BikeVis Bullet LED Lights & PodMod Modulator

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review by Moshe K. Levy

WE'D EXPECT MOST motorcyclists can find a dozen uses for these nifty new BikeVis Bullet LED accent lights from the land of the Ace Café. Since the weatherproof housings are only 9mm x 23mm long (.35" x .9"), they're tiny enough to find a home on most flat panels or fairings, though they pump out a surprisingly bright output of over 60 lumens. If that isn't enough, Bike-Vis' new "PodMod" modulator has been introduced to supplement the Bullets' conspicuity-enhancing properties.

Bullet LEDs

To test their effectiveness as conspicuity lights, we installed a set of Bullet LEDs on a BMW R1150RT's front fairing, right under the main headlight cluster. Location is important, as one should find a flat surface where wiring can be easily accessed and hidden once installation is complete. Being LEDs, they need to face the intended line of sight for maximum effectiveness.

Each Bullet comes with one meter of wire coming out of the bottom of the housing. Wiring is easy—attach the power wire to an existing feed on the bike (running/marker lights are a great choice) and attach the black wire to ground. With a draw of only 0.03A each, they're hardly going to overload even the most marginal electrical system. In fact, we used the meager "parking light" circuit on the RT as the power source without issue.

The Bullets attach to the mounting surface via 3M double-sided tape. The tape is extremely strong and felt solid once the Bullets were mounted. Although very difficult to capture with a camera, the Bullets are, indeed, quite bright, especially during the day. At night, the RT's formidable four-bulb headlight cluster overwhelmed the little Bullets. During the day, however, the Bullets stood out distinctly and could be seen head-on from very far away.

PodMod

At first glance, the PodMod is simply a small weatherproof canister measuring approximately 1.24" x .7", barely larger than the Bullet LEDs themselves. Zip-ties are included with the Pod-Mod, so it can be affixed wherever space allows on the motorcycle. We suggest mounting it close to the lights themselves to keep wiring

lengths to a minimum. Since the PodMod is connected in-line with the Bullets, installation is simple. The PodMod has only four wires: The red wire goes to the motorcycle's positive 12V DC, the grey wire to ground, the PodMod's striped black to the Bullet's striped black, and the PodMod's black to the Bullet's black. In this way, it can be easily retrofitted to existing Bullet installations by merely disconnecting the Bullet power and ground wires and replacing them with the Pod-Mod's red and gray wires, respectively.

The PodMod can handle 0.2A max load, or enough to easily modulate three pairs of Bullet LEDs (each of which draws 0.03A). (It should be able to modulate other LED lights which are under its max load capabilities as well, but it was tested only with Bullets). The Pod-Mod's microprocessor control "ramps up" the effect of modulation, such that a few seconds after power is applied, the Bullets start to twinkle rapidly. This does not resemble the set on/off sequence one normally associates with a headlight modulator, which typically cycle at 240 times per minute. Rather, the modulation effect here is a much faster cycle, such that the Bullets are on average "on" 92.5% of the time and "off" only 7.5% of the time. For a similar effect, just visualize the brisk sparkling of an approaching truck with a loose headlight. It definitely gets your attention, but in a different manner than the distinctive on/off flashing of a headlight modulator. The PodMod's effect is much more noticeable in the daytime, adding to the appeal of using the Bullets as additional conspicuity lights.

Bottom Line

Clearly, some creative motorcyclists are going to have fun with these Bullets, tastefully mounting multiple pairs for additional daytime running lights, markers, accents, or conspicuity where required.

About the only suggestion we have for BikeVis is to offer a version of the Bullets with the wires exiting at the rear of the light housing, instead of on the mounting side. The current arrangement requires that a hole

Bullet LED

be drilled where the Bullet light is to be mounted, to allow the wires to pass through. On some applications, like the RT location shown here, this is not an issue since the holes are hidden. But other potential locations exist where owners may be less than anxious to drill. Fortunately, BikeVis tells us that Bullet lights with the wires routed out of the rear of the housings should be available soon.

The Bullets carry a warranty of 1 year and a life expectancy of over 50,000 hours. They are sold in pairs, in either "Xenon White" tested here or "Ultra Blue" colors. (Check local laws before installing blue lights on your motorcycle.) Zip ties and mounting templates are also included. The white lights cost £12.95 + £8.95 international shipping (about $35). The blue lights will set you back an additional £2 (about $3).

The BikeVis' PodMod is a worthwhile addition to the Bullet LEDs (or other small-draw LED) conspicuity light setup, as it does, indeed, enhance the attention-grabbing effects of these petite illuminators. Total cost for the PodMod is similar to the Bullet LEDs—£19.95 + £8.95 international shipping (about $35). Paypal is accepted.

PodMod