

Motorcycle Tour Magazine

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# BACKROADS

Motorcycles, Travel & Adventure

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Exploring  
Eastern Europe  
with Adriatic Moto Tours



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## MORPHING THE DAY-TO-DAY YAMAHA FZ8 INTO A SPORT-TOURER SHAD SIDE / TOP CASE AND COMFORT SADDLE

Reviewed by Billy Rallis

My standard Yamaha FZ8 is a fantastic machine. Light, great powerband and riding position – but the machine has its drawbacks.

The saddle was a rock and other than strapping bags onto it and the tank bag, carrying day-to-day items or touring more than a few days was problematic.

With the addition of a new bride, I knew I needed to either move to a different machine or upgrade the FZ8. I choose the latter.

After searching around a bit I came across the SHAD Company that has been making quality luggage and accessories for various machines for years.

Yamaha uses SHAD for their standard luggage on their Super Tenere'.

After a bit of consultation I made the plunge and ordered both side case and a top case. They also offered a replacement "Comfort Seat" for the Yamaha so I went for that as well.

When it all arrived brackets were carefully laid out and instructions read twice.

Installation went fairly easily and in a few hours the once street-wise naked machine had been transformed into what would be a cross-country road warrior.

I chose the SH39 Top Case; this SHAD trunk features the Press Lock system for quick release and an integrated carrying handle making it a breeze to handle off the bike.

Holding a full 39 liters it can easily carry lighter stuff that I didn't mind having high on the back behind my passenger. Unlike so many other systems, with SHAD's you can open and close their bags securely without the use of a key. You can lock it when you wish, but do not have to turn off the bike and remove your keys to get into this case. A big plus for me. You can easily match up the locks on all your SHAD luggage for the ease of one key use.

Depending on your machine and color scheme you can easily change color panels on this case to make it match many different rides. These interchangeable color panels are available in most of their product line.

The side cases were their new SH 36 model. Extremely light weight, aerodynamic and very durable, these water-proof side bags matched the top case and the Yamaha well, offering me plenty of room for a week's worth of gear for both my passenger and me. In fact it is large enough to hold an XL full-face helmet. Going for the optional Liner Bags for the SH36 was a good choice as they fit perfectly and add a bit more security for all your gear. They also allow you to leave the bags on the bike if you like.

The designers in Barcelona, Spain have said, "From the early phase of product design and conception, engineers and designers at SHAD have sought to combine performance and functionality. Keeping this in mind, we developed a totally new and different side case."

And, they have. The new 3P Mounting system is elegant, simple and strong allowing for removal and installation in mere seconds. The case's framework itself is part of the success of the SH36 luggage.

This framework makes this case waterproof. It includes a double profile and a pyramidal rubber edging within, thus becoming a maze for water, which is directed to the base, where the gutter efficiently drains it. In addition, the structural framework increases rigidity, allowing optimization of the ma-



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materials used. As a result, the SH36 is the lightest of its market segment.

The final part of this rebirth was a real no-brainer, especially when riding for long stretches at a time – the SHAD Comfort Seat.

These saddles are built from the ground up using the latest of material and comfort technology. Nothing of the stock seat is used and the research that went into each of these Comfort Seats is very impressive.

The main innovation is the 3D MESH technology, a bielastic foam placed between the base and the polyurethane cushion to increase the feeling of comfort. These seats do not use gel solutions that are deformed as time passes and are sensitive to temperature changes.



SHAD's 3D MESH technology guarantees hours of travel without losing its shape; it absorbs vibrations and dampens the rebound, as well as offering more elasticity and resistance.

We can attest that the difference was day and night.

Where the stock saddle would become "irksome" and cause pressure points along my posterior, the SHAD Comfort Seat eliminates all of these issues. My riding partner is all smiles too and that is always a good thing.

With one afternoon's work and one company I was able to morph my FZ8 into a competent sport-tourer which has now moved its home from New York to Los Angeles in a far easier way than it would have been possible before.

The SHAD SH39 Top Case lists for \$176, the SH36 Side Cases for \$469 and the Comfort Seat for \$399. Prices vary from machine to machine and brackets to mount vary as well.

All this money was well spent to turn my naked machine into a fully dressed long distance rider.

See your local SHAD dealer or visit

[www.shadonline.com](http://www.shadonline.com).

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