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Has anybody ever seen a failure like this on an early F650GS or Dakar?

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WayneC

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Which Bike?

Comments and Questions on what is the best bike for YOU, for YOUR trip. Note that we believe that ANY bike will do, so please remember that it's all down to PERSONAL OPINION. Technical Questions for all brands go in their own forum.



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24th October 2008

mcgiggle

Gold Member
Veteran HUBBer

#16

Join Date: Dec 2007
Location: buckinghamshire uk
Posts: 185

We have brought a 650 GS and are on the look out for another for our trip to India, I have been using the bike to and from work for the last 3 months and covered 5k and I don't like the bike but my wife is only 5ft 3in and we want to go on the same bikes so spares can be shared, HEEEEEEEEEEEEELP



24th October 2008

tmotten

Veteran HUBBer

#17

Join Date: Aug 2005
Location: Gold Coast, Australia.
Posts: 272

Quote:

Originally Posted by **Threewheelbonnie** ▾
The lack of a service reaction once the issue is known is the only thing we can lay at BMW's door until we know more IMHO.

Andy

I reckon the same. But unfortunately the first thing people will point fingers at are the great big badges across the bike without actually stopping to think about it or ignore arguments related to taking perspective on the issue. Ignorance I think it's called. Can't say I'm surprised it's the usual suspect again.

I don't imagine that possibilities 1 and 2 could be it though. Wasn't the 650 GS their lead up/ introduction into the 'small' 'trail' bike market that they now entered in to completely with the G range? (this is related to option 2). Option 1 seems unlikely. They've been around long enough to have enough experience to be getting this wrong.

Quote:

Originally Posted by **mollydog** ▾

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*The DR650 is the BEST short person dual sport on the market ... bar none. [Image hosting, free photo sharing & video sharing at Photobucket](#)
The DR is also as simple and reliable as a hammer. No Fuel injection, no ABS, No radiators or hoses to break (The Suzuki is Air/Oil cooled) and none of the problems that seem to plague some of the overly complex F650's.*

Mate, get off ya soapbox now and apply for a job at Sususususuki. You're sounding like a luddite. Best keep this DR because you'll be struggling to find anything air cooled with a carby soon. And thank the man for that. Let's go back to the steam engine.

Quote:

Originally Posted by **mollydog**

Showa is indeed owned by Honda. I have no idea the relationship between Showa and BMW but typically the OEM (BMW) would spec the front fork they want and Showa would provide a suitable fork.

How much interest Showa would have taken studying the bike or it's intended use is an unknown. I would think BMW would hold ultimate responsibility for testing out-sourced parts.

Sounds like this problem took years and lots of hard miles to rear it's ugly head. No one really to blame here other than the denial aspect provided by BMW. Fact is, BMW are STILL responsible no matter how much time passes or how the bike was used.

I disagree. Assuming the automotive engineering industry works the same as my engineering industry and BMW asked Showa to DESIGN the forks and not just construct them, Showa would have certified their design and are therefore responsible for their design. It's not a case of Showa 'study' BMW's internson, they would have asked for certain parameters and constraints. Providing BMW would have taking this serious and provided feedback to all information requests, BMW would only responsible for the management of the item, interface between components and dealings with the customer, which IMHO they failed miserably.

TacosTyringTravels.blogspot.com

Last edited by tmotten : 24th October 2008 at 08:32.



24th October 2008

khaylock

New on the HUBB

#18

Join Date: Oct 2008
Location: Carmarthen
Posts: 12

Quote:

Originally Posted by **tmotten**

I disagree. Assuming the automotive engineering industry works the same as my engineering industry and BMW asked Showa to DESIGN the forks and not just construct them, Showa would have certified their design and are therefore responsible for their design. It's not a case of Showa 'study' BMW's internson, they would have asked for certain parameters and constraints. Providing BMW would have taking this serious and provided feedback to all information requests, BMW would only responsible for the management of the item, interface between components and dealings with the customer, which IMHO they failed miserably.

Except that something doesn't make sense to me if that's the case. If I as a motorcycle manufacturer give you a spec and ask you to build something that meets that spec, and you deliver it to me, and then it turns out that in 1 in 100 or 1 in 200 or 1 in 300 random cases it fails to meet the spec and risks killing

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people, then why should I try and cover the fault up and not organise a recall on the installed base at your expense?

I can see the issue if it turns out that I got the spec wrong and the failures to date can all be laid at my door for not writing a robust enough spec, but conversely, if BMW could pin this on a conformance failure from Showa, wouldn't Showa have been paying for a global recall to replace the fork legs years ago?

Last edited by khaylock : 24th October 2008 at 08:58. Reason: Typos!



