

Fall 1993

Volume 1 Number 3

\$5.00 USA

Fall is Here Already?

Thanks to all of you who subscribed to the **ST1100 Newsletter**. Without you, this publication would not be possible. I hope you notice some of the changes for this issue. First off, this has been offset printed instead of laser printed or copied. I've also switched to a heavy newsletter paper and have attempted to make not only the content, but the appearance of the newsletter the quality we all deserve.

I've created a new complimentary issue for those who inquire about the newsletter and already reached my first goal of over 100 total subscribers in the USA, Canada, and Germany. I am now actively pursuing additional subscribers in Europe, sending over 50 complimentary issues to ST1100 riders there.

At the same time, I've decided to try to push up the publishing schedule a little so that the issues arrive closer to the beginning of the season instead of near the end. This means you readers that wish to contribute articles or letters to the newsletter will have to hurry and get them in. The deadline for the Winter 1994 issue is January 10, 1994, then mailing on about the 30th. Why not write a nice, short, informative piece for your fellow ST riders over the holidays?

The Spring 1994 issue will then have a deadline of March 15 and

mail on about March 30.

Lastly, I have adjusted the subscription rates to try and cover most of the publishing and postage costs. At the current subscriber level, I will be able to maintain the same quality of publication at the following rates for 4 issues:

In US Funds

USA, Canada, Mexico	\$16.00
Europe	\$25.00
All Other Locations	\$30.00
Back Issues - Each USA	\$5.00
Back Issues - Each Others	\$8.00

Every subscriber is at least paid through the Spring 1994 issue, but at that time, the above rates will be the renewal rate. I feel this is still a very reasonable rate for the newsletter but let me know if you feel differently.

As the fall riding season comes to a close for several of you, I hope you found it very enjoyable with your ST and have lots of nice experiences to tell us about. For those of us lucky enough to keep riding all year I look forward to our continued safety and plenty of winter miles.

Ride Safe, Ride Fun - Grant

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ST1100 Newsletter

Where It Meets The Road

By Rock Rhoades, Texas

I'm still looking for the right tires for my ST (though I may be very near the answer). I ride very hard (even for an HSTAer!), which shows in my tire mileage below. I like to go peg-scraping, so stability and traction is important; my annual mileage is high, so I need long wear; and I commute year-round on the bike, so wet-weather traction is also a consideration. Still wonder why I can't find the "right" tire? Perhaps my experiments with different tires, detailed below, will help other ST riders find suitable rubber. Feel free to contribute money toward my research and development efforts!

Bridgestone Exedras (original equipment): good grip, but vague steering feel; front tire developed pretty severe cupping by the time it wore out; rear tire wore to a square profile, making the rear end squirmy during transitions and at low-to-moderate lean angles. Mileage: 9,000 front, 8,000 rear.

Michelin A/M59X radials: these tires were my favorites on my Concours, so I thought they'd work well on the ST...NOT! The rear tire, though only available in 160/60 profile, worked OK. The front, however, was VERY unstable, feeling like there was only 15 psi in the tire. I had to go to 41 psi to get rid of the weave, but that just cost me traction, and made the tire wear at the crown like a bias rear tire. They also had poor wet-weather traction, especially the front (I never had a complaint on my Concours). To top it all off, they gave the ST a good case of headshake; the ST will shake its head a little with any tires, but these were the worst. (NOTE: The new 89-series Michelins are supposed to solve these problems, and the rear is available in 160/70. HOWEVER...a

friend in HSTA reported that the A89X front tire gave him a high-speed weave over 100mph, and it got increasingly worse above that.) Although this is just an educated guess, I think the difference in performance between the Concours and the ST is that the Michelins were not designed for a rim as wide as the ST's (the Concours has a 2.15" rim, the ST a 3"). Mileage: 11,000 front, 7,000 rear.

Dunlop Sportmax: I have only tried the rear tire of this model. It sticks very well in wet or dry, and I got average life from it. However, I used a 160/60-17 because it's not built in a 70-series profile. This gets you about 6 mph higher top end, and 2 mpg worse mileage, both due to the lower overall gearing. Corner carving is much trickier, though, because the smaller diameter tire means you have less ground clearance and less available lean angle, especially if you're riding two up. Instead of your being able to ride the peg feelers in a turn, the centerstand hits first and tries to lever the tires off the pavement. Not good! Mileage: 7,000.

Metzeler ME33 Laser and ME55A Metronic: I like these tires, but they have their drawbacks. The rear tire squirms when

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you're at moderate lean with the power on; i.e.- corner exits. When worn down near the tread wear indicators, the front tire makes the ST shake its head almost as bad as the Michelins. They stick extremely well in all conditions. In fact, the front tire holds as good as any front tire I have ever used. My other major complaint of both front and rear tires is their merely average life. Mileage: 9,000 front, 7,000 rear.

Avon ST22/23: After reading Ross King's article in the Feb 93 STARReview, I ordered a set of these, and ran them to SouthSTAR in Helen, GA. I ordered the recommended 170/60-17 rear tire; I had hoped that the extra width would keep me away from the ground clearance problem I had with the Michelin and Dunlop tires. Although they are significantly better, they still don't match the stock profile's lean angle capabilities. The Avons, though, are the only tires I've tried that stick as well as the Metzlers. The front tire also makes its traction capabilities known under hard braking. In addition, their round profile makes the bike really responsive, and keeps its steering neutral. Just before I left for SouthSTAR, I found out that Avon now makes a 160/70-17 rear tire. The 170/60 is almost gone, and I have a new 160/70 sitting in the garage, waiting. I've currently got 6100 miles on these tires. The front doesn't even look half gone, and so far I've had NO headshake with them. The rear isn't faring as well, though; it won't last to 7,000. Those numbers are not as bad as they seem after you put them in context. I do my hardest riding on HSTA rallies (ask those that went with me to Deal's Gap), and this is the only set of tires that have seen TWO rallies. I think I can safely predict front tire mileage in the 12-15,000 range, and rear tire (160/70) at 8-10,000 (when compared equally with the others).

Due to my aggressive style of riding, the tire mileage I get will most likely be significantly less than what most of you can expect, but the figures should still be valid for comparison with each other.

Bottom line: Unless the stock profile rear Avon has a rude surprise in store for me, I think I've found my tires.

ST Iron Butt Troubles

A Moto Guzzi wins limping in on one cylinder? Who would've guessed! However, newsletter readers Ramon Becerra and Ron Major both ran into difficulties on this most recent 11 day endurance run. Ramon finished 24th out of 24 finishers when the drive splines on his ST1100 failed (Congratulations on finishing though). Unfortunately, Ron was involved in an accident in Portland, Maine that totalled his beautifully customized ST and also injured Ron.

Ron said he was recovering and that he would be back, probably on another ST. I know we all wish him our best in his recovery. Ron gave me permission to give out his address. I'm sure he would appreciate a card from his fellow ST riders. His address is:

Ron Major
5605 Noel Drive
Temple City, California 91780

For information on riding in the next (1995) Iron Butt, write to:

Mr. Michael Kneebone
Iron Butt Association
6326 W. Grace Street
Chicago, Illinois 60634

Wobble Cures

By W. Grant Norman

A few weeks ago I received the following letter from American Honda:

AMERICAN HONDA MOTOR CO., INC.
1919 Torrance Boulevard · Torrance, CA
90501-2746
(310) 783-2000

October 19, 1993

Dear Mr. Norman:

We have received your letter directed to District Service Manager, Mr. Bob Wolsted, with copy to Vice President, Mr. Silvio Carrara, requesting Honda's recommendations for your Honda 1991 ST1100. Mr. Carrara has asked the Motorcycle Customer Service Department to respond to such concerns, as this is in our area of responsibility.

While Customer Service has been asked to respond on management's behalf, you may be assured that this particular matter has received their attention.

First, we are delighted that you are pleased with the good treatment and service received from both Wild West Honda and Mr. Wolsted. Acknowledgement of your kind words will be passed on to Wild West Honda.

As you know, Mr. Wolsted visited Wild West Honda and inspected your ST1100 to review the handlebar oscillation concern you had brought to American Honda's attention via your ST1100 Newsletter.

Upon inspection, Mr. Wolsted informed us that he was unable to test ride your motorcycle because the steering stem bearings and front wheel bearings were worn and loose. These conditions were subsequently remedied.

While we appreciate your thought that perhaps American Honda should issue new maintenance information about bearings, we do not believe this is necessary because: 1) the Maintenance Schedule in the Owners Manual is

adequate and should be strictly adhered to and 2) the condition of your motorcycle should not be generalized to other machines.

We are glad to hear that your motorcycle is fixed and performing to your satisfaction. We are sure by following the recommended maintenance in your Owner's Manual, similar problems can be avoided in the future.

In the future, if you believe you have a problem with your ST1100, please make an appointment with your Honda dealer so that he may offer you his high quality service. Above all, we always encourage Honda owners--such as yourself--to follow the inspection and maintenance schedule in the Owner's Manual.

We would also like to take this opportunity to point out that some of the tires specified in the Owner's Manual may not currently be available in the United States. We encourage you to be certain to purchase the exact tire specified in your Owner's Manual.

Again, Mr. Norman, thank you for contacting American Honda. We wish you many more pleasurable miles on your Honda ST1100.
Sincerely,

AMERICAN HONDA MOTOR CO., INC.
Lori Cuthbertson
Motorcycle Customer Service

The Fix: Yes, Wild West Honda was able to fix my front wheel wobble problem. It was related to the bearings and tires. The steering head bearings were worn out as were the front and rear wheel bearings, even though they had been replaced only 14,000 miles earlier. The actual repairs included new steering head, front and rear bearings and Bridgestone Excedra (OEM) tires.

I've put over 3,700 miles on my ST since their repair and there is no major wobble, however, if I try to make it wobble hands free at about 45 mph, I can see a slight oscillation. This is not a problem since hands free riding is not recommended and there is virtually no wobble at all hands on, and that's even hands on relaxed, which was my original complaint.

As I mentioned in the last issue, I'm no mechanic or engineer, but I feel I now have a pretty good understanding of how to resolve the front wheel wobble.

First off, why do some ST's seem to wobble while others do not? I think there are a several factors: 1) Weight and loading 2) Bearings 3) Tire wear.

On my ST, I've had probably some of the most severe wobbling because of not only my svelte weight of 265 lbs, but also I'm a full time, year round rider in the South. That means while many ST's are tucked away in cozy Northern garages or cruising down balmy California highways, my ST is trudging through the continually humid and frequently wet, Houston climate. The result - according to some mechanics, short bearing life due to deterioration by water.

Add my weight to this and there is a much greater potential to have a wobble problem. And put on a worn front tire and there's the perfect recipe for knee-slappin, tank-whappin wobble!

Now on the design side - I feel, as I've mentioned before, that the ST1100 bearings could have been better from the beginning - maybe there could have been better water repellent design in the wheel bearings and definitely a stronger tapered-roller bearing for the steering head instead of ball bearings, but for now, it is just one small deficiency we as owners may have to just put up with.

