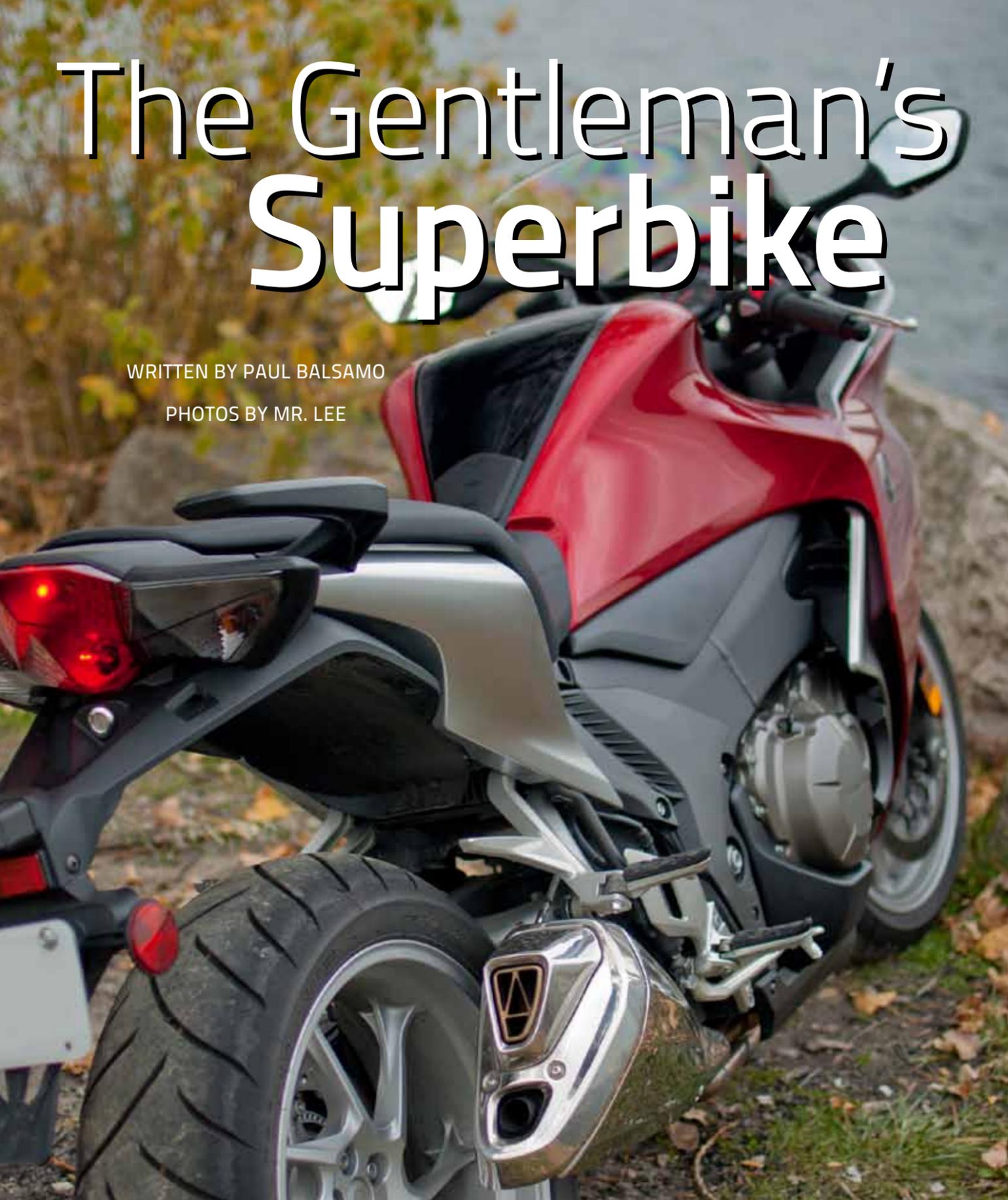
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The Gentleman's Superbike

WRITTEN BY PAUL BALSAMO

PHOTOS BY MR. LEE



Picking up Honda's latest VFR offering left me perplexed and unusually speechless.