24th October 2008

tmotten 
Veteran HUBBer

#19 

Join Date: Aug 2005
Location: Gold Coast, Australia.
Posts: 272

I agree with your rational (not sure on what you consider a spec though). My rational was aimed at the design aspect of the problem, not the management of it. That certainly has been atrocious to say the least, but if I try hard and be impartial, it's hard to really judge without the real facts. But considering BMW's secrecy on other matters, I don't think we'll ever find out.

I like to think that the flaw is one of those things that fall outside the normal engineering boundaries, principles and experience. The handling of solving the problem is open to all sorts of conspiracy theories. And it shouldn't be. I had to bring my bike in for a triple tree recall. Don't see why a fork recall would be that much more in cost. But maybe this had something to do with corporate BMW not being convinced by the failure of the fork in the case of it falling outside those engineering boundaries and taking the approach that it's a one off that turned into a 7 off (not sure how many cases we know off). And lets hope it stay in the single digits.

TacosTyringTravels.blogspot.com



24th October 2008

khaylock 
New on the HUBB

#20 

Join Date: Oct 2008
Location: Carmarthen
Posts: 12

Quote:

Originally Posted by **tmotten** 
(not sure on what you consider a spec though).

I was thinking in terms of ThreeWheelBonnie's 'possibility 2' expressed above - that BMW have asked Showa for a design that would cope with conditions rather less extreme than the ones that the F650GS could sometimes generate when used as intended.

I come from a software development background and in software it is very often the case that software does exactly what was asked for, but not what was/is required. This distinction often has a large impact on who gets to pay to fix the problems. Is it the same in safety critical engineering I wonder?



24th October 2008

Threewheelbonnie 
Veteran HUBBer

#21 

Join Date: Apr 2008
Location: West Yorkshire UK
Posts: 398

Spec versus what is actually needed is exactly the same. You can say to your customer "we usually fit X to an off roader" but you can't force them to agree that this is that type of vehicle, especially when that version costs more. If you know what you are doing your spec says what your product WILL do and categorically

Art

- Ken "Sparky"
- MacKenzie
- Nazia Parvez
- Simon Roberts

excludes anything not directly stated. For a brake the spec is about 40 pages and reads like an insurance policy, I think a fork would be similar. Customers faced with things they didn't tell you about always try the "but you knew it had this" routine, but it is like arguing with an insurance company once the lawyers get involved, the paper spec wins nine times out of ten. If you manufacture to an agreed spec you don't pay.

I bet software also has the issue of what other people do? The electrical guy deciding to use a bit of engine for an earth is fine so long as they decide to do it before the corrosion test and talk to each other. It all falls down when it's changed after test and no one tells the engine case manufacturer. Tiny tiny changes can effect safety systems, a few Hertz of engine vibration or a new way of inserting the wheel bearing could well be the route cause of this issue, but that's total and utter speculation. These are very complex systems, hence you must go design-change-test never design-test-change.

Given the reaction of BMW I'd say Showa were correct in writing and manufacturing to the spec and hence BMW would get the bill, but this is also pure speculation.

Andy



24th October 2008

#22



chris
Super Moderator
Veteran HUBBer

Join Date: Jun 2000
Location: God's Own County
Posts: 691

My ha' penny's worth: All Beemers are shite.

<http://www.horizonsunlimited.com/hub...mw-r100gs-7766>

Glad the guy didn't die. Unless you want to lose your friends, tell them to keep away from the crap Bring Mir Werkstatt machines.

Ride safely
Chris

[Brighty's website: TheBrightStuffDotCom](#)



25th October 2008

#23



AliBaba
Veteran HUBBer

Join Date: Apr 2001
Location: Norway
Posts: 868

I'm not sure how many bikes who have had this problem (eight was mentioned on Adv-rider but I guess it's more).

BMW have used a lot of Showa shocks and they have been a mess so I have no idea why they have used Showa on the old 650GS. Well I guess it's because they are cheap..

Anyway it's not interesting that Showa made the forks, BMW has the responsibility for the final product.



25th October 2008

#24

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Compass Expeditions - Adventure Motorcycle Tours



AliBaba
Veteran HUBBer

Join Date: Apr 2001
Location: Norway
Posts: 868

Quote:

Originally Posted by **mollydog** 
*Hey Chris,
The broken rotor also is weird.*

It's a weak spot, they brake all the time. I'm on my third rotor, they usually last around 100kkm.



25th October 2008


#25 

backofbeyond 

Veteran HUBBer

Join Date: Apr 2005
Location: Oxford UK
Posts: 332

Quote:

Originally Posted by **mollydog** 
I'm really surprised more guys from the UK don't travel on the CX500/CX650 Honda (or SilverWing version?) given the stellar long life reputation as Messenger bikes in London. Tough 300,000 mile Guzzi style motor, shaft drive that does not fail, tour-able with mods perhaps?

