

**MotoArt**

I'm purchasing a new bike to display in my living room. I've asked the dealer to forego all customary pre-delivery preparation and inspection—he's not to put any gas in it or take it around the block. I want the bike to remain unfueled and unriden for perpetuity (or at least until I decide to sell it).

The bike is air-cooled and has no battery. If I simply prop it up inside my home, off the tires and out of the sun, what will become of it? Will the internals eventually corrode? Will the oil turn to molasses? Will the rubber components rot or become brittle? What should I do to prepare it for a long hibernation? I live in a dry climate.

Eric Levy  
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*That's a very interesting question. What you are really asking is what effect simply time will have on the components of a bike. Your biggest problem will be the evaporation of oils from all plastic, rubber and/or leather components of the machine (you don't say what kind of bike it is). The engine oil will break down but if it's a synthetic, not all that much for a few years. We would suggest periodic treatments with something like Armorall to preserve the rubber and plastic and change the engine fluids at least once a year. The machine should last forever in a dry environment.*

*Ed. Note: You might want to contact the folks at the AMA's Heritage Motorcycle Museum for advice also, as they obviously have a lot of experience in this area.*

**Storage In Garage During Winter**

I have been a subscriber for several years, but I have not seen this topic addressed: I live in New York and we generally have winter conditions from December through March. I store my motorcycle in a garage with a battery tender. However, it is damp and cold. Do you recommend running a small heater near the bike? What can be done to prevent the cold moisture causing oxidation on the motorcycle parts? Do you recommend using a cover? This seems to me to further trap moist air close to the bike. A friend of mine (single) keeps his bike in the living room, but do you have recommendations for keeping the bike in a regular garage during the winter?

Geir Friis  
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*Your bike (no matter how much it feels like a member of the family) does not need a heater in the winter while it slumbers. Cold of the type you get in New York will not hurt it at all as long as the battery is charged, it will not freeze and the rest of*

*the components are very resistant to damage. Moisture, on the other hand, is a killer of metal parts, among other things. We recommend that you spray all exposed metal surfaces with a light coating of WD-40 to inhibit corrosion, and then cover the machine with a breathable cover like a bed sheet. This will allow the bike to have a means of releasing any trapped moisture and keep the dust and airborne debris that holds moisture away from the surfaces.*

**Moto-Resurrection**

I have a few questions about bringing a bike back to life. I have a neighbor that has retired. I noticed his bike sitting in the garage collecting dust for quite some time. I finally asked him if it was broken. He indicated he just stopped riding it eight years ago when he started spending time on the lake in his new boat.

The bike is a 1984 1300cc Kawasaki six-cylinder that is fuel injected with only about 20,000 miles on it. The battery has been removed and the gas tank drained, but not before it started to rust.

I was wondering if this beast can be brought back to life without a complete rebuild? Just a best guess will do.

Is it possible to remove the rust from inside the tank? How do you clean old fuel injectors, soak them in carb cleaner?

Since this bike was not stored intentionally, the oil was never flushed before sitting. Would the metal surfaces be pitted? What procedure would you use to flush the old oil out? With so few miles, would the seals still be in good shape or would they have started to dry out and crack? The vehicle is located in north Texas.

Besides knowing how to get it running, I was wondering if you had any insights on this bike. I read some history on it but nothing like the write ups that are being done today. I'm sure it is top heavy, as the gas tank is above the engine, but there are very few that put them under the seat for better center of gravity.

The guy who owns it can't be more than 110 pounds and liked the 900-lb. beast.

I would also be interested in knowing more about how long a gas tank takes to collect enough condensation to start rusting. I have three bikes and they can sit for a few weeks at a time. Does it take 6-12 months before they start to rust when the vehicle is stored inside? Do you just need to keep the tank full like they do with airplanes? Thanks for the info and keep up the good work.

Jeff Hutchison  
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*The Voyager 1300 was a wonderful but under-rated machine of its time. It is defi-*

*nitely worth restoring. Since the tank is already rusted on the inside, it will have to be cleaned, and you should coat the inside to keep it from re-rusting. Drain and remove the tank and take off all fittings and hardware. Your next step would be to remove all loose rust by mechanical means, by inserting something to rattle loose the big pieces. (We use steel chain, that way it comes out with a magnet). Next we use a solution of a product called 'CLR'... it can be obtained in your local hardware store and is often used for household cleaning. Finally, after a thorough flushout, we use a system product called "Kreem," making sure to follow all directions, which you should find at most motorcycle shops.*

*The fuel injectors were not designed to be cleaned or serviced. However, if the injectors do flow somewhat, they may be cleared by using standard fuel injector cleaner in the fuel, but if they are blocked, soaking or running product just won't help. Your best bet is replacement of the injectors. Condensation formation over time is a factor of humidity and temperature change during the day and the amount of exposed surface area in the tank. A full tank does not get much rusting, but without knowing all the variables, there is no way to tell how long it will be before enough water accumulates in the tank to do damage, but a coated tank will not usually have a problem with that. As far as problems in the crankcase, we would just change the oil, run the bike, then change the oil and filter. The heat from running the engine should loosen things up, and after the second oil change all will probably be okay. Don't forget to flush and change the coolant system, too.*

*A very nice chronology of your bike (ZG1300-A1) can be found at: <http://www.z-power.co.uk/Z1300.htm>*

*Good luck.*

**Battery Testers**

I just re-read your article on battery chargers (2/2001 & 7/1998) and wondered what to do if you have more than one battery to be maintained? Can they be connected to one charger for maintenance? If so, how are they connected?

