

Tips, Tweaks, Fixes and Facts, plus Buyer's Guide and Expert Q&A from the Industry's Best

DOIN' TIME

A Complete Guide to Living With Your Motorcycle...

STAFFERS' RIDES



ARRIVEDERCI!

PHOTOS: Brian Catterson

Color-matched Shad top trunk looks like it was made for the Hypermotard and is easy to lock, unlock and remove from its base.

DUCATI HYPERMOTARD 1100



RINGLEADER: Brian Catterson
MSRP (2008): \$11,995
MILES: 7332-10,346
AVERAGE FUEL MILEAGE: 37 mpg
ACCESSORIES & MODIFICATIONS: Dynojet Power Commander, California Cycleworks gas tank, Race Tech suspension, Shad top trunk

Parting is *such* sweet sorrow... After nearly two years, my long-term Hypermotard has finally returned to DNA. That's what insiders call Ducati North America, incidentally, not some failed science experiment.

As detailed in our three previous updates, the Hyper underwent a dramatic transformation in our hands, first becoming a pseudo-sport-tourer and then a full-on supermoto. For this final go-round we blended the best of both, fine-tuned a few things and added a couple of new parts as well.

Let's talk about the last stuff first: When the fine folks at California Cycleworks (www.ca-cycleworks.com) read my report about running out of gas en route to Las Vegas, they promised to send me one of their new, larger HM69 gas tanks (\$799) as soon as they were ready. It took a few months, but the wait was worth it. The rotationally

molded polyethylene tank is one of the most ambitious aftermarket parts ever, amazingly doubling fuel capacity to 6.4 gallons without affecting the look or feel of the bike—though it is nearly 20 pounds heavier when full. Fuel range goes up accordingly, my personal best standing at 230.3 miles. This added volume was achieved by replacing the airbox with individual filters, repositioning various electrical components and tipping the battery on its side. The only downside is installation: Even with the detailed directions, expect to spend a full day in the garage if you're mechanically inclined or to pay a mechanic four or more hours' labor if you're not. The most economical method would be to have it installed at the same time as a major service.

Our other new part likewise came after a few months' wait. Spanish-made Shad luggage is a new player in the U.S. market, and the company's color-matched SH29 top trunk (\$142 from www.binetto.com) seemed the perfect complement to the Ducati Performance luggage rack we'd fitted previously. And it was, bolting on with minimal fuss using the provided hardware and surviving a few weeks of commuting before tagging along on my final ride to the inaugural Motomathon in Colorado (see *Cat Tales*, page 7). There I apparently stuffed enough in the trunk that it exceeded the 12-lb. weight limit of the rack, which broke

at a weld, smashing the taillight lens. Oops...

In our most recent update we told you to stay tuned for tuning, and that we did. We first tried a high-flow K&N air filter (\$79 from www.knfilter.com) coupled with a DP Racing ECU, which worked perfectly with our LeoVince SBK GP Style Evo II exhaust (exhaust \$749, link pipe \$299 from www.leovinceusa.com). Said ECU is included with the \$2500 DP Termignoni 2-into-1 pipe, or is available separately for around \$1300, which is far more than even a well-heeled *Ducatista* would care to spend.

The low-buck option is a FatDuc 02 Manipulator (\$80 from www.fatduc.com). This installs inline with the exhaust oxygen sensor, and alters the output voltage to trick the ECU into thinking the bike is running leaner than it is so it richens the fuel/air mixture accordingly. It's not an exact science as the mixture is adjusted across the board, but it's an inexpensive, easy-to-install upgrade.

Our ultimate solution was a Dynojet Power Commander III USB (\$349.95 from www.dynojet.com), which allows fine-tuning of the mixture at all rpm and throttle settings via computer. After a dozen or so dyno runs at Gene's Speed Shop in Carson, California, our LeoVince-equipped Hyper went from 77.8 to 82.6 horsepower and 64.2 to 68.6 lbs.-ft. of torque. More impressive was the improved driveability, which is saying some-



California Cycleworks gas tank resembles the stocker but is literally twice the size, doubling range and halving fill-ups.



A picture is worth 1000 words—or in this case, 10,000 miles. Check-engine light stayed on after we removed the stock exhaust system with its power valve.

thing considering how fluid the two-valve, Dual Spark twin feels in stock trim.

