

MC GARAGE DOIN' TIME



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Suzuki

V-Strom 1000 ABS

WRIST: Marc Cook

MSRP (2014): \$12,699

MILES: 9,303

MPG: 40

MODS: New luggage, windscreen



UPDATE
05

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Finally I got out of the office and free of the shop to put the V-Strom to a decent touring test. The distance wasn't huge—400 miles each way—but the situation was what you'd call no-frills transportation: Ride to the Santa Cruz area from my office at about midday, work there for a day and a half, and then head home Friday evening. If anything determines how good a motorcycle is as a traveling mount, this kind of gotta-get-there deal will do it.

Naturally, I used the trip to try some new accessories. First was Suzuki's own touring windscreen (from Suzuki dealers; \$235), an option for the base V-Strom and standard on the Adventure model. I can't say I'm in love with the looks, but the screen, taller and wider than the stocker, worked amazingly well. In the lowest of three positions—the V-Strom allows you to bolt the screen into one of three vertically, plus the mounts pivot to three different angles—I could easily see over it. Best of all, weather protection improves as turbulence decreases. My shoulders and arms are still out in the breeze, but my core is well protected with this screen.

SHAD's new SH36 side cases (*shadusa.com*; \$660 with mounts) are available with V-Strom 1000 mounts, so I packed them for this trip. In most ways, I really like the bags. They're roomy, at 36 liters each, and sized so a full-face modular helmet fits with ease; the Suzuki pieces are 26 and 29 liters each. The fit and finish of the SHAD cases are terrific, considering the parts cost less than half of the factory options. Cinch straps inside the bags hold cargo in place and a handy floor extends into the opening

half of the clamshell so your stuff doesn't immediately hit the road when you open the bag. The locks are sturdy, and—*behold!*—the bags can be left unlocked and the key removed.

My sole complaint is with the mounts. Because these are universal bags, they are not built to snuggle up to the V-Strom's tailsection. There's space between the bags and the bike, so the bags stick out a bit. And along with the fact that the luggage is a bit wide anyway, you get an installed width of 40.9 inches. Suzuki's own bags are 34.3 inches wide. Not a problem most places in the world, but real mirror-banging trouble here in lane-splitting-allowed California.

Because I can't stop tinkering, I used the smallest spacers between the SHAD upper mounts and the Suzuki's subframe that I could, even electing to run without the plastic trim piece in an effort to move the bags toward the bike's centerline. Then I added 1-inch shims to the forward mounts, which moved them in a little. For all that effort, they measure 40.2 inches across.

Once I got clear of traffic and forgot about the V-Strom's bustle butt, it was a fantastic trip. The ability to gobble miles in a low-key, unassuming manner is the Suzuki's most endearing trait. Good range from a 5.3-gallon tank and an average of 40 mpg (down a little with California's winter gas), a nearly perfect seat, supple

suspension, and low vibration all make for a bike you can run from fuel stop to fuel stop without much pain. I returned home near midnight on Friday, none the worse for wear.

SHAD's SH36 saddlebags are much larger than Suzuki's own pieces. Pretty wide, though.

