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SPORT SPORT-TOURING

PROJECT GSX-R750: MAKING A HYPERSPORT COMFORTABLE.

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PHOTO BY JERRY PHIM

Who says sportbikes aren't comfortable? OK, maybe off the showroom floor they'll get some muscles sore, but there are a few quick and simple ways to ease those muscles and still enjoy touring, yes touring, on a sportbike. As more and more sport-touring motorcycles get bigger and bigger (the Yamaha FJR1300 and 2008 Kawasaki Concours 1400 come immediately to mind), we here at *Rider* decided to bring as much practicality and comfort into a much smaller package. Our weapon of choice: a 2007 Suzuki GSX-R750. Why the 750? For starters, its narrow dimensions, light weight and capable engine create the perfect platform upon which to build. We didn't choose the new GSX-R1000—which we bill as having excellent sport-touring potential just a few pages back—because, in the end, it's still heavier and not as nimble as its little brother. Besides, who needs 160 horses on the street anyway? With that said, here are just a few ways to bring out the inner tourer in your sportbike.



A F T E R



1. The TracStars are Helibar's gift to wrists.
2. These steel brakelines give positive and consistent feel at the lever time after time.
3. The Laminar Lip bolts on in minutes and works well.
4. The Taylormade exhaust looks great and won't wake the neighbors. Note the adjustable footpegs.



- 5 and 6: Dowco's Fastrax luggage makes touring with a sportbike a reality and the tankbag's optional hydration bladder will quench your thirst on the road.



Here's some good news. One modification that can be made is to the footrests, and it's free—at least on the GSX-R. On this bike the stock footrests are adjustable and can slot into three different positions. Set them to the lowest setting and allow yourself to stretch a little. If your bike doesn't have this option, the aftermarket may have alternatives such as lowering kits to suit your needs. Plan to spend around \$200-\$600 for a kit, depending on the bike.

To create a more comfortable, upright seating position, changing out the stock clip-on handlebars was in order, so we made a call to our pals at Heli-Modified (www.helibars.com) to order a set of its TracStar HeliBars (\$269). The TracStars are 2 inches taller than the stock clip-ons

and 1 inch more rearward, which puts significantly less weight on the wrists. The best part is that it retains all the stock cables and lines and doesn't require any modifications to the bike. After putting some miles on the GSX-R750 with these bars, the only thing we wished for was that we had discovered them earlier!

Wind protection on a sportbike is designed to work best in a full racer tuck, and unfortunately touring windscreens for sportbikes are becoming an endangered species. Hope is not lost, though, as Laminar (www.laminarlip.com) produces its Laminar Lip for many of today's popular motorcycles, not just sportbikes. The Lip for the GSX-R750 (\$79) requires just four provided screws, installs in minutes and works well in diverting air up and over your helmet instead of at your chest like the stock screen.

You can't go sport touring without soft luggage, and Dowco (www.dowcopowersports.com) has that angle covered with its new Fastrax luggage system designed specifically for sport and adventure bikes. The tankbag (\$119.99), tailbag (\$109.99) and saddlebags (\$169.99) are made from tough Cordura material and feature waterproof zippers. Together they provide up to 19 gallons of storage space, with numerous pockets here and there for smaller items such as cell phones and MP3 players. A pocket for an optional hydration bladder is also included.

Stock rubber brake lines have a tendency to flex under hard or continuous braking, creating a mushy and unsettling feeling at the lever. These Goodridge (www.goodridge.net/usa) stainless-steel braided Teflon lines (price varies) won't flex, helping to deliver a positive feel at the lever and pedal every time. Sure, it may not be a touring item, but better brake feel is always welcome no matter what you ride.

The last item isn't particularly necessary for sport touring, but considering the number of people who change the mufflers on their bikes we thought we'd include an aftermarket unit for our bike as well. Besides, the stock unit on our bike is ugly and heavy anyway. This \$695 Taylormade (www.racetaylormade.com) street exhaust is 10 pounds lighter than the stocker, frees up some ponies and plain looks great! It is louder than the stock unit, but only marginally, so the likelihood of waking the neighbors on Saturday morning is lower.

These are just a few of the bolt-ons we've found so far in our attempt to create a well-rounded sport sport-touring machine from a hypersport like the GSX-R750. Stay tuned, we'll chronicle future updates as we find them. ☞