



# MOTO MOUTH MOSHE

Moshe K. Levy

RA 43605

▶ MotoMouthMoshe

## On Extreme Farkling

Catching the bug

### Farkle - /far'kl/

*(noun) - a backronym named after the combination of "function" and "sparkle," rumored to have been created in a Honda ST1100 Owner's Group forum in the late 1990s.*

*(verb) - to accessorize an otherwise perfectly good motorcycle*

**M**y career of farkling BMW motorcycles is one that can only be measured in extremes. It was common for me to approach vendors at BMW rallies looking for merchandise to review, only to find out that I already had their entire product line already installed on the RT. This is



a sickness I like to describe as "Extreme Farkling."

Reviewing all of the various products over the years by definition means that at some point, there is simply nothing else left to add! So it was with my beloved Blue Pig, the 2015 R1200RT that I just sold to transition into a GS rider. After nearly eight years together, that bike had a list of accessories on it so long that it ran an entire single-spaced page, and that was before I stripped it of a few key parts prior to the sale!

Anecdotally, this farkling bug seems to infect mainly the substantial subset of BMW riders who, like me, initially switched over from Harley-Davidson. Harley owners are, by and large, accessory addicts. They are known to spend ~25% of the total cost of the motorcycle on accessories on the first day of ownership—and much more over the life of the bike. As such, the aftermarket that serves H-D is gigantic, promising improvement on literally every single aspect of the riding experience. Accessorizing a hog becomes a means to differentiate one's bike from everyone else's, to fix a flaw with the factory design, or in cases like mine to satisfy a relentless desire to find out if the promise of the given product lives up to the hype of its advertisements.

### Farkling led to moto-journalism

In fact, this is how I got my start in moto-journalism. In 1998, I was the proud owner of a brand-new Harley Sportster 1200 Custom, which liked to puke oil out of its air cleaner all over the right side of the bike after every highway ride. At that time, online forums were abuzz with all sorts of half-baked ideas to solve this problem, from underfilling the oil tank to stuffing women's sanitary napkins into the air filter assembly. I dove into the aftermarket and discovered "horseshoe breather" solutions, tested many of them for my own research, and finally authored a how-to guide on my website to help other Sportster owners address this issue. Dave Searle (then Editor-in-Chief of *Motorcycle Consumer News* magazine) came across my article, and asked if he could run it in MCN.

Twenty years and well over 200 published articles later, it's safe to say that this crazy quest to bolt more and more "stuff" to my motorcycle is intricately woven into my character. It's a gift and a curse: a gift because the drive to keep pushing for improvements wherever they may be found generally makes reviewing things a pleasure. A curse because after a while, my main steed starts to resemble a comically overloaded test rig, weighed down with so many accessories that it's hardly a motorcycle anymore!

Ultimately, the symptom progression of Extreme Farkling begins in curiosity

and individualism, advances via obscene amounts of money spent on accessories, and finally culminates in... boredom. The Blue Pig, once accessorized to the hilt, became a hindrance of sorts. Yes, the bike itself was perfectly suited to me, but my throughput as a moto-journalist

began petering off. There was nothing left to add anymore! My curious side was finally satiated, and that's the death knell for a professional reviewer.

I'm convinced that my switching to a GS was at least in part psychologically motivated by having a blank canvas

again, and this time on a platform that is highly amenable to accessorizing vs. the more purpose-built RT. Either way, whether for form or function, my shelves are chock full of parts again, ready to put through their paces and report back to you!

