

Custom Motorcycle Kit Bikes

In reality the title should be Component Bikes, because a kit snaps together, whilst most bikes supplied in this form have everything you need there are some that do require some engineering. They are not necessarily going to fit together as easily as a Lego kit.

You might find different fitment problems with different kits that require modification. If modifications can't be made safely then you need to use the warranty. If you have bought from a local supplier they will (or should) be prepared to help you when you call. If you have bought it direct across continents then redress will be with the supplier not your local Bike Shop.

When choosing your kit bike, choose your supplier using the same care and good sense.

There are many big parts distributors out there who sell bikes in kit form, some are complete with everything you will need to finish your bike. Some will contain all the main parts including engine and transmission and some will be a rolling chassis which usually has all the main chassis parts including forks/wheels/forward controls. It is important to find out what is in each kit, especially when you need to compare different kit prices, rolling chassis kits and buying the parts individually.

Take a critical look at the contents of any kit. Kits can contain a lot of cheap and sometimes low quality parts which could explain their very attractive price - you only get what you pay for.

The nuts/bolts supplied with kits may be very low quality and you may have to budget to replace these with better quality ones during your build. This is not necessarily a total negative. Replacing a few small parts is a low cost consideration compared with the much higher cost parts.

To get your bike through the SVA test, you will need a legal exhaust and to have specific other parts like indicators/mirrors of a certain size. License plate may have to be a specific size and mounted at a certain point. Kit bikes do not include these parts and will have to be provided by you.

There is a large variety of "kits" on the market, all require a lot of work. Don't buy one if you are not prepared to undertake many weeks in the garage. You need to remind yourself that you are building a personal and uniquely different motorcycle, or reconsider customising a stock bike.

Some compromise may be necessary to get your bike built and on the road, wholesale compromise may be too much to stomach. It's your call and only you can decide. Pictures of these kit bikes in brochures will be painted in colours you may not like, and remember everything you get in the kit will be raw and unpainted.. You have to imagine this bike in your colour scheme before you accept it as the basis for your custom bike.

Find out if your kit requires any skilled fabrication or contains only bolt together parts. Wheel/axle spacers may not be included and you may have to source these parts yourself. Outsourcing of fabrication and other skills is an additional cost to you which you or may not have budgeted for. The more complete a kit bike is the more likely there will be a few parts missing or wrong. Find out before you buy your kit about the warranty conditions. There is likely to be some time limits for making any claim and you may have to count all the parts as soon as you take delivery.

Rolling chassis often make a very good buy. Not only will you expect to get an affordable collection of parts along with up to 10% reduction in price, you will usually not have to make any compromise on your chosen design. Some suppliers allow you to design your own rolling chassis kits which are an ideal option. Some dealers offer a deal to build/test/register your kit bike for a specified one off payment. Again ensure any deal covers everything, and ensure you achieve your design goals.

Kits don't come with instructions or torque settings, you will need to purchase a HD or Clymer workshop manual, check which manual is the most useful before you buy one.

When you receive your kit you will be faced with a mountain of parts, many small parts and the problem of checking it off and then finding where to put it.