

HARLEY-DAVIDSON XR1200

Words: *BILL HUNTER*

At last my dream has come true. That horrible 18-inch front wheel has gone, hurrah! The original items have now been replaced by a set of the best wheels in the world. The rims are made right here in South Africa, the factory situated just around the corner from our office, which is handy. BST (Blackstone Tek) is the company, and its products grace racing grids at MotoGP and WSBK.

The main reason for discarding the 18-inch front on the XR is to fit a 17-inch version like all the race teams do in Europe. Now I can fit 'proper' tyres, which in my case means the new and all conquering Metzeler Racetec Interact which go for about R3,500 a pair. I've always been the biggest fan of Metzeler, ever since using them on my championship winning drag bikes in the past. This rubber has also cleaned up in this year's national superbike championship, so they're sticky overkill for me and the Harley. How long will they last on the heavy ol' Harley? Don't know, don't care, I just want their astounding grip.

But nothing is as astounding as the effect these BST 100% carbon fibre wheels have had on my bike. Nothing. Short of inventing warp drive, I've just peaked in the development of the XR. Actually, amazing is an understatement, I can't believe what a 'simple' wheel can do to the performance of a motorcycle.

The weight saving over the original wheels is equally as dramatic; we're talking 70% less rotating mass here! Imagine putting three two-kilogram bags of sugar in a sock and swinging them around your head, they will pull you off your feet. Well I've lost that on both front and rear, possibly more. At least 12-14kg off the wheels is an incredible result, no?

The BST wheels are also four times stronger than a steel version with hardly any weight around the important rim area; it's all in the aluminium hubs, centralizing the rotating

mass.

They aren't cheap though, retailing for R29,500, which includes everything needed for a quick swap. But put it all into perspective, certain Italian magnesium wheels imported into SA are nearly double that. And some fancy full titanium race pipes can now cost R30,000 or more. If you want the best, then as always, it will cost.

The XR1200 now feels more like a 650 Supermotard bike to ride. It changes direction with just a drop of either wrist and the acceleration and braking is also better off for the rim change. And just look at them, what works of art they are.

Gorilla Zilla is the SA distributor for BST so give them a call today (011 462 8419) and give your bike, or any bike, as they can be adapted to fit anything, the best present you could possibly give it. Let me tell you, proudly South African takes on a whole different meaning with BST wheels...■



Flawless construction, extremely pretty and incredibly strong. BST carbon wheels.