Some mechanics have mentioned to me that frequently serious racers will immediately remove Japanese bearings from their bikes and replace them with a higher quality American made bearing. This maybe a possible course for ST riders in the future. Others, such as Dan Drom, the service manager at Wild West Honda who supervised an excellent repair of my ST suggest that on heavy bikes like the ST, Gold Wings, etc. that the owner should seriously consider wheel bearing changes at every other tire change. It is also very

important that the bearings are greased properly with the correct type of bearing grease. Dan also pointed out an interesting fact to me in the BMW K bike owner's manual that recommends steering head bearing changes at every 25,000 miles - in my opinion, something ST owners may also wish to consider.

Lastly, as part of the fix to my ST, I replaced the Metzeler tires with the OEM Bridgestone Excedras. Performance wise, I haven't noticed any major difference, but then again, I don't put my ST through the "sport" stresses that Rock Rhoades mentions in his article on tires, so I would say Rock would have more knowledge on the tires than I would.

Warranty Repair: From my understanding, Honda considers the bearings a wear item that is the responsibility of the owner to purchase if needed. I'm not sure if I personally agree with this, but I do feel Honda tries to be more than fair in instances where there is some doubt on the durability of the parts. For instance, I feel if you have only a few thousand miles on your ST and the bearings are bad, your Honda service manager should replace those bearings under warranty....at the same time, if you have 50,000 miles on the bearings and they're worn out, that seems reasonable to me to purchase new ones. However, there's a lot of range between 3,000 and 50,000 miles so again, I suggest you discuss it with your service manager at your Honda dealer. If you feel that they are still not responsive to your request, then you can write or call the customer service people at American Honda. I feel they will do their best to try and resolve your concerns.

So the keys to no wobble? 1) Good, well-greased adjusted bearings 2) Good tires, inflated properly. As for loading, make certain you do not have excessive weight, especially towards the rear of the bike. All of this will help minimize a wobble effect.

SURVEY RECAP

Reader Comments

Thanks to all who returned the survey sheet providing some very interesting information. What follows are some of the comments taken from those surveys, after which are charts of the survey question results.

I am always looking for more information and knowledge about motorcycling and the motorcycles I ride. This newsletter provides a very focused source of information on the ST1100.

Jack Curtis, New Mexico

Great magazine Grant! I like hearing what others have done with their ST's. It helps me to know what will & won't work as well as what problems I might expect in the future.

Mike Rowland, Maryland

I'm the second owner of the bike, the original owner had the exhaust system modified (by Muzzy of Oregon) to accept Super Trapp mufflers. It is just a tad too noisy for me, even with min baffling, but fun to ride. Polish: Johnson Wax "Klean & Shine" small cans travels well & can be used on everything but tires. Oil: Now using Castrol Synthetic, any comments? Front Tire: Metzeler ME33 Comp K 110/70 VB 18 - No wobble.

Joe Zinn, Washington

Over 75,000 miles on the 1991 & 1993 ABS - tried most tires - Avon, Bridgestone OEM, Dunlop Sportmax, Metzeler, Michelin - some wobble from new tire now, tire brand effects some - with Metzeler worse and Michelin impossible over 95mph. On #2, 1993 ABS - as part of the pre-delivery head set, swing arm, drive spline and wheel bearings were greased properly - very little grease was in any of

these components except the swing arm - wheels and head sets were nearly dry.

Charles Mourer, Washington

Hopefully we can all meet and talk about ST1100's at STAR '94.

Tim Brogan, New Jersey

I installed a J&M unit with J&M "Midland" CB. Have sent the J&M back three times for repair. The mike connection at the unit keeps breaking. I keep the CB in the Honda back rest pouch. It's the only place I could find to install it. Does anyone else have this problem? Has anyone else found a better place to locate the J&M CB on an ST1100? PS: Good newsletter and BBS. My last trip was 5K to Newfoundland & Labrador (Very Cold!!)

Brad Teets, Pennsylvania

Being a Honda Sport Touring Association member and talking to the other members that own ST's, I know several others have experienced the front wheel wobble problem and blowing headlight bulbs, another problem I'd like to see explored in this newsletter.

James Flood, New Jersey

Why does Honda think one size "fits all?" How about an adjust for the handlebars, pegs, etc. How about an opening cover for the fairing parts in front of our knees - on cold days it would be great to have all that heat!

Bill Millard, Maryland

I'm not very technical but I still enjoy reading all about the ST. Hope that you keep it for ST's only. It looks as though you have done a lot of work for us, thank you, it was great.

Alison Taylor, California

No wobble noticed with OEM, approximately 2K miles into Metzlers noticed a wobble. Worse if tires (especially rear) low on air. Got progressively worse as wear on tires increased. By replacement time my wife as a passenger could notice the wobble during cornering. Got 7500 miles on both front & rear Metzlers before tread marking were showing (wear indicators). Just replaced with Michelin X89 & A89. What a difference! Coming home from shop the wobble much improved but still present. Before first ride, checked air as it was from the shop - only 30 PSI front and rear! Put 42 PSI front and rear and the wobble has disappeared! I have only been out once with the new tire and it was for a ride in the mountains with my wife as a passenger. I'm 210 lbs and she's 140 lbs. I thought I noticed a wobble a time or two but it was so slight I couldn't really tell and I'm not sure it was really there, if not for past experience I know I wouldn't have even thought it was there. Cornering is much more stable with much less effort, the difference is remarkable. I don't know that lean angle actually increased but I do know I leaned further and was able to corner faster because of the increased confidence. All this with my wife on back! I'm going back this weekend by myself! I'll let you know if the wobble returns as the Michelins wear. I'm not sure the bike has a design problem, rather it appears to be hypersensitive (thoroughbreds usually are!) to tire selection and pressure. I would like Honda to at least study the problem and make recommendations.

Bill Johnston, Georgia

I've experienced wobble only with worn-out front tires - more serious with the Metzlers than with the Dunlop. Now I've installed a new Avon ST22 Radial and the wobble disappeared.

Raymond Cadieux, Quebec

Wobble only occurs with hands off bars and decelerating. When front wheel bearings, tires were replaced and switched to Progressive Suspension and steering head bearings adjusted, I have not seen the wobble for 5,000 miles. Original battery is getting weak if bike sits for 10 days. Chaparral has OEM replacement for \$61. K&N Air filter works great - have used for 9,000 miles - tried K & N brake pads, \$40 for two front pair, at 29,000 miles. Okay for a few thousand miles then developed annoying squeal but stopped when other above repairs were done for wobble. Can not recommend K&N Brake pads due to squeal. Progressive fork springs - have not really noticed any great improvement other than less nose diving with passenger. Engine oil Amzoil Synthetic 20W50 seems to make shifting easier, fewer missed shifts, false neutrals, and quieter than Honda or Castrol oils. How about getting subscribers together for a ride? Thanks for the plug on the luggage rack for the ST. You might also mention that a passenger backrest comes with the rack.

Tim Vipond, Texas

Too much plastic - hard to get to components. Like the performance.

Marvin Kirkpatrick, California

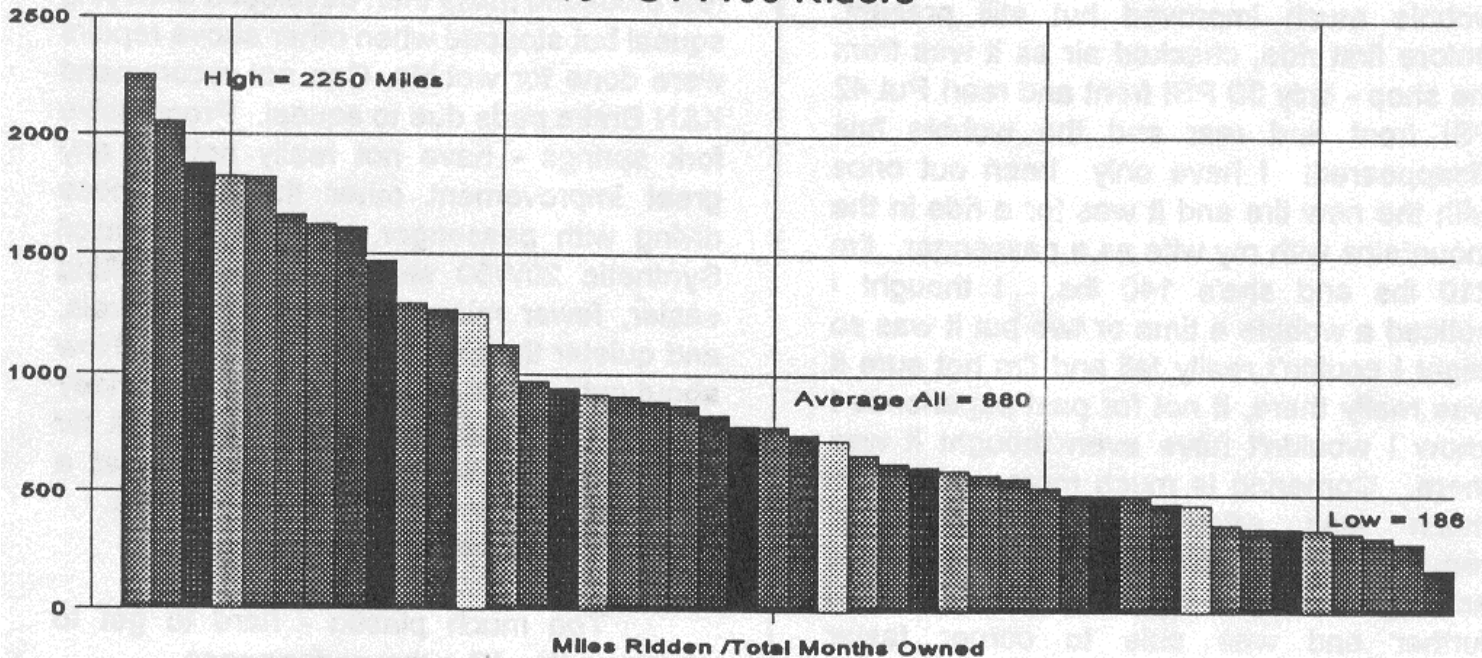
1) Shaft drive makes clunking noise
2) - buzz in front end (handle bars) - 3) The microfiche for the 1992 ST shows 2 snorkel tubes hooking up to the air cleaner box, however, I have been unable to locate a 1992 model that comes with 2. Usually only the right side has one. The left has the brass screw insets on the front fairing and a hangar on the air cleaner but no snorkel. 4) What are those two pop-out plastic pieces near your knees on the inside, grey fairing?

Jeff Rabenda, New Jersey

Jeff - Those two pop-outs are where the Hondaline accessory knee pads attach, one of the few accessories Honda actually offers us!

