



PRODUCT REVIEW

Traveling Light

Lithium Ion Battery

BikeMaster
DLFP-30L-BS \$319.95
Bikemaster.com

Reviewed by Robert Filla

Electronic advancements during the last 20 years have propelled motorcycles into an era of techno gadgetry unimagined by our fathers. With more innovative farkels being unveiled on a weekly basis, power requirements constantly tax both charging and storage systems. Toss in extra cubic inches and high-compression engines and you have a recipe for potential failure when you hit that button on an empty highway and are greeted with an exhausted battery instead of a throaty roar.

My 100th Anniversary Road King came equipped with an AGM (Absorbent Glass Mat) battery. Many riders report great success with this unit, accruing a staggering number of miles and years of service. It has seen duty from 1997 to present on all H-D Touring models, demonstrating itself as a reliable product. But a few years ago I wrote a review on a lithium bat-

tery, became hooked on the concept and eventually switched all my bikes over to lithium. That first lithium was a tiny thing, in both weight and dimensions. With a weight of approximately six pounds, it was a dramatic change from the OEM AGM that tipped the scales at a massive 22 pounds. And even though it packed a substantial increase in cold cranking amps (CCA) over the stock battery, it was smaller which meant having to cram a sizable amount of packing foam around it to keep it from bouncing around inside the battery carrier. So when I discovered that BikeMaster's Lithium Ion was exactly the same size dimensionally as the original AGM battery, I made the decision to try something new. Plus there was a 16-percent increase in CCA over my previous lithium unit (from 540 to 625), which meant cold starts on winter days would not be a problem. (Harley-Davidson does not publish ratings for their battery but my research indicates less than 400 CCA).

Installation is a simple procedure, streamlined even further since foam spacers are not required. For improved heat dissipation BikeMaster does recommend elevating the unit above the floor of the battery box using several self-adhesive foam pads supplied with the battery. The OEM top mount Z-bracket used to secure the stock battery was a perfect fit. The positive

provides for accurate voltage readings on the fly (you can even monitor your charging system by depressing the push button and watching the voltage rise and fall as you operate the throttle).

Additional features include cylindrical cell with energy storage welding technology for higher output, a built-in charge and equalizing protection board that prevents overcharging, an overall weight of 6.2 pounds, vibration-resistant construction allowing for multi-direction installation and a two-year warranty. If ever needed, a conventional lead-acid 12-volt charger (without pulse charging function) or a specially-designed LiFeP04 battery charger can be used for charging. And since it contains no corrosive liquids or toxic heavy metals, it is environmentally friendly. BikeMaster was established in 1983 and is distributed exclusively in North America by Tucker Rocky.

Two days after installation, I left for New Orleans for a 900-mile round-trip weekend.

High temperatures and plenty of rain along the ride made no difference in the unit's quality performance. I feel confident that BikeMaster's Lithium Ion Battery will provide years of maintenance-free, reliable service. ▶



and negative lugs come with both top and front connections that allow for various cable routing options. A nifty feature not seen before is a push button located on top of the battery that activates an adjacent digital voltage display. More than a novelty, this readout

QUICK PICKS

Budget-priced protection

Skeid Leather Jacket

Viking Cycle
Colors: Black or brown, Sizes: S-3XL
\$169.99
Motorcyclehouse.com

Reviewed by Moshe K. Levy

Viking Cycle's Skeid (pronounced "Skade") jacket offers solid functionality at an affordable price, for riders looking for a classic cruiserweight leather jacket that won't break the bank. The exterior shell is constructed of rugged 1.1mm drum-dyed cowhide leather, with stretch paneling at the waist and rear shoulders for a snug fit. A neoprene-lined mandarin collar

with two metal snaps and a large brass YKK main zipper in front keep things secure, while each shoulder has its own ingress air vent with a smaller YKK zipper to adjust the flow. The air then exhausts through two much larger zippered vents on the rear back panel. The shoulders and elbows have additional leather for fortification of those common abrasion areas, and removable armor is included within integrated pockets in the back, shoulders and elbows for extra safety.

Inside, a polyester lining provides adequate breathability for summer riding, while a 175-gram zip-in thermal insulation lining installs in seconds when things get chilly. Storage is one of the Skeid's strong suits, with two enormous snap-actuated chest pockets

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Time Machine

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November Winner Don Schneckloth

Congratulations to Don Schneckloth who was the winner of November's Name That Time Machine Trivia Quiz. Our winner was plucked deep from the heart of the Midwest in Bettendorf, Iowa, where Don parks his bike each night when he rides home from his job at River Valley Cooperative in Eldridge. Don beat out the competition for our first round of *Harley and the Davidsons* Name That Time Machine trivia.

At the age of six, Don's dad decided to bypass the time-honored bicycle for his son, and put him on a dirt bike instead. Leaving the other kids in the dust, Don went on to enjoy a lifelong love of riding, graduating to his first road bike, a 1967 Harley-Davidson Sportster. He's kept on with the Harley tradition and currently rides his 2012 Harley-Davidson Street Glide.

Don's dad also gifted the love of riding to Don's brother Tom, who is one of his favorite riding partners. He also likes to ride with his oldest friend Brad Nelson, as well as Dennis Clifton, Roger Timmerman, Randy Decrain, and Gary Grass, all longtime Harley riders. Being an enthusiast, Don enjoys working on his bike himself, but when he needs a hand he goes over to Clinton Harley-Davidson in Clinton, Iowa. ▶



Jacket

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and two zippered hand warmers on the exterior, combined with two more very large internal pockets. The interior also has two phone pockets and two "knife pockets" near the main front zipper, with pass-through gaskets and loops to allow headphone wires to be neatly routed from within the jacket to the rider's head. This was particularly convenient in keeping that chaos nice and organized. If the liner is installed, it too has its own zippered pocket for even more storage room.

The styling is contemporary and understated, with no screaming logos, reflectivity, stripes or any other distractions. Just a good old basic black leather jacket. The Skeid's perfor-

mance on the road was excellent for this garment class. The stretch panels do a good job of keeping it conformed against the rider's body at speed, which is useful when riding naked cruisers with no wind protection or fairings. This is a mid-weight garment for all-around use, though not for extreme temperatures on either end of the thermometer. Without the liner, I was comfortable from 60-90 degrees. With the liner fitted, the jacket can be used comfortably down into the high 40s, below which you'll want to break out the heated liner for winter use. Fitment is neutral, with room for additional layers underneath if necessary.

The Pakistani-made Viking Cycle Skeid is a superb value considering its construction and functionality. ▶



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