Any thoughts on these bikes?

In '98 a friend and I rode to Copper Canyon via Baja, me on a new '98 KLR test bike, he aboard an old CX500 clapper bought for \$500. (a 1982 model with only 25,000 miles on the clock)

Regulator/Rectifier failed on first day (still in USA) we bought a new one and that was the last problem other than a cracked luggage rack which we had welded up in Creel.

Patrick 

I toured all over Europe for many years in the late 80's / early 90's on a CX650 turbo. It introduced Mrs BOB to the joys of bike touring - and she's still talking to me! Great bike with just phenomenal grunt for overtaking but really iffy handling when loaded up and marginal brakes.

It suffered from the usual CX faults - burnt out alternator, reg/rec etc and had the turbo replaced under warranty (thank god) but other than that it was just the usual stuff that you get as bikes age. Most unusual was returning from a trip to Spain with my wife (on her first long bike trip) to have the rivetts that hold the ally end caps on the silencers fracture. Every time we stopped first job was to search the gutters to find bits of wire / twigs etc - anything to jam in the holes to stop losing the caps. Nearly 20yrs on she still reminds me of it!

Sadly it dropped a valve returning from London on the motorway and destroyed the engine - something that just about every other CX owner I've ever spoken to is amazed by. As you say they usually go on for ever.



25th October 2008

#26 

khaylock 

New on the HUBB

Join Date: Oct 2008
Location: Carmarthen
Posts: 12

Quote:

Originally Posted by **AliBaba** 

I'm not sure how many bikes who have had this problem (eight was mentioned on Adv-rider but I guess it's more).

BMW have used a lot of Showa shocks and they have been a mess so I have no idea why they have used Showa on the old 650GS. Well I guess it's because they are cheap..

Anyway it's not interesting that Showa made the forks, BMW has the responsibility for the final product.

The current *known* tally (note: known to a small group of folk in a small corner of the English speaking interweb, not known to BMW) looks a bit like this. In the beginning there was 'Gertarg' who had his front wheel come off on Ruta 40 in Argentina and nearly died - broken neck, months in hospital, etc etc. He sued BMW and apparently from what he posted on Chain Gang, during 'discovery', BMW coughed to knowing of three other identical failures before they redesigned the parts. BMW settled the lawsuit. So that makes 4.

Meanwhile, just around the time BMW were switching production from the old fork castings to the new ones, in 2003, Wayne Carruthers had a fork leg on his day old Dakar fall apart at low speed and dump him head first into the ground down in Australia. That's 5.

Fast forward to 2005 when we know that Advrider user 'Giddyupgirl' hit a dog that ran under her front wheel at 40mph and was chucked off when the right hand fork apparently failed in the same recognisable way on impact. She paid for a new fork leg and carried on riding the bike for a few years. That's 6.

Then last year we had Loud Al, also off Advrider, who suddenly found that his Dakar wouldn't turn left any more in a left hand bend on a tarmac road at about 45-50mph - which could have been rider error but might well have been his right hand fork leg failing - and he then straightened up and braked to ride off into the adjacent bumpy but clear run off, whereupon he was chucked on his head and found that his fork leg had failed. Again, when it was bodged back together with wire the bike was rideable, wheel was still round, etc etc. That's 7.

Those last two never reported anything to anybody until they saw the thread on Advrider, by the way, but the pictures and their contemporaneous accounts tell the story.

Then there was an anonymous individual who works for a motorcycle related business in the US whose personal Dakar suffered the same failure last year (photos have been seen by myself and the lady whose bike is pictured at the top of this thread) but bloke is keeping his head down to keep his job). That's 8.

Then there is Red Baroness, whose bike features at the top of this thread. That's 9.

Then there is SGK3 on Advrider, who had the same thing happen to his Dakar a couple of weeks after Red Baroness had hers. Again, all documented with pictures. So that makes a nice round 10.

If there was a statistician in the house, it might be interesting to consider that six of the bikes that we know this happened to were definitely US bikes. Others may have been, but six were definitely bought from dealers in the US. Numbers that I've seen from recall notices would tend to suggest that approximately 10% of Global F650GS & Dakar production in earlier years went to the US, and I believe that there were approximately 43,000 bikes with the early pattern forks shipped worldwide, give or take the odd couple of thousand. So that would mean that

there were approximately 4,200 F650GS & Dakar bikes sold in the USA.

Put another way, one in 700 US early F650GS or Dakar owners are *known* to have had a catastrophic fork failure (with pictures or a witness statement as corroboration).

