

RICK MAYER CYCLE SADDLE

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Reprinted courtesy of
Backroads Motorcycle Magazine

Few things compare to the satisfaction of taking something that looks like every other one coming off the assembly line and making it 'yours.' Customizing a motorcycle is as old as, well, the motorcycle itself. Few riders are content to simply take the bike from the dealer and keep it that way for the rest of its life. Your motorcycle is like an empty canvas, waiting to be formed. From little things like changing the grips to complete rebuilds, individuality is key. Thus my attempt to personalize my BMW R1150R. I added a fairing, pinstriping and a few assorted touches, but the biggest, and most necessary change made was to the saddle. Now, BMW makes a fine machine but their Germany technology just hasn't gotten the seat thing down yet. Known for being long distance motorcycles, you really wouldn't want to be doing hundreds of miles a day, let alone thousands for you Ironbutters, on a stock seat. Enter Rick Mayer.

At last year's BMW National rally in West Virginia, while perusing the vast vendor's offerings, I came upon Mr. Mayer's booth. Sitting out front was his own motorcycle, complete with custom saddle. Encouraging folks to 'take a seat', I waited patiently my turn and hopped aboard. Granted, it was just a brief sit-down, but I could immediately feel the comfort pouring from the stitches. I decided on a solo seat made of tan leather with blue and yellow piping. A deposit was given and off I went, happy in the knowledge I would soon be saddle sore no more.

The process began. I was emailed a production date. At that point, since I had chosen to send my stock seat for the pan to be used, I planned on it being done



while on the road and not in need of my bike. Rick asks that you send along some photos of you on the bike, in your riding position with feet on pegs, and with your passenger if you are ordering a dual seat. This gives him valuable information such as leg, back and arm relationships.

The saddle showed up at my door one day, about a month or so later, in the middle of November, and off I went to reunite it with the bike. Popping it on, it fit and looked beautiful. The bike and I went out for a quick spin just to get the feel of the new saddle. Although a bit slippery at first, it immediately felt comfortable.

I had chosen leather because it offered the colors I wanted, but was told that it also breathes better than vinyl, and, over time, conforms better to your anatomy (butt imprint). Although needing a bit more care, such as being aware to not leave it in the rain without a cover for long periods of time and waterproofing it a couple of times a year, over time I believe it to be the better choice. Finally being able to put some long miles on the bike, it was

overwhelmingly apparent that this custom saddle would make my riding life much better. Having to make a couple hundred mile dash on interstates one day, there was no fidgeting to be found. My body found its 'happy place', probably just where Rick designed it to be, as he hand-crafts each saddle specifically to your bike, your dimensions and your riding style. He uses multiple densities in the saddle, with the individual pieces bonded so that they will not separate. This is different from the single density molded cookie cutter forms utilized by other manufacturers. In addition, Dacron thread is used in the stitching. While cotton thread may wick moisture into the underlaying material, Dacron, a water repellent material, will not. To further improve the water resistancy, a latex cement is applied to marry the underlaying materials with the cover.

I've had other custom seats on my rides and, while being a definite improvement over stock, do not compare to the comfort and individual molding of a Rick Mayer saddle. Mr. Mayer is so

confident in his craftsmanship that he'll guarantee your comfort or buy the saddle back from you. As with all things, you get what you pay for. My solo saddle, made of leather with leather piping, set me back \$434, including shipping. This was more than the normal prices because it was further customized. Normal pricing starts at \$249 for solo vinyl, with the rear portion of piece seats recovered to match front, \$349 for solo leather, \$299 for dual vinyl and \$399 for dual leather. There are extra costs for specific styles, as with all custom items.

All in all, I'm sure that over the next several years my saddle and I will form a lasting relationship, sort of like that old pillow that you just can't give up. I thank Rick Mayer for making my BMW a true long distance riding machine and look forward to doing just that, riding long and far, discovering new places in comfort.

You can find out all about Rick Mayer saddles by pointing your internet finger to www.rickmayercycle.com, calling 866-357-BUTT or writing 5778 Heavenly Valley Lane, Anderson CA 96007.