Thanks,

Tim Pigden  
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*All of the major battery charger companies make charger models designed specifically for shop use that allow multiple batteries to be serviced simultaneously, however, battery chargers designed for single battery charging should never be used to connect more than one battery at a time due to currents running between the bat-*

*teries. There are some people who have suggested arrangements of diodes between the batteries to prevent this, but we have found that the voltage drop of the diodes prevents the multiple batteries from reaching full charge.*

**Gel Battery Maintenance**

I have a 2004 BMW R1150RT and I am told it has a gel battery. I have always used my Deltran Battery Tender to maintain the lead acid battery in my 96 R11RT during the winter months, with excellent results. I have read that I should not use my tender on the gel battery. My dealer does not think it would cause a problem but he would sell me a BMW gel battery charger for \$79.95 if I was worried about it. I called Deltran and they told me I shouldn't use the tender and that they make a special battery tender for gel batteries for \$59.95. What are the facts, and what is the best charger for my gel? P.S. I reread the article from Feb. 2001 but no mention of gel batteries in the charger comparo and I have subscribed to MCN even before it was MCN. Thank you,

Tom Raver  
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*Your dealer and Deltran are quite correct, the gel type batteries charge to a higher voltage than conventional batteries and the 'standard type' chargers cannot bring them up to a fully charged state. We recommend that you pay the price and get the proper charger to ensure long battery service.*

**H-D Ultra Total Electrical Cutout**

I have an Ultra that dies when it gets hot. Twice now, after running at low speeds in 85°+ weather, all electrical function on the bike terminates without warning. Once the condition occurred crossing the Ohio River in rush hour Cincinnati traffic with no shoulder on the bridge, and the other time was down in Biketoberfest traffic. In both cases the bike regained electrical power after 15-40 seconds (it's hard to estimate time when you are concerned about getting off the road without being crunched).

Once the power comes back on, there is no evidence of a problem, and so far, it hasn't reoccurred. But, in addition to this, twice I have had the bike fail to turn over after stopping for gas or lunch. But after bump-starting the bike, it acts normal.

The battery is new and fully charged. I almost suspect there is a dead spot where the starter does not have enough torque to turn and the bump-start changes that geometry. I have another friend that had to make a hot wire switch at his starter for a potentially similar issue on a '95 Tour Glide.

Does the bike's tilt-over sensor kill all electrical power, and could this be a potential cause?

Other than heated grips (that I love) the bike has had no modifications. It currently has 28,000 miles after the cam bearing plate fix that you reported on. Other than the above, the bike runs great but...

Thanks for the great magazine!

Tom Pearson  
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Grosse Ile, MI

*It sounds like you have two different things going on in your bike. We can't troubleshoot this one long-distance, but you might try an experiment: Start the bike and heat the breaker panel with a hair dryer. If the bike dies, the problem is that one or more of your circuit breakers are getting weak and opening, and when they cool off are reclosing.*

*Also, the starter motor may well have a dead spot, but the only way to tell is by disassembly and inspection.*

**Low Mileage Flat Tire**

My new H-D V-Rod blew a tire yesterday. No one I know has ever had a motorcycle tire puncture and some have tires in conditions that I would not give my worst enemy. This tire had only 2,500 miles on it. Is this typical?

I have been told by the dealer that it is not repairable, although it was not on the sidewall. Is it common practice to replace the tire in these circumstances?

The tire is a Dunlop D207 180/55ZR18. Do you know of other tires I can use as replacements? Can I install a larger tire? If so, what effect will it have on handling, etc.?

Thank you in advance. Your publication is fantastic. Keep up the good work.

Joe Gardill  
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*The length of time a tire will last is dependent on many factors, such as the type of surfaces they are ridden on, the inflation of the tire, the weight of the bike and its rider, riding styles, abuse, etc. The mileage on your tire is much lower than expected for a tire to wear out in normal conditions, but since you say that the damage is not on the sidewall, and don't mention that the tread is worn out, it sounds like you may have had a puncture, in which case the mileage is irrelevant. The dealer, who has seen the tire, advised you to buy a new one. We haven't seen it, so we can't advise otherwise. Be advised, however, that even when a tire can be repaired, it will have a lower maximum safe speed than an undamaged*

*tire, and that a tire that is badly worn is more susceptible to punctures. As far as switching to other tire types, that is a matter of preference and can only be tested by each rider on their own.*

**Too Hot Harley**

I'm considering installing an oil cooler on my 2001 Ultra Classic. I've already installed the 1550cc big bore kit. Is the oil cooler necessary? Harmful? Any comments? If installed, I will run the new Harley synthetic oil. Will that make any difference?

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*Synthetic oil is much more forgiving than petroleum-based lubricants when it comes to being able to withstand high heat without thermal breakdown. A stock engine does not need an oil cooler because it has been found over time that they almost never run above 180° F. In your case, however, depending on your local climate and running conditions, it may well be a good idea to add the cooler. What we would do is run the machine on an open road for a while, and check the temperature of the heads. If they are under about 180°, do not bother, but if the temperature is significantly above 200°, the cooler will help a lot.*



**Downtime Files**

is a joint service of  
Motorcycle Consumer News  
and the American Motorcycle Institute  
of Daytona Beach, Florida.

Please keep in mind that since the AMI staff has not seen your motorcycle, the answers given are best-guess assumptions based on prior experience and education, and may not necessarily be correct. When in doubt, take your motorcycle to a qualified shop.

Send your typewritten questions and photos if possible to:

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