What percentage of US F650GS owners do we think are on the internet? What percentage do we believe are active on the Advrider board? What percentage of accidents involving an F650GS suddenly veering out of control and impacting something solid or fast moving with fatal results were never attributed to a fork failure after the motorcycle was obliterated by an impact?

If you think that half the F650GS/Dakar owners in the USA are on Advrider, and have read that thread then I *think* that means that you 'only' have a 1 in 350 chance of your forks failing if you ride an early F650GS/Dakar in the US. If you think that only 10% of American F650GS/Dakar riders are on the US Advrider board, that *might* mean that you have a 1.5% chance of having your forks collapse during the life of the bike.

However, I freely admit that stats aren't my strong point.

If that *is* correct, though, then that would put the worldwide fork failure numbers from the 40,000+ machines with the older forks in circulation at something like 600!

If the KSI rate mirrors the rate in our Advrider sample, and we go with our worst case '10%' derived figure of 600 total, then there will be a hundred people suffering only a wallet injury, 200 slight injuries and 300 KSI.

At this point I start to doubt my maths, because if the global magnitude of the problem is that great, BMW can surely expect to be sued back to the stone age in due course, can they not?

Scary stuff if I'm right, though...

Last edited by khaylock : 25th October 2008 at 06:00. Reason: Missing word...



25th October 2008

#27



mollydog
Moderated Users
Veteran HUBBer

Join Date: Aug 2003
Location: california
Posts: 1,483

[quote=AliBaba;212248]I'm not sure how many bikes who have had this problem (eight was mentioned on Adv-rider but I guess it's more). Cheap? Well, "Cheap" suspension All about money. So this is up to BMW.

Last edited by mollydog : 22nd March 2009 at 08:09.



25th October 2008

#28

Max Dongo
HUBB regular

Join Date: Jul 2007
Posts: 35

Have there been any similar reports about Aprilia Pegasos? And where were the components manufactured? This looks like a metallurgical issue.

Last edited by Max Dongo : 25th October 2008 at 07:24.




25th October 2008

#29



I did not mean that this have happened eight times worldwide, sadly no one know how many times it has happened. Personally I am not a fan of the old 650GS, but this should not happen with any bike.


Quote:

Originally Posted by **mollydog** 
Cheap? Well, with Showa you can choose to buy "Cheap" suspension components or expensive ones. All about money. So this is up to BMW. After all, Showa supply components for everything from 80cc kids bikes to Formula One race cars.

Yes, as I said " **Anyway it's not interesting that Showa made the forks, BMW has the responsibility for the final product.**


It looks like you liked Chris story of broken shocks, it wouldn't surprise me if they were Showa. But again, that's BMWs responsibility.

Quote:

Originally Posted by **mollydog** 
I have never seen a KYB, WP or Showa component fail in an unprovoked manner ever. In desert racing and in Baja lots of weird and unpredictable failures can happen but so far I've not heard of a fork breaking in race use. (although it may have happened.... it is not common)

Well, in this thread alone there is 7-10 broken Showa forks and BMW have probably a history of thousands broken shocks from Showa. I'm not sure if WP made the triple clamps for KTM back in 2002 but they broke. KTM handled it pretty good!

Quote:


Originally Posted by **mollydog** 
My guess is BMW simply buy an "off the shelf" item from Showa. Showa would take no part in testing or spec-ing out the shock or forks. It's all up to the BMW to figure out what component is best for the particular bike.


I agree, but on the other hand 95% (at least) of the forks are still working and a lot of them have been beaten pretty badly. Many of the forks (or most according to Adv-rider) have broken at low mileage.

For me this looks like a production problem, the quality differs from one shock to the next. Agree?

But the bike is BMW badge, and BMW should be blamed.

Quote:

Originally Posted by **mollydog** 
If Showa items are failing on BMW's or causing problems can we assume Showa products have similar problems on the thousands of other bikes they are used on?

That's an interesting statement! So you say that Showa sell good product to the big four and crap products to BMW? Well, it would explain why I think Showa is crap and you like them. 



Quote:

Originally Posted by **Max Dongo**
Have there been any similiar reports about Aprilia Pegasos? And where were the components manufactured? This looks like a metallurgical issue.

The old Aprilia-built F650 Strada/Funduro series built in the 90s are not in question here. In the year 2000, BMW brought the F650 'in house', more or less redesigning it from scratch to avoid having to pay royalties to the Italians, and presumably to avoid any N.I.H. internal politics at the same time. So it's the early F650GS that is at issue, built between 2000 and the end of 2002 when the new forks were fitted to every bike.



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WayneC

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