

The Chain Gang

BMW F650 Discussions

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Catastrophic F650GS Fork Failure

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Re: Catastrophic F650GS Fork Failure (#p416636)

by **Red** on August 10th, 2008, 4:40 pm

Yeah, and this one makes light of her crash....

[http://uk.youtube.com/watch?v=M76FywIGi ... re=related](http://uk.youtube.com/watch?v=M76FywIGi...re=related)
(<http://uk.youtube.com/watch?v=M76FywIGiH4&feature=related>)

Looks like the bike took a lot of abuse. Wonder if it was maintained. And I agree, the forks look funny in the before photo.

Gotta wonder if the previous crash(es) bent the fork and caused the failure. Perhaps the bike was already "totaled".

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Re: Catastrophic F650GS Fork Failure (#p416643)

by **maddog** on August 10th, 2008, 7:58 pm

Wow...

The portion that appears to have failed is the slider tube on the brake side. I was having tons of problems with my seals, and once took them apart with a more experienced mechanic/machinist. He took one look down that tube and said "Hold it just, one, second". Slider tube WAS NOT TRUE. When you looked down the tube with the retainer bolt out, you could see that in some parts of the tube light was being refracted and there was an obvious defect (or at least non-straightness) in the fork near where the brake mounts were. Other side = fine, no evidence of anything.

I replaced the part, figuring that it was contributing to my seals and since then I've had no seal troubles now in almost 9k miles of riding (normally I would have gone through 3 seals in this time...

Obviously if the fork tube is not machined correctly there are stress concentrations in the tube near the point of discontinuity, ala St. Venant's principle, for those who have ever sat through Engineering Mechanics. Since the sliders are cast, it stands to reason that they will fracture rather than bend if stresses get too bad at the point of discontinuity.

Just my forensic interpretation. So next time you change your seals on that side, I would recommend everyone take a look down there...maybe that's the cause?

Glad the rider lived....

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Re: Catastrophic F650GS Fork Failure (#p416648)

by **haakon** on August 10th, 2008, 9:22 pm

The "modified" sliders was fitted to bikes made after 06.06.2003
Almost funny she found a notice on other such failures here at our own FAQ, I never noticed it

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Re: Catastrophic F650GS Fork Failure (#p416666)

by **Will in CA** on August 11th, 2008, 1:54 am

Why in both videos is the camera looking so down, so we can see what causes the crashes. Is this an ongoing occurrence? That little slip in the mud should not cause the forks to brake. The way I read the note at the end of the video is the RIDER did a triple summersault. I wonder how tight that pinch bolt is on the axle?

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Re: Catastrophic F650GS Fork Failure (#p416691)

by **grandevox** on August 11th, 2008, 6:05 am

careyab wrote: But she had a big accident before, bike triple flipped:

http://uk.youtube.com/watch?v=I_b8VBfEmr0
(http://uk.youtube.com/watch?v=I_b8VBfEmr0)

Now we learn the truth! She knew the fork sliders were damaged, she took photos of it - otherwise why would you take a picture of that? At that point, if it were me, the trip would be over until I replaced the damaged parts. But that's just me.

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Re: Catastrophic F650GS Fork Failure (#p416694)

by **Flash 412 (CO)** on August 11th, 2008, 7:24 am

careyab wrote: But she had a big accident before, bike triple flipped:

http://uk.youtube.com/watch?v=I_b8VBfEmr0
(http://uk.youtube.com/watch?v=I_b8VBfEmr0)

What makes you think this is the same person? The YouTube video is dated June 22 and the AdvRider post is dated August 9th. A broken arm doesn't keep someone in the hospital that long. The Redbaroness crashed in the Yukon. The crash in the YouTube video looks European.

What makes you think that the Redbaroness is the one whose bike flipped three times before her crash?

<http://www.advrider.com/forums/showthread.php?t=371650>

(<http://www.advrider.com/forums/showthread.php?t=371650>) says:

Photos from my crash in the Yukon last week (clear day, bit windy, smooth pavement, and thankfully not much traffic, forks broke and front wheel came off). I was riding a 2002 F650GS. I sustained a compound fracture to my left forearm and another bone in my left hand. My Motoport gear, Arai helmet and Daytona boots protected me from any other harm. I had to be airlifted to Seattle for surgery. I am out of the hospital now, but my bike and gear is still in Destruction Bay, YT. Yeah, I know.

She also said: "*My bike did have some **front end damage in a previous crash, but it was completely checked out by a BMW dealership.***"

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Re: Catastrophic F650GS Fork Failure (#p416697)

by **careyab** on August 11th, 2008, 7:49 am

[quote="Flash 412 (CO)"] [quote="careyab"]
Trollhaugen Rally in WA ...

http://www.soundrider.com/dsport/rides/trollhaugen_dualsport.htm
(http://www.soundrider.com/dsport/rides/trollhaugen_dualsport.htm)

Last edited by [careyab \(./memberlist.php?mode=viewprofile&u=20259\)](#) on August 11th, 2008, 8:03 am, edited 1 time in total.

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Re: Catastrophic F650GS Fork Failure (#p416699)

by **haakon** on August 11th, 2008, 7:55 am

From the FAQ... OUR FAQ:
GS Catastrophic Fork Failure?

