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Tall Seats and Other Oddities

By:

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I am a relatively new motorcycle rider and a brand new rider of a BMW R1150R, so when I went from the flat-footed security of cruiser-style riding to the somewhat precarious perch atop a 30" tall BMW, I knew that I'd just slid backwards down the learning curve. Now I would need to start worrying about all sorts of new hazards that mostly boil down to "Can I get a foot on the ground if I stop here?" and "Can I get a foot SECURELY on the ground if I stop here?"

The first outing on the new Beemer was a ride down Highway 35 to Rockport to meet Mike Murphy and his Bay City friends for lunch and then up to Goliad State Park for the night. When I got to the restaurant the parking lot was full. My initial parking attempt snugged the bike up against some sort of utility shed. I got off the bike, removed my gear, and started to walk away but then thought better of that location. The bike would be invisible to cars coming in one of the entrances, and it could get sideswiped. I got back on the bike, started it up and proceeded to do a U-turn in the parking lot, or rather, attempted to do a U-turn. Next thing I knew, we were both on the ground. That BMW salesman's last words to me as I departed the dealership were still ringing in my head, "Remember: always trust the bike." Apparently I didn't heed his advice. Okay, so I got that first "drop" over with early, albeit at just 230 miles on the clock. But now I won't have to worry about the "when" part any more.

The motorcycle was about three months old when I first heard the classic "cage" driver exclamation. You know the one. The reply, of course, is "Yes, BMW also makes motorcycles." Even among rider groups, my pretty red bike is always the object of curiosity, and I find myself hovering like a nervous mama when others want to sit on it. *Everyone* wants to sit on this bike. Maybe it's that bulbous gas tank, or the odd quirky front fender, or the fact that absolutely

nothing about this motorcycle remotely resembles a cruiser. I was recently asked by a well-meaning cruiser rider why I'd removed the air filter housing.

Once the gas station stops on this bike ceased to be an adrenalin-laden adventure for me, I could relax a little more, not worry so much about the height, and realize that over all, this motorcycle is significantly easier to handle than a cruiser. It's lighter, that boxer twin gives it a low CG, and it has a tighter turning radius. Hmmmm. Maybe I don't have so far to travel back up that learning curve, after all.