

# R1100S OWNERSHIP SHIFT

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## along with changes at Pelican Parts

by Ben Barkow  
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When I first signed-up at the R1100S forum at Pelican Parts five years ago, I was not surprised to find it was filled with a lot of older riders. But many were Kawasaki and Yamaha retreads looking for a go-fast bike with a BMW logo on it, as befits their advanced ages. These new-to-BMW folks also brought along a coarseness of manner and speech unlike earlier generations of BMW owner.

Was the R1100S once a go-fast bike with race qualifying handling? I believe BMW-Rad hoped it would be. But then, these are guys who brought you the 800 cc off-road bike<sup>1</sup>. Along with the impression of being a racy bike, the forum folks were enthusiastic to further abet BMW in getting a coupla' more HP from the engine at screaming engine speeds. Now, that is not at all the refined ways of BMW's great sport-tourers of the past.

The repair chit-chat was also indicative. While BMW clutches are renowned for lasting forever, there was a lot of discussion of worn clutches. I'd guess some klutzy riders used to wet clutches during alcohol-soaked rides were confused; using the BMW dry clutch like a wet clutch will wear them out fast.

At the age of 10, nobody thinks the R1100S is anything but a *vintage* go-fast bike. I see at Pelican Parts a return to modal BMW behavior. People are now more concerned about de-tuning that inaccessible screaming peak HP and instead adding flexibility to the engine and low-to-middle grunt power. Given the nature of things, this is a trade-off of one against the other.

De-tuning includes cam timing retard, front exhaust crossover debaffling (see my write-up), and increasing valve lash.

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<sup>1</sup> OK, 150,000 buyers also thought it was a good idea. But if they had made a sensible on-road bike (which is the only place the GS series is used anyways), maybe 200,000 buyers would have agreed.

I think we are starting to see interest in shade-tree repairs. The moderator and members have radiated enough hostility that there are no repair gurus posting on the PP board regularly. This is a really serious loss and PP is the only bike forum I know where no experts post answers.

Funny thing happening at PP now. Members are starting to object to posts that are abusive, mindlessly nitpicking, or otherwise uncivil. Great.

Might not be long before Roger, the moderator since long ago, has to be turfed out too since a lot of the disgusting behavior at a board is a reflection, if not a *direct* expression of a moderator's character. Not to mention "overlooking" nasty posts when it suits them<sup>2</sup> and not doing their job as website cop.

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<sup>2</sup> A particularly revealing instance occurred a few months ago. A leading purveyor of bike bling (and perhaps a supplier of expensive goodies to Roger's Texas motorcycle business) posted a crude racist cartoon. It showed a black man with the racist body feature exaggerations and stereotypical lust behavior typical of a KKK poster. Did Roger diligently discipline this idiot and remove the cartoon? No, he left it on the website. Roger canceled the membership of the guy who complained about it (DAMHIK).