

SUPERMOTO SET-UP



**Words by
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available are fashioned for the high-powered 'Superbike' (17" wheels) type bikes and as such are only available for the larger tyre sections (160-190 for the rear, 110-120 for the front). What's more because these tyres are radials (i.e. not much side-wall strength) they require wide rims (4.5"-6" for the rear 3.5" up for the front) to retain their desired shape.

Now what we are wanting is to get the best road tyre available onto our dirt bikes which with their (comparatively) limited power have a much smaller rim width. This combined with a dirt bikes larger rim diameter means your tyre choice for standard wheels are somewhat limited.

However the relatively modest horsepower outputs of most dirt bikes mean that not having the big (heavy) super sticky tyres isn't the huge disadvantage it might at first seem.

KNOBBLIES

The easiest and certainly the cheapest way to go (we're told) is to simply put an old knobbly onto your bike and if necessary hack the knobs back with a sharp knife. If the knobs are too big/long the bike tends to 'walk' as the knobs bend under load on the track and can unpredictably roll you off the edge of the tyre when you are lent over.

Cost: An hours labour?

Effectiveness: You'll have a laugh with reasonably predictable sliding but don't blame us if the tyre decides it's your turn to taste the tarmac.

Road tyres on standard rims:

There's a number of choices

here but remember it doesn't have to be a great big wide tyre. As an example for the rear of a 250-motocross bike you could probably go down in tyre section from your dirt tyre. Getting the most use out of the tyre may mean you want to try and retain its profile by not 'pulling in' the sides of the tyre so much with your narrower rim.

Examples: ME33 Metzeler (90/90), D404F Dunlop (80/90) 21" fronts or TT100 Dunlop 110/100x18 or 100/90x19 Rears.

Cost: \$350-\$400 a set.

Effectiveness: You're cooking. (See 'Brakes') Welcome to high speed cornering.

ROAD TYRES ON ADAPTED RIMS

As mentioned earlier the 'ideal (rear) tyre' is designed for 4.5" rim (which generally won't fit on your bike) but there are a number of 4" rims off smaller road bikes that can be bought from wreckers and adapted to fit. Tyre shape won't be ideal but choice of tyre is greatly enhanced.

Examples: D208 Dunlop 160/60 Rear 120/70 Front

Cost: \$350-\$400 for the wheels plus fitting and \$650-\$800 for a set of tyres

Effectiveness: You're on fire. Now you can swap from dirt to road simply by changing wheels!

ROAD & RACE TYRES ON PURPOSE BUILT WHEELS

4.25" rims seem to be the favored compromise for rear rims. Problem is they're not readily available as an alloy. The

AS a generalization a supermoto bike is simply a dirt bike adapted to ride on seal. Yet it's quite surprising just how easy it is to adapt. In fact the first real hurdle to having a go is not the bike, it's getting you suited up.

Now you dirt boys are a pretty hard bunch and might fire yourself at the surrounding vegetation on occasion but this is a whole new neighborhood. In this neighborhood not only can you get beaten up, but you can get bitten too. The abrasive qualities of hitting asphalt at speed are not to be taken lightly. For Race Day you should always be in leathers (2 piece at least) as well as leather gloves, boots and of course a certified helmet. Your MX helmet with goggles and boots are fine and for the purposes of having a demo you might get away with a cordura jacket and pants.

So on the protection front it is worth talking (nicely) to your

road riding buddies, local road racer, bike shop, or try to hire* a set. The alternative is to front up with the cash and buy yourself a set of sturdy leathers (plenty of ventilation is advised) before you venture out.

There are a number of ways to approach 'taking to the streets', from grabbing the oldest knobbly off the rubbish pile and cutting the knobs down to shelling out \$600-\$900 on the stickiest road race tyres on the planet. So outlined here are the choices and ball park costs of each set up.

WHEELS & TYRES

As with racing on any surface for Supermoto ultimately you want to have the greatest traction available. Supermoto being run primarily on tarmac this invariably means you want the stickiest road race tyre and herein lies a problem.

The stickiest road/race tyres



SUPERMOTO

4.25" option doesn't compromise the tyre shape as much and gives you an even wider variety of tyres to choose from.