There was a time when superbikes were not very civilized; they were unruly, nervous, twitchy and a touch smelly from all the fluids and exhaust fumes. Honda's 1200 VFR is nothing like the superbikes we have seen so far. Nearly the entire bike is wrapped in beautifully finished plastics, leaving only the slightest hint of motor visible. There is just enough mechanical presence to remind the rider that he is not on an electric motorcycle but rather on a 2 wheeled rocket capable of reaching speeds well beyond reason and safety in the blink of an eye.

The new VFR, however, brings some new questions to the table: Is it truly a superbike or could it be viewed as something else entirely?

The version I tested had the standard 6 speed transmission but an automatic version also exists. Much like seeing an automatic transmission in a Porsche, trying to visualize an automatic VFR 1200 caused me some difficulty and discomfort. For years hardcore superbike experts insisted that drive shafts were not appropriate for such aggressive mechanical endeavors as the superbike class. It would appear that is no longer the case.

Riding the VFR around, along with its physical attributes and design, often reminded me of the BMW K1200S, which is a very good thing.

New to the VFR lineage is Honda's new generation of V4 engines. Standing at 1237cc, the new 76 degree mill draws a lot of its design from the RC211V Moto GP program. Chalk one up to the Superbike lineage: The motor is not your usual V4 design. In fact the front 2 cylinders that are nestled in the twin-spar aluminum frame are set wider apart than the rear ones. This allows the bike's mid-section to be slimmer, thus easier to wrestle around for the rider. Unfortunately, all this work to slim down the bike's looks seem to be negated by the ginormous and strange looking, exhaust can. While the sound emanating from this bike is fantastic, a more discreet or classic looking exhaust might have been preferable.



Riding the VFR around leaves no doubts that it is a sports bike, but the final shaft drive presence lingers and suggests that it could also double as a touring machine. Like the K1200S, it seems a bit bulky and long for real track use. Where track machines are light and flickable, the VFR often reminded me that it was no lightweight with a 613Lbs wet weight.

Drive shaft driven bikes will often send some undesirable driveline feedback through all sorts of weird lashes and odd rear wheel behavior. Nothing of the sort could be detected on this unit, even when punishing the transmission with aggressive shifts. It's hard to determine for sure, but the slipper clutch residing in the engine case, combined with an offset pivot point and a sliding CV-joint on the single sided swingarm might be

just the right kind of buffers this bike needed to smooth everything over for riders.

Historically, I have never been a Dunlop fan, but credit must be given where it is due. While I did find the front end to be a bit slippery on wet pavement, the OEM skins were actually quite nice to ride on. Undoubtedly, the overall length of the machine and its conservative rake contribute to that steady footing. Where true superbikes tend to be short and raked aggressively, the VFR's sport touring bike's wheel base allows for better control of all the ponies that escape at the rear wheel.

Going back to the technical wonders this bike brings us, Honda is joining the fray with fly by wire technology. No longer is the throttle directly connected to the feeding system; that job has been taken over by computer chips. As with all the other bikes tested that utilized a similar setup, the functionality is seamless: Twist the throttle and the bike responds. This is one development that goes totally unnoticed by riders

To keep everything under control and safe, Honda has found it wise to equip the VFR with a very effective standard linked ABS system. It may take some riders a while to get used to the technological intrusion in brake control; but something has to be said for a system that improves street performance, even when it concerns slowing down. I resented the idea for a long time until I realized how valuable that feature is with the heavy and powerful machines we now have prowling the streets. Putting the squeeze on the twin 320mm rotors are a pair of radially mounted 6 pot calipers up front, while a seemingly small 276mm disc brings up the rear. In true Honda fashion, the ABS pulsations are near non-existent, even under hard breaking.

