



BUYING A USED MOTORCYCLE

TAKE A FRIEND WHO KNOWS THE MOTORCYCLE MANUFACTURE TYPE AND HAS KNOWLEDGE !

Don't go to buy a bike on your own if you can avoid it. Take a friend who knows about motorcycles, the BRAND and who will look past the shiny bits and be the voice of reason.

They will also be useful as the 'bad cop' in haggling over the final price if you decide to buy, not to mention being essential back-up.

Oh, and, AVOID VANS/TRAILERS AND THE LIKE!

Buying expensive things from the back of vans, trailers and the like is never a good idea, and bikes are no different.

If you really have to do it, then make sure its somewhere public and covered by CCTV.

Ideally always buy from the owner's house and ensure you go inside to do the paperwork – it might not be their house or their bike!

ENGINE

As the most expensive component on the motorcycle, the motor is key. If it's not right, the rest of the machine makes little difference. You need to hear it starting, running and ideally take it for a test ride so that the engine gets up to full operating temperature and you can make sure all gears engage correctly, all electrical components are functioning and you are generally happy with what you are going to shell out for.

Four-strokes should not smoke at all! Throttle response should be crisp and immediate, clutch action should be smooth and progressive and the transmission should not be jerky or noisy.

If the owner claims to have carried out recent rebuilds, find out why and **ASK FOR RECEIPTS** that show the work was done by a reputable company.

If the owner will not let you ride the bike – then ask them to run the bike up and down and go through the gears. If they say no – you might need to ask yourself **WHY!**

FRAME

Any second hand motorcycle you buy should show absolutely no signs of frame damage. Any indication of impacts, cracks or repairs – do not buy. Have a look from the back and the front and try to spot whether anything is out of line. Is the subframe twisted, are the forks straight when the handlebars are, does the saddle sit correctly on the frame rails? Check around the steering-head and major weld points for any signs of stress.

SUSPENSION

OK so it's going to be difficult to test this without a test ride; don't be surprised if the seller or dealer won't allow you to rip down the road and risk never being seen again. But what you can check on the suspension is for smooth action, that there are no squeaks or grinding noises, and all the components look cared for. Forks should be entirely free from



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oil and any pitting on the stanchions and should move freely. It's not a big job to change fork seals, but it's a pain and even more so on a big adventure bike.

As for the rear shock, this could similarly move freely and show no signs of leaks. A new unit or rebuild will cost, so if you see problems either don't buy or use it as a major bargaining point if you are entirely confident what the problem is.

BEARINGS

You need to be checking all the bearings on any bike you're looking to buy whether dirt bike, adventure motorcycle or road bike. Starting with the round bits, that means grabbing hold of both wheels and trying to rock them sideways on the spindle. If they won't budge, that's good but if they move it's not. Changing wheel bearings is not difficult, but it's an indication whether the seller has looked after the machine as much as they say. Another bargaining point if you're sure that's the extent of the issue.

Head bearing can also become worn and notchy. On they tend to stay in the same position for miles on end so tend to wear in the same central position.

So, with the bike upright, hold the front brake on and rock the bike back and forth to check there is no play in the steering head.

If the bike has a center stand, put the bike on it and with the front wheel off the ground – get the owner to push down on the back of the bike – check the bars move left to right easily and without any sign of tight spots or notches. Then move to the front of the bike, and again with the front wheel off the ground, hold the bottom of the forks and see whether there is any movement in the steering head when you try to rock the forks back and forward.

DRIVE TRAIN

The more a motorcycle gets used, the more the chain, sprockets, and Drive Belt wears. Any second hand motorcycle you buy should not need these replaced.

Full replacement could be costly so ideally this shouldn't be something you have to do immediately after buying. If the sprockets or drive pulley or the chain knackered and rusty, chances are that's what the rest of the bike is like under those shiny plastics.

CABLES AND WIRING

All the cables and wires on your prospective purchase should be in good condition and do exactly what they should. Throttles should snap back as the manufacturer intended, clutches should be smooth and progressive and any other associated cables should be free running and functional. Replacements are so cheap on most machines, there's little excuse for not replacing. If the seller says the clutch cable is stiff, there's a chance that the clutch is at fault not the cable, so beware.

Electrical wires should all look original and unmolested, not exposed or badly repaired and all electrical components should be in working order.



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BRAKES

Things that are going to bring your new bike to a stop, the brakes are an important part of the package. Check that all discs are the correct thickness, unworn and free from scoring. Pads should have plenty of braking material left on them and fluids should look new and light in color, not brown and murky. Check over the hydraulic hoses for signs of wear and leakage, make sure all the bleed nipples are in place, don't look seized, and are not weeping fluid.

WHEELS AND TIRES

The wheels should be in good condition, run straight and be free from defects. In general tires can be quickly and easily replaced, but factor this into your offer if you will need to do this before the bike is safe. If they're more than Five Years old or in bad condition, consider this in your offer.

BODYWORK / DAMAGE

Bodywork is singularly the worst indication of the motorcycles condition. New fairings and plastics on bikes might make it look pretty but that can hide a multitude of sins underneath.

Don't be dazzled by pretty colors and don't necessarily be put off by scratched panels – it's what is underneath that matters.

IF A BIKE LOOKS GOOD, DON'T THINK YOU DON'T NEED TO CHECK EVERYTHING

PAPERWORK, PAPERWORK, PAPERWORK

I CAN NOT STRESS THIS ENOUGH! VERRY, VERRY IMPORTANT !!

If you are buying privately you need to see as much paperwork as possible. For a registered motorcycle this will obviously start with the log book and, but don't take this as gospel. Make sure the engine and frame numbers match to what it says on the paperwork or it may be a ringer. A string of previous repairs with receipts for work done is good news.