

Into the Ride #6

RANS PASSES THE BAR!

NEW HANDLE BAR AND RISERS OPTIONS by Randy Schlitter

The "03 V2 features a new handle bar and riser that is winning wide appeal. The basic change is more retro since the root of the design changes is the early Stratus "Ram Horn" style bar. Like the classic Ram Horns, the new system places the hands even with or slightly ahead of the knees. In this position, your arms are slightly bent. If you are considering changing your bike over to the new bars, it's important to select the right combo of riser and bar from the start.

First off--let's be sure we are talking about a long or compact wheel base bike, like a V2, Stratus, Tailwind or Wave. Any of these models can be fitted with the new system. Second, be sure you want to change. If you are happy with the handling, position, and comfort of your current bar set up, leave it be. However, if you want to try something new, this is certainly the way to go for very little cash outlay. The big deal about the new bar and riser selection is that it opens up the cockpit and makes it easier to mount the bike. And it reduces tiller, which will enhance handling, in most cases.

Less tiller results in more turn for a given input. The handling may seem more sensitive, however that is a good thing at start up speeds. In our field-testing, the reduced-tiller set up showed a definite increase in startup handling ease. In fact first time riders favored the reduced-tiller bar set up almost 100% over the "more-tiller" unit.

This inspired us to bring out the range of the bars and risers. Now the question is, how do you pick the right bar and riser without having to try them all?

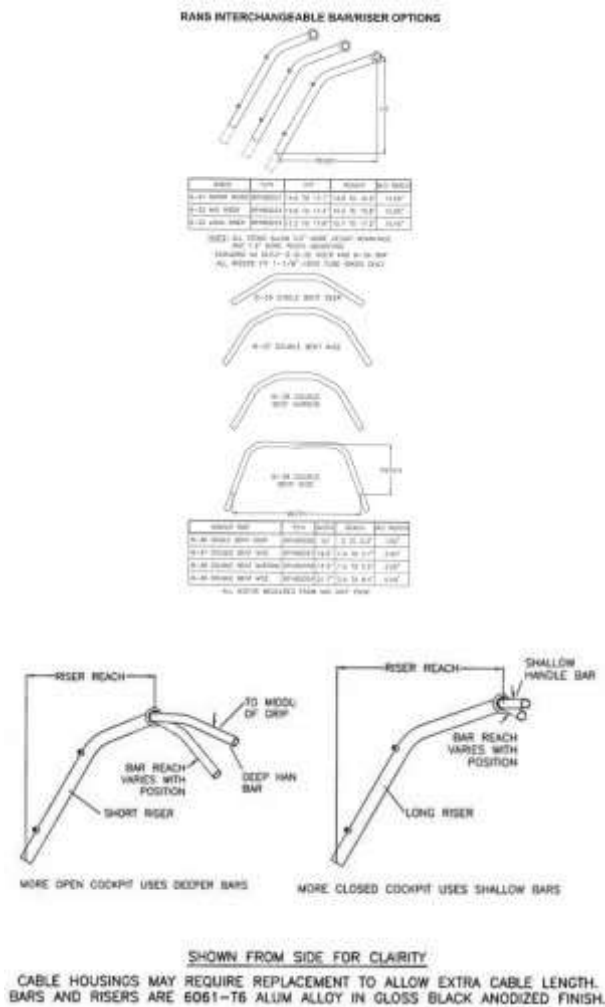


Figure 1

Use to the chart to determine which bar and riser is the best guess in fitting your static reach measurement.

Looking at the chart (Figure #1) you will notice both the bars and the risers have a dimension for range of reach. This is the distance that either the bar or the riser projects rearward. The number is expressed in a range, since it can change if the riser is moved up or down, or if the bar is rotated.

To determine the correct riser and bar combo, first you need to decide if you want a more open cockpit or more closed. The new setup will give you a more open cockpit no matter which you choose, but because of the bars various shapes, this can be tweaked too. My current favorite is the short riser with the double bent wide bar. This places my hands even with my knees. All of the bars are bent out enough to allow plenty of space for turning without the bar hitting your knees. On my setup, it allows me to cant the bars down enough so my hands grip naturally without twisting at the wrist. Again this is my preference. You may want your hands to meet the bar flatter or less vertical.

