

Few editors or motorcycle magazines would quarrel with the statement that the GL 1500 Gold Wing owned the touring bike market. Recently, a German upstart introduced a strong competitor, the LT 1200. (LT is affectionately defined by the Beemer owners as 'Light Truck'.) Even the thought that there might be a possibility the Gold Wing would have to share its crown with another bike was unacceptable to Honda. Their engineers went into warp speed to bring the GL 1800 to market.

While the LT may have turned up the heat in the Gold Wing nest, the egg had been laid in 1993 when Masanori Aoki, at the age of 33, was given the assignment of Large Project Leader. Aoki was to lead the team that would design the replacement for the successful GL 1500. After learning English, Aoki went to Americade, Wing Ding, Sturgis etc. to learn what customers wanted. Included in the learning curve was a 2220-mile bike ride from Anchorage to Seattle that amplified the importance of gas mileage and tank capacity. More surveys, meetings, designs, clay models, prototypes, testing in the Mojave Desert and 40 patents later, in April of 1999, an 1800, fully loaded, with two up, had enough oats to accelerate up the Victorville Grade on I-15 in Calif. This was a real world test, something akin to taking a 'ride' in a muscle car on the legendary Woodward Blvd. in Detroit.

The statistics on this bike would fill the entire newsletter. I'll ignore talking about the LBS (Linked Braking System) or the ABS (Anti Lock Brakes), the Pro-Arm single-side swingarm that utilizes Honda's Pro-Link single shock system, the all new electronic **reverse** (you know – go backwards) and I will only mentioned two. Both the torque and horsepower are over the century mark. The 'C note' on torque is crossed at around 2250 rpm and it stays above 100 until well over 5000 rpm. Who needs an automatic? Put it in 5th gear and turn the screw. The second statistic comes from the February 2000 issue of *MCN*. The quarter mile disappears in 12.14 seconds @105.92 mph. I'll bet a Pew Wee Gleason type (135 pound quarter mile expert) could put this bike in to the high 11's. Can you imagine trolling for Porsche GT 2's with a touring bike????

At our USAir meeting we had a nice turn out from the Pittsburgh based company that produces a product that is based on an element with an atomic number of 13. The frame, engine and swing arm share an atomic weight of 26.982. (I do not want to hear about different weights of various grades of aluminum) If you are not into the periodic table and aluminum, then take a look at the weight of an empty beer can and understand a lot weight has been engineered **out** of this bike.

Speaking of Pittsburgh, is there any interest in paint in Pittsburgh? I've been told there used to be. The GL 1800 can be purchased in four colors. The most unusual color is called Illusion Red ChromaFlair. This paint is called both a color-shifting and a holographic paint. Depending on the light and where you are standing, the red paint can range in color from a beautiful red metallic through the spectrum to gold. Visit www.colorshift.com A late model Corvair convertible painted with Dupont's red ChromaLusion licensed version of this paint, (approximately \$1,000/gal.) and a **class winner** at last summers SAE Car Show, will also be on display. The car is be provided by Hamlin's Body Shop in Bridgeville. This is the same company that brought the '8' door Corvair van to our Plymouth Prowler meeting. Does the name Harlequin Color mean anything to anyone in the Pittsburgh Section?

See you there -- RIDE RED!