

# The Chain Gang

BMW F650 Discussions

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## Catastrophic F650GS Fork Failure

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### **Re: Catastrophic F650GS Fork Failure (#p418146)**

by **maddog** on August 20th, 2008, 5:51 am

*bigb wrote:*I just got my HP 41CX tuned, cleaned, and 2 brand new XMemory modules installed. I'm looking forward to a crunchy analysis.

What does your ZX1000 dildo mania module have to do with this? What kind of w\*\*k ass technocrat am I dealing with here? Rather than sit around cranking the iludium pu/36 space modulator, I ride my bike. My problem was solved. No nazis. No bugs. No Xmemory.

The fork protectors are on there, dumbass. They've been on there since a few months after I bought the bike. Had you been around here longer than 6 months you would know this. But, well, you haven't. See you around n00ber.

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### **Re: Catastrophic F650GS Fork Failure (#p418162)**

by **ThorH** on August 20th, 2008, 7:23 am

Jeez, you guys need to chill! Dip it in ice cream, perhaps?

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### **Re: Catastrophic F650GS Fork Failure (#p418163)**

by **HighAlpineDrifter** on August 20th, 2008, 7:29 am

This concludes our broadcast of Sensitive Male Ego Theatre. Join us next week when we take up a roundtable discussion of the topic "Metrosexuals: Pooftahs, Evolutionary Train Wrecks, or Both?".....

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### **Re: Catastrophic F650GS Fork Failure (#p418168)**

by **bluepoof** on August 20th, 2008, 8:10 am

*HighAlpineDrifter* wrote: This concludes our broadcast of Sensitive Male Ego Theatre. Join us next week when we take up a roundtable discussion of the topic "Metrosexuals: Pooftahs, Evolutionary Train Wrecks, or Both?" .....

Not that there's anything wrong with 'poofs....

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### **Re: Catastrophic F650GS Fork Failure (#p418174)**

by **Harmon** on August 20th, 2008, 9:20 am

*bluepoof* wrote:

*HighAlpineDrifter* wrote: ... Pooftahs...

Not that there's anything wrong with 'poofs....

I hear that nowadays they can even get married in California?

([http://bluepoof.blogs.com/motorcycle/2007/06/whats\\_a\\_wedding.html](http://bluepoof.blogs.com/motorcycle/2007/06/whats_a_wedding.html))

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### **Re: Catastrophic F650GS Fork Failure (#p424337)**

by **kwh** on October 3rd, 2008, 10:05 pm

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### **Re: Catastrophic F650GS Fork Failure (#p424341)**

by **ThorH** on October 3rd, 2008, 11:30 pm

Time for some angry lawyer to get one of them law suites going? And maybe pool in the R1200GS brake failures as well...

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### **Re: Catastrophic F650GS Fork Failure (#p424356)**

by **nineof6** on October 4th, 2008, 1:44 am

There's also an interesting post there by someone who does stress tests on metal. It sounds like there may be no visible way to check for a defect until after the crash.

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### **Re: Catastrophic F650GS Fork Failure (#p424371)**

by **Timmer** on October 4th, 2008, 3:03 am

I was riding with a friend who has an 87 or 88 H\*nda NX500 and it has a similar fork design as the F650.

I've got an early 2003 F650 and have inspected the front forks but have noted nothing unusual.

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### **Re: Catastrophic F650GS Fork Failure (#p427806)**

by **tall tony** on October 30th, 2008, 9:28 pm

Here is an email conversation I had with BMW UK on the subject:

Dear Sir,

Following numerous recent items on various internet motorcycle forums concerning catastrophic failure of the lower fork sliders on F650 GS models,I am seeking advice on the matter.

I understand that the forks were redesigned for later models with the area around the axle mountings strengthened.As this is the area that has failed I can only assume that this was as a result of problems with the original design. Due to the safety critical nature of this problem should I fit the later design forks? If so, would BMW be prepared to contribute to the expense?

I own a 2002 reg. Dakar (VIN \*\*\*\*\*) which has now covered close to 40,000mils. This motorcycle was first owned by the BMW Offroad Training School in Wales,I purchased it from my local dealer, CW Motorcycles, with around 500mils. showing.

Yours sincerely,

Tony Holt

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Dear Mr Holt

Thank you for your email dated October 16, 2008. I am sorry to learn that, following research that you have carried out on the internet, you have concerns over the functionality of your BMW F650 GS. I can appreciate the concern that this has caused you.

When a potential issue comes to light, BMW Germany carry out full investigations to ensure that any vehicles which may be affected are issued with a product enhancement. I have researched this matter on your behalf and began by reviewing the failure reports, customer feedback and part order information that BMW collate in order to determine if a fault is common. I have checked our records and I am unable to locate information which confirms that the defect you have noted is an inherent fault within our vehicle range. With this in mind, BMW would not be in a position to assist with the cost involved in replacing these components. I appreciate your concern, however, unless there is a fault with the front forks on your motorcycle, we would not see a requirement to replace them.

I have also checked your bike's specific chassis number against our records to see if there are any outstanding technical campaigns. I can advise that there is an outstanding campaign to check the wiring harness on your motorcycle. I would recommend liaising with your local BMW Approved Dealership in order to have this check completed.

I am sorry that you have had cause to write to us under such circumstances and I trust that I have been able to allay your concerns regarding your motorcycle. If you have any further queries, or if I can be of assistance to you in the future, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

BMW Motorrad UK

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## **Re: Catastrophic F650GS Fork Failure (#p427855)**

by **haakon** on October 31st, 2008, 11:47 am

*tall tony wrote:*Probably no surprises there but it does at least confirm the 'official' position.

