

FIRST RIDES

MV AGUSTA F4RR ★ HARLEY-DAVIDSON NIGHT ROD ★ BETA 290 EVO

MOTORCYCLIST

MV AGUSTA F4RR »

SPECIAL ADVENTURE-TOURING ISSUE

4 WAYS TO ADVENTURE

450 ★ 650 ★ 800 ★ 1200

WHICH ONE'S RIGHT FOR YOU?



◀ BMW G650GS

BMW R1200GS ADVENTURE »

◀ BMW F800GS

HUSQVARNA TE449 »

PLUS

motorcyclistonline.com

**FIRST LOOK: 2012 DUCATI 1199 PANIGALE SUPERBIKE
UP TO SPEED: LIQUID-COOLED BMW R1200GS SPIED!
EURO NOTES: REMEMBERING CLAUDIO CASTIGLIONI
CHECKERS: JOSH HAYES, AMA SUPERBIKE CHAMPION**

27 DAYS
JOE GRESH ON THE
TRANS-AMERICA TRAIL

MOOSE GLIDE
JACK LEWIS ON THE
ALCAN HIGHWAY



DECEMBER 2011

\$4.99



A SOURCE INTERLINK MEDIA PUBLICATION

DOIN' TIME



PHOTOS: Joe Nerlic

HONDA VFR1200F

WRIST: Marty Estes
MSRP (2010): \$15,999
MILES: 7123
MPG: 36

MODS: Akrapovic slip-on, K&N oil and air filters, Continental tires, Helibars clip-ons



I've logged 3,500 miles since my last update, and I'm happy to report that a fair number of those were purely for entertainment. Every year when MotoGP comes to California I join up with a group of friends and take the long, scenic route from Los Angeles to Monterey. Prior to the annual pilgrimage I asked *Motorcyclist* wrench jockey Michael Candrea to perform an oil change and tire swap so the Honda would be ready for the outing. Michael installed a K&N oil filter (\$13.99; www.knfilters.com) and filled the crankcase with Maxima Premium4 oil (\$7.97 per liter; www.maxlmausa.com). The stock Dunlop

Roadsmarts were cooked at 4000 miles, so fresh Continental Road Attack 2 tires (\$155.00 front, \$210.00 rear; www.conti-online.com) were spooned on as well. The Conti's are advertised as a sport-touring tire, but the European definition of sport touring entails much more sport than touring. The grip and handling of the RA2s is a step above the stock rubber, but lifespan probably won't be as good—especially after the route we took to and from Monterey! The twists and turns of Highway 33, 58 and the legendary Pacific Coast Highway put a hurt on the Road Attacks, and with 3200 miles on them the rear is starting to look worn. At least it's worn evenly from edge to edge...

The VFR's exotic engine configuration is much more apparent now thanks to an exhaust upgrade. Akrapovic's high-mount titanium slip-on (\$974.95; www.akrapovic.com) sounds fantastic and cut 6.1 pounds from the Viffer's backside. In conjunction with a high-flow K&N air filter (\$62.50), the free-flowing muffler added 7.4 peak horsepower as verified by our SuperFlow dynamometer. In the open configuration, the Slovenian-made pipe produces a very unique sound without being obnoxious. With the noise-reducing



The Akrapovic titanium slip-on is spendy, but the construction is flawless and the pipe unlocked significant horsepower. The unit retains the factory exhaust valve.



The Viffer's cockpit was a little tight for my 6'2" frame. Adding Helibars' elevated clip-ons resolved my comfort issues. The bars are a must-do mod for taller riders.

insert in place the pipe still nets 5.7 bhp, with much less noise. After installing the exhaust I initially had issues with the accessory center stand dragging at full lean. Removing the rubber bumper from the stand let it rest higher, eliminating the ground clearance issue.

The trip to Monterey was properly sporty, but for around town and longer, straighter routes I find the VFR's stock ergos a little too aggressive. Helibars has been making alternative handlebars for decades, and a set of their hi-rise clip-ons for the VFR (\$289.00; www.helibars.com) move the grips 2 inches up and 1 inch back with less of a downward angle. The VFR was apparently a difficult bike to engineer, as there is a very limited amount of clearance between the gas tank and windscreen at full lock. Kudos to Heli Modified for making the bars fit, and for providing excellent instructions with their product. After installing the bars the riding position is still sporty but far more comfortable than the stock setup. With less reach to the bars I can sit farther back on the seat, which has made life easier for my back, neck and shoulders. **MC**