

DVD Review: Fix My Hogs

HARLEY OWNERS LOOKING to save big bucks in maintenance costs or just bond with their bikes should check out Fix My Hog's collection of DVDs. There are now five editions: maintenance DVDs for Sportster, Softail, and Touring models, as well as the new "Bolt-On" instructional DVDs for Softail/Dyna and Touring models. Owners eager to spin their own wrenches will benefit from the comprehensive information provided—over 21 total hours contained in the five editions.

The series started when company founder Dennis Santopietro became increasingly frustrated as he tried his hand at DIY maintenance on his 1984 FXRS, and decided to produce a series of DVDs to help others tackle common service applications. The first was released in 2004. Luckily for Santopietro, his childhood friend Bob LaRosa is an MMI graduate with over eight years of experience working on Harleys. The two collaborated on the project and shot the videos in LaRosa's Connecticut shop.

Unlike other DVDs in this genre, the FMH videos are true professional productions. When combined with the practical instructions LaRosa presents throughout the series, the comparatively excellent quality of the picture, lighting, and sound is proverbial icing on the cake. Of special interest are the two newer "Bolt-On" DVDs covering the Softail/Dyna and Touring models. Santopietro's theory is that since owners are saving substantial amounts of money by performing DIY maintenance, they will use the newfound cash on various upgrades for their motorcycles. This mirrors my own experience when I owned a Harley, and the Bolt-On DVDs will definitely save newbie wrenches from making some of the "idiot tax" mistakes so com-

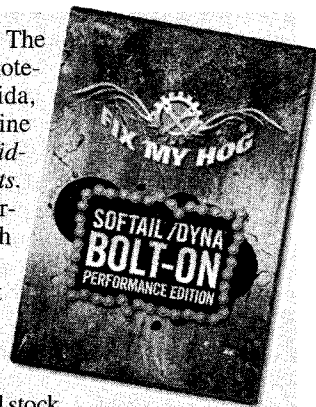
monly part of the DIY experience. The Bolt-On DVD sets also contain a noteworthy interview with Chris Maida, editor of *American Iron* magazine and co-author of *101 Harley-Davidson Twin Cam Performance Projects*. He talks about how to reconcile various engine modifications with ever-tightening EPA regulations.

Unfortunately, the DVDs neglect some well-known weaknesses in exchange for more trivial projects. For example, no mention is made about replacing the absolutely dismal stock suspension on the Dyna and Softail models. What point is there in increasing engine output dramatically via freer-flowing intake and exhaust if the bike wallows like a drunk pig in the curves? There should also be a section on upgrading the feeble single-piston Hayes brakes on the older EVO models, so owners can rely on more than prayer should they need to stop suddenly. Information such as this would be more useful to function-minded Harley owners than the segments on replacing perfectly adequate stock components, such as the clutch and CV carburetor.

However, all in all, the DVD packages are unquestionably worthwhile for Harley owners to obtain. The information presented by LaRosa in his signature Paulie Walnuts inflection will entertain as well as inform, and Santopietro reports that his company will expand its focus beyond Harleys to include metric bikes in the future.

—Moshe K. Levy

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