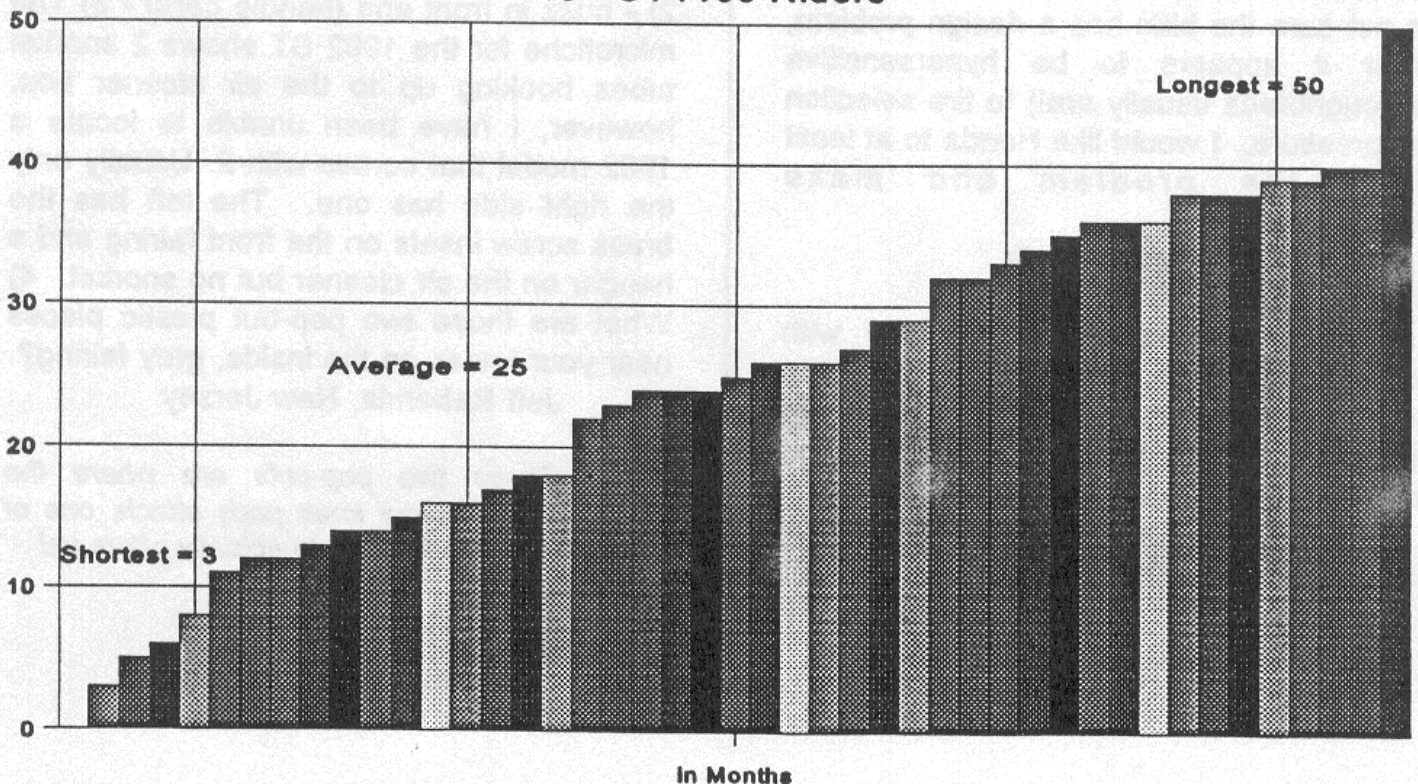
Average Monthly Miles

43 - ST1100 Riders



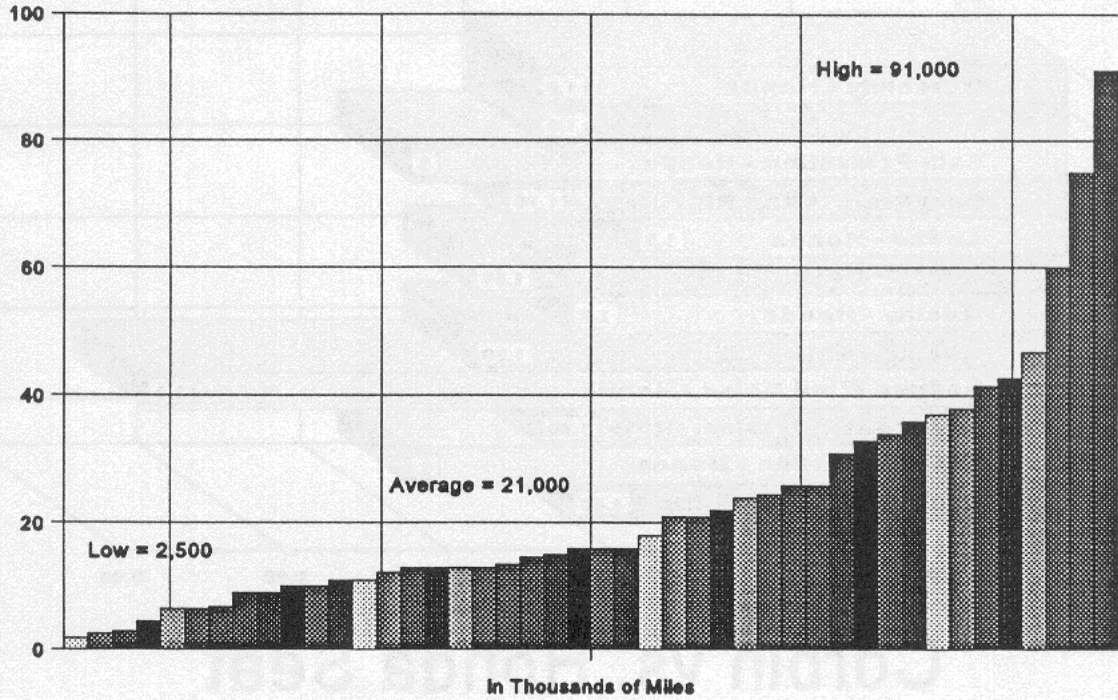
Months of Ownership

43 - ST1100 Riders



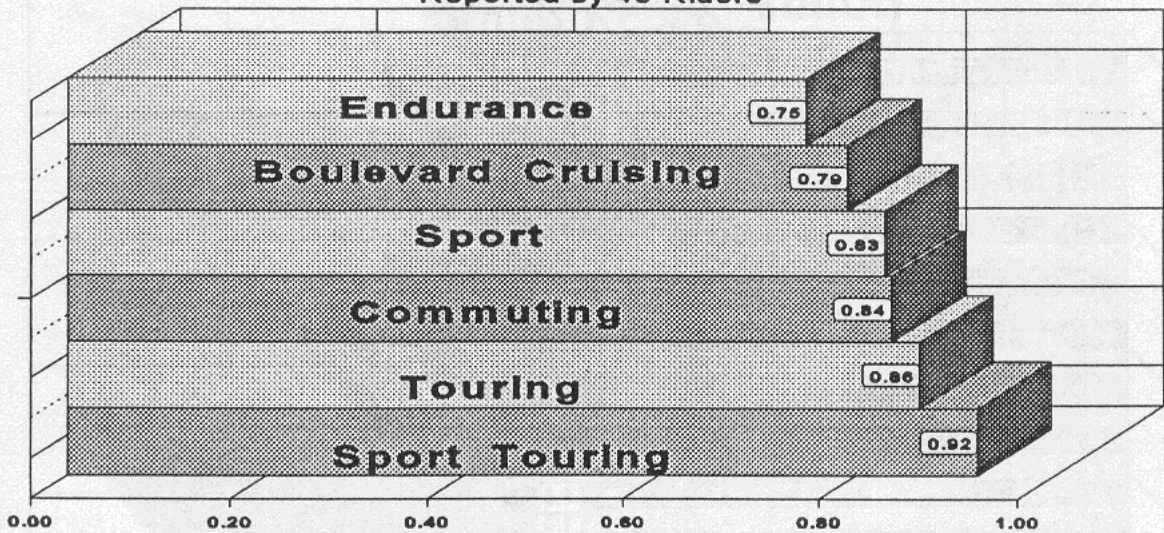
Total Mileage

43 Riders - 904,000 Total Miles



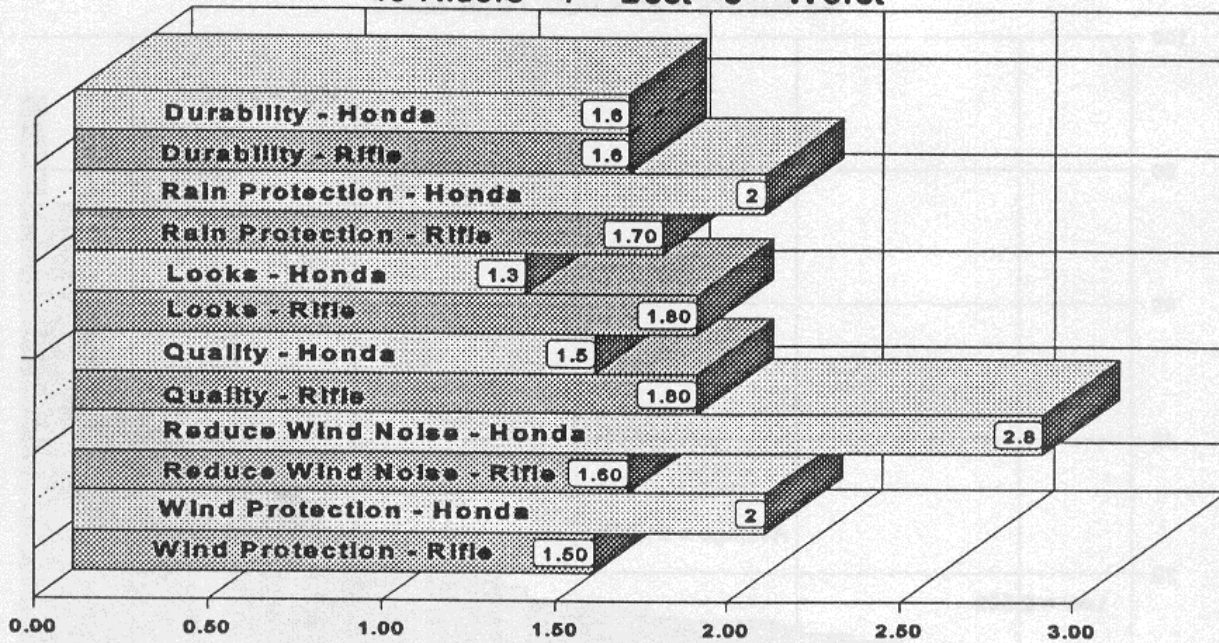
ST1100 Riding Styles

Reported by 43 Riders



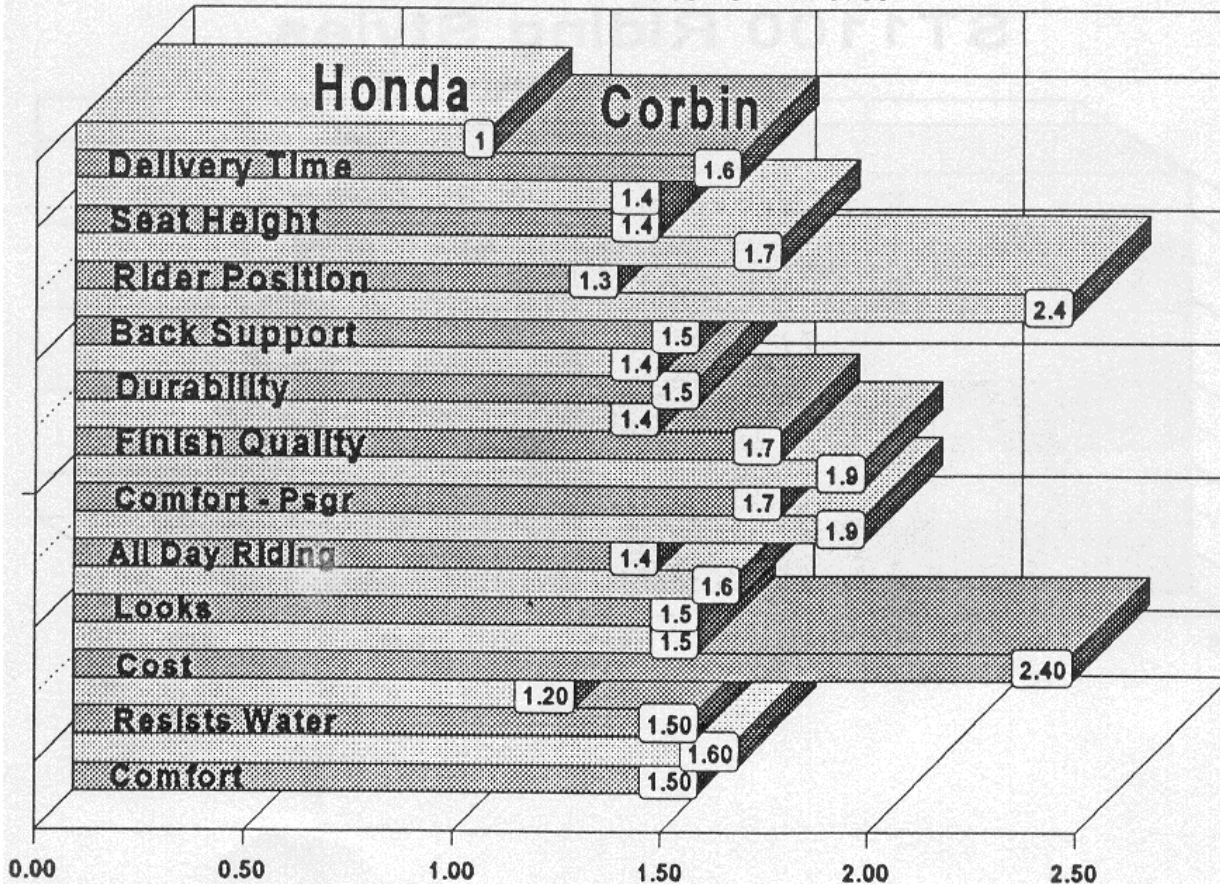
Rifle vs. Honda Windscreen

43 Riders - 1 = Best - 3 = Worst



Corbin vs. Honda Seat

43 Riders - 1 = Best - 3 = Worst



ST1100 Winter Riding Modifications

By Martin Hildebrandt
Stadthagen, Germany

The Problem:

The ST1100 has good wind protection but unfortunately through that superfluous aperture in the front the water is led directly into your face. Besides the mirror/indicator combination spreads the rain over the back of your hand and the fingers. Same is valid for the feet up to the ankles, if your feet are not pressed tight to the machine.

Another small problem is occasional carburetor icing if you're driving at low temperature (<5° C) and very high humidity. After about 200 km the performance goes bad and acceleration is nearly impossible.

The Solution & Materials:

1. Gaffa Tape The good old super strong tape from the PA-people. I don't like any constructions with tape and florist's wire, but this is a class of it's own. It's about 5 cm wide and due to the fibre inlay holds astonishingly well. Price: about 20-25 DM per roll (about \$12-\$15 US)

2. ABS-sheets, ca. 1.5 mm thick ABS means "Acrylbutadienstyrol". It's the most common thermoplast. Price: ca. 8 DM per sheet (about \$5 US)

3. Hot grips Price: ca. 80 DM at Hein Gericke or other suppliers (about \$50 US)

4. 12 V sockets from BMW Price: ca 50 DM (about \$30 US) as a kit You should take the complete kit from the K1100 LT. It fits perfect.

The Work:

1. Close the horizontal aperture with the tape. No more rain on your face.

2. Paste the tape like a shingle-roof in the triangle made of mirrors and

windshield. Be sure to make it from the rear to the front and it will hold forever or at least 1000 km (625 miles US). Do it from the front to the rear and after 50 km it's gone. This construction looks like the hand-protector of the old R100RT and is just as good. It has the best result in holding your hands warm of all the things I tried. Tested up to 200 km/h (125 mph US) on 1600 km. Don't try any other tape than the suggested.

3. Installation of ABS-foot-shields Take a ABS-sheet of normal size (A3) and cut it into two equal pieces. At both sides of the machine you have to remove two screws. The first holds the cover on this metal-bow on the side. The second holds the fairing just beneath your foot. Measure the screws distance and drill two holes in the respective sheet. The upper has to be 6 mm the other 9 mm. Now you simply take the original screws and fix the ABS-sheets at the machine. Now the important step: Use one of those hot dryers. Hold the ABS-sheet on the rear side and pull it outward. Warm up a vertical stripe about 3 or 5 cm behind the screw-holes. The sheet will go outside and stay there when it gets cold. At my experience this is of no harm for the fairing, but be careful. You could place some tape under the ABS to protect the paint. This construction has the elegance of a humbling pig, but it works very well and can be done by someone like me, who doesn't even have two left hands, but ten thumbs instead. Don't be surprised if you get a horrible scratching noise in curves, it's completely harmless.

4. Carburetor icing. Who is crazy enough to ride several hundred kilometers at 3 degrees celsius without a pause can get a problem with carburetor icing. Just close the air-inlet at the fairings side with a piece of tape. Now the carburetors take more air from the warm way through the cooler and the cylinders and the effect is gone.

5. Attaching of hot grips and sockets. The hot grips are no "cure all" but they work

very well in alliance with the described hand-shield. Without this hand-shield they are nearly of no use. I was able to sweat on the inside of my hands and to be frozen on the outside with hot grips but without the shield.

It's favorable to attach the grips common with the socket kit from the K1100LT. It's very simple work and looks quite professional when ready.

Remove the side fairing and the tank-dummy. Drill two holes where the sockets shall be. I suggest one to be beneath your knee, the other just under the pocket.

If you have a ABS-machine get the power from the backlights fuse. Use a somewhat bigger fuse. If you have a standard machine get the power from the horns fuse. It's much oversized and it seems the constructors installed it extra for this case.

Both fuses are operated by the key, so you don't have to think about your heated visor when you switch your bike off.

Hope these tips are of some use for you. All is tested on some rides to the "Elefantentreffen" which happens every year in the beginning of February on the opposite side of Germany.

Have fun, Martin

As I've mentioned several times, the success of this newsletter depends on you the riders and readers submitting your ideas and articles. I would like to especially thank Martin Hildebrandt for this piece on Winter Modifications, not only because its usefulness and information, but also the time he spent translating it from German to English for us. Thanks and we look forward to seeing more of your fine work in the future. -Grant

Rifle Windscreen Modifications

