



LONGTERMER SUZUKI DL1000XT V-STROM

# SOLID GROUND

Words: Paul



## Booking the Suzuki V-Strom in with the suspension gurus of MotoSR might just be the best upgrade yet.

Let's face it, if you're looking to ride a big bike semi-seriously off road, you're going to need to make a few modifications to get it working properly. The constraints of budgets, combined with the concessions required to make a good road bike, understandably leads to the manufacturers coming up with a middle ground which 'kind of' suits the majority. When you're positioned outside of that pigeonhole, well, you need to take matters into your own hands.

Pulling into MotoSR headquarters and it's still difficult to comprehend the fact you're not greeted by the ever-enthusiastic Richie Ebbett. Instead, long-time friend and business partner Scotty Brooker greeted me and the V-Strom with vigour, as he's been

chomping at the bit to get his hands on the BRM DL1000XT.

Having owned an earlier V-Strom himself which he trekked around the country on with his fiancée, Scotty has an affection for V-Stroms, and more importantly, knows just how good they can be made. Taking into account my size, the luggage – which normally has a few kilos of camera gear in it – and then trying to ascertain the sort of riding I'm doing, Scotty needed the bike for a few days to work his magic, so I left the V-Strom with him.

The MotoSR service essentially comes in two varieties – a simple re-valve if your bike's springs are correctly set for you, or you'll need a new set of springs thrown into the mix as well. Scotty uses American firm RG3

for all his suspension components, with the motorcycle suspension experts providing top-quality valves and springs – along with Scotty's valuable knowledge – which helps him find the right setting from the outset.

### SORTING THE STROM

"The suspension on the V-Strom although very soft, is decent quality and very tuneable once inside," explained Scotty as I turned up a few days later to collect my (hopefully) much-improved ride. "Your bike, like many others, was way too soft – under-sprung and with very light valving. It was so soft that as a rider you feel every bump, big or small. This also makes the bike feel heavy and far from nimble. Basically, it's not very nice to ride and miles away from the bike's potential."



After looking at the suspension, it soon became apparent that I was asking too much from the stock springs, so Scotty fitted some heavier ones, and then – with a re-valve – was able to provide me with better settings (compression and rebound damping), meaning the V-Strom was now much more suitable for what I was using it for.

“Most – not all, but most – big road and adventure bikes need springs and certainly without a doubt, a re-valve/service to unlock their full potential,” explained Scotty. “We advise owners on what they need and can work with their budget to achieve the optimum settings with your machine,” he continued. “This MotoSR suspension re-valve/service costs \$1453 – that’s a full re-valve/service, full set of springs and we removed and refitted the suspension to the bike. If you’re riding a bike like say, an Africa Twin, V-Strom or big KTM worth anywhere between \$17-\$27,000 and we can improve your suspension handling, comfort and safety for \$1000-\$1500, it’s not a lot of money to spend to turn your cool bike into a great bike. It’s worth a phone call at least.”

### TESTING TIMES

Picking the V-Strom up off its stand was the first shock, with the Suzuki no longer settling on its springs, but instead standing up in its stroke. What does that mean? Well, the softer springs let the bike sink through the

suspension’s travel under its own weight, and that’s before sticking 100 kilos of me, 20+kilos of luggage and anything else on its back. Now, the V-Strom stands proud, letting you know that you’ve still got plenty of travel left in the suspension to soak up the lumps and bumps.

Heading out onto the roads and the transformation is dramatic, with the V-Strom feeling taut and purposeful when being flicked through corners. Grabbing the excellent brakes no longer results in the Suzuki doing a nose-stand, with the firmer damping again, holding the forks up in their stroke. But the sign of a good suspension set-up is what it feels like in normal conditions, and the new MotoSR tune makes me feel like I could double the distance I’m able to ride, simply due to the increased comfort. Bumps aren’t transferred through to the saddle, the input required to get the bike turning is less, which results in less fatigue. It’s a no-brainer.

Having ridden the Africa Twin – which MotoSR also did the suspension tune on – I knew the V-Strom was likely to be pretty good, but the difference is night and day. Okay, it’s still a road-biased machine, so I’m unlikely to be leaping over rocks like our test on the Honda earlier in this magazine. But with the better damped and sprung suspension now featuring a full range of adjustment from what is now a great set-up, it’s certainly going to give the Suzuki a bit more of a fighting chance off road. I can’t wait to find out. ■■■

Pre-load now has plenty of adjustment



Forks are firmer, yet still compliant