Tony

That is just what could be expected

It makes me real sad someone has to be seriously injured or killed before they accept the design MAY have some "flaws".

I sure see the huge cost it would be to have a general recall for all the bikes with the potentially dangerous lover forks, but just ONE life lost is worth so much more!!!

I believe the they did the math... and decided to NOT act.

Not yet that is.

SAD!!!

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## **Another US Failure (#p427861)**

by **WayneC** on October 31st, 2008, 12:27 pm

he following is the text of an article written in 2004 for BMWCCA Magazine and published in BMWRA magazine "On The Level"

## ALUMINUM FAILURE

I recently experienced a component failure. Although it is not with a BMW sedan, but with a motorcycle, I thought it might be of interest to BMWCCA members as more and more BMWs use alloys, and the failure of my GS650 motorcycle fork axle flange was likely caused by a poor alloy casting.

I was travelling east on a straight 30-mph road at normal speed when the bike suddenly fell over, taking the rider down, too. Thankfully, there were witnesses, but none so close that they would run over me. I am thankful that the failure didn't occur at 70 mph. I had just crossed over railroad tracks when I hit the ground; I believe the tracks were the final jolt that caused the weakening axle flange to fail.

The bike

was a 2001 GS650 with about 1,400 miles on it, and it is the bike they advertise as their Dakar

endurance bike. You can see that the flange pulled away from fork, taking a piece of the alloy. As an engineer, I find this type of failure discomfoting because it happens so quickly and without any warning. After the accident, I checked both the floor in my shop and the spot outside my office where I parked the bike, expecting to see shock oil drips, but there were none. The only clue I had before the accident was that the front brake lever was "stiffer."

I've been driving BMWs exclusively since I was seventeen, from my first 1602 to the current 530i, and this GS650 was my first BMW Motorrad-my forty-something birthday gift. Whether you are an owner of a 650GS, or driving modern alloy equipped cars, I would advise that you do a quick check of the vehicle before every drive, as this failure was unannounced. Be sensitive to new shudders, sways, or other unfamiliar vehicle actions, as it might save your life.

I'm also quite disappointed with BMW's response. The dealer said that it was impossible for this part to fail, and that I must have been doing something unusual. BMW Motorrad hasn't responded since they got full pictures of the failure several months ago. I think they want to close their eyes and pretend it isn't a normal component failure, hoping that I was doing something strange with the bike like skydiving or some such. My friends have all grown tired over the years of hearing me sing BMW's praises. I've gotten a real earful this year as they have chided me about

how the GS650 let me down. And now, with BMW not even trying to make right this failure, I'm having a tough time defending BMW.

So, be careful, be wise, and be aware of changed vehicle characteristics. I know I will.

Jim Tussey  
Caro, Michigan

Full image of article posted at advrider

[http://www.advriders.com/forums/showpost ... tcount=195](http://www.advriders.com/forums/showpost...tcount=195)  
(<http://www.advriders.com/forums/showpost.php?p=8251159&postcount=195>)

gs fork 2004s.jpg (5.88 KiB) Viewed 788 times

Last edited by [WayneC](#) (./memberlist.php?mode=viewprofile&u=30741) on October

31st, 2008, 11:39 pm, edited 1 time in total.

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### **Re: Catastrophic F650GS Fork Failure (#p427864)**

by **haakon** on October 31st, 2008, 1:03 pm

I think everyone with the slightest interest in mechanical engineering know aluminum come in all sorts... from potmetal to extremely high tensile, high shear types.

The mechanical strength of a single component is a mix of design, the way its made and the quality of the metal used.

The way it is cast- natural pressure, sand cast, lost wax.. and all sorts of other ways to do it also is important to the strength of the part in practical use)

Showa do make top notch forks!!!! They are one of the best in making forks... (personal meaning)

IF BMW did the design, and specified how the forks were to be made (thinking \$\$\$)

The material used, the design and casting method would surely also be specified.

Showa would then make what BMW ordered.. no questions asked...

Fair enough!!... Fair enough for Showa to deliver what was specified.

NOT "fair enough" that BMW refuse to accept the forks are NOT good enough for the 650 bikes.

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### **Re: Catastrophic F650GS Fork Failure (#p430409)**

by **WayneC** on November 22nd, 2008, 8:49 pm

For those who consider the fork failures to be a rare occurrence

It was the annual Sydney Motorcycle Exhibition today and I had the opportunity to ask the proprietor of one of the smaller motorcycle insurance assessment and salvage companies here in Sydney if he had ever seen axle mount damage on an F650GS.

The proprietor pulled up on-line pictures of a repaired F650GS currently for sale on tender, he went on to describe how the axle's tear out of the RHS fork leg in exactly the manner seen in the pics and threads we have all seen recently.

The proprietor of the business went on to indicate he had assessed half a dozen F650GS and all exhibited the failure. He stated he had begun to wonder about the damage he was seeing and the strength of the forks after the second or third instance as the type of damage was extremely unusual.

The F650GS for sale was indeed an 02 model and on the repaired machine was a new style RHS and an old style LHS fork leg.

There were 300 to 400 F650GS with old forks sold Australia wide and one assessment co operating in one of 7 states has seen 6 machines with fork failures. It make you wonder how many more there really are.

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## **Re: Catastrophic F650GS Fork Failure (#p430616)**

by **Bobcatou** on November 24th, 2008, 4:44 pm

Is there a chance you can see hairline fractures with the naked eye on the fork. At least a way to check them over like everything else on your preride. Is there anyone who has taken pictures with hairline cracks before they had them repaired?  
bc

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