By Russ Madsen, California

I have reshaped the Rifle on the ST, finally. Many observations and details...in a nutshell, there's a lot involved because the characteristics of airflow over a surface play as important a role as the desired calm area.

The actual heating and bending goes very easily. Keep the heat gun moving and push on the screen gently nearby. Then it's a matter of feel when it starts to soften. I did everything freehand yesterday, in spite of thinking for weeks about needing some kind of mold or template to get both sides shaped the same. Also, figured out this morning to put a sock over the end of a 2" wide strip of 3/4" plywood and use it as a backing to get an even surface. This was a big help in getting rid of small rippled places that I was unable to get smooth by hand.

Right now I've got the airflow off my shoulders OK but I went too far without test riding and put a flared lip across the top edge. That lip is causing turbulence to hit my helmet where before that flow was going over my head. Before I change anything else though we're going out tonight and ride to get Jane's feedback from the pillion.

Yesterday, I took the bike up through speeds at 5 mph increments to 60 mph. Hit turbulence and went back to reshaping 4 times. It doesn't take much of a ripple (an eighth of an inch or so) to cause turbulence sufficient to make the bike a little unsteady!

After using the plywood idea to smooth out some remaining ripples, I had it up to 95 mph this morning and it's stable *enough* but noticeably less stable than before I started. I still haven't gotten into a strong enough cross wind to make any final judgements. Nor have I worked with putting on the air dam/deflector yet.

Don't have enough miles to report gas mileage either but I expect a drop. After all, the engine is now pushing a much wider and flatter surface than before.

Important Cautionary Note: Windscreens are airfoils, major amounts of force are generated by the airflow over them. I went ahead with this project knowing full well that I may end up with a sail that will *fly* the front end any which way...if anyone tries this **BE AWARE!** In addition to undergrad college level physics of fluid mechanics, I've been dabbling as an amateur in subsonic airfoil theory for about 4 years or so (landsailing and soaring) and had a special class in elementary supersonic aerodynamics a few years ago.

Shiftless ST?

By Russ Madsen, California

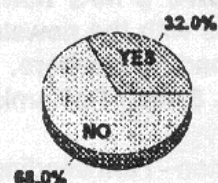
We made it out of the snowstorm it Yarnell but not without dropping the ST on it's left side. Once we were at a lower elevation, I set about assessing why I was only getting shifts into 1st and 2nd gear. The linkage looked fine. The clutch seemed OK. But I saw that the entire left side of the lower fairing was pushed out maybe a half inch. It looked like a mounting bracket may have bent when it went down. This moved the rear edge of the plastic, the strip that runs behind the shifter, to a position that blocked the travel of the lever.

I pulled out a knife and cut away a small rectangle where the lever was contacting the plastic. While I was cutting I concluded this strip has been interfering slightly with shifting ever since I bought the bike. A spot of abrasion showed that contact with the shift lever had been ongoing for some time. Once we were back underway, I found shifting was the smoothest and most positive it has ever been.

Anyone who has an ST1100 might want to take a look at the fairing plastic. If there's a worn place behind the shifter, it might help shifting to trim it away. Ride safe and enjoy!

Ride With Earplugs?

40 Riders Responding



Reader to Reader

The following section of the *ST1100 Newsletter* is reserved for the readers comments and experiences. If you wish to respond to one of the readers with additional questions or answers, send your question or answer to:

Reader to Reader
ST1100 Newsletter
 PO Box 840566
 Houston, TX 77284-0566

After I have copied the information for use in the next newsletter I will forward your information to the reader if you include a blank stamped envelope.

Letters

Hi Grant - Received the *ST1100 Newsletter* today. Congratulations on the first issue. Must be a lot of work to get it all together.

Very good friend of mine, Dick McCoy, has an ST1100 and I ride it now and then. Seems to me its almost perfect for the way I like to ride. Very next bike will probably be an ST.(my wife says "get rid of something" and you can get one...I have 5 M/C now). I wish you continued success with the newsletter. Hope to see you on the road somewhere.

James A. Smith, California

WG Norman - I am sending you an article [from the June '93 issue of *STARReview*] about changing the clock bulb on an ST. In reference to the front tire wobble I spoke to a rider who had that problem with Metzeler tires at 45-50 mph. He switched to AVON's and this seemed to cure his problem. I am using Metzelters and have had no problem with them.

Clarence B. Allen, Pennsylvania

Dear Grant - My ST is a silver '91, purchased new in August '92. Real modifications haven't begun, and I have a low by average 9,400 miles. So far, a Corbin Canyon dual sport with removable backrest, and a Rifle (+4) windscreen have been added. Stock tires are Bridgestone and are about due for replacement. No headshake has occurred yet. I am considering Michelins 89X Front/Rear combination because they are radial and are made in the 160/70-17 rear size for the ST.

