

Deaf Old Bastard!!

So how many times have you heard that! I'm talking to you!

You've been riding for a couple of hours with a group of mates. The roads have been free of traffic and you have been sitting on just over 100kph. Suddenly you find yourself in the middle of a corner, which you did not see. Your mind had been pondering other matters and you had been riding on autopilot for a few minutes.

It is the constant droning of air passing the helmet that often lulls a rider into a false sense of security and their concentration drops off.

Lose concentration and you can and will crash – you need to stay alert when riding a motorcycle and you cannot maintain a high level for long. So your concentration comes and goes as you ride along. Constant noise is one of the most common causes of loss of concentration. Did you know that industrial noise above 85db requires that hearing protection must be worn or that a constant 80db for 8 hours will damage your ears.

So what hearing protection do you use? None?

I have heard the excuses, "I need to hear the motor", "Traffic sounds are very important to me", "they won't make a difference as I am almost deaf now". If you damage your motorcycle you can repair it, damage parts of your body and some can be fixed, but your ears are different, damage done to the inner ear is permanent and cannot be undone.

So which helmet do you wear? I use a system helmet, known in New Zealand as a "flip front". There is not a system helmet made that will keep sound under 80db at 90-100kph, in fact there is not a helmet made that will keep the sound under 85db at the slow speed of 80kph.

Do quiet helmets exist? Yes they do but you should still wear ear plugs of some sort. Check out this extract from a press release, "After comparative evaluation on performances of motorcycle helmets by independent Italian company, Modutech S.R.L., Arai have come out the

winner. Their RX7 Corsair helmet has proven to be the quietest helmet you could put on your head." Results we have on hand indicate the sound levels are as follows: Arai RX7 @ 90kph = 94.5db ventilation open, Arai RX7 @ 90kph = 94.3db ventilation closed, Arai RX7 @ 130kph = 101.6db ventilation closed, Arai RX7 @ 130kph = 101.9db ventilation open. These were the average noise pressures during the test. These tests were done in a wind tunnel without the noise of a motorcycle or rider.

Noisy pipes do not normally come into the equation as the sound is left behind the rider, but it could effect a pillion.

One of the quietest helmets we have information on is the Baehr Silencer with our information showing a decibel reading of 84.7 @ 80kph and 95.6db @ 120kph. These readings were taken using a rider and a recording system.

An increase of 6db means a doubling of the noise. 91db is twice as loud as 85db. Although a 6db rise is in fact a doubling, the human ear only experiences a 10db rise as a doubling of noise.

So you can understand why so many older motorcyclists are hard of hearing! "What's that?"

Sound protection does not need to cost the earth, disposable ear protection has been around for years and is regularly used in work places nationwide. For a cost of \$2 you can protect your ears but if you are looking for comfortable ear protection you will have to pay more. I have been using a set of Alpine MotoSafe ear protection for the last couple of months and they have proved easy to use, comfortable on long rides and they do drop the noise level. They are made from surgical grade silicone rubber with a set of patented filters. Green for average use and yellow for louder noise. I use the green filters and find I can still hear people talk to me, pillion to rider as always requires a bit louder level of conversation unless you have an intercom system. The Alpine plugs come with a small padded pouch for storage and I find it very handy. It keeps them clean and easy to find in my riding



gear pockets. Cost \$49.00. For more information on Alpine/Baehr products contact Tony at Challenger Motors Phone 09 838 8974, Email tj@challengermotors.co.nz.

For another style of ear protection contact Desmodromics 09 489 4485, Kai makes silicone rub-

ber inserts, using your inner ear as the mold. These require an appointment but takes only 20-30 minutes to have a pair made. Cost \$60-67. Check out his web site for more information. www.desmodromics.co.nz.

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