



Project GT

Flat track style without the pain

I'VE really enjoyed our time with the Hyosung GT650. I've taken it on weekend rides with friends, ridden it to work at 5am in the morning in the fog, and enjoyed Sunday morning blasts across the mountain for a hot breakfast with my mates.

Cultivating the look

One thing which has stood out in all this time is the heads this bike has turned. Sure it looks great standard, but I reckon I've tweaked it just enough to make it stand out even more.

In café racer form we tidied up the rear, put some stickers on, added some clip-ons and rear sets and put a 'fruity' pipe on to give the beast some bark.

To be honest I was never that fond of the bike in café racer form because I found the riding position uncomfortable. It was all right for shorter rides but not much fun for 100 kilometres. Plus the length of the standard GT clutch cable made it hard to route with the GT650R handlebars. It made the pull of the clutch lever harder than standard because of this, and if I was to do it again I would get an 'R' clutch cable to alleviate this problem.

Dennis, Cycle Torque's advertising manager and resident 'retrophile' loved riding the bike, especially with his cool leather jacket and gold metalflake open faced helmet. There's been a number of factory café racer styled bikes built over the years, and I reckon the Hyosung looks as good as any, especially with the all black look.

Flat trackin'

Not long after the last story on the bike, Cycle Torque sent it to Staintune (www.staintune.com.au) to get a new muffler. The original idea was to build a twin system, as in two mufflers coming out the back. I was especially keen on this idea but it would prove to be too difficult a job to design and make in the short time they had the bike so a regular reverse cone megaphone was adapted to fit the standard header pipe. I'll let you be the judge but it looks horn to me. Not only that it sounds absolutely spot on, with just the right amount of muted throatiness. You won't offend anyone because it's too loud but they'll certainly know you've ridden past, and on something which sounds much tougher than a 'commuter bike' as some people like to think of the Hyosung. I can tell you that this bike is much more than that, as any of the guys who've ridden it will attest.

The other thing that impressed me was how good the fueling was with the Staintune muffler. Nice and crisp on the throttle, with no missing or farting anywhere in the rev range. I would say plenty of aftermarket muffler manufacturers say their products will do this but it's not so often the case in reality.

To test if it actually made more power we handed the bike over to Dyno Bike Solutions at Raymond Terrace just north of Newcastle (02 4987 2344). Head man Gavin Schofield ran the bike up on the dyno with the standard muffler, and then the Staintune unit and came back with a reading of 1.5hp



above stock at its peak. So, we weren't hallucinating. There was also a handy six per cent increase in torque. This doesn't tell the full story though because the mid range is loads fatter again, and this is where the bike is ridden most.

This muffler is a standard reverse cone made by Staintune for a number of different models and costs around \$700. Ours was modified to fit the Hyosung and if you had a one-off custom job like this you'd have to pay a bit extra for the time to fit it. Most of the time you buy the mufflers through bike shops which are Staintune stockists, but for custom stuff go direct to Staintune.

So, we got the sound right, what about the look? I love the flat track look, which is all about being stripped down and lean. It's a look which shouts 'competition', as if there's nothing on the bike which isn't for a purpose. No frills, no crap.

I had a Harley-Davidson XR750 seat which I wanted to fit. After I pulled off the rider and pillion seats, and the surrounding bodywork I realised it was to be a tougher job than first anticipated. It all centred around raised tubing which held lots of bits and bobs and would make the XR seat sit way too high. It was getting in the way so it had to come off. As I was about to get to work with a hacksaw Cycle Torque's editor walked in the shed and yelled "stop, what do you think you are doing?" I set about telling him an artist was about to transform the look of the GT650, but unfortunately although he could see my vision he couldn't come to grips with how I was about to turn this vision into form. Anyway, after a chat about what I wanted to achieve, and the fact it wasn't my bike, I decided to stick with what we'd already done for the café racer look, where we'd pulled off the pillion hand rails and the number plate bracket, making our own tail tidy.

Flat trackers don't have front guards so that had to come off, taking me about 30 seconds. I tried to fit a set of taller handlebars we had lying around but the standard length brake hose, clutch cable, and wiring for the starter and blinkers etc was too short. It might have only taken me 30 seconds to take the front guard off but I spent an hour working out the taller bars wouldn't work. That's OK, I liked the riding position anyway.

I'd already bought a set of red metalflake handgrips and was looking forward to getting them on. When I ordered them I never bothered to look at the size. Well, they were too big, but all was not lost, they'll go on my dad's Norton when he's not looking. I can imagine the look on his face when he pulls the covers off it for the next ride.

While he wasn't looking I also 'borrowed' the cool 'bar end mirrors off the Cycle Torque Ducati 851, and with only a minimum of work they bolted straight on into the ends of the standard handlebars.

You can see by the photo of the Harley-Davidson flat track replica this was the look I was trying to achieve without making wholesale changes to the Hyosung. I think it's worked well. There's more you could do, like covering the seats in some funky material, custom painting the tank and body panels, or even as little as getting a new Hyosung sticker for the tank in some retro font.

One thing's for sure I'll miss the 'Hyo'. Everyone who's checked it out has made positive comments on the modifications I've done, and it's a cracking bike.

- Alex Pickett