I have some ideas that have not yet been tried, but as soon as I do, you will receive word on them. It seems about everything else possible has or will be written about in the Newsletter. So this information will be of great use. Thank you Grant, for an excellent source of information, thanks to my friends in the Honda Sport Touring Association for passing on the word of this newsletter to me, and thanks to Honda for the best bike I ever rode!

Michael C. Anderson, Pennsylvania

Dear Grant - Just received your second newsletter and think it was great. I particularly enjoyed the letters. Without being specific as to whose letter I am referring, I would like to offer my two cents worth on some of the things said. I have not experienced any front end wobbles, nor do I personally know any ST owner who has. Perhaps it will come as mileage increases, who knows? Rod Eastwood has not mentioned it and he must be nearing 100,000 miles and as far as I know has consistently run Metzeler tires.

At about 8000 miles I replaced the OEM tires with Pirelli Match. I experienced no wobble with them, but they always felt "squirrely." I could not achieve any degree of confidence with them so after 5000 miles I got rid of them and installed Avon ST radials. They are everything which the Pirellis were not!

As I told you, I installed higher bars and went to braided stainless hoses for clutch and brakes. I used a longer bolt at the master cylinder and ran a hose to each caliper. This makes for a neat installation and eliminates that ugly-ass crossover line between calipers.

My only problem so far has been the burning out of several headlight bulbs. Why, I don't know, but as they cost so much I may soon try the H4 modification.

I recently purchased a Western Mfg. Handy motorcycle lift. I plan to start doing most of my own service including adjusting the valves. At least my legs won't be sore for days after from kneeling and squatting. Keep up the good work and keep those newsletters coming!

Reuben C. White, California

Grant - Just got your letter of the 23rd. FWIW, my wife Karen bought her ST on 6/11/93; since then she's managed to put almost 4800 miles on the bike. She recently began talking about the bike feeling different in the handling area - a certain sloppiness that she thought was attributable to tire wear. As soon as she received your newsletter, she knew that the wobble effect was what she was experiencing.

Prior to her purchase, I was aware of the discussions on the HSTA BBS, TMCBBS, and CIS, regarding the possible wobble problem. I did not tell her about the reports because I figured

she would back out of the deal. Although she has over 15 years of experience and is an excellent rider, it has taken me 2 years to convince her that a bike like the ST, Concours, or K75RT was not too much for her to handle.

The following info is purely anecdotal but I believe is accurate regarding her bike: 3 days after the purchase, I took the bike in for its initial service (approximately 750 miles on the odometer) - no evidence of wobble; the following weekend we headed for Helen, GA for the HSTA Rally, - mileage after trip - about 2600 - again rode bike - no wobble; at 3500 miles we took a one day 500 mile trip - Karen begin's noticing a difference in the handling feedback. I again take the bike out and although I think I detect some minor difference - am still unable to get a real wobble effect. This week, I take the bike to work (current mileage 4700) and under deceleration, the full-blown wobble is right there at 45 miles per hour.

Yes - Honda's right, at this point it only shows up if you release your grip on the bars - my concern is - will it become more significant as the bike ages. I'm sure some smart corporate attorney could even argue that it's a safety enhancement - designed to alert a sleepy rider that their concentration is faltering - but the first time somebody goes down and blames it on handling instability, Honda is looking at a major lawsuit.

Except for this problem, it is an excellent machine and I am even considering replacing my GL1500 with one for myself. Keep up the good work, your newsletters are well done and certainly informative. Now if I can just find somebody to manufacture a decent looking aluminum faceplate to cover the bar mounting bolt area, add a set of chromed bars that pull back about 2 inches more than stock and maybe rise another inch or so and maybe incorporate a set of stainless steel lines - then package the whole thing as a kit.....

Brad & Karen Metzger, Pennsylvania

I recently received a letter from American Honda Customer Service Rep. Lori Cuthbertson in response to the postcard I mailed the other day. Her response mirrors what Honda has claimed from the beginning: No service memos

have been issued regarding the wobble, the dealer will be able to diagnose the problem, etc., etc. I was pleasantly surprised at the quick response-the letter arrived just a few days after I mailed the card. She states that she also tried to contact me by phone, but was unsuccessful since my number is unlisted.

Good news about the September 9th meeting at Wild West! Unfortunately, I will be out of town later that week, so will be unable to attend. I'm anxious to hear of any real fix, and hope you don't have to listen to the same old line from them.

I will fax Honda's letter to you (you may have received a similar one).

Steve Wright, Texas

Dear Grant - We just received the ST1100 newsletter of August 23. I wish you luck with your "wobble" meeting with the Honda District Service Manager. Jim (my partner) and I each have an ST1100 and both of them have had the wobbles. Sometimes the problem has been so severe on my bike that I can feel the wobble even when I am riding with both hands on the handlebars. A new front tire (Metzeler) will generally cure the problem, but only for a few thousand miles. We are both careful to keep the tires properly inflated and do not experience any "cupping" or other bad wear patterns on our tires.

I really like my ST1100 with the single exception of the wobble problem. I also plan to keep mine for a long time and it would be great if Honda could (or would) do something about this serious problem in an otherwise fine bike.

William L. Rogers, Colorado

Dear Grant - Great newsletter! Though I don't expect to do all the wrenching described, I like the thought of maybe being able with the help of the info. My remaining unanswered quest: If it really is important to drain the carbs for winter storage, why can't Honda put out a printed sheet describing same. I also would like to know if anyone is trailoring an ST1100, and how are they tying it down? (I know that trailoring an ST seems anti-ST, but to get out of Vermont in the winter, it may be necessary)

How about telling us more about you personally? While you mentioned having two kids and a wife, what do you do for a living, how old

are you and your kids? Do you have any other obsessions besides the ST? (hobbles, etc.?) Any idea on how many ST's there are in the USA? Reuben White's wishes were right on. A bit smaller bike with a lower seat and less weight would be nice for us smaller weaklings. It's fantastic in motion, but at slow, parking-lot speeds and backing up, it can be a bit difficult. I'm sure we all would love to hear more about Ron Major's modifications. I would like particularly to hear about the handlebar mounts, since my right wrist gets tired easily. (Do fatter grips help? Any in particular recommended?)

I have mounted my SOLO radar detector on a windshield bracket from the Mr. Bracket Company, with a fishing leader hooked to a hole drilled in the bracket and a windshield bolt for a safety line. (The stock windshield SOLO bracket mount seems too small to be secure.)

My Corbin Rumble Seat (\$297) is of questionable additional comfort, but the passenger backrest makes passengers more secure. Unfortunately the Corbin seat does not have the swing-out bungee clips. I have added the Lakewood Honda rack (see enclosed), and though perhaps pricey, is very well made with good mounting extension bolts for the passenger grab rails, and clear instructions.

Believe it or not, I too have a wobble! I realized a week ago as I was relaxing with my hands off the bars and letting it slow down from 60 or so, that as it dropped from 50 to 45 a wobble built up, then diminished to cease at about 40. I have the original Aeromax Dunlops on the bike with 5,000 miles on the front tire has a reasonable amount of tread, but seems to be developing some cupping. The wobble may have existed before, since I don't really notice it with both hands on the bars. Actually, the vibration at 4,000 rpm bothers me more. I'm waiting for more information via the newsletter to help me decide what tires to put on next year.

Thanks for the info about the Johar foam grips. I picked up a pair of their Rad Grip for \$5.95. What Johar model are you using, since my dealer only had these? The ones I got were marked JII-B, Street Grip-Grooved. Thanks again for all your information and help.

Please pass on to Tom Cardinali of somewhere in Vermont that another Vermonter

(me) would like to know how to contact him. Keep up the great work.

William S. Luring, Vermont

Dear Grant - Received your letter of 23 August re American Honda's tack toward "resolving" the ST1100 front wheel wobble. I must confess that my '92 ST wobbled on deceleration only once when I had a set of Metzlers on (33A front and 55A rear). I did send Mr. Carrara a letter regarding the drive shaft and pulse generator. Both of these items on my '92 ST needed work. The drive shaft damper case had an oil leak (it contains 1 oz. of w hypoid) and the pulse generator failed leaving only my 1 and 3 cylinders firing! I wrote Mr. Carrara about these problems and indicated my desire for a drive line as solid as a BMW and for a more "solidly" built bike.

A fellow HSTA'er here in NJ was very nearly launched into oblivion on his way to a spot in North Carolina this past June. He noticed a grinding sensation and MAJOR vibration. A dealer in Charlotte pulled his front wheel and the bearings and races fell out. I have replaced my front wheel bearings at 35,000 miles and feel safer about it.

We enjoy the ST newsletter here in Central NJ and ride our ST's like crazy. We just took a two day 1,000 mile trek to Mt. Washington in New Hampshire over the weekend of Aug 28 and 29th.

Jeff Rabenda, New Jersey

Please note the two enclosed photos, one of a new wheel and bearing, the other with 8,800 miles. The wheel change was necessary because of a bent rim in Mexico.

I was struck with the lack of grease in these wheels. At the same time I disassembled the steering head, the grease quantity and condition was the same as that in the used wheel.

On page 64 of *Sport Rider* Magazine, October 93 issue, is an article on the replacement of the stock ball bearing for tapered roller bearings in another Honda motorcycle.

I had 52,500 miles on a 1991 ST1100 and 22,500 on my 1993 ST1100 and have ridden on Sport Max, Avon 23, Metzler 33/55, Dunlop and Bridgestone O.E.M. Some wobble more than

other (Metzler 33) some less (Bridgestone O.E.M.) but all wobble before and after head grease and torque. Progressive or stock spring seem about the same with this condition. I have used only Honda recommended fork oil. The condition is more irritating and attention getting than adrenaline pumping. This was my comment to Honda Customer Relations on August 23rd, 93 in a phone follow-up to my card.

Charles Mourer, Washington

Dear Grant - The ST is running great. I hope they incorporate some of the changes discussed by ST owners in future editions of this motorcycle. Things like larger and sturdier steering head, wheel and swingarm bearings, a utility outlet installed on the inner 'grey' fairing. I have enclosed the letter Mr. Washington kindly sent me regarding the letter and your postcard I sent to Mr. Carrara. Hope it proves useful. I have tested the wobble on my ST, currently with Bridgestone tires, and at all the speeds I have tried there has been no wobble, knock wood. My dealer here in NJ has tightened the head bearings once and replaced the front wheel bearings at my request (and my \$\$\$). Though when I first replaced the OEM tires with Metzlers (33A and 55A's) I did experience the wobble at deceleration around 30-35 mph. Anyway, My main reason for writing you today is to ask for the address of Mr. Ron Major and/or the Iron Butt Association. I would like to find out more about this group who sound a little more mile intensive than even some in the HSTA! Well, I'm at 38,000+ and off to TN-STAR in Townsend, Tennessee this Friday the 24th of September with some fellow HSTA'ers. Maybe I'll come back over 40,000 and have something new (hopefully good) to report. Thanks again and planning my 10,000 mile 1994 circumnavigation of the USA!