I had a good time commuting to work on the VFR. Despite gobs of power on tap, it is very civilized in traffic. The fairing offers a fair amount of protection from the elements and the driveshaft keeps everything clean. Even the quiet exhaust note played in my favor as I whizzed by traffic cops on my way to work. My only gripe on a day to day basis was that in tight quarter maneuvers, the steering lock is way far on either side of the steering column. That would normally be a bonus, allowing for a tight steering radius while parking. Unfortunately, in this case, the indents in the tank don't actually



Riding the VFR around leaves no doubts that it is a sports bike, but the final shaft drive presence lingers and suggests that it could also double as a touring machine.

permit the presence of fingers around the grips. As it stands now, at full steering lock, there is almost enough room for fingers to fit inside the space left between the grips and the tank, but not quite. This would seem like a minor consideration, quickly solved by wider maneuvering around the parking lot; until one considers the advent of a tank slapper or a low side. They do still happen and they always happen at the worse possible moment. All that could go through my mind was the vision of four fingers on either hands getting swiftly crushed between the grips and the tank. Frankly, the image did not appeal to me. This is very unlike Honda.

Despite the obvious power and the exterior design, it's s to me that the VFR joins the ranks of the sport tourers. It may be sportier looking than the likes of the Kawasaki Concours, but it cannot realistically be considered a potentially competitive track bike. No luggage was provided by Honda for my test period, so I cannot comment on cargo capacity for touring but I hope that it will compare with Kawasaki's offering. Considering the comparable BMW K-series and their style of luggage,(if it is any indication) I am worried that what may come available might be very sporty and potentially a bit short on capacity. Time will tell.

SPECS

Engine Type:	V4, 4 Stroke
Cooling:	Liquid
Valves:	16
Valves per Cylinder:	4
Transmission Type:	Manual
Number of Speeds:	6
Final Drive:	Shaft
Front Tire:	120/70 ZR17
Rear Tire:	190/55 ZR17
Front Brake Type:	Dual Hydraulic Disc
Rear Brake Type:	Hydraulic Disc
Wheelbase (mm):	1545
Fuel Capacity (L):	18.5

2R



“Have you ever known someone that had similar interests to you, but just seemed to look effortlessly cool doing it? I mean, a bike is a bike right?”

From Project to Pavement, Bucket to Cafe...

Yamaha's 1975 XS650 transformed into asphalt crunching Cafe Racer...

Story by: Damien Eaton
Photos by: Tyler Reid

We all have our preferences when it comes to machines. Some might grab at a pair of ape-hangers, get low down into an old chopper or bobber and hit Lakeshore on a Friday night. Some lean over the tank of a sport bike, as slick as they come triple let's say, dig into the rear sets and deplete the tear ducts of moisture on the track, or on their favourite stretch of OPP free road. The ride to have, for you could mean a visit to a Saturday morning fish market downtown atop your Vespa, or hanging with a group of your friends at the local donut shop after a day trip to Niagara or Wasaga beach on your cruiser. Perhaps, a quick trip to the Yukon on a touring machine is your thing. Everyone's different and there is no right or wrong answer.

For instance, Tyler R thought his idea of the coolest ride, was at the track, racing his sport bike. Over a period of time, Tyler noticed his friend Noel and a group of intrepid Vintage buffs were busying themselves building ultra-cool cafe racers and bombing around downtown Toronto on them. For a time Noel and his crew had turned the condo parking garage into a shop with an assortment of old bits and bobs, frames and the like kicking about, until that is, new management put the boot in.

So when Noel offered up an old frame that was likely going to be filed in the pay-no-mind trash heap, Tyler couldn't resist. He had always had an interest in building a cafe racer but the opportunity had just never materialized until then. A worn motor in need of a rebuild along with an assortment

of parts were offered up to the Gods of speed and Tyler was in business.

Let's face it, when you look at the substantial cost of buying a new motorcycle in today's economy, one has to ask the question. Can I save money on other things in life? Do I have to eat, everyday? Do I really need to wear clothes? Is having a roof over my head a necessity, or am I merely a slave to frivolity?

So when Tyler realized that for roughly \$1000.00 not including a million man-hours, that he could be riding an incredibly unique, exciting ton-up machine, let's just say, he was in.

