

SEND LETTERS TO THE EDITORS OF MCN

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Kudos For Color!

I love it, I love it, I love it! A hearty congratulations on (finally!) producing a color MCN. The pictures are beautiful and I expect they'll only get better as the process is tweaked. Have you considered making a lifetime subscription plan available?

Brett Goldstock
goldstock@gmail.com

I know graphic design, layout and selective use of color. All I can say is excellent—just excellent! Cheers from a longtime subscriber.

Roger Perry
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I just received the new "In Living Color" March issue of MCN, and I have just one word for you: *Wow!*

Ken Bowen
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Dallas, TX

Received your March issue two days ago and really, really like it. I especially like the semi-glossy format. I've been a subscriber since December '91 and the new semi-gloss color is classy and something to be proud of.

Frank Brown
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Tampa, FL

The March 2008 issue has just arrived and what a pleasant surprise! The color printing really adds some spice to the publication. Thanks for the hard work from all of you in making it possible.

It should be mentioned that even if you had stayed black and white, your publication is still the most important and valuable in the motorcycling world because it is "100% subscriber supported since 1991." The independence this affords your staff and contributors to use their intellect and integrity in reporting places you in a unique and valuable position in

the publishing industry.

Motorcycle publications that are advertiser supported do a very good job. One just has to keep a critical eye out for the "marketing gloss" overlooking the shortcomings of a product or service.

With Motorcycle Consumer News, we expect the unvarnished truth. In color or black and white.

Dennis A. Hogan
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Austin, TX

Color & In Gear at a Stop

My subscription recently came up for renewal and I was holding off sending in the form. When I read that the mag was going color, I immediately renewed. Boy am I glad I did. The color really does make a difference.

Regarding having a bike in gear when having a passenger get on, I have a suggestion: As Ken recommends, have the bike in first gear so that you can have both feet on the ground. But instead of holding in the clutch, have the ignition off. That way, there is no chance of the bike lurching forward. And let the passenger know not to touch your left arm when you come to a stop on the road. Then the only lurch risk in traffic is from accidentally letting go of the clutch.

Keep up the great work on the mag.
Jeremy Krall
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MCN In England

I was just wondering, are you in any way associated with the MCN weekly in the UK?

Larry Tapp
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No, the initials MCN stand for Motor Cycle News in England, and Motorcycle Consumer News here. However, we do get some e-mail intended for them on occasion, probably because we registered the name mcnews.com before they did.

Cold Weather Riding Gear

Fred, I just finished reading your January 2008 column about how the weather in New England restricts us from enjoying riding. The weather in Minnesota is similar yet I am able to ride all year round because of the following additions: trainer wheels, electric clothing and gloves, and Skidoo helmet with facemask.

During our winter, which lasts about 130 days, there are about 40 or 50 days that I consider too snowy or too cold to ride. This means that I am able to ride on "most" winter days. Okay, I may look like an idiot with the only motorcycle/trike on the road, but that does not bother me.

I prefer the temperature to be higher than 25° F or 30° F for comfort and do not even plug in my electric clothes unless the temperature drops below that.

Electric clothes are not necessary above 30° F. In addition to the windshield, there are wind deflectors for my hands and legs and feet. It surprises me that there are not more trikes like this on the road in the northern United States. After all, people go snowmobiling in the wind, don't they?

Donald Cameron
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Addition To The Family

I congratulate Dave Searle on becoming a grandparent and finding a way to link it with the magazine. Now that we all know so much about Blake, can we expect to see a color picture of him (preferably on or near a bike) in the new full color MCN?

George F. Levar
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George, I've already been warned not to buy him a motorcycle without his parents' permission! But I'll bet I can sneak a photo of him on my bike when we're babysitting, since you asked.

—Dave

Thumbs Up On Aerostich Straps

Your assessment of the Aerostich

Cargo Straps is just plain wrong! I have used these straps for over 15 years. Your comments made me believe that you confused bungees and straps for a few seconds! Straps are designed to be used against passenger rails and handles/racks on saddlebags. In all my years of carrying all the "essentials," not once have we lost any part of our load. Carry a long set for backup and you have the perfect tie down in case you add to the load. Never a broken buckle, never a frayed edge. Long live the Aerostich Quick Release Cargo Strap, a bargain at any price!