Jeff Rabenda, New Jersey

Dear Grant - I was pleased with the second issue of the *ST1100 Newsletter*. The experience that others have had with the bike and accessories is useful. I also am glad that you switched to the 8 x 11 format since this facilitates keeping them in a notebook. I see that a lot of people are dissatisfied with the stock windshield. I have a problem with turbulent air

over the top of the shield but I believe that is caused by the shape end not the height. I do not want a shield so tall that I have to look through since I find that difficult in bad weather. (on one occasion snow froze it over completely and I had to try look around) I was very happy with the shield on my FJ 1100 Yamaha which was much shorter but the flow of air coming over the shield was smooth and did not buffet my helmet. Well different strokes for different folks

I have had one problem with the bike which is merely a nuisance but it puzzles me. On three occasions I tried to start the bike and found the electrics were dead (all lights and clock off). In each case I had ridden some distance and then let the bike set for a short time. These incidents were months apart and in each case cleaning the battery terminals cured the problem. The first time I took the bike in to the dealer and had him check the electric system without finding a problem. I have never had a problem like this with previous bikes wonder if anyone else has had a similar problem. I have not had the wobble as yet there but there has been some unsteadiness in the front end (a lot of bump steer). This is with a very worn front Metzeler on the bike. I am afraid that this may be a problem which is inherent with the design and that a real cure would slow the handling. (ie. more rake and trail) One writer (regarding other bikes) indicated that it was caused by the much wider front tires that are being used now. I know that some Gold Wings had similar problems and my FJ 1100 Yamaha also had the problem. Well good luck with the Newsletter.

Leonard Berkley, Ohio

Dear Grant- Thank you for your most informative newsletter. I've read it cover to cover several times. So much information! I am manufacturing a beautiful tank cover for the ST1100. It protects the "top shelter" (as described in the Honda Service Manual). It also has a velcro flap allowing access to the fuel tank. Black is the only color available at this time. Call Scott Dinger, Calif. at 619-689-1133 (w), or 619-457-7626 (h) after 5pm. Thank you and keep up the good work on your Newsletter. The publication reflects your dedication.

Scott D. Dinger, California

Dear Grant - I want you to know right up front that I writing to you about the ST's wobble instead of reading my newest "Motorcyclist". I noticed a small amount of head shake during deceleration when my bike was new. This was usually felt with only the right hand on the bar while passing through the 50 to 40 mph range. I complained to my dealer who then checked tire balance and reported that the balance was dead on. I lived with this condition, which never got worse, even when I changed the OEM Dunlop rear tire to the Honda recommended G548 Bridgestone.

During the same time, period my riding partner, a ST owner on his third rear tire, switched to Metzeler's ME33 Laser and ME55 Metronic. He started experiencing a more pronounced head shake as the front tire started to wear. He complained to the dealer who queried American Honda as to possible causes. They replied that the head shake was a result of engine harmonics. To prove their point they suggested the following:

Accelerate up to approximately 80 mph and carefully downshift, without engaging the clutch, into neutral. When in neutral, release the clutch lever, and let the bike coast through the normal head shake zone.

My friend and I both tried this and sure enough, no head shake. I was convinced until I replaced the Dunlop front tire with the Bridgestone G547 at 12,000 miles. My head shake problems disappeared, and didn't even resurface when I replaced the Bridgestone rear tire with a Metzler ME55. I decided to try radials on the ST after reading an article in the STARreview. I mounted Avon's ST22/ST23 at 30K and guess who's back. The symptoms first appeared during leisure acceleration, again through the 40 to 50 mph range. Now after 2,000 miles the symptoms are more noticeable during deceleration. I had the tire balance checked and the steering head bearings torqued, neither of which solved or even improved the problem. I'm convinced that the tread pattern on the front tire is a contributing

factor in this equation. The Bridgestone has a center groove and the tread pattern is angle less sharply than the Metzeler and Avon pattern. I guess the only way to prove it is to mount another set of Bridgestones, but I like the handling and stick of the Avons too much to switch back to bias belts. More than likely I will experiment with different brands of radials until I exhaust the possibilities. With the ST's odd rear tire size that shouldn't take too long.

I trust this will give you one other possibility to ponder. I need to tell you about the 109 miles of ol' Rt 666 between Clifton and Springerville, Arizona next time. Until then, keep those keystrokes flying, I anxiously await the arrival of the Fall '93 *ST1100 Newsletter*.

Paul R. Blood, Arizona

I received my complimentary issue of the newsletter a few days ago. Congratulations on a fine effort, and I wish you the best of luck with it. I am pleased to report that I took delivery of a new 93 ST1100 (red) yesterday. My initial riding impressions are that everything I have read or heard about the bike is true. One comment that I have NOT read is how tall the bike is geared, especially first gear. It took me a while to get used to this although the engine doesn't seem to care.

Ever get that sinking feeling after making a major purchase that the product you bought will, somehow, not live up to your expectations? That was certainly NOT the case with the ST, as I have not felt this good about a bike in a long time. I usually don't keep bikes very long, preferring instead to sell or trade them in on a newer model every year or two. After some twenty odd years of riding, this bike is the one to hang on to. I did keep my Concours for various sentimental reasons-plus the fact that it's a pretty decent mount.

Well, enough rambling. My main reason for writing was to comment on the unpleasanties you encountered under your valve covers and to offer a suggestion concerning the front tire wobble problem.

First the wobble. The Kawasaki Concours occasionally suffers from this malady as well. My front tire started wobbling between 30 and 40

MPH at about 12,000 miles. I was lucky—the fix was simply to tighten the steering head bearings with the special wrench which I ordered from Kawasaki. Others have not been so lucky.

A fix which I have read about for the Concours involves aligning the front end components with respect to the front brake discs:

1. Make sure that the steering head bearings are adjusted to the specifications called for in the service manual. Raise the front wheel by placing a jack or other sturdy item under the frame, towards the front (remove lower body panels first).

2. Using a large plastic tie wrap (which is a long, plastic strap with a ratcheting mechanism to prevent the strap from loosening—available at electronic parts stores), place the tie wrap around the front brake and throttle. Slip the pointed end of the tie wrap into the "buckle" end and pull it tight. This will effectively squeeze the brake lever and hold it as you proceed with the alignment.

3. With the brake lever secured with the tie wrap, loosen the triple clamp bolts securing the fork tubes as well as the bolts securing the front fender. Keep in mind that the fork tubes may try to slide out of the triple clamps, so you may have to block the front wheel up as well. Mark the tops of the fork tubes with a pencil to indicate their original position. Next, loosen the front axle nut. Recognize that nothing has to be removed—only loosened. **DO NOT LOOSEN THE BRAKE CALIPERS OR ANY OTHER BRAKE COMPONENTS!**

4. Torque the front axle nut first, then the triple clamps. Keeping the fender straight, tighten it last. Check and double check the tightness of all fasteners. Remove the tie wrap by cutting it. The theory behind all this is that, when the front brake is applied, the front end components will align themselves with respect to the front wheel when everything is loosened and then retightened. I have not tried this procedure, so I cannot guarantee that it works and whoever attempts this does so at his/her own risk.

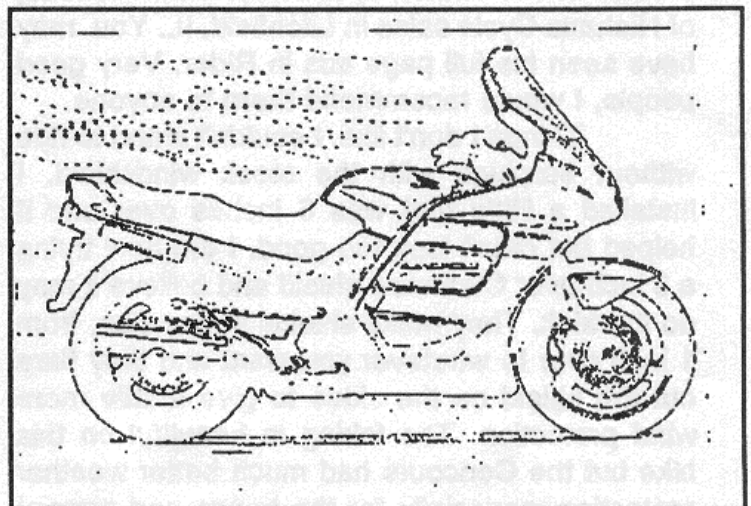
Regarding the nightmare you experienced with your stripped head bolts and poor service in general: It's disturbing to me that this problem exists not only in the Houston area, but in many other areas as well. I perceive it as

a nationwide problem not only in the motorcycle and automobile industries, but many other businesses as well. The state of customer service in this country, with a few exceptions, is just plain bad. Because of this, I have been forced to do all of my own out-of-warranty work with every bike I have ever owned. I have also had to double-check all warranty work. With my Concours, I have found: hoses left disconnected, components not properly torqued, parts left off, greasy fingerprints left on the paint and bodywork, etc.

The problem with buying a first-year model or a model that is not selling well is this: Plain and simple, the mechanic is learning on your bike. After purchasing my Concours, I vowed never again to buy a first-year model. Not only are the mechanics unfamiliar with the particulars of the bike, but it usually takes another year or two for the manufacturer to work the bugs out. Fortunately for ST owners, Honda seems to have gotten things right the first time.

My advice to riders is this: if you are lucky enough to find a quality shop, spread the word. Let other riders know where you have taken your bike and where you felt you received good service. Give that dealer all your business. When I bought my ST, I made it very clear to the salesman that the primary reason was buying my bike there was due to the service department, which I had previous dealings with. There are good shops out there.

Steve Wright, Texas



Mr. Norman - Thanks for sending the comp issue of ST1100 Newsletter. I have been a member of the Concours Owners Group for several years and was hoping someone would have a newsletter about the ST that had tech articles, etc. similar to the ones on the COG newsletter.

I had the misfortune of hitting a deer with my Concours in Nov. '92 which totalled the bike and broke my collarbone. In Dec 92 I bought a 93 ST110 ABS-TCS and have grown to like this bike very much. At first I missed the sporty feeling that the Concours gave me but other qualities of the ST have impressed me. I will expand on some of the questions in your application if I may.

Mechanical problems. During the first 800 miles I had an intermittent problem where the bike would not have good throttle response at low rpm's. The dealer checked it over and found some minor problems but that didn't correct it. It finally got to the point where after a 300 mile ride one day I came to a stop on an exit ramp and it wouldn't pull itself away from the stop, it would idle but didn't have enough power to pull itself. The dealer lived close to where I was and brought his trailer and towed me into the shop where they looked at it the next day and it ran fine. After two more occurrences like this they said they finally found a vacuum line elbow was pinched and when it got hot it would collapse. It was somewhere under the simulated tank and they said it went to the fuel valve. Since then I have put 5000 additional miles on it with no problems. The dealer, by the way, is Bill Niehaus, of Niehaus Cycle sales in Litchfield, IL. You may have seen his full page ads in Rider. Very good people, I would recommend them to anyone.

Things I don't like. I couldn't stand to ride without earplugs with the stock windshield. I installed a Rifle that was 6 inches over and it helped but didn't look too good. I am now trying a 3 inch over Clearview shield and believe it may do the trick. They make shields in any size, from 1 inch over to whatever you want and they flare out the shield on the sides to give a little more wind protection. The fairing is beautiful on this bike but the Concours had much better weather protection, especially for the hands and arms. I ride all year long whenever there is no snow or

ice on the road and miss the additional protection of the Concours fairing. The saddle bags are beautiful but flimsy compared to what I was used to. The hinges seem to be light duty and I frequently have trouble getting them closed when loaded, it seems like a little weight on the lid causes the hinges to bind. I have bent the bars back slightly, you can't do much bending and keep the plastic cover in place. I read in an ASTRA newsletter that some owners were installing bars from V65 Sabres and I might try that next.

