

trail notes

BITS AND PIECES



FAIR DINKUM GAS GAS

At Fair Dinkum Bike Tours in Cairns we've taken on the new Gas Gas EC 450 as our long-term test bike for our Cape York rides. Why a Gas Gas, you ask? I've used different bikes in previous years such as Yamahas, KTMs and Hondas, and as we use bulletproof Suzuki DR-Z400s as our hire bikes we wanted to try something a little different.

I rode a Gas Gas 450 on a Cape ride back in 2007. I liked it a lot. It was easy to ride with good power and good fuel economy. It has been a bike I wanted to ride full-time since.

With help from Dean Arbouin at Bits for Bikes, our local Cairns Gas Gas dealer, I picked up the new bike recently and began getting it ready for Cape York riding. Here's part one of a three-part series from our initial setup to a progressive report on the bike during our 2011 season.



STARTING OFF

First impression is it's a great-looking bike with all the quality fittings. This means you don't have to go and spend more money on accessories. It's also great value for money as RRP is \$11,995 plus ORC.

First mod we did was to fit a quality alloy bash plate from Force Accessories. We relocated the horn from the RH radiator shroud to behind the headlight.

We fitted a Clarke 10.5-litre clear long-range tank which utilises the standard shrouds and fuel pump.

We lock-wired the throttle cable to the adjustment screw in the throttle housing so it doesn't get snagged on full throttle.

We didn't like the way the seat bolted on so we rang Lee at Main Jet Motorcycles in Victoria. He's a font of knowledge and makes some nice mods for the Gasser. He supplied the Quick

Release Kit for the seat which is a much better option for easy maintenance.

We added a 22mm front axle nut to replace the standard allen key bolt and a retainer spring for the LH rear axle block so that we could swap the rear axle around with the axle nut on the disc side of the bike to make adjustment and removal easier.

Another tip is to waterproof with silicone the starter and thermo fan solenoids which are located under the battery box. When they get wet they short out. The fan will start up on its own, draining the battery.

After the first ride we tensioned the spokes and found the steering head bearings loose. This is just a simple matter of loosening the top triple clamp bolts and tightening the centre lock nut.

We'll keep you updated on the gasser in part two of our story.