

Kawi Perfecting the C14 for 2010

Our C14 Tech Editor Reviews the 2010 Connie

by Fred Harmon, COG #2170

photography by Fred Harmon and Kawasaki Motors Corp.

Most of my adult riding life has been spent on various street bikes, and my first Kawasaki was a KZ750 back in the early 1980's. In 1987 I bought my first Concours for \$3,300. It was a leftover 1986 demo model bike that had about 2,500 miles already on it. Little did I know, this was to be the first in a long line of Concours that would grace my garage. Over the years, I have owned four different ones, including a new generation 2008 Concours 14 model.

The Concours 14 has proven to be a huge leap forward in both performance and technology over the original bike. The changes introduced in the 2008 model really brought the engine, suspension, and brakes closer to the level of current sport bikes, and vastly improved both power and handling. It pretty much defined and created the new SuperSport Touring category of motorcycles, much the same as the first Concours created the Sport Touring category when it was first introduced in 1986.

Not long after its release, Kawasaki sent out surveys and held focus groups to try to find out what items owners liked and what ones they didn't. Common complaints included poor rear visibility out of the mirrors, an excessively larger and unsightly muffler, the center glove box preventing use of a tank bag, and too much heat was put on the rider's lower torso in hotter temperatures.

The roll out and press introduction took place in late October, and Kawasaki was gracious enough to invite me as a representative for COG. They turned me loose to go ride in the mountains around Palm Springs California on a brand new Candy Neptune Blue 2010 Concours 14. Here are my impressions of the changes to the bike.

Many of the changes to the 2010 model are a direct result of the feedback Kawasaki received. (For example, I immediately noticed that the oil drain plug has been moved to the front of the engine case to increase lower ground clearance. Another one is the bike now only comes with one key FOB card that actively transmits a signal, versus the two that came on previous years. The second key FOB card is passive only, which means it can now be carried on the bike somewhere without it enabling the

ignition lock mechanism. The new passive FOB card has to be held directly to the ignition lock to operate.)

New Responsiveness

The first thing I noticed about the bike was that the handling seems to be just a bit crisper and more responsive. Maybe it's due to the new tire design, or maybe it's because of the fork oil level change, but whatever the cause, the handling is indeed improved and the other journalists that rode the bike made the same observations. The tires on the bike have been redesigned, and the new Bridgestone model is designated as a BT-021U. Additional rubber has been added to the front tire and the tread grooves in it are obviously deeper. The rear tire also sports the new U designation.

Heat Reduction

The next most obvious change is the reduction of heat that the bike puts on the rider and this is a most welcome improvement. The new wider fairing and larger side vents are largely responsible for this. The area down by your ankles is now totally sealed off, so no more hot air is ejected on your lower legs. Even in slow speed stop-and-go traffic, the bike does not become uncomfortable. The new larger side vents allow the engine to better shed heat, and the slightly wider fairing helps insure that heat flows out past the rider. Gone are the removable side extensions on the side panels. Vents have also been added to duct air through two small openings on either side of the dash. This reduces back pressure behind the windscreen



COG's own fearless C14 Techmeister Fred Harmon takes a Palm Springs twistie on a '10 C14. The 2010 Connie is cooler to ride, redesigned with a more aggressive appearance, and has some outstanding new features



For 2010, the mirrors are raised so that visibility to the rear is improved, and eliminates most of the saddlebags obstructing the field of view.

and improves overall air flow and reduces buffeting.

Raised Mirrors

The new mirror position is another very welcome change, and as soon as you sit on the bike you notice that the rear visibility out of the mirrors is improved. It is much easier to find a mirror

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