Example: Rennsports Metzeler RS1/2 160/60 Rear 120/70 front.

Cost: \$1600-\$3000 for the wheels plus \$650-\$850 for a set of tyres.

Effectiveness: The bollocks, acceleration and cornering sorted. Obviously there's a huge selection of tyres available from other manufacturers as well. Avon for example produce the Gripster AV37/38 which we're sure would make a great wet weather tyre, just remember to measure things up beforehand.

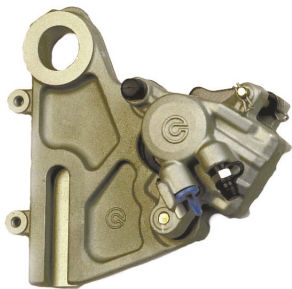
BRAKES



Does the chain clear the tyre? Now we've got you moving how do we get you stopped?

You can get away with standard brakes but you do run the risk of damaging the standard front brake rotor. As (handy dirt/road racer) Mark Whyte told me, after running a standard set up on his RM250 at the Paeroa street meeting a few years back, "they become fairly ineffective after 3 or 4 laps"

To be fair your brake rotor



(caliper and master cylinder) isn't designed to cope with the high level of force now afforded by your newfound traction. Really a standard disc and pads may handle a few hard laps of Supermoto abuse but if you want to be sure of a trouble free

day you really should upgrade at least your brake rotor.


Some options are:

1. Bolt on a larger brake rotor and make a simply bracket to extend the mounting point of your caliper or buy an aftermarket kit that does the job properly.
2. As above but get a higher spec caliper to increase the power you put into the rotor.
3. As above but grab a bigger master cylinder and get a braided line made up as well. This will give you a better 'feel' and mean you won't have to pull the brakes on so hard, with increased stopping power.

You can buy all the above from a motorcycle wrecker or get your local motorcycle dealer to get it in ready made kit form from places like Crown Kiwi

Enterprises in New Plymouth.

Pre Track Requirements.

A few little safety requirements need to be addressed before you put your bike on the trailer pre event. Your coolant needs to be replaced with 100% water, all mirrors, lights and indicators removed and your sump plug needs to be drilled and safety wired. Those little tasks completed, you're converted. 



World Supermoto Update. Busy Boys

You wouldn't describe it as so much as a hum of activity more like a gut trembling rumble. First off Husqvarna motorcycle importer Dallas Rankine has been seen with 1 of only 300 special factory built Nox supermotard racers, rumored to be Whibley ridden come November. It's lovely.

We know road racer Simon Turner is already blasting about on his new factory supermotard Husaberg racer. And now we've learned of BSL and Britten racer Stephen Briggs, securing a factory 660 KTM. Briggs is currently flat out converting a KTM 380SX to get himself up to speed.

It seems wherever we go we hear of Motards coming together. We have entries for our own event coming in from all over the country.

Ex Superbike Champ Chris Haldane and a number of his customers have their own WR's decked out and ready for action. Roll on April 27 for the 'weigh in' at Taupo. (See bottom panel)

MNZ CHIEF RESIGNS

By the time you read this MNZ's David Appleton (CEO) will have left the organization. Upon hearing of his resignation a number of people became concerned for the well being of the World Supermoto event. Appleton who was instrumental in getting the round to New Zealand is contracted part time back to MNZ to see the World Supermoto project through to completion. Appleton told Bike Mart, "We're so close now, and I'd hate to see the event not come to fruition. With the amount of time I've invested I'm absolutely rapt that we're able to come to this arrangement and I can help put the final details together."

TRACK DAY

Kiwi Rider along with Bike Mart is having a "Supermoto Demo Race Day" at Taupo on 27 April. (See the ad on page 9 of the enclosed Bike Mart) So come along and bring your Motocrosser, F650, Navigator, Dominator, TDM, TTR, XR, KLX, or whatever. Borrow some leathers, slip on a road or tight pattern tyre and have a go or at least have a look at what your missing. Shayne King (and other top racers) will be there to demonstrate and give basic instruction. See you there.

* If you need a set of leathers and are doing the Kiwi Rider Bike Mart Demo Day, ring us by 19 April on 094165307 with your sizes and we may be able to hire you a set).

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