TIPS, TRICKS & ANSWERS

LONG-TERM RIDES:

2017 KTM 690 Enduro R

01886 MSRP $10,799

Nelson-Rigg's light-but-durable Sierra Dry Saddlebags are attached to KTM's tubular Case Carrier System. Even holding just a spare tube, the Front Fender Bag makes the fender flex a lot over rough terrain.

We've got a soft spot for the hard-edged KTM 690 Enduro R dual-sport. As we reported in our December 2017 review (and on ridermagazine.com), the 690 is light, powerful, agile and imminently capable, a bike that steps up anyone's off-road game as long as you can get a leg over its 35.8-inch seat. But the KTM's 67-horsepower single is buzzy, its seat is rock-hard and its 3.2-gallon tank limits range. We kept the 690 in our long-term fleet to see if we could address these issues.

To counteract buzz felt through the grips, we installed KTM's Progressive Handlebar Damping System ($199.99), a CNC-machined handlebar mount with vibration-damping rubber inserts. Vibration hasn't been eliminated, but it's been reduced enough to prevent fatigue and hand tingling, especially at the end of a long ride. Comfort has been further transformed by a Seat Concepts saddle (starting at $294.99), which is wider in the back and has denser, more supportive foam without increasing seat height. With a gripper top, faux carbon-fiber sides and orange stitching, it's a perfect match for the KTM, and I did a 300-mile day with no discomfort.

Auxiliary tanks are complicated and expensive, so I carry extra fuel in a 1-gallon RotopaX container ($59.95), which fits perfectly in Nelson-Rigg's Sierra Dry Saddlebags ($199.95), rugged,

1) The Seat Concepts saddle is remarkably comfortable. 2) KTM's Progressive Handlebar Damping System reduces vibration in the grips; we wish a taller riser was available. 3) Black Dog Cycle Works' Traction pegs provide a larger platform for stand-up riding and include screw-in traction spikes (not shown).

Doubletake Mirrors and KTM's Touring Windshield add to the 690's versatility.

waterproof soft bags that hold 27.5 liters in each side. Since they're designed to attach to a tube rack, we installed KTM's Case Carrier System ($359.99), which required drilling holes in the bodywork since passenger grab handles (and footpegs) were dropped from the 690 Enduro a few years ago. We also installed KTM's Touring Windshield ($64.99), a Nelson-Rigg Front Fender Bag ($34.95), tough, infinitely adjustable Doubletake Mirrors ($96) and, from Black Dog Cycle Works, an Ultimate skid plate ($249) and wider, longer Traction footpegs ($229).

Our local dealer, Thousand Oaks Powersports (805-497-3765), took care of the 690's first service ($257.15), and at 1,886 miles, the original Pirelli Rally-Cross tires are still hanging in there, but the rear will need to be replaced soon. The only mechanical issue we've had is a broken return spring for the rear brake lever ($2.35), which was an easy fix. With more comfort, more protection from wind and damage, ample luggage capacity and extra fuel, we've greatly expanded the 690 Enduro R's functional bandwidth both on- and off-road. And we're having a blast!

—GREG DREVENSTEDT

Black Dog Cycle Works
blackdogcw.com

Doubletake Mirror
doubletakemirror.com

KTM PowerParts
ktm.com/ktmpowerparts

Nelson-Rigg
nelsonrigg.com

RotopaX
rotopax.com

Seat Concepts
seatconcepts.com

STAYIN' SAFE

Mirror, Mirror, on the Bar

Proper mirror positioning can give you the fairest view of them all.

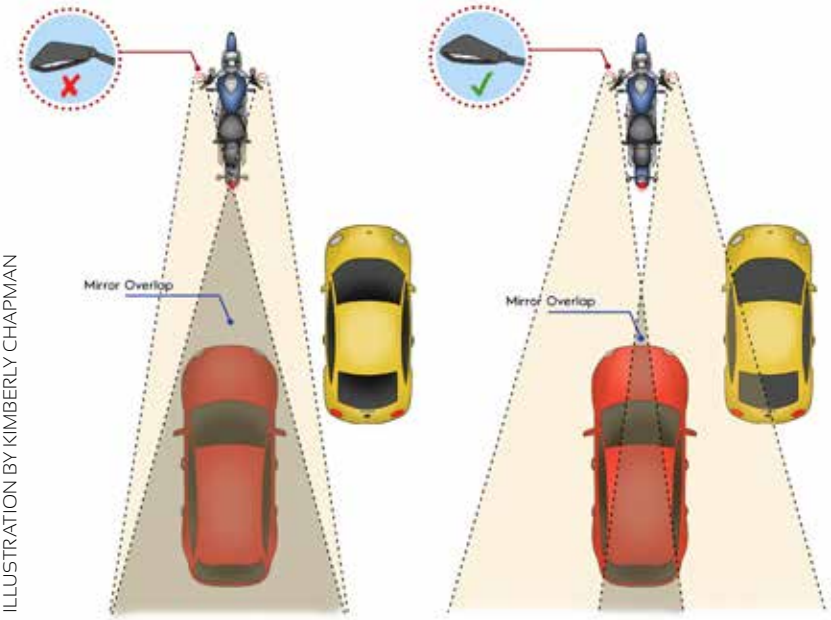

ILLUSTRATION BY KIMBERLY CHAPMAN

Most riders position their mirrors to provide the same rearward view, resulting in a duplicated image and a much narrower overall view. By angling mirrors outward, the rider can expand and optimize the rearward view while still seeing everything behind.

You wouldn't ride with a blindfold on. Nor would you ride with blinders to obscure your peripheral vision (like horses wear). Yet, many riders keep their right and left mirrors adjusted in a way that provides the narrowest view (including an excellent view of their elbows).

Next time you hop aboard your bike, and before you pull away, take a careful look into each mirror. What do you see? Is the view in the left mirror virtually the same as the view in the right mirror? How much of the scene behind you can you see in both mirrors? If the scene is largely duplicated by each, try angling both mirrors outward to expand the width of your overall view. The ideal adjustment allows you to see a vehicle directly behind in either mirror but with minimal overlap of that image. You should have a distinctly different view to the outside of the mirror now as well. The left mirror should reveal more of the space adjacent to your bike on the left (where cars pass), and the right mirror should expand the view of the space to the right of your bike (where merging vehicles appear from), significantly expanding your total rearward view.

While we're talking mirrors, it's a good time to consider what other drivers see. Car drivers have a rearview mirror mounted on the windshield that provides exactly what the name suggests: a rear view. Cars also have two side-view mirrors mounted to the outside of the vehicle on the right and left side. Unfortunately, despite the name, those mirrors are typically adjusted inward to take in the same rearward view as the inside mirror. That means that vehicles—including our motorcycles—are easily obscured from the driver's view. Be aware as you ride alongside other vehicles; if you can't see their reflection in the mirror, they can't see you!

—ERIC TROW