Dennis Shields
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Bungees Unsafe

Although you did mention to use caution when attaching bungees in your "All Tied Up" comparison of straps vs. bungees in the February issue, they are not safe no matter how careful you are! My best riding buddy a few years ago lost most sight in one eye because of a bungee cord that slipped out of his hand. The hook almost ripped his eye out. He said it was the most painful thing he has ever experienced, even more than being wounded in Nam! Bungee cords are stupid, dangerous, inefficient and just not worth it. Look at your comparison, why use bungees when straps are better and safer? I'm surprised companies are still making them.

I think you could have said something like "because bungees are inherently dangerous, we can't recommend their use, therefore we will compare strap configurations only."

Roger Phernetton
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Where Was Helen?

Your article on packing straps missed a great opportunity to inform people about the Helen Two Wheels straps and packing system. I have used the straps and her bags since being introduced to them at a BMW rally. The material in her straps has never made any marks on any of the bikes I have used and have always secured the loads.

After about 10 years of use on the first pair of straps, one D-ring failed. This was replaced for free with a complete set of new straps after I mentioned it when purchasing a new set in a different color for my other bike. I always carry the straps on the bike whether touring or not. I have used them to carry bags of horse feed, garage sale finds, almost anything securely on my last five BMWs since the early '90s.

Mike Hankinson
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Better Electrical Connections

Let me add a little info, if I can, from my 30 years in the auto and truck maintenance field.

As far as battery cables being disconnected and connected, the safest way to do so is where the negative cable connects to the motorcycle frame or engine, not at the battery. There's less probability of sparks, which can cause battery explosions (I have seen them).

I only use wire taps as a temporary solution until a more permanent connection is performed. Generally, these types of fasteners cut the wire they are connected to, reducing the load carrying capacity of the wire. That's the opposite of what you want to do, since you are adding a load to it which will demand a higher load carrying capability. Being exposed to the elements also presents an opportunity for moisture to enter the wiring harness and corrode the conductor where the insulation is compromised.

It's best to solder the additional wire to the end of the original wire where it connects to the load, but also consider the load capacity of the original wire before adding load to it. Crimp connectors also benefit from a little solder when possible.

Tom Hilsendeger
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Ken's Bike

Is that you on the YZF600R? If so, please tell me the tires you run for commuting/light track day—or just identify the tires in the photo in the February 2008 issue. I have an '07 model that I absolutely love and would also be interested to know of any farkles you've installed.

Dennis Rushing
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Dennis, the Yamaha YZF600 you see in the November 2007 Street Strategies is my wife's bike. She's owned it since 2002 and loves it very much. It has been a very versatile bike, doing duty as a tourer, commuter and as a trackday mount. The tires you see in the photo are Michelin's excellent and equally versatile Pilot Power.

Other than frame sliders and Heli-bars, the bike is stock.

—Ken Condon

Ibuprofen Solution

I found flash gordon's February column interesting. One trick I often use when on a day-long ride (usually to a Moto Guzzi rally!) is to take ibuprofen before getting on the road, and another at the first gas stop. I find it helps fight overall soreness.

I have never had any problems with stomach upset with aspirin, ibuprofen, etc. Does flash have any comment on this trick? I noticed that he likes naproxen. Is it somehow better than ibuprofen?

Howard Rhinehart
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Laurel, MD

I don't recommend ibuprofen or naproxen on an empty stomach—they may cause bleeding (and sometimes, perforation). Naproxen's action is much longer: taking it with breakfast lasts all day, and it can be repeated with dinner. The maximum dose is two twice daily.

NSAIDS like ibuprofen and naproxen can decrease kidney function when taken for a long time (several weeks or more). That, and stomach problems are the main concern.

—dr. flash gordon

Re: Risk Revisited

Ken Condon's "Risk Revisited" article hit it out of the park! I've ridden with riders of varying skills and abilities. During my early club associations, I became the club's safety officer. On many group rides, some members were obviously fearful of becoming either the mini-group leader or sweep. This fear led to some very unsafe riding through intersections, etc.

I promoted Experienced RiderCourses every spring only to have eight out of over 60 members sign up for a 12-student class. Only after strong-arming them did I fill the class. What a sad commentary for a club!

