



Bill Mayer Saddles Ultima Leather Seat

DESPITE ALL OF THE WELCOME functional improvements BMW incorporated into the latest “water boxer” R 1200 RT, as far as my butt is concerned, sitting on a bare I-beam is the height of luxury compared to the bike’s stock seat. Indeed, the park-bench flatness of its shape and spongy, unresponsive foam result in abject misery after only a few hours on the road. Luckily, Bill Mayer Saddles offers a reasonably priced upgrade using the stock seat pans, custom tailored to each rider’s unique needs. This isn’t an off-the-rack solution—ordering the Mayer seat involves answering a myriad of questions about rider height, inseam, weight, posture, typical miles ridden per day, seat height preferences, riding style and more! Photographs of the motorcycle and traces of your bum’s outline on the stock seat must also be provided, to show typical positioning. This information is all utilized by Mayer to select from five different foam densities and an assortment of shapes, as the saddle is constructed to each rider’s individual requirements.

Once the information was provided, we shipped our stock seats off

to Mayer and had the finished product back in hand within two weeks. Our tester was the “Ultima” rider and pillion model in premium black leather, which costs \$739 plus shipping (an “Endura” vinyl covering is also available at a lower price point). Immediately upon inspection, one can gauge the progressive density of the supportive Mayer cushioning versus the squishy stock setup. Build quality is superlative, and all seams in the material are straight and true. The sumptuous aroma of the grippy genuine cowhide adds an air of opulence to the saddle, befitting the regal RT. A bottle of “Bee Natural” conditioner was thoughtfully included for periodic cleaning of the leather. For added protection, some riders elect to sheath their new seats with waterproof covers, such as King Of Fleece’s Splitweight model.

The padding material on the pillion section is substantial, resulting in a nearly 5-inch high built-in backrest that supports the pilot’s lower back on longer trips. Thankfully, the “low” factory seat height was preserved, eliminating the need to tiptoe when

stopped. Installation of the Mayer seat is a tool-free 60-second affair, since the stock pans are used, along with the OEM plugs for the electric heating elements if so equipped (as ours was).

On the road, it was all sublime bliss, even after 20 hours on a straight shot down from New Jersey to Florida. The Mayer saddle’s 15-inch-wide, ergonomically dished shape continually hugs your butt, with plenty of snug lateral support and a refreshingly firm base. After roughly 2,000 miles, the seat “broke in,” and now feels as though someone made an exact mold of my rear, which I fit perfectly into on each ride. No more hot spots, sore points, squirming for relief or sliding into the gas tank during braking, as with the stock seat. The overall feeling is one of sitting in the bike, rather than on it, ensuring that my favorite extended ride will no longer be constrained by the unnecessary agony of BMW’s stock seat.

—MIKE LEVY 

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