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Shop Talk

By Dan

GETTING READY FOR SPRING

As I was sitting on my motorcycle in the garage looking out at the snow I decided that because I couldn't ride I should at least get my bike ready for spring. Wow, it's hard to believe that we just celebrated the New Year and spring is just around the corner. Let's review what needs to be done so that when the weather allows it we can just start up and ride.

1. If you removed the battery from your bike in the fall, make sure it's charged, clean the battery terminals and reinstall it in the bike. If you left it in the bike charge it up and clean the battery terminals. If you have a battery tender then this part is already done.
2. Check the tire pressures and inspect the tires for wear or punctures. The proper tire pressure is written on a sticker on the left side swing arm of your bike.
3. If your motorcycle is chain driven clean the chain with a rag and a low flash point solvent (varsol). Lubricate the chain and adjust it as per your manual. Most people tend to over tighten their chain. Remember that as the rear suspension moves up over bumps it also moves back and if the chain is too tight the chain pulls up right on the sprockets. This is the most common reason for broken and stretched chains.
4. Check the operation of the headlamp, turn signals, brake light, and horn. Try both the front and rear brakes and check the clutch free play.
5. If you did not do so in the fall, now is a good time to change the oil & filter. Oil will absorb some moisture over the winter and if it was dirty it will turn acidic. Be sure to use oil specifically designed for motorcycles. This oil also runs in the transmission and clutch and has special additives to protect them.
6. I like to give my motorcycle a good cleaning at this point. Inspect your bike for loose bolts or parts and any fluid leaks. Heavy areas of grease from chain oil or road grime can be removed with a degreaser but be very cautious with high pressure washers. Do not spray them directly on electrical areas or wheel bearings.
7. Now clean your boots and jacket with leather conditioner and sit back and wait for the weather to clear up.