

Objectivity. Definition (according to Bing Dictionary): ob-jec-tiv-i-ty [òb jek tívYtee], NOUN, 1. ability to view things objectively: the ability to perceive or describe something without being influenced by personal emotions or prejudices; 2. accuracy: the fact or quality of being accurate, unbiased, and independent of individual perceptions; 3. philosophy actual existence: the actual existence of something, without reference to people's impressions or ideas.

When *Wing World* magazine editor, Sharon Stanley, gives me an assignment, she expects objectivity of me. And, as readers of this magazine, you should demand this of me, too. However, sometimes that's not an easy task—as I found out this time with the F4 Customs' F+4 Windshield!

F4 CUSTOMS WINDSHIELDS

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**For information,
visit F4Customs.com or call (330) 968-4644.**

HONDA

Setting the Stage

Last June, my wife, Lyn, and I were at Americade in Lake George, New York and had the opportunity to talk with Don Garver from F4 Customs Windshields. Timing being everything, Don was just about to unwrap (literally, UPS had *just* made the delivery) a prototype of their latest design for their popular GL1800 windshield.

After telling Don I write for *Wing World* magazine (and after agreeing to keep quiet about this new product for awhile), he invited me to see how it looked. (Our bike's stock windshield had been removed shortly after we bought the bike in favor of a taller aftermarket one; the F4 is nothing like either of those.)

After this chance encounter with Don and the new product, an appointment was scheduled for a vented "F+4" (4 inches taller than stock) to be installed on our Wing during opening day of Wing Ding 34 in Fort Wayne, Indiana.

With the Windshield Installed...

Well, everything went smoothly and, before long, I was heading out of the convention center in Fort Wayne and onto the streets. Exiting the parking lot, I was looking into the turn (as the Motorcycle Safety Foundation would have every motorcyclist do) but, when the Wing straightened up and my vision was directed through the new F4 windshield, I thought *What windshield?*

Now this is where the "objectivity" issue comes into play—this sudden realization that what we now had on our bike could not even be compared to anything else I've ever ridden behind; there was little room, in any way, to equate it to any of my past shields.

The clarity of the material F4 uses for their products matches, or exceeds, that of any "plastic" I've ever experienced in my personal and professional careers. It's so similar to looking through a piece of glass that one easily forgets it is in front of him or her. And unlike some aftermarket products, this shield is far less "swept back". For instance, have you ever leaned forward and banged your helmet on the top of your windshield? Well, that's not likely to happen with the F4. Or how about the time you accidentally put a scratch right in your line of sight (where else would a scratch be?) or the time you used the wrong product to clean your shield, only to end up with a milky glaze on the surface that will never go away? Well, those types of things should never happen with an F4.

And forget about having to have 100-percent cotton towels or micro-fiber cloths; they are not to be used. The recommendation for cleaning off the unwanted bugs and bird droppings are simply water and paper towels. You can even use the towels available at the nearest gas pump! That's because these windshields are advertised at rallies in an actual display that uses a windshield wiper with *steel wool* wrapped around it that constantly rubs across the front of a shield. That's how un-scratchable they are!

The reason why is that the surface of the demo shield is treated with their proprietary process on one-half and left unprotected on the other half. This makes a very visible statement about how difficult it is to damage F4 windshields. And now, after several thousands of miles on our bike since its installation, ours still looks new—with not a single scratch on it! This product is made to last for years.

In fact I found that, on the open road, I had no complaints at all about the F4 Customs F+4 windshield.

The Story Continues

I had to forgo Closing Ceremonies at "The Fort" because Lyn and I were scheduled to be in Stowe, Vermont the following day. However, seven hundred miles separated me from home—and possible strong storms lay between.

My plan was to "stop for the night" once I hit bad weather, but I ended up having dinner at home since the storms and the Wing and I never crossed paths. But even after that many hours in the saddle, fatigue had not yet set in due, at least in part, to the great wind protection the F4 had provided me. That said, averaging quite a good speed and towing a fully loaded Bushtec trailer, my bike's fuel economy dropped to about 36 mpg. (This was slightly better than expected, compared to similar past rides.)

Now some friends had recommended against getting the vent, due to their previous experiences with things like bees and wasps passing through one and right into their helmets. I didn't understand that level of concern since I was accustomed to the vented air hitting me in the chest. That said, the design of the F4 directs the vented air higher and, though I prefer this setup, I plan to put a screen in the vent just as a precaution.

Time for the Real Test

Then it was time for the *real* test. As we all know, it doesn't matter how I feel about the ride, it's the co-rider's happiness that's paramount.

Lyn and I had a 300-mile day ahead of us to Vermont, and it would get off to a bad start if the changes I'd made "out West" in Indiana would have a negative impact on the pillion position.

With an obvious smile in her voice, Lyn expressed her pleasure when she looked around my helmet and found she was looking through the entire windshield, not just the edge of it. (This is a result of the F4 being wider than the old windshield. In addition, the clarity of the F4 makes the edge far less noticeable as well.)

Now, my hearing is not as good as it used to be and conversing through the headset at highway speeds has always been problematic for me. However, the bubble behind the F4 provides a slight, but noticeable, reduction in wind noise, which makes for some improvement in the hearing department. (One of these days, we hope to also come across some helmets with headsets that make for a serious improvement in noise reduction and hearing improvement.)

Conclusion

Two last things to consider are rain and fog. We've found that the F4 performs as advertised: the water sheds off very quickly. In fact, only once did I see a trace of fog accumulating on either side of it (when the conditions were abnormally favorable for condensation to form on the inside). But at that point, the air was so saturated with fog that what formed on the inside was barely even noticeable.

My plans for this evaluation had included before and after photos of our bike; however, doing so could be considered a comparison, and this is one product that stands by itself. Instead, I'll just leave you with this photo of the fine crew waiting to take care of you the next time you need a new windshield. ●