Things I like. Love the ABS. It took some nerve to purposely try it out the first time but it was neat once I did. I have even practiced full lock stops on wet grass and it stops perfectly. When I say full lock I mean grabbing a hand and foot full of brake, of course it will not lock up. The bike handles well and is very comfortable for my wife and me. I have installed a J&M amp in the tail section for music from my walkman which I velcro to the plastic bar cover. I also have a radar override amp which beeps in my left helmet speaker whenever my detector goes off. I have the detector in the locking fairing pocket with a small toggle switch to turn it on mounted on the left fairing area above the dash pocket. I will soon upgrade to an intercom/cb setup and haven't decided whether to go with J&M or with Cycle Comm, either one is expensive.

One thing I have had to get used to is the sound the engine makes when you accelerate, it just doesn't sound like a sporting motorcycle. It's a good engine, just doesn't sound like it. I rode a new VFR 750 at the Daytona demo rides and some Honda people interviewed me about it and the new Magna I rode. I told them I would trade them engines, put the VFR 750 in my ST, man, that is one sporty engine. Maybe Honda will put a few more ponies in the ST but I doubt it.

Front end wobble. Haven't put that many miles on it yet, only about 7000 but I did have that problem with the Concours. It comes stock with Dunlop radials but had Metzlers on it when I bought it used with 18000 miles on it. It had a ME55 on the back and a Lazer on the front I would experience a wobble around 50 mph, usually in the morning before the tires warmed up. It was ok unless you took one hand off the bars. I tried everything mentioned in the COG Newsletter, progressive springs, exact

measurement of the oil in the forks, adjust steering head bearing and computer balance the wheel and tire. Nothing helped until I tried a new set of tires and put the OEM Dunlop radials on and the wobble was gone. I was on my second set of them when I wrecked it and never had anymore wobble, plus the radials stuck like glue and I got about 10000 miles out of the first set. I don't know if any radials are available for the ST but would like to try some.

I normally go to a lot of rallies, BMW rallies, etc where we pack all of our clothes, tent, etc and the 2 of us take off and have found the ST is perfect for this. Loaded with all our gear and 2 people it still handles very well and is a pleasure to ride, and if I turn the music up I can't hear that feeble engine sound, ha. I say I normally go to these because this year has not been normal. I am a supervisor at a power station and since May 20 I have been locked in at work due to a labor dispute. One day it will be over then look out, we'll be doing some touring somewhere warm.

I belong to a BMW club, the Springfield Milers and although I don't own one they do not discriminate and welcome sport tourers with all brands. I removed the Honda decals and put on some BMW tank emblems and have had a lot of fun fooling people, you'd be surprised how many thought it was one. I got tired of that so now I have put authentic Ferrari emblems on it, a Ferrari script on the back above the tail light, Testarossa on the tank and Quattrovalvole emblems on the fairing near the motor. I haven't had the opportunity to try them out due to the lockin but should have a lot of fun with them.

I have a Corbin seat also and after having them redo it we have found it to be comfortable and good looking. The way they normally make them wastes a lot of room at the back of the passenger bucket but we had them extend the seating area all the way back like the stock seat and it is fine now. It takes forever, (18 weeks) plus many phone calls to get them to redo the seat so I would advise ordering it that way when you purchase it. Well, that's about it. Good luck with the newsletter, it looks good. Let me know if I can contribute anything. Maybe I'll see you at a rally someday after I get out.

Fred Ziglar, Illinois

Dear Grant - Yes, I experienced front wheel wobble with my ST1100. It is cured. At 19,159 miles it was time to finally change the original front tire. It still had about 1/8" centerline tread left but the rear tire was ready for a change as well. I was embarking on a trip home to Toronto, Ontario and didn't want to run out of tread. Both tires were replaced. I decided to stay with the Dunlop 505s as I didn't experience any problems and I got decent mileage out of them. The trouble started after I returned to Florida (10 days and 3000 miles later).

One morning riding to work I noticed a slight wobble from the front tire as I decelerated to a stop from 50 mph. My hands were light on the grips for some reason. Anyways, I tried to duplicate the wobble and was very successful I held both grips very lightly and let the bike decelerate from 60 mph. From 45 down through 40 mph the front end wobbled like crazy. The wobble was also noticeable accelerating through 40-45 mph but was not near as bad as during deceleration. The wobbling was not noticeable with both hands firmly on the grips.

I decided not to fool with the wobble at all and took it to my local Honda dealer, Honda of Fort Walton Beach. After a couple of test rides and close inspection of the front end, they decided to change the relatively new front tire. The tire change stopped the wobble! I was told the tire might have had a defective "soft" sidewall. The wobble was more severe during deceleration than during acceleration because weight shifts forward as the bike decelerates. I've put about 500 miles on the bike since the second tire change and have no problems to report.

As a footnote, the week before the front tire wobble and subsequent tire change, the "new" rear tire was replaced. After I returned from my trip north I inspected the bike and discovered the rear tire had a 8" split in the center tread groove. There was no evidence of foreign object damage. I don't know how long I had been riding on the split tire, since the last time I inspected the tire was about 400 miles previous. Honda of Fort Walton Beach replaced the tire no questions asked and commented that it was the first one they had seen like that. I wish you success with the newsletter and look forward to reading it and perhaps contributing in the future.

Kent L. Malcolm, Florida

Dear Grant - Thank you for adding my name to your mailing list! This newsletter seems like a fantastic source of information for us crazies, and I look forward to reading it every quarter. Hopefully there will be enough interest generated to warrant more frequent issues, that is if that's something that you would be willing to do.

A fellow ST'er (Jeff Rabenda) and I rode from NJ to the races at Mid-Ohio on Saturday, and then rode home on Sunday - making the trip back in 8 1/2 hours. He and I ride together a lot, having made two trips out to CO, UT, SD, etc. from our homes in the Princeton area in the year that we have owned our ST's (mine a '91 new last July now with 20,000 miles, his a '92 purchased in April 92 now with 35,000 miles). As we always do during and after a little riding, we were extolling the virtues of the bike and the beauty of comfortably sustaining autobahn speeds for hours.

But after this ride, the talk turned to starting an ST1100 club of some sort. This is such a unique and exciting motorcycle that it sometimes becomes difficult to wax poetic to someone who has not had the opportunity to really ride the bike. Our concern, however, was that there were already so many organizations that ST'ers can belong to that we didn't know if the specialty would be necessary. It was especially relevant, then, to see your newsletter in the mail on Monday. If you have any interest or comments on the possibility (or necessity, for that matter) of organizing, please share them with me - I would be very willing to do all that I can to launch, organize, write for, spread the word of, or otherwise be involved in this kind of endeavor.

Thank so much for devoting your time and effort to the project, and hopefully we can all get together in the near future.

**Michael J. Flook, New Jersey
NJHSTA State Director**

Grant - This is to let you know that I was contacted today by a representative from Silvio Carrara's office concerning THE WOBBLE in response to your letter and my postcard. She asked me several questions relating to the problem and suggested that I make an appointment the week of the 13th of September

in order for them to determine what is the problem. She was very nice and fairly knowledgeable. She will be calling my dealer. This tells me that they don't have a clue about what is causing the problem and that they are finally getting into the data gathering mode they should have been in over 12 months ago. BUT, it certainly is a good sign. I have a feeling my dealer will blame the ME-33 and the ME-55a. He is excellent, but I'm the only ST1100 he has sold. He does a BIG business in Wings, F2's, and 900RR.

Volume 1 Number 2 of the Newsletter was fantastic. It was by no means too long. Although I am a mechanical zero, I enjoyed the how-to articles. Also, the product evaluations were what I needed.

The Honda representative called back and basically tried to convince me that I really only had the WOBBLE when I took my hands off the Handlebars and how that is not really something one should do. Also, she told me that all Honda products do this.- RIGHT.

Also she volunteered the information that most of the people they have called have decided that the WOBBLE really isn't a problem and people were thanking them for the interest. Well, that sometimes happens when a friendly sounding representative suggests that maybe you don't have the big picture and you are kind of a nice dumb ass for taking your hands off the handlebars even if you do feel a problem. Having once been an attorney, I recognize the tactic employed. I am not a happy camper. I suggested that perhaps she might be intimidating people on her call backs, I would still like my dealer to look into the problem.

If this is Honda's general reaction to the problem perhaps we should raise the ante. Maybe informing Honda that a dangerous condition exists that should be possibly be brought to the notice of the motorcycle and general press and possibly to governmental entities charged with the protection of the riding public. Well, only as a last resort - I love my ST1100 and think Honda generally is a good company. But, this tactic has me steamed. Maybe our HSTA officers, such as Moose, who own ST1100s could talk to Honda. The mention that this is a problem that could expose Honda to

all sorts of legal liability - particularly after they were notified - just might get someone's attention. Well, I've vented as they say. Just trying to keep you informed.

Wyatt Martin, North Carolina

Dear Readers - In response to all your great letters I'd like to first off all thank all of you for taking the time to write - I know it can be a time consuming effort (believe me, I know!) so I do appreciate all your comments and inquiries.

I do especially appreciate those readers with Concours in their backgrounds that have shed some light on some of the similar problems they had with that fine machine.

As for more information about me, as William Luring requested, I have not been riding that long again since I quit when I was a kid - my last bike being a 1969 Bultaco 250 Pursang. I rode a few other bikes occasionally over the years - once-in-a-great-while - but had really joined the ranks of 4 wheelers who thought street bikes were just too dangerous.

Then, in late 1988 I rode my brother's '81 Honda CBX and was once again hooked. I bought a used Honda CX650 Custom and proceeded to put 15,000 miles on it in a little over a year - then I added to the garage a Suzuki GS850, to which I added another 15,000 miles, and a Yamaha 535 Virago for the wife, then a Honda Spree I traded an old computer for, and a Yamaha MX50 - and then a Yamaha DT175 from a garage sale! Finally, on November 1, 1990 I bought what I feel has been the most unbelievably great bike ever - my ST1100. Since then, all the other bikes have gone except my Yamaha MX50 (for the kids).

My background is a Degree in English, concentrating in Writing (isn't that a coincidence) and I'm now 44 with a wonderful wife and 2 kids, 11 and 13. For money, I work as an independent software developer, developing data base software with Microsoft's Foxpro products. I also market my own commercial software for decorative products businesses that manages carpet samples, fabric samples, and area rugs. I am currently also on a part-time contract with another Houston software company developing

commercial software for health clubs, access control, file and record tracking systems.

My favorite ride is the Blue Ridge Parkway, which I rode 3 times in 11 months a year ago. I also enjoy riding the Texas Hill country southwest of San Antonio and Northwest of Austin.

As for the ideas of us getting together to ride - I have no problem ever trying to find an excuse to ride - rain - shine - cold - whatever. As for forming an ST1100 Club - I like the idea, but at the same time, I'm not sure what a club could add that could not be supplied maybe even better from HSTA, ASTRA, or other clubs in your area. I have frequently thought of forming a club and have seriously considered talking to the CBX Owners club about maybe tagging on to some of their events. If enough of you out there like the ST1100 Owners Club idea I'll see what I can do. Michael Flook, a State Director for HSTA has already volunteered to help form a club...so let me know.