To select a bar and riser combo, you will need to measure what we call your "Static Reach". Do this by standing against a wall you're your shoulders pressed flat against the wall. Hold one arm out 90 degrees to the wall, and make a fist. Have a friend measure from the top of the knuckle to the wall, keeping the tape measure 90 degrees to the wall. See figure 2.

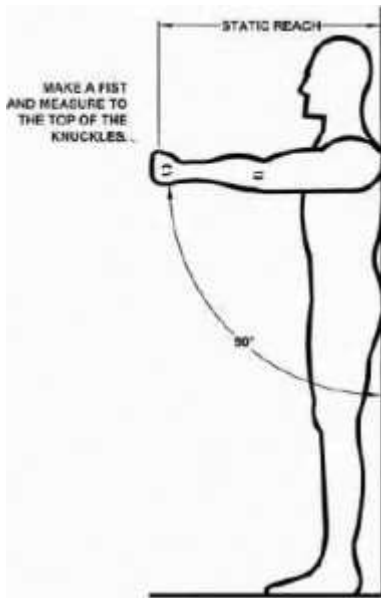


Figure 2

You can take 41% of your height, to determine your Static Reach, but this can only be accurate if you are average portions.

Take your Static Reach and multiply it by .62 Example: Static reach of 27" times .62 = 16.74".

Look at the chart (figure #1) and determine which bar and riser would have a combined figure around mid-reach around 16.74". For instance, a short riser will have a mid-reach of 14.25". The Double bent wide bar has a mid-reach of 3.65. Add these: $14.25 + 3.65 = 17.9$ ". This would suggest you would need a shorter bar or riser with less reach. However, you can rotate the bars and lower or extend the riser to arrive at a reach that will work. The same short riser and double bent wide bar can reach as far as 21" or as little as 14.5".

The calculation will show the combinations that will work, and can guide you away from the ones that won't. You will have to decide on which you prefer--less tiller, more or less open cockpit, narrow or wide bars. The B-37 and B-38 bars have two different widths. Select the wider bars if you have thick knees or want more room for tighter turns at lower speeds. A narrow, shallow bar like the B-36 in combo with the B-31 riser will give the quickest handling and it is the lightest bar with the least amount of tiller and reach. On the other end of the scale, the B-33 riser and B-37 bar will have the most reach, most tiller, least open cockpit and most dampened handling. Below are a few of the combos we are using on our factory test bikes.



The B-31 short riser and B-37 bars is one of my personal favorites. It fits a wide range of riders, it can be rotated into a drop down position for a natural feel at the grips, plus being a wider bar, it dampens the very responsive handling just right.



Combine the B-32 mid size riser and the more compact B-38 bars for a little more reach, and slightly quicker handling. It is a great combo similar to the B-33, B-37 setup, but a little tighter in cockpit and turn space.



The B-36 bar and long B-33 riser offer a less aggressive change from the stock set up, but noticeably more open cockpit and less tiller. A nice set up if you are pretty happy with the stock issue and wanting to try a less drastic change.



The B-31 riser with the B-36 bar is the lightest set up with the fastest handling and most open cockpit. I run this set up on one of the Formula test bikes. It makes me reach a bit more since it is just outside of the static reach formula, but I like it anyway, for its sporty handling and wide open cockpit. This combo is fun for a really all out high performance machine.

Set up your new bar and riser combo so the bar is as low as possible with the hand-grip besides the knees for most applications. See photo#6.

Photo #7 shows how the arms will be more extended as mentioned when set up with the B-31 and B-36 combo.





After a few test rides with a new bar and riser set up, you may want to raise or lower the riser, or rotate the bars. The point is to try a few positions to find that sweet spot where it all comes together. At first you may feel the knee overlap in a tight slow turn is a problem, but take into account that while at normal cruise speeds bar movement is small compared to the amount in a slow tight turn. Learning to hang a knee out will work fine to make those slow single lane 360's, which I feel is a small price to pay for the great handling the new bar combos can offer.

TECHNICAL NOTES: When converting from the standard bar and riser to a new combo, it will require new cable and housing lengths in most cases. The 2003 Tailwind is an exception. If you are not apt at re-cabling your bike then take it to your favorite bike shop. Also on some earlier models the riser tube diameter is smaller, meaning the stem diameter will also be smaller. Since the new risers are 1.25 instead of 1.125 a shim is needed between the stem and new riser. Shims are available through ShopRANS or your bike shop.

Check this web sight over the next week or so for a step-by-step illustrated article on changing to the new bar and riser system.

Enjoy!

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