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TECH STUFF

Here's a quick checklist for pulling your bike out of storage

Preparing for Motorcycle Riding Season

1. Remove your bike from storage. First things first. Remove the cover and any blocks that were used to keep your bike in place during winter storage, as well as any plugs or covers from the exhaust pipes. This is also the time to wash away any wax you may have applied to protect the frame, rims and chain.
2. Change the engine oil and spark plugs. Many bike manufacturers recommend that in addition to regular scheduled oil changes, you should change the engine oil and filter prior to storage and in the spring. During storage, the oil can separate causing a condensation buildup that may harm your engine. While you're there, replace the spark plugs. Be sure to set the gaps to the recommended manufacturer's setting using a gap setting tool. You will also want to check and clean your carburetor, replace the air filter and check the transmission fluid.
3. Check the battery. Since you probably removed the battery for storage and kept it charged, all you have to do is clean the cables and terminals with a wire brush, grease and reconnect. Depending on your battery, you may have to fill the cells with distilled water. If your bike has a fuse box, it's a good time to check the fuses and replace if necessary. It's also a good idea to have some spares on hand.
4. Flush the cooling system. You need to flush and replace the old antifreeze with a proper coolant. Be sure to check for cracks in all hoses and replace if necessary.
5. Check the fuel system. Replace the fuel filter and examine the fuel tank, fuel lines and fittings for cracks and leaks. If your bike has a petcock, turn the fuel system to "ON." If there is a "PRIME" option, turn to it for about 20 seconds, then to "ON." After burning the fuel from storage, add a fuel cleaner the next few times you fill your tank.
6. Check the brakes. When it comes to safety, brakes may be the most important part of a bike and time should be spent checking them on a regular basis. Inspect the brake pads and discs for wear. Check the brake lines for cracks. Lubricate the front brake hand lever and throttle cables. Check and fill the brake fluid level or replace if dirty.
7. Inspect the frame and suspension. Visually inspect the frame for hairline cracks around the engine and transmission brackets. Inspect the handlebars for cracks and oil the cable connections. If needed, tighten all nuts, bolts and mounting brackets. Adjust the fork and lube all bearings. Lastly, inspect the rear shocks and fender mounting hardware and grease the side stand.
8. Check the tires, wheels and chain. Check the tires for cracks, worn treads and correct tire pressure. Inspect the rims for dents and carefully tighten any loose spokes. Grease the bearings. Check for wear on the chain and sprockets. You will also want to check and adjust the chain slack.
9. Prepare to ride safely. Even after all the mechanical components have been checked, you should never ride a bike without proper safety precautions. Inspect the headlight, including high and low beams, the taillights, brake light, turn signals, instrument panel lights and horn. Take the time to clean and adjust the mirrors. It is also important to wear the proper gear, such as a good helmet, eye and face protection and protective clothing, even on short trips.
10. Be sure you're covered. After making all the routine checks listed above, check your insurance policy and review your coverages to make sure they meet your current needs. If you have added any custom parts or equipment, you'll want to make sure they are covered.

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Attending were artists like Doug Powles from Painted Horse, Inc in Harvard, Pete Stasukevich from Airbrush by Stach in Beloit and Rich Keylard from Bartlett. There were musicians, like old school country jam band Last One Standing, who I met at a Brothers, MC farmhouse party out west of Elgin. There was Legendary Rocker Mike Tafoya (from Lost Boyzz), who I met at the annual Brothers Rising MC Toys for Tots in Waukegan. Tafoya came and played his heart out with some extremely soulful blues riffs and rock-a-fied ballads that defy description.



Listen, I'd like to thank Preacher for the opportunity to write a few lines about folks who love riding. Because when that engine hums and throbs, all the crap those other folks wallow in can just fade away. When I get on my bike I can breathe like it's my first time ever taking a breath. I don't care if it's raining or snowing or what. People ask, "don't you get cold?" Yeah man, I freeze. They ask, "does the wind hurt?" Oh yeah, it just rips me apart. What else do they want to know? Is the sun hot? I'm fried. Is the rain wet? I'm soaked.



I don't know what else to say. That's just how it is. Next time I'll give everybody some writing tips. It's the research that's difficult, I swear.

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