Well, as this issue once again fills 28 pages, I once again am grateful for all the interest in the Newsletter. I hope you enjoy it and I would especially like to thank our contributors Russ Madsen, Martin Hildebrandt, and the prolific Rock Rhoades! I hope to see more from them and the rest of you.

Grant Norman, Publisher

Reader Classified

FOR SALE

Custom Luggage racks for ST1100's

Tim Vipond - (713) 565-0530

James Smith - (619) 669-4875

Tank Covers

Scott Dinger - (619) 689-1133 (w)

(619) 457-7626 (h)

FOR TRADE

Rifle Smoked 22" ST1100 Windscreen

Will trade for Stock ST1100 Windscreen or Stock ST1100 Seat

Grant Norman - (713) 463-3794

A MORE ACCURATE FUEL GAUGE

By Rock Rhoades, Texas

It had always bugged me that the ST's fuel gauge didn't move for the first 100 miles, took a nose-dive the next hundred, then sat on the peg for the last 50-80 miles. To make matters worse, the low-fuel light came on with 50 miles still left to go. I finally decided to seek relief.

First, I went to my Honda dealer and bought replacements for the two fuel tank gaskets (about \$7 total). I then ran the bike down well into reserve, so there would be no more than 1/2 gallon of fuel in the tank. Then I started taking things apart.

I'll start this by giving two caveats: 1) except for fuel pump replacement, none of this is in the service manual. Having made adjustments to the fuel gauges on a couple of quadracycles, I felt I could stumble through this, but I do NOT recommend you try to accomplish this procedure unless you are willing and able to live with your own work. 2) If you decide to try this, be even more meticulous about your work than usual, not only because you are opening the fuel tank to damage and contamination, but because the even the slightest stray spark can HURT YOU.

The fuel tank is easier to remove than I expected. Remove the same panels and stuff you'd pull to change the air filter, remove the air filter and its housing, disconnect four electrical connectors and one fuel line, remove the four bolts holding the tank, and viola! Pour out the remaining fuel into a

suitable container, and remove the fuel pump assembly per the service manual.

Now look down at the fuel sensor float, and see where it is in relation to the bottom of the tank (use an explosion-proof flashlight, like a Maglight). If it's like mine, it's hanging about an inch off the floor.

To adjust it, first remove the sensor housing. It's held in by a circular retainer, but can be removed by a small drift and some patience. Re-bend the supporting wire, trying to confine your adjustments to the two existing bends. Go a little at a time, taking care not to stress the wire (no sharp kinks), and frequently check your progress by reinstalling the float and checking its distance from the floor. The goal is for the wire to hit the bottom stop on its mount at the same time that the float hits the bottom of the tank. During the repetitive bending and checking, you needn't secure the sensor housing into the tank; merely hold it firmly in place while you check it, making sure that it is indexed into the alignment notch.

When you're finished, hold the sensor housing in place, reach through the other hole, and move the float through its full travel, insuring that it doesn't contact the front of the tank at any point in its movement. If it does, it's back to the bend and try process. When you've got it as good as you can get it, reinstall it into the tank with a new gasket. I'll warn you that it's difficult to get that circular retainer started when you're fighting the thickness of a new gasket. Again, patience is the key.

Now you can shift your attention to the low-fuel light. Look on the fuel pump

support, near the bottom. See that silver thing about the size and shape of one of those itty-bitty picnic salt shakers, with a wire? That's the low-fuel sensor. It's attached to the support with two tiny Phillips screws that go through the support from the back. There's enough slack in the wire to mount it further down on the support. All you have to do is remove the screws, mark a new location for the screw holes, and drill new holes. I moved mine down about 3/4". When you're finished drilling, make sure no debris is left on the support and pump assembly (a magnet comes in handy).

It's done. Reinstall the fuel pump per the service manual, put the bike back together, and put some gas back in the tank.

My fuel gauge still doesn't move for the first 70 miles, but from there it's a linear run down to empty, which corresponds to the lower peg on the gauge. The low-fuel light now comes on at a more reasonable 25 miles to go, as the gauge gets to the lower part of the red zone. A two-hour, seven-dollar investment kills another pet peeve!

TWEAKS

By Rock Rhoades, Texas

Maybe it's just my ego, but I think I have some useful information, opinions, and experiences for some of you other ST riders out there. Part of that is because I've compressed the learning curve; my 17-month-old ST has 36,000 miles on it. Part is because I'm such a motorcycle freak that I study and experiment more than most. Part is because I take fuller advantage of the ST's capabilities than most (Todd

Nunnally thinks I should donate my bike back to Honda's R&D department as an example of a thoroughly-thrashed ST). Part is because my background as an aircraft maintenance officer and test pilot keeps me technically oriented.

The ST suits my riding style and riding mix (commuting, trips, corner-carving). Several other bikes can out-perform it in any one of these categories, but fall flat in another. And I know of NO other bike that will perform as well in the twisties when riding two up.

The ST, however, is not entirely perfect. In a sense, though, that's good, because it leaves enough room for a little personalization without resorting to chrome pieces and other nonfunctional geegaws.

Some subjects are long enough to warrant their own article. Like my headlight conversion article that's already been printed. Or tires. Or stereo/CB/intercom installation and the related problems and concerns with electromagnetic interference. Or my built-into-the-dash radar detector. I'll skip those more involved subjects for now, and write separate articles later.

Anyway, for what it's worth, here are some of my thoughts on the best sport-touring motorcycle ever built, what I've done to address some of its shortcomings, and what I've done just to make the bike a little better for ME.

Encapsulated: I commute year-round in any and all weather, not to mention trips, so fairing coverage means a lot to me. My Concours with a 22" Rifle had MUCH better wind and weather protection. The ST has worse hand, leg,

and outer arm protection, but I can't improve it, so I have focused on upper body protection. At 6'1" I was up in a very noisy, turbulent area behind the ST's stock screen. I tried a 20" Rifle, but still had a little buffeting at the top of my helmet, so I exchanged it for the 22" height. Perfect height for me (my line of sight is about 2" above the screen) and good wind control, but still pretty noisy. I finally tried Saeng's Stealth Edging. I can't tell that it increased the size of the still air pocket, but it made the cockpit MUCH quieter. With an aviation background, I'm more sensitive than most to the need for hearing protection, but with this screen/edging combination, I quit wearing earplugs.

Deep breathing: Instead of paying \$60 every 12,000 miles for a Honda paper air filter, I bought a K&N cleanable, oiled-foam filter for \$40. Money well spent.

The other filter: Emgo, although virtually unknown here, is a respected performance product name in Europe. You can get their oil filters for the ST for about \$4 from (are you ready for this?) J. C. Whitney!

Binders: I'm running Galfer (another big name in Europe) front brake pads. They specialize in Kevlar pads (in fact, they made Kevlar pads before anyone else). They work so well that, until you get used to their lighter touch, the initial contact with the rotors will cause an abrupt jerk. This is especially good considering that they are not noticeably creating wear on the rotors. I do NOT recommend these pads unless you are an aggressive, experienced rider, because they make locking the front tire, even at high speed, too easy to do, even

with only one finger. Unless you have a smooth hand and a cool head, they can get you in trouble. The only negative comments I have are that when I was installing them I had to slightly enlarge the locating pin holes with a file for them to fit properly, and when braking they have an audible hiss. I've got EBCs on the rear, because I didn't want it as touchy; I can't tell any difference in performance between the EBCs and the stock Honda pads.

Buzzwords: The ST's often-mentioned 4,000-rpm vibration can be significantly reduced by getting the carburetor synchronization spot-on. Not within 1" of vacuum, like the service manual says, but PERFECT. Thankfully, the ST holds its carb synch almost forever.

The not-so-loud button: Stock horn is lame. I got a plated (corrosion-resistant), low-tone, 130-decibel unit from (again) J. C. Whitney, and mounted it behind the lower fairing grill, just below and forward of the clutch slave cylinder, and added an automotive-style relay in the fairing above the stock horn. The horn button simply triggers the relay, which powers both the stock and aftermarket horns. Now my scooter has a big sedan's two-tone sound.

Haulin': I have a Hein-Gericke luggage rack that I bought in Europe for my Concours. When I got the ST, I just had the bolt tabs heated and bent to match the ST mount holes.

Cheap insurance: I wanted to install a hidden anti-theft switch, but instead of putting it in series in the ignition circuit, which is easily hot-wired around, I took advantage of a suggestion in the Street-Wise section of Motorcyclist

magazine and wired it into the kickstand interlock circuit. With the switch off, the bike can be started, but will die when put in gear. Would this frustrate a thief, or what? Just make sure to use a weatherproof switch, or the contacts will corrode and it's YOU who'll be frustrated.

Cruisin': The only thing I'd like to see for the ST that you just can't find anywhere is an automotive-style electronic cruise control. I avoid the interstates like the plague, but when you do need to drone, a cruise control is invaluable. The vacuum actuator on car units is simply too huge to consider adapting to a bike. Instead, I've got the simple but effective VistaCruise throttle lock.

Oh, deer: I found black plastic deer whistles to match the bike, and mounted them under the mirrors. They're not noticeable, but they're out where they need to be. Of course, they're really a case of closing the barn door after the horse is gone; I only got the chance to get my ST because I totalled my Concours on a deer.

Miscellaneous mods: Larger-than-stock handgrips for my oversize paws. A power connector for an electric vest. A new-style left fairing pocket cover ('91 models had a different material that would get brittle in winter and melt in summer). Hondaline kneepads, because my long legs and Aerostich suit were wearing the paint away. A small "letter clip" on the left fairing to hold (you guessed it) letters (on the way out the driveway to the mailbox). I had bag liners left over from my Concours, so I just modified them to fit, though they are a bit bulky for the ST's bags. I had a compass and temperature gauge on the

fairing below the headlight adjustment knob, but recently removed them because they were more form than function (I'm still looking for useable replacements).

Dream on: Other mods I want to make (waiting on money, of course) include a backrest for Linda, an integrated stereo and CB, a more comfortable saddle (Linda's likes her half, but I get buttburn after a full day of riding), and maybe a tank bra.

The other shoe: My ST has been the most bulletproof motorcycle I have ever owned – just feed it tires, service it once every bazillion miles, and ride, ride, ride. That is NOT to say, however, that it's been entirely flawless. I've had three fairing panels replaced so far for blistering and peeling paint. This is a known problem with the black STs, and the replacement panels now supposedly get a better surface preparation prior to painting. We'll see. The only other warranty claim I've made is on the front wheel bearings, which gave up the ghost at only 36,000 miles. Except for when I have run Michelin or Metzeler front tires, I haven't had significant headshake problems, which is surprising considering that those wheel bearings have been on their way out for about the last 3,000 miles. I don't know yet if this is a case of dry-from-the-factory bearings that I've heard about in the ST1100 Newsletter; I'm currently waiting on the bearings to arrive, and haven't taken the wheel apart yet.

Stray thought: I mentioned headshake on the ST...when I buy any new motorcycle, I retorque the steering stem bearings after about 1000–1500 miles. Retorquing isn't required in the

factory manuals, only checking for play, but I've always considered it routine maintenance to take up the slack created after the bearing "settles in." From that point, I only retorque it as needed, which normally means every 40,000-60,000 miles. This significantly reduces any bike's tendency to shake its head.

Whatever else you may do to personalize or modify your ST, be sure to correctly install AND HEED the sticker on the windscreen that says "This side up!"

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