

Wunderlich Rear Protection Bars for R1200RT – Installation and Review

By Moshe K. Levy #108097

AS LONGTIME BMW RT RIDERS KNOW, on Oilhead models, when the system cases were an easily refinished matte plastic finish, the occasional parking lot tipover was not such a depressing affair. Such is not the case with R1200RTs, the case lids of which are factory painted to match the other bodywork. An accidental drop can easily mean several hundred dollars for associated repaint and refinish. Enter Wunderlich's new Rear Protection Bars for 2005+ R1200RTs.

As shown in **Figure 1**, these German-made steel bars are beefy structures, with each side weighing in at 3.5 pounds, and main tube diameter measuring in at a robust one inch. In addition to the bars, the package arrives from Wunderlich well packed with printed directions in several

languages and a small plastic bag full of metric hardware. For installation you will need the usual tools (mainly torx) for removal of body parts, as well as a standard selection of wrenches, a Philips screwdriver for the tail light assembly, and other assorted common items every DIY person has in their toolbox.

In studying the printed instructions before beginning the job, one will immediately note that they are lacking any detail whatsoever about Step 1, which is dismantling the rear bodywork, the seat and the tail light so as to remove the entire luggage rack. This chore is far and away the most time consuming portion of the job, and yet it gets no mention in the paperwork.



Figure 1

Luckily, Wunderlich has a detailed supplemental instruction pictorial on how to accomplish this task online at www.wunderlichamerica.com/instructions/8160179supplement.pdf.

The supplemental instructions are straightforward enough, but in removing all of the assorted items mentioned above, please take special care with the two rear-most torx screws holding the body panels

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to the frame, and as well as the two torx screws holding the luggage rack to the tail light section of the frame. In these areas, the stock torx are screwed into brass fittings, which are uber-soft and quite easy to bugger up. Take your time and go slowly!

With the bodywork removed, we are now ready for actual installation of the bars. It is at this point where the printed instructions that came with the package come into play. As shown in **Figure 2** with the bars mock-installed, Wunderlich's steps are to assemble attachment point A, then B and then C in that order. I found it made infinitely more sense to do it in opposite order, because everything must first be installed loosely, and then tightened up gradually, in order to center the assembly, which inevitably involves some "muscling" into place. Attachment point A is by far the strongest connection point, with an M8x50 bolt passing through steel, while attachment point C is the weakest, with two thin M6x50 fillister

head screws holding the bars to the frame via a plastic "frame adapter" sandwich. By installing attachment point C first, all the heavy "torquing into place" is left to the larger, stronger hardware used on points A and B.

At this point, installation becomes an obvious path of simply lining up the hardware with the space available and tightening down accordingly. The first side will take you twice as long as the second because of the learning curve in terms of properly centering the assembly, but overall this is not rocket science. All you need is just a little patience. To save the loyal reader some unnecessary frustration in this process, here are two useful tips from the front lines:

- 1) Consider taking all the included bolts for attachment points A and B to your local hardware store, buying slightly longer bolts of appropriate stainless

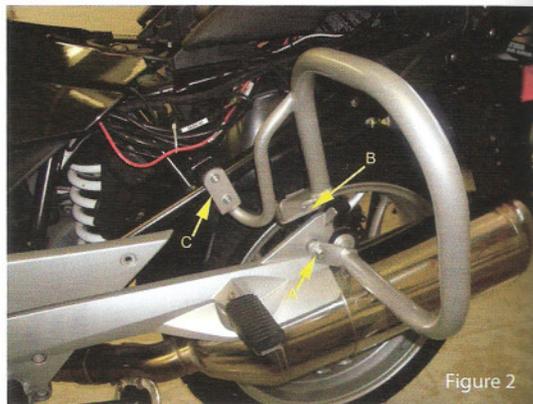
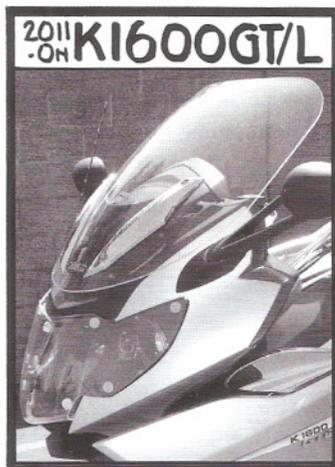


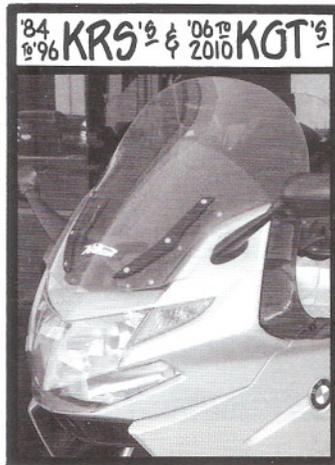
Figure 2

steel, and using those instead. The bolts included in the package are just barely long enough to allow the nuts to bite thread, until the assembly is "pulled" into position by tightening down. This may involve you wrestling with 1-inch steel bars to get that first bite – or, for a few bucks, you can simply buy some longer bolts, which will allow you to install the hardware loosely no matter how "off" the assembly initially sits, and then easily pull it into position by tightening.

- 2) For attachment point C, there are two



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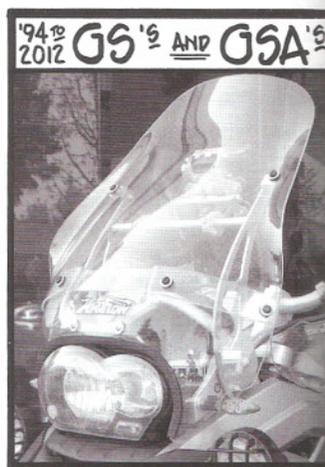
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M6 self-locking nuts on the backside of the bars. Space there is extremely tight, and unless you have the patience of Job, do not attempt to access these nuts without a Gearwrench Flexhead (or equivalent) 10mm wrench, which turns this potential time-sucking irritation into a 15-second non-issue.

So now everything's centered and torqued down nice and tight. All that's left is to button up the luggage rack, tail light and rear section bodywork in that order. It all fits without a hitch, and there is plenty of clearance between the bars and bodywork. The final product looks as shown in **Figure 3** and feels very substantial indeed!

Aesthetically, the bars seem to add a distinctive "police/authority" model look to civilian RTs, while also making a perfect mounting point for accessories such as helmet locks and luggage straps. In addition, they become the de facto handle with which to pull the bike onto the centerstand (much

more comfortable leverage than using the luggage rack). Readers should note the bars are also available in black powder coat and chrome versions, in addition to the silver powder coat shown here.

Functionally, some riders worry about interference with pillion comfort. For what it's worth, my wife (5'5" with a 31" inseam) couldn't even tell the bars were there, but perhaps others would be more sensitive, depending on their size and posture. In general, I do not ride with a passenger; but if you do, I would suggest if possible to have your favorite passenger "trial sit" on a bike with these installed to check for fitment. Naturally, the biggest functional benefit is protection of the system cases, and for those interested, Wunderlich's YouTube video of the bars (www.youtube.com/watch?v=UiliVqJTwSY) demonstrates the generous protective clearance these



Figure 3

protection bars offer with the motorcycle fully tipped over on its side – saving your faithful author the arduous task of having to display this himself!

MSRP is \$319 plus shipping and handling. For more information about Wunderlich America's Rear Protection Bars, visit www.wunderlichamerica.com, e-mail info@wunderlichamerica.com or call 1-831-761-1070. ☺

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