A term coined in the 1950's in England, cafe racer (pronounced caff racer) referred to motorcyclists that began or ended a road race



at a transport cafe. The bikes were modified for speed and handling rather than comfort. A single seat was often added along with low slung Ace bars or clip-ons, the latter fastened directly to the front forks for greater control and slippery aerodynamics. Being a ton-up boy or doing the ton simply meant you were at ease doing over 100 miles an hour on your machine. The preferred bikes of the day were, ultimately a Triton, which utilized the best of both worlds by dropping a Triumph Bonneville engine into a Norton featherbed frame. A Bonnie or a Commando would have been the proverbial bollocks, or perhaps a BSA, Royal Enfield twin or a Matchless.

Today the cafe racer enjoys a rich following and its own counter-culture. New machines are offered by the likes of Triumph, Norton, Ducati and Moto Guzzi. Some are available as kits, like the Royal Enfield Clubman 500 or variants of the new Hyde Harrier Jubilee, which utilizes the new Hinckley built Triumph Bonneville or Thruxton engine in a Harris frame. Then of course there is the do-it-yourself builder, often taking British or Japanese machines from the 60's, 70's and 80's and creating their own artwork from more often than not, virtual basket cases.

Tyler began work in the underground garage at his condo. He managed to get the rolling chassis assembled in his parking spot before pausing to move the project to his heated garage in the country. As Tyler will readily

admit, he had no idea what he was doing when he entered into this lofty undertaking. With more hours under his belt than he cares to remember and some help from some fantastic forums such as, dotheton.com and xs650.com, his project eventually came to fruition.

Originally budgeted to come in around \$1000.00, not including Tyler hours, the build now sits at roughly \$2500.00, most of which went into the engine, which was the only outsourced component of the project.

A fair penny went into such upgrades as new electrical, carbs and such, with an eye more about reliability over performance, because let's face it, if performance was the primary concern, he could have just bought a modern sport bike.

As an owner of a cafe racer, I can back Tyler up when he talks of the thrill you get from such a machine. As he puts it, even more importantly, the biggest thrill of all is knowing that he built it.

Tyler has only straddled his caff a couple of times so far this year, due to our incredibly uncooperative Ontario spring of 2011. I look forward to bumping into him at his favourite roadside cafe between ton-ups.



TECH Corner

WRITTEN BY SIMON BAKER

Project:
Spring Bike Inspection

Required Tools:
Top-up fluids
a rag
your eyes

With the warmer weather coming it's the time of year that I really look forward to after a cold winter ... riding season. Just like I need some spring maintenance to make sure I still fit into my leathers after hibernating; bikes need some maintenance to ensure they are reliable for the upcoming season.

The things you should be most concerned with prior to that first ride are:

Battery

If you removed the battery for winter storage, reinstall it. When reinstalling the battery connect the positive terminal first, then the negative terminal. Make sure that the battery connections are clean and tight. If not done over the winter, put the battery on a trickle charger for a few hours to bring it up to snuff.

Fluids

Check all of the fluid levels, oil, brake, gear oil (for you shaft drive owners), coolant and fuel. When checking the fluid levels compare the colour and smell of the fluid to the new fluid you



use to top-up. If it's different, don't top it up and, assuming you're using the correct fluid, it's time to change the fluid. There's a lot of debate on whether it's worth changing the oil again at the beginning of the season if you changed it prior to storing the bike, this is a personal choice based on economics and risk.

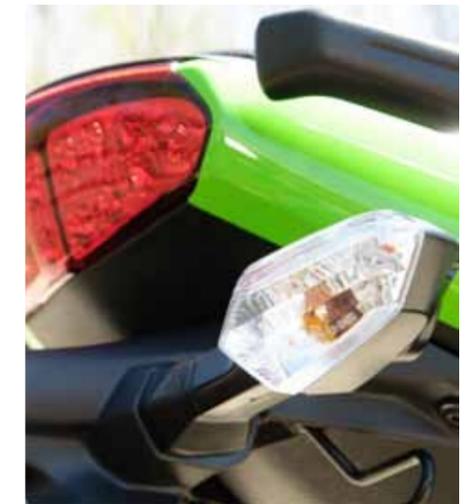
Controls

Inspect the bike's controls to ensure they operate freely without binding or sticking. Check the control cables for kinks or bulges. Adjust the clutch, throttle and brakes as necessary. Check that the throttle returns properly with the steering turned as far as it will go, both ways.