Your article illustrates the various mindsets in the motorcycling community. Some are just satisfied to be able to keep the bike up at a stoplight, and others take every class, ride track days, etc.

The ERCs are nice, but it would be nice to have reasonably priced high-end riding courses like the STAR or CLASS courses.

Herb Schaffer
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Further Speculations On The Future

Loved the article by Fred on his predictions on where the industry is going. I agree with Fred on the Gold Wing going to 2000cc but think they'll add an automatic option soon. Unfortunately they will also probably force you to also buy the ABS, navigation system, airbags and air conditioning options at the same time.

My wish would be going retro and coming out with a new 1200cc Gold Wing for those who want a smaller tourer with all the options. Why not return to a new CB750 inline four? That was one of their most popular bikes. Or take it even a step

further and come out with a new Super Cub scooter/motorcycle.

I think Harley also has to wake up and smell the coffee like everyone else. It will get harder and harder to sell a bike because it has the "name." Why not add liquid cooling and quench all those complaints about hot, thigh-burning heat from the engine, which is my major complaint on my bike.

Fred, I hope your predictions are 50% correct or even 25% correct. Change is good. We need new ideas even if the "old" becomes "new." Sometimes what worked yesterday will still work today.

Harold Landau
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Defense Of Trikes

Thanks for the article on trikes. After a near fatal accident on September 10, 2006, (head on at 60 mph) my right leg still doesn't work well.

I recently purchased a Gold Wing and had a Champion trike kit installed and have the wind in my face again. The brakes all work from the front brake lever and although I walk with a cane, I feel comfortable and safe operating my trike. So next time you see a trike running down the road, it isn't necessarily a sissy, it is just someone who refuses to quit and still loves the wind in their face.

Howie Wass
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Dangers Of Staph Infections

A couple of issues ago, there was story about staph infections, and I read it, no big deal. When the doctor saw my leg, he said you have staph, and put me in the hospital.

Staph is a big deal and after seven nights, no showers, no Internet, no decent food, no motorcycle riding, no good TV stations, people coming in my room every three hours to check my blood pressure, temperature, pulse, the IV, give me more drugs and take more blood, I was ready to get out.

Thanks for informing everyone about the dangers. Trust me, it *can* happen to you. The doctor never found the spot where the infection started. As doc flash said, the only good prevention is to wash our hands regularly, and when we get a cut, a hair that makes those white bumps, or anything, keep it clean and watch it.

James Carpenter
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Venox Performance Numbers

I read a recent issue of MCN where you

listed performance data from previous tests. One piece of data that stood out was the 0-60 time for the Kymco Venox, around 11 sec. (I don't have the exact number in front of me right now). I own a 2006 Venox, and I am certain that it does not take 11 seconds to reach 60 mph. I wonder if during the test the bike was being ridden like a traditional cruiser (short shift at low rpm to use torque rather than rpm to accelerate). This bike needs to be revved to take advantage of the power characteristics of its motor. Mine easily reaches 60 in 3rd gear, but I have never timed it. Don't be afraid to overrev these motors, they have a built-in rpm limiter.

I cannot do any testing right now because my bike is frozen into my barn (upstate NY snow belt), but I will do some rough estimates once I get it out next spring and get the cobwebs out of the bike (and my mind) to see if it really is that slow.

Ed Darling
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Ed, we make every effort to wring every bit of performance from our test bikes.

The Venox does like rpm, as you say, but something to keep in mind is the accuracy of the speedometer. Many bikes, in fact almost all, have very optimistic speedos, which might make you think you'd achieved 60 mph when you were running only 55 mph. Also, the Venox is heavy for its displacement, 435 lbs., making it harder to accelerate from a stop.

Our testing equipment is very accurate, but perhaps a machine that has been well broken in could improve slightly on our times.

Corrections

Reader Peter Benoit questioned the 3.4 hr. labor time to synch the EFI on the Hayabusa and B-King, so we double-checked with Suzuki. The time we were first given was incorrect. The correct time is 0.5 hr.

flash gordon's column in the March issue should have stated fish *liver* oil is a source of Vitamin D, not fish oil.

Also, we ran a picture of the H-D Wide Glide instead of the Softail (below) in the Design section, "A Perfect 10."