"I own a F650 GS that I received new in June of 2000. After about 5,000 miles, I experienced a catastrophic failure of the castings on both side of the front forks. I sustained major injuries. BMW has admitted to knowing of 3 nearly identical failures before they redesigned the forks, adding more material. They decided not to notify owners. I'm wondering if any Chain Gang members know of similar failures. Gertarg '00 F650GS

I forgot to mention that as both sides of the forks snapped, the front wheel departed the bike leaving the bike and me doing 3 flips as the forks dug into the dirt. By the way the front wheel is in almost perfect condition. I didn't hit anything. Gertarg

That is the first instance of that happening that I have ever heard. Trevor #999 Back in '02 I purchased some parts from a guy of the internet...I think it was of of IBMWR, can't remember...they were new spares he had for a long tour down south. He was injured really bad for a few months when his front end came apart, but I can't remember if he said the forks or the wheel itself. I talked to him through e-mail and on the phone and I'm trying to find the records of what I purchased and then to narrow it down. He did say that he was involved with some sort of legal action with BMW at the time due to his situation not being the first, although his story was the only one I'd heard of until now. I wonder if he's the same guy? beem_dubya #1328"

BMW DID change... modify... the sliders- eventually...

But kept real quiet, probably hoping no one would make a fuss or get killed!.. as if they cared, except for trying to avoid a a real expensive recall. If the design and manufacture was right the upper tubes ought to bend before the wheel just "fell off" (even after a accident)

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Re: Catastrophic F650GS Fork Failure (#p416701)

by **THM** on August 11th, 2008, 8:03 am

So if my bike is an '03, probably manufactured in Fall '02, I don't have the modified forks? If so, I guess I should start worrying.

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Re: Catastrophic F650GS Fork Failure (#p416703)

by **haakon** on August 11th, 2008, 8:38 am

I would NOT worry too much if you know the history of the bike
Even if you do not. I dont have the numbers of GS`s produced before the
modification to the sliders, but a lot was sold, and many of them have been used in
rough terrain..

(I have not done more than one "flipover" myself- but "crashed" several times- I
am maybe more worried for all the times I have hit obstacles without a proper
front wheel lift.....

I will NOT change the sliders, not yet.

We know of only 4 or 5 bikes where the sliders failed.... and maybe add a few we
dont know of.

Jeeze... dont make me worry Ill loose the front wheel ... Got to admit I checked
my sliders yesterday.

To "loose" the front wheel on a level road... at speed....

I want to buy a Rekluse clutch... NOT new sliders

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Re: Catastrophic F650GS Fork Failure (#p416737)

by **jsanford** on August 11th, 2008, 1:10 pm

*grandevox wrote:*That's pretty bad - but in reality in the "before" photo things
didn't look right on the forks at all. I thought I could see some hairline cracking (IN
THE PHOTO!) before the forks broke. I could also see some intergranular corrosion
bubbling up under the paint as well. These sliders tell a story, I just don't know
what it is-but the parts looked sick.

Which photo? I don't see what you're talking about [in this photo](#)

(<http://red-baroness.net/Motorcycling/images/BrokenBike/wheelonedaybeforecrash.JPG>) ;
perhaps I'm missing something?

The rest are really haunting--I wonder about the details of the earlier crash. Not to
assign blame, but in wondering how severe it was to *possibly* cause unseen
stress damage.

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Re: Catastrophic F650GS Fork Failure (#p416743)

by **redbaroness** on August 11th, 2008, 2:47 pm

To those of you who seem to see fork damage in the earlier photo, gee I should
have brought you and your xray vision along on my ride.

And to those who think that I knowingly rode a damaged bike to my impending
death in the middle of the f**king Yukon, f**k you.

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Re: Catastrophic F650GS Fork Failure (#p416747)

by **chichimo** on August 11th, 2008, 3:18 pm

redbaroness wrote:.... those who think that I knowingly rode a damaged bike to my impending death in the middle of the f**king Yukon, ...

just in awe at the damage and the fact that you are ok...that is all that really matters...that you are ok, even with the injuries you sustained...though i am curious...and did not find it in any of the posts,...but do you have any recollection of how fast you were going when the failure occurred????
and no, i don't think you knowingly rode a damaged bikeand i don't think the bulk of the posters here do either.....just glad you are ok, and going to ride again.....terrible accident

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Re: Catastrophic F650GS Fork Failure (#p416748)

by **GSlite** on August 11th, 2008, 3:19 pm

*redbaroness wrote:*And to those who think that I knowingly rode a damaged bike to my impending death in the middle of the f**king Yukon, f**k you.

WELCOME!

I agree on both points. I doubt anybody would knowingly ride a damaged bike *any* distance, let alone the Yukon. Also, it's exceedingly difficult to ascertain any sort of stress damage to a cast metal part by simply looking at a low-res photo posted to a web page.

Sorry about your crash. Truly awful stuff. Hopefully something good will come of all this (posting details, people analyzing, etc.). Also, while I do not wish to see BMW "punished" for anything related to this type of part failure, I *DO* hope they take note and deal with this in a reasonable fashion.

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Re: Catastrophic F650GS Fork Failure (#p416750)

by **redbaroness** on August 11th, 2008, 3:30 pm

chichimo wrote:

redbaroness wrote:.... those who think that I knowingly rode a damaged bike to my impending death in the middle of the f**king Yukon, ...

but do you have any recollection of how fast you were going when the failure occurred????

I do. Let's just say that it was... uhh... slightly above the posted speed limit. I was riding safe for road conditions though.

Thank you for your good wishes. I hope there is some summer left by the time I get back the use of my arm.

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