FIRST RIDES

APRILIA TUONO V4R ★ HONDA CROSSRUNNER & CBR600F ★ KTM 350 EXC-F

MOTORCYCLIST

motorcyclistonline.com

QUARTER-LEADERS

THREE 250cc SPORTBIKES THAT PROVE LESS IS MORE!

» HONDA CBR250R
» HYOSUNG GT250R
» KAWASAKI NINJA 250R

ALL UNDER $4K!

JULY 2011

STREETBIKE SURGERY
$1500 KAWASAKI NINJA 250R

A SOURCE INTERLINK MEDIA PUBLICATION

ANSWERS

WORDS: Tim Carrithers
PHOTOS: Aerostich, BMW, Triumph

GOT A QUESTION FOR ANSWERS?
SEND IT TO MCMAIL@SORC.COM

ASK THE PRO

INVISIBLE, MAN

Q: I've been riding my trusty Honda 919 to work and leaving my Ford F150 in the garage since the price of unleaded cracked $4 per gallon. Averaging 42 mpg is great, but sometimes it feels like I'm invisible out there. What should I be doing and/or wearing to help the average dim-bulb driver actually see me?
Derek Laufer
Corpus Cristi, TX

A: *For starters, wear white or brightly colored gear. Motorcycle Safety Foundation Vice President Rob Gladden says feeling invisible is a good thing if it reminds you to ride like you're invisible. Never assume the driver of another vehicle sees you. Beyond that, wearing black is a bad idea. "According to a study from New Zealand, wearing a white helmet was associated with a 24 percent reduction in risk. Keeping your headlight on and aimed correctly is very important as well. There's been some discussion about high-beam vs. low-beam because the high-beam can obscure your front turn signals. A headlight modulator can increase your conspicuity if using one is legal where you live."*

Where you are on the road is important as well. "Think about your lane position," Gladden says. "Don't hang out in someone else's blind spot. If you're riding alongside another vehicle, don't ride at their four o'clock or their eight o'clock. Make sure you're in their line of sight. Put yourself in the driver's seat of the cars around you and think about what you can do to make yourself more visible."

Play what Gladden calls the What-If Game, as in, What if that dilapidated '68 Olds Toronado cuts across my bow? "It keeps you scanning the riding environment, always keeping an exit route, or two, or three. It also keeps you actively engaged in riding. It's easy to start thinking about what's for dinner or what you're going to do when you get home while you're humming down the freeway. Playing What-If keeps your head in the game."

If you haven't been riding regularly, Gladden says the MSF's online Rider Perception Challenge (www.msf-usa.org/riderperception) can help you learn to recognize virtual danger sitting in front of your computer, making it easier to avoid real trouble on an actual motorcycle.

FAQ

MAGIC CAN-BUS

Q: What exactly is a CAN-bus system? I know it has something to do with getting electricity from one part of the motorcycle to another, but how does this arrangement differ from the wiring harnesses we all know and love?

A: *It's basically a digital answer to the same old analog question. Once upon a time, the wires, diodes, switches and such of that loveable wiring harness were all you needed to power and control a relatively humble list of electrical chores. Managing a modern motorcycle's explosion of onboard computers requires something considerably more sophisticated. Enter the CAN-bus system. Developed for all manner of industrial applications and perfected by Bosch nearly 30 years ago, it orchestrates all your digital acronyms—anti-lock brakes, traction control, engine management and the like—along with all the other electrics, without running miles of wire all over the chassis.*
Using what's called a Controller Area Network protocol—the CAN—and a differential cable arrangement—a.k.a. the bus—such systems let a bike's various computers talk to one another and share information quickly and efficiently. Built-in diagnostics make it easier to troubleshoot as well. On top of that, improvements or options that might have required a whole new wiring harness in the past plug right in. That cranky old wiring harness doesn't seem quite so loveable now, does it?