

A person wearing a black leather motorcycle jacket and dark pants is seen from behind, looking towards a black motorcycle parked in front of a building. The building has a white door with a 'WARNING' sign and a dark brown door with 'MOTO EST.' written on it. The scene is outdoors on a paved surface.

MOTO EST.

# BUYING A USED MOTORCYCLE

There is an art to buying anything second hand and when looking at motorcycles you need to know what to look for and how to best communicate with the seller.

It's easy to get distracted with a potential new toy in front of your eyes, so print out this checklist and make sure to tick all the boxes before handing over your life savings!

# Get a feel for the bike.

## **JUMP ON.**

Jump on, throw the kickstand up, and take your time to get comfortable with the clutch, brakes and gears.

## **START 'ER UP!**

Ask the seller to make sure the bike is cold before you get there & start the motorcycle up **WHEN THE ENGINE IS COLD..**

To check you can hover your hand over the engine or exhaust to see if any heat radiates off it.

- Does this bike & riding posture feel comfortable?
- Can your feet reach the ground easily?
- Do your arms feel relaxed and in a good position holding the handlebars?
- Does it kick over the first time with no issues?
- Does it idle smoothly after a few minutes of running?

## **TIP.**

Whilst your sitting on the bike in neutral test the breaks.

Roll forward then slowly apply the front breaks until you come to a complete stop, there should be little to no noise coming from the breaks.

Once you release the break lever, roll back (or forward) to feel if there is any tension from the break calipers.

Repeat this process with the rear breaks.

# What to ask.

Buying second hand can be a trust game, chances are the bike has been dropped (which is normal) but you need to ask the questions and use your instincts to feel if the seller is being upfront, honest, and has maintained the machine.

The more you know about the motorcycle's history the better you can gauge what condition it should be in.

- Why are you selling?**
- Has this bike been in an accident or dropped?**
- How often do you ride it?**  
*Commuter riders vs. long distance / does it sit in the shed for a long period of time.*
- Do you have a record of the service history?**  
*Check to see if there were delays in service.*
- Have you done any cosmetic or mechanical work on the bike & do you have paperwork for it?**
- Do you have the bike manual?**
- Where was the motorcycle stored?**  
*An ideal situation would be in a garage, rust is not your friend!*

# What to look for.

Performing a thorough inspection over the motorcycle will show you the signs about the bike's true history.

- **ROAD RASH.** *Can you see a rash (surface scratches) on the:*
  - Body of the bike
  - End of the grips & foot pegs
  - Bottom & sides of the exhausts
- **LEVERS.** *Are the clutch & throttle levers wobbly / scratched / different colours / newer than the bike etc.*
- **NUTS & BOLTS.** *Do the bolts on the engine look original or have the nuts been threaded/replaced*
- **FLUIDS.**
  - Can you see any leak marks around the engine & under the bike?
  - Does it look too clean underneath?  
*Are they trying to cover something up*
  - Fuel.  
*With a light, check there is no rust inside the tank and the fuel is clean & transparent.*
  - Check oil & fluids.  
*Look at how clean it is & if they are at the correct levels*
- **TYRES.**
  - Age. *Find the 4 digit DOT number on the sidewall of the tires. The last two digits indicate the year manufactured. (The average lifespan of a tyre is 6 years.)*
  - Wear. *How low is the tread? To see if the owner has been thrashing corners like in the Moto GP, check the wear on the outside edges of the tyres.*
- **BATTERY.** *Check to see if it has any acid damage, some can claim a "new battery" is installed but if the bike has been sitting unused it can dwindle away.*

# Before sealing the deal.

## TEST RIDE.

Not everyone will let you take off on their bike, if they do, expect to hand over money or something of equal value.

It's best to get an experienced mate to ride it as they will know what feels right from wrong. If you drop or damage it, consider the bike sold (*congrats on your new motorcycle!*)

## DO YOUR HOMEWORK.

- **THEFT & FINANCE.** *Run an online check on the VIN & license plate number to see if it has been stolen or if there are any finances owing.*
- **MECHANICS.** *If possible, it's recommended to get the bike checked over by a motorcycle mechanic before purchasing.*

## NEGOTIATE.

- **ROAD WORTHY CERTIFICATE (AUSTRALIA).v**  
*If the motorcycle has truly been taken care of and serviced regularly the seller will generally arrange the RWC. Be wary of ones that won't as you can find many hidden costs when it comes to getting the bike back to on-road safety standards (particularly if the motorcycle has any customisations).*
- **PRICE:** *Generally there is some movement on the price, find out what other models are going for on the market, do they have similar wear and kms?  
Remember to always get a receipt including the date, make/model, rego number, price & names if handing over your money!*