Tires

With your bike still on stands from storage; check the tires for wear, cracks, bulges and nails in the tread. A good idea is to take a rag and run it over the surface of the tire to check for any sharp objects that snag the material and then slowly run your hand over the tread. You want to ensure that your tires are smooth; indicators of tire wear include ripples or bumps in the rubber.

Check the tire pressures and adjust, as necessary, to the manufacturer's recommendations.



Lights

Make sure all of the lights work correctly, the lenses aren't cracked and the lights are mounted securely. It's amazing how lenses become cracked all by themselves over the winter. It's almost like the bike gets bumped into a lot and things get thrown on top when it's sitting.

Cleaning

Wash the bike and look for any loose parts and missing or cracked / broken pieces when washing. Make sure you don't just wash the top half of the bike, get down low and get it really clean so that you know when you hit the road that you haven't missed anything obvious that could cause problems. I don't know about you but my bike always runs better the cleaner it is.

Safety Tip! On your first few rides of the year be cautious; it has been a few months since your last ride on the bike, so getting used to it again can take a couple of rides and also, the roads will still have salt and sand on them.



2011 Kymco Xciting 500 Ri

WRITTEN BY PAUL ROSEMOND PHOTOS BY MR. LEE

"The next ride was a 30km ride to work and across the 401 in traffic."



I was never a big fan of scooters to begin with, but when I was asked to test ride the Kymco Xciting 500 Ri scooter, I admit that I was a little "excited". My only previous experience riding a scooter was a small 50cc something I had rented in Acapulco back in 1994. From that point until now, I never paid attention to scooters.

I received the keys to the Kymco late on a cold Thursday evening. I was told I could take the highway with it, or stay on the street if I wanted to. Due to the cold, I took my chances on the highway. While making my way to the highway, I found that the Kymco's low center of gravity allowed it to handle several lefts and rights very well. After a smooth 270 degree on-ramp, I rolled onto the throttle and found the 500cc single to accelerate very well up to highway speed. With minimal traffic on the highway, I had no wind protection from other vehicles. However, the stock windshield was enough to get the passing air up and over my helmet. Its wide front offers good wind protection for one's legs, but not your hands. While exiting the highway, I found the dual front disc brakes worked very well. Paired with the rear single disc brake, the scooter comes to a stop very quickly. Surprisingly, the scooter also has a parking brake.

The next ride was a 30km ride to work and across the 401 in traffic. It was on that ride that I found the scooter's

well-padded seat to be comfortable. The seat is adjustable by approximately 2 inches for those with short legs. The front and rear brake handles are also adjustable with four-position switches. The mirrors are a fair size and when properly adjusted, give you a clear view of what's behind and almost beside you. If you can't see the vehicle next to you in your mirrors, you'll definitely see it with your peripheral vision. The scooter has three dials showing speed, rpms and fuel and coolant temperature sharing the third dial. The dials are clear, concise and nicely backlit. Even the speedo has a redline starting at 150km/h which is suited for the Ontario market. The hand controls are just as clear as well. The "flash to pass" is a nice feature considering some motorcycles don't have that option. The relay for the turn signals is loud. Its half relay and half door knocker, and can be heard while in city traffic; good for those of you that like to leave your turn signal on well after a turn or lane change.

The scooter is well equipped with storage. There's a small compartment just between the rider's legs (most likely for ownership and insurance papers), a locked pocket in front of the rider's left knee, as well as the usual grocery bag hook. Beneath the seat is a lit and carpeted storage area big enough for a half helmet and other small items. I was pleased to find a 12v accessory outlet, as well as an adjustable cell phone holder. While accessing the storage area under



the seat, the seat is held up by a single gas-charged piston allowing access to the battery, toolkit, carb maintenance panel (although its fuel injected) and the air cleaner panel.

The Kymco does have available accessories such as: a backrest, carrier plate, touring windshield, a scooter cover, and a wireless 3rd brake light.

