

ZTechnik Z7101 Stainless Steel Engine Guards

●●●●● review by Moshe K. Levy

IN FARKLING OUR new 2009 BMW R1200RT test mule, we decided to add more fortification to the valve covers than offered by the ubiquitous plastic protectors we've all seen on R-Series boxer twins. Our search led us to ZTechnik's new Z7101 model Stainless Steel Engine Guards, which fit not only the RT, but the entire R1200 line, including the GS, ST, and R models. MSRP for the Z7101 model guards is \$289.95.

At first glance, the Z7101's beefy 1" stainless steel tubing certainly implies much more strength in a low-speed spill or tipover than either the plastic- or rubber- type valve cover guards. Indeed, we measured the guard's heavy-gauge tubing walls at a robust 2.4mm thick.

We followed the comprehensive instructions included with the kit, and installation was a snap, using commonly available hand tools. Two M6 bolts and one chunky M10 bolt with locking hardware (per side) provide stout structural rigidity, as each guard is attached to the engine block at two points (low and high) and to the cylinder head at one point (mid). Notably, we were able to mount the complete guard set on our R1200RT test mule without removing any of the bodywork in less than an hour (including time to take photos). Just slightly loosening the lower section of the bodywork was enough to allow access for a ratchet to tighten things securely.

Once mounted, the right side guard's lowest attachment point (M10) comes within just a few millimeters of the O2

sensor on the RT's stock exhaust header, so aftermarket headers may be a fitment issue if O2 sensor placement is different from stock.

The ZTechnik Z701's bright, textured satin finish (which results from a media blasting treatment, followed by electro-polishing and clear coating) complements the Hexhead's gray valve covers perfectly, and these look flat-out gorgeous as far as engine guards go. There is even an integrated mounting hole per each guard where one can easily attach post-mount auxiliary lighting or other equipment – a very thoughtful touch.

As an added functional bonus, routine R-bike maintenance is unaffected by the addition of the ZTechnik Z7101 guards, unlike the plastic/rubber valve covers, which add an extra step when the valve covers need to be removed for valve adjustment and other service. The unobtrusive Z7101s leave plenty of clearance for the valve covers to be removed and reinstalled without any problems. Likewise, there is enough clearance between the guards and valve covers to add “highway pegs” or other clamp-mount accessories without issue.

Overall, we were most impressed with the superb fit and finish of the ZTechnik Z7101 Stainless Steel Engine Guards, as well as the simplicity of instal-

lation and eye-catching appearance once mounted. Although they are, no doubt, quite sturdy, we're hoping we don't get a chance to test them on our new RT anytime soon!

**ZTechnik—2200 Maywood Dr., Maywood, IL 60153;
708-343-0400; info@ztechnik.com;
www.ztechnik.com**

