

I traded Jimmy all my baseball cards for his Dad's bike, okay?

Next Month

- Victory Hammer evaluated
- KTM 690 Enduro evaluated
- Victory Empulse TT evaluated

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Hog Skins Paint Protection Systems

INNOVATION OF THE MONTH

AS A DAILY commuter, I was resigned to seeing paint damage from flying road debris. Within a year, my fairings would be as cratered as the surface of the moon. But, for my latest new bike, a 2014 H-D Switchback, I decided to see if I could prevent this value-depreciating condition by applying paint protection film from Hog Skins of Ozark, MO. The product is model-specific for select H-D Switchback FLD, FL Touring, and Trike models. The Switchback kit only covers the front faces and top lids of the saddlebags, while the more elaborate “complete” FL and Trike kits cover the front fairings, fenders, lowers, fuel tank, cowbells, and other bits as well. “Partial” kits are also available at lower cost, if preferred.

As shown in Figure 1, the kit comes complete with everything required to install the clear 3M 8-mil urethane protection film. The film itself is precut to the exact proportions required, so there is no guesswork or trimming required for perfect fitment. Other components include two 16 oz. spray bottles, a small concentrate container, a plastic spoon, a squeegee and a microfiber towel. However, the most important item in the box is the installation DVD, which provides step-by-step instructions on the preparation and application of the film.

Essentially, installation involves thoroughly cleaning the painted surface, then using a mixture of diluted isopropyl rubbing alcohol to completely soak the “sticky” side of the film, laying the film down in place as shown in Figure 2, and finally wet-squeegeeing it in an overlapping pattern until it lies seamlessly. It’s

not rocket science, but it does require careful effort, coupled with patience, to get right. Luckily, since all of this is done wet, the process is forgiving before things dry and set fully.

The final installed product is as shown in Figure 3, and if you can’t see anything different, that’s the point! To all but the most finicky, the transparent film is virtually invisible, and the few small bubbles I had after initial installation vanished after a week of riding in the sun—success!

Riders considering this product may want to heed the following tips based on our experience: 1) The most important tool for this job is patience. 2) Having an extra set of hands nearby is very helpful, and it is important to do it in a relatively warm (at least 50° F.) ambient temperature. 3) Youtube has many videos showing application of the product, such as https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A-6KoQh_ErPY 4) Riders who would rather opt for professional installation can expect to pay between 1-3 hours labor, depending on the kit. For reference, we were quoted \$90 to professionally install the Switchback kit shown here.

My last car had protective film applied to the front end, which survived five years and over 100,000 miles of commuting abuse, including routine automated car washes. It looked as



Fig. 2

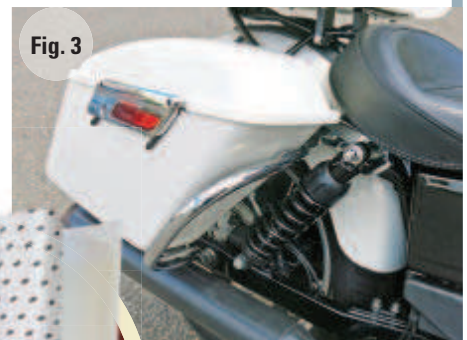


Fig. 3



Fig. 1

good as new on the day I sold it, with no fading, yellowing, or peeling. There is no reason to believe the Hog Skins product won’t perform just as well, and that’s great news for anyone who wants to keep their scoot’s front end showroom pristine.

Switchback Saddlebag Kit for 2012+ H-D FLD Models (SKU #HS12-CUR-SWSB); MSRP \$114.75.

—Moshe Levy

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