All in all, I did find this scooter experience enjoyable. The scooter was fun to ride as it handled, accelerated and braked well. The styling is nice with its red accents, matte finishes and Gatling gun style exhaust. However, I did find an issue with the mode select button on the gauges; it was difficult to change between the odometer, trip 1, and trip 2 modes. At times, the readout's numbers weren't clear or didn't light up at all. The adjustable seat is a nice touch but not meant for people with long legs. The suspension works well on smooth roads and handles whoop type oscillations well, but any sudden bump goes right through the scooter and resonates through your body. Now, imagine if one of these scooter manufacturers stepped up and dropped a 600cc in-line four into a frame!



SPECS

Engine
 Engine Type Single-Cylinder
 Cylinders 1
 Engine Stroke 4-Stroke
 Cooling Liquid
 Valves 2
 Valves Per Cylinder 2
 Valve Configuration DOHC
 Starter Electric
 Fuel Requirements Regular
 Fuel Type Gas

Transmission
 Type Continuously Variable (CVT)
 Primary Drive (Rear Wheel) Belt

Wheels & Tires
 Front Tire (Full Spec) 120/70 - 15
 Rear Tire (Full Spec) 150/70 - 14

Brakes
 Front Brake Type Dual Hydraulic Disc
 Rear Brake Type Hydraulic Disc

Technical Specifications
 Wheelbase (in/mm) 61.8 / 1569.7
 Fuel Capacity (gal/l) 3.4 / 12.9



Subscriber's Corner

We- Michael, Darryl and Eli look forward to our trips every year this is one of our Trips along Route 66. When one trip ends we are already planning the next. That is how excited we are. Each trip experience is different from the next. The roads, weather, and the places that we stay, there is always a story. Eli is our main photographer and spends hours of time putting together a video of our fantastic trips. Darryl leads the group with his gps and his fine mapping skills. I am the food advisor. I make sure no one goes hungry. I am always looking for the best bbq places to eat. The pictures tell the tale. As well you can check any of my pockets there will always be food available. (it is a standing joke).

If you'd like to see your photo in Subscribers corner send in any interesting photo that includes a 2Ride Motorcycle Magazine in the photo to story@2ride.ca and it may be selected in an upcoming issue of 2Ride



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Suzanne

I have been riding for 11 years and currently own 3 bikes. A 2010 Ducati 1198, a 2006 Yamaha R1, and a 2004 Kawasaki ZX6-RR for the track. Riding is a great passion of mine. I love the sense of freedom when I'm out on the road by myself, but I also enjoy the amazing camaraderie when I'm riding with a group of friends out on an adventure or even just riding to an ice cream meet. I have ridden many different bikes, but I prefer the speed and maneuverability of a superbike. Throttling through the twisties is when my soul comes alive! :) I have pushed the limits at many different tracks, including those in Ontario, Quebec, Ohio, Illinois, Pennsylvania, Virginia and Florida.

My riding adventures have taken me many places including Daytona Bike Week, Key West (the southern most point in the US), the Smoky Mountains (including Deal's Gap), the Mexican border in Nogales and the Pacific Coast Highway in California, to name a few.

The best thing about riding motorcycles is all the great people I've met on two wheels! I've made friendships that will last a lifetime. Some of the best people ride motorcycles!



Words to live by - "Four wheels move the body, two wheels move the soul".



Victor

I've been riding for 7 years. This is my first bike that I built AND the first bike that I have ever owned. I ride as often as I can. Lots of times I will get on my bike and take off up north just to clear my mind. I'm co owner of Flynntorious Productions along with Lisa Flynn. I host many events including one in particular which is called GTA's Hottest Babes & Bikes, one of the greatest bike shows in Toronto.

Year make: 2004 Nastyboy 2
 Motor: HD 88 Twin Cam
 Trans: HD 5spd Trans
 Wheels: Weld Racing Wheels
 18" rear wheel, 21" front wheel
 250mm rear tire
 Pipes: Vance & Hines Big Radius pipes
 Paint by: Little Stevie (Hot Rod Hell)
 Color: Lamborghini orange w/Toxic bronze
 Carb: Big PSI Carb
 Seat: Mena Custom Seats

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