

Motus MST is a hand built, beautifully crafted bike

Geoff and Greg Mellenger are certified speed freaks. They have a huge inventory of go-fast machines at their MCC Cycle dealership in Villa Park.

Between Ducati, Triumph, KTM, MV Agusta and Norton, there are plenty of choices to satisfy their customers' desires for speedy bikes. So it was a natural when MCC announced last summer it was adding Motus Motorcycles to the mix.

It didn't take long for me to place a call and ask for a test ride; I was looking forward to getting on this Motus more than any other motorcycle I've reviewed in years.

The 2017 Motus MST is powered by its MV4, 1,650 cubic centimeter (110 cubic inch), 90-degree "Baby Block" V-4 engine. It produces 165 horsepower at 7,600 rpm, just below the redline, and 123 foot-pounds of torque at 5,000 rpm.

If that isn't enough performance to set your hair on fire (which it is), the R model bumps up the output to 180 horsepower and 126 foot-pounds of torque. And both engines put out over 80 foot-pounds of that torque right off idle!

That's electric bike kind of immediate torque.

But unlike the inaudible sound from an electric motor, this Motus makes a symphony of sound

that is absolutely brilliant. Because the engine is basically a small block Corvette engine cut in half, the sound from the exhaust is more V-8-like than a four-cylinder. It roars to life and settles into a startling, throaty deep rumble to let you know this is a machine unlike any other.

The MST defies categorization. Even without the luggage, it really isn't a traditional sport bike because, despite the similar power, it weighs 585 pounds. It doesn't have the top speed of a lighter bike, but I'd love to get one on a track, such as the four-mile course at Road America with its long straightaways.

Put the hard luggage on and the Motus will leave other Sport Touring bikes in the rearview mirrors pretty quickly. The MST is in a class by itself.



Ken "Hawkeye" Glassman
Motorcycling

The bike carries its weight low in the chromoly trellis frame, so low-speed, parking lot maneuvers are easy.

My prior knowledge of the power, coupled with the sound from the engine, intimidated me as I pulled out of the MCC lot, so I wanted to take it cautiously until I got familiar with it. Clutch pull was easy, and engagement was mostly smooth. Shifting gears felt

great and I rode the MST easily and smoothly in traffic. It also surprised me that the ride quality was almost "boulevard cruiser" compliant and comfortable.

After reaching open road two-laners, I decided to check out the acceleration. You can easily spin the rear tire taking off. Once I shifted into second, I cranked it — and was startled that the front wheel left the pavement, which immediately let me know this puppy is something totally different from anything I've ridden before.

The engine roars mightily under hard throttle inputs and the bike takes off like a rocket. The power is simply ballistic, and left me wondering if it runs on gas or plutonium.

You'll hit the soft redline pretty quickly until you run out of road, or run into fear of lurking police cars. However, even at redline, the engine doesn't feel frenzied, nervous or

overtaxed. The power is predictable and linear, but it just doesn't feel like other high-powered sport bike engines. There's no frenetic, high pitched whine of a liter bike — just an unrushed grumble as the speedo spools up to illegal speeds.

It feels sophisticatedly smooth, like James Bond (Sean Connery, not the other pretenders), and just as bulletproof.

The tallish, adjustable windshield keeps the windblast quiet, working well to let you feel like you don't have to tightly clutch the bars so you don't go flying off the bike when accelerating. Yet with all that power, this MST still has a high degree of refinement. It's inviting, like a modern muscle car, such as the Dodge Hellcat. Blistering performance, which offers a



COURTESY OF KEN "HAWKEYE" GLASSMAN

The 2017 Motus MST feels sophisticated and smooth, like a motorcycle James Bond would ride, reviewer Ken "Hawkeye" Glassman writes.

uniquely visceral sensation that wakes up your entire body with excitement and focus, is provided without any negative rumbles, stumbles, creaks or rattles.

The MST steers quickly and lightly and it leans over easily in what qualifies as tight corners in our area. The bike reacts athletically in side-to-side transitions, and can almost be described as "flickable." The suspension components are top shelf, and nothing will upset the bike as you track steadily through a curve or corner.

The throttle by wire performs with precision, and the power comes on smoothly and there's always that monster torque ready to shoot you down the road.

With all that go, it's nice to know the Brembo brakes are ready to haul it down to a stop without any fuss. With excellent brake feel, easily modulated with just two fingers, there's never a worry the brakes won't handle the job. There is also plenty of grip from the Pirelli Angel GT tires.

Just looking at the Motus is like seeing a piece of art. Many of the parts are outsourced to aerospace companies, so even things like the passenger peg brackets will catch your eye.

Other components are sourced from companies like Ohlins for the adjustable forks, Progressive Suspension shocks with a remote pre-load adjuster, Powerlet power ports and forged aluminum OZ Racing wheels. Sargent makes the

comfortable dual saddle, which is cut narrow at the front so even short-legged riders like me can reach the ground comfortably.

Stainless steel headers sweep toward the dual Akrapovic mufflers. Quick-release Givi luggage makes the MST perfect for sport touring duties. The HeliBars allow more adjustments than the driver's seat on a Rolls-Royce.

Fit and finish are what you expect from a low-volume, hand-built boutique motorcycle.

The MST features cruise control and a multifunction, programmable, multi-diagnostic, full-color TFT dash display. It has impressive features for the rider and service professional. What you won't find on the bike is traction control, ABS or multiple riding modes. This is a bike for riders who want all the control with their own riding skills.

The \$30,975 list price is steep, but after seeing the bike in person and riding it, that cost seems like a good value compared to other excellent sport touring bikes. It's the difference between a custom tailored suit and an expensive suit bought off the rack. It's just special.

Fortunately, the Mellenger brothers want folks to experience the motorcycle for themselves, and they allow test rides. So if you're looking to up the ante in your garage for a new power Sport Touring bike, go check it out for yourself.

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