

HOW ADVANCED IS YOUR GOLD WING?



We tend to take what we buy and personalize it over time. Rarely does this become more evident than with Gold Wings. Some accessories are more ornamental, others focus on functionality and many serve multiple functions. Chrome usually serves to make the machine more visually appealing. Lights can add appeal along with a higher level of safety. A dual-custom seat can make the ride more comfortable, while suspension upgrades can add to comfort and enhance performance. With a motorcycle designed for long distance travel having a second place to put your feet is a necessity. Some of us are happy to buy a

Wing and ride; others look to constantly improve their pride and joy.

My and my wife's 2001 Gold Wing has gone through a substantial transformation. You may have read about many of these changes over the past seven years in this magazine. These upgrades included seating, front and rear suspension, handlebars and windscreen. The charging system has benefited from converting the headlights to HID and the rest of the front and rear lighting to LEDs. These changes provide a considerable reduction in electrical loading. There is a module connected to the rear lighting that warns those behind the bike



Bill McIlrath's 2001 Gold Wing has numerous upgrades.

of a reduction in speed without braking. Add to all of this, the much lighter yet more powerful Lithium Ion battery.

These are improvements we made to our bike since the day we bought it, but how does it now compare to a brand new Wing? The answer is simple. If we were to buy a 2016 Wing, every add-on I've listed above would be done again – everything! This is not the end of the story. There are many accessories I've never covered in my articles before (some are visible in the photos). There is a digital compass/thermometer on the windscreen. This gives a temperature reading clearly visible to both me and my wife without the need to divert attention from the road to press a button and see a reading that doesn't appear until several seconds later. It would be nice to have a low profile display just above the dashboard with the time, temperature and perhaps

other readings displayed so rider and co-rider could see them all the time.

Now consider GPS. Yes, it is not built in, nor is it necessary to pull over and stop to change a setting. I've never owned a GPS that did not give the owner the option to override the "in motion" setting and do not plan to in the future. Additionally, our GPS has Bluetooth. After spending so much on a motorcycle why should you need to spend more to connect your cellphone to it?

This brings us to the TPMS. Newer Gold Wings may have this built in, but do they have the capability to cover the third wheel of a trike or two more for a trailer. Honda may tell you triking or pulling a trailer will void your warranty, but by law they have to prove having done so caused the problem before they can deny a claim. Honda knows a large portion of its customer base will consider adding a trailer. It

would be nice if they would put in additional framework making it easier to install a hitch. Judging by the large number of Gold Wing trikes on the road today, I'm surprised Honda does not offer a triked Gold Wing.

I expect any car I buy will come with a spare tire and a motorcycle will come with a tool kit. The kit that came with our 1985 GL1200 Limited Edition was a thing of beauty wrapped in leather. Tool kits are no longer included. Many of you would say you want a new Wing to have a sixth gear. Please do not wish for this, you will end up shifting out of first earlier and your RPMs at highway speed will remain unchanged. Hopefully someday we will see the addition of a second overdrive. My bike also has Baker Built Air Deflectors. The popularity of these and similar products show the need for better airflow management including increased adjustability.

All of us have our own ideas of what we would like to see in a future ride, but we can likely all agree we want it state of the art. In this issue you will find lots of goodies to consider adding to your pride and joy. As for ours, it only has a little over 100K miles on it. I see nothing on the market that can compare to it. [\[WW\]](#)

Read more about McIlrath's add-ons in Wing World or at BillMcIlrathMotorcyclePhotojournalist.com. Bill McIlrath, GWRRA Life Member #22638, lives in Bethel, Connecticut.