

Lighting up the night

Clearwater Dimmable LED Light Kits

Clearwater Company
 Clearwater Erica—\$899
 Clearwater Darla Kit—\$499
www.clearwaterlights.com

Reviewed by Moshe K. Levy

After a few years of proven performance among early adopters, LED lights are finally becoming accepted in the motorcycling mainstream. Compared to traditional halogen bulbs, LEDs draw only a fraction of the current to produce equivalent levels of light, generate exponentially less heat, are much more vibration resistant, and can last literally hundreds of times as long. As the technology continues to advance at a rapid pace, Clearwater has introduced the dimmable Darla and Erica kits for riders looking to upgrade nighttime visibility as well as daytime conspicuity. The Darla is a more traditional spotlamp housed in a 2" black anodized CNC machined 6061 aluminum enclosure, varying its output from 100 lumens on "low" setting to a powerful 2,000 lumens on "high" setting, while drawing only 12 watts on full blast. The Erica is for serious night riders, with a 3.75" black anodized 6061 aluminum CNC machined enclosure,

with output ranging from 300 lumens on "low" to a whopping 6,000 lumens on "high," and max draw of only 60 watts.

To mount both sets on my 2014 FLD, we utilized Clearwater's beefy anodized aluminum "B25" mount for 1.25" bars to attach the Ericas to the engine guard. We then mounted the Darlas directly to the Erica mounts, such that the Darlas are peeking over the top of the guard, while the Ericas reside below. The Darlas can also be mounted on their own brackets separately or even fork-mounted, for those who prefer that arrangement. A good degree of aesthetic and functional customization is available in this setup: The Darla's anodized bezels (shown here in black) are available in chrome as well, and the lenses for both lights are available in either clear or amber tint. For added protection, slip-on lens covers are also available in clear or amber, to defend the lenses against road debris. If the rider chooses to run two sets of lights instead of the usual configuration of only one set, there are several options for actuation (in addition to the traditional on/off switch). For example, the lights can be tied into the horn or the high beam switches for added control, and two sets of lights can be daisy-chained on the same harness, to be controlled together by one dimmer. Everything in the kits feels robust, and is clearly of premium-level fit and finish. Once

the sun disappeared over the horizon, we headed out to rural areas, and tried against all odds to remember the bad old days of outriding our feeble halogens!

The results, as you can imagine, are superlative. We took time to aim the lights properly, angled slightly outward to illuminate the sides of the road, in order to light up an approximate 135-degree arc in front of the motorcycle. The lights have a wide, tall light pattern, and at max setting, the Ericas literally rival the noon-time summer sun's illumination capacity. The Clearwaters project approximately 75 percent of the light in a 15-degree cone for concentrated forward penetration, while the remaining 25 percent is projected in a 45-degree cone for lateral visibility. The latter gives a wide pattern of light for added visibility while cornering, and for easier sighting of roadside obstacles. Both lights emit a bluish-white color that seems to make far-off road signs, reflectors and even animal retinas absolutely glow. The dimmability feature is incredibly useful, allowing the rider to vary light output on the fly according to surroundings, since max setting is



Darlas and Ericas installed on my 2014 Harley FLD

blinding to oncoming traffic. But even at 50-percent setting, compared to riding with only the stock headlight, the Clearwaters are extraordinary performers.

They're not inexpensive, but for the discerning motorcyclist looking for superior American-made lights that literally transform night into day, they're worth it. Model-specific kits are available for many different motorcycle brands and models, so interested riders should check out Clearwater's website for information related to their specific bikes. ▶



Stock low beam



Stock low beam with Darlas and Ericas on Max Setting