Suspension tuning was a work in progress, as finding the optimal settings proved elusive. In stock trim our Hyper was too softly sprung, harsh over small bumps and yet blew through the stroke on bigger hits. So we took it to Race Tech, where technicians fitted stiffer springs (1.0 kg/mm front, 10.7 kg/mm rear), revalved the shock and installed a G2-R cartridge kit in the fork (\$2046.86 total from www.racetech.com). This let the bike ride higher in the stroke and pitch less under braking and acceleration, but made the fork even harsher. It took two return visits to get it right. Do yourself a favor and decide up front whether you want your suspension sport-touring supple or sportbike-stiff, because you can't have both. Or order the S-model with its uprated Öhlins suspension in the first place!

In terms of maintenance, the Hyper was a model of reliability. Our first-year model had two recalls early on: one to "flash the dash" so the tripmeter was accurate, and the second to install a supplemental battery bracket. Beyond that, we simply changed the oil every 3000 miles or so and had the valves checked at 7500 (\$585)—the latter service interval having been increased from 6200 miles in '08. We also replaced the rear brake pads (\$26) at that point, the fronts just starting to wear thin at the end of our test. The bike went through three sets of tires during its stay, the last a set of supermoto-style Dunlop D616s (\$173.95 front, \$219.95 rear) that were just about worn-out when we returned the bike. The chain and sprockets are also due for replacement. Aside from these service items and various upgrades, the only part we replaced was the left rear side panel (\$77.50), which cracked at its upper mount when we put too much stress on it while coaxing the LeoVince exhaust into place.

In spite of its aggressive appearance and racy name, the Hypermotard is in fact one of the friendliest and most versatile motorcycles on the market today—and more so thanks to the extensive Ducati aftermarket. From commuter to canyon-carver to track-day scorcher to sport-tourer, the Hyper does it all, and does it well. I'm truly sorry to see this one go.



FRESH MEAT!

PHOTOS: Harley Davidson

HARLEY-DAVIDSON XR1200



RINGLEADER: Brian Catterson
MSRP (2009): \$11,079
MILES: 3008-4280
AVERAGE FUEL MILEAGE: 37 mpg
ACCESSORIES & MODIFICATIONS: None yet, but Storz Performance is on my speed dial

When I first got my long-term XR1200, it was funny how often I heard it: "Hey, isn't that one of those European Harleys? How'd you get it here?"

"Um, it was *built here*."

Seems even those in the know failed to realize that although the XR was first offered for sale only in Europe, it was—like all current Sportsters—manufactured in Milwaukee and assembled in Kansas City.

For me, signing up for a long-term Harley was a big step. Contrary to popular belief I have nothing against The Motor Company or its legions of fans, and in fact have lusted for various Harleys over the years. These tended to be the racier models, like the VR1000 Superbike, XLCR café racer, XR1000 street-tracker, XR750 dirt-tracker and MX250 motocrosser. Thus the XR1200 struck a chord. It

certainly looks racy, and it works incredibly well for the mostly inner-city commuting I do nowadays.

Of course it's not perfect, a few of the components dumbed-down in the interest of the bottom line. The Showa suspension is marginal at best, the inverted fork fair but the shocks better qualified to serve as door-closers. Shock spring preload is the only adjustment. Fortunately, Harley introduced the Euro-only XR1200X for 2010, and is offering its fully adjustable Big Piston fork and shocks to regular XR buyers for a relatively affordable \$1500. That's on my short list.

The brakes could also use improvement, the old-school rubber lines swelling under pressure. The seat needs help too, the soft foam getting softer as the day wears



Real brakes on a Sportster? Almost. The pair of four-pot Nissin calipers and 292mm front rotors are top-shelf stuff, but the rubber lines are from the discount rack.

on, making the seat-to-peg distance even tighter than it already is. The Storz SP1200 I rode for this issue's "12 Bikes of XXXmas" feature was equipped with steel-braided lines and an excellent Saddleman seat, so I may have to order those as well.

The only mod I've made so far is embarrassing. After snagging my right pants leg on the rear brake fluid reservoir guard a few times, I finally got it caught but good and tipped over, *Laugh-In* style, in my driveway! I've since wrapped a black zip-tie around the reservoir and through the guard so it won't happen again.