



2017 Harley-Davidson Freewheeler

STORY AND PHOTOS BY KOZ MRAZ

2017 Harley-Davidson Freewheeler is the epitome of triking fun. The Fat Bob style front fender and pair of Bobtail rear fenders married with the cast aluminum Enforcer wheels give the Freewheeler a sleek custom look. The headlight nacelle slims down the front end while a pair of dual chrome mufflers with slash-down tips peeks out from beneath the trunk. A lean, mean three wheeled machine, this is a well-mannered trike with hot rod temperament. Just hammer the throttle and the new Milwaukee-Eight 107 (107 cubic inches, 1,750cc) with precision oil-cooled cylinder heads and twin and Dunlop Signature P205/65R15 tires grab like a muscle car and this baby hauls ass.

With a claimed running order weight of 1096 lbs. the Freewheeler gets 4 brake discs for one machine: 6 pistons grab a pair of 300mm rotors up front, and two more grab a pair of 270mm fixed rotors in the rear. A linked braking system applies front and rear disc brakes on the application of the foot lever while the front brake acts independently when the lever is applied on its own. The traditional Freewheeler doesn't have any traction control or ABS brakes, nor options for such. The linked braking works like this:

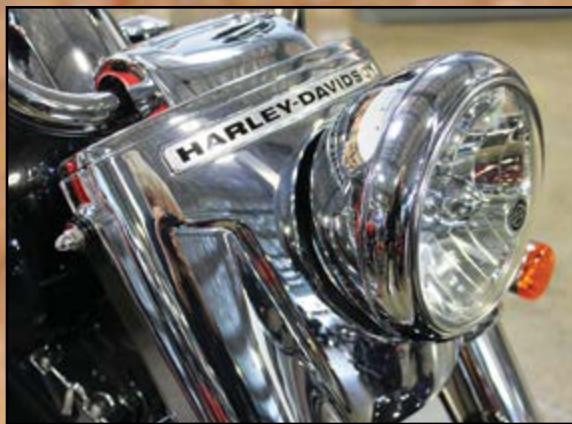
When applying the rear brake pedal, the linked system utilizes 100% of the automotive style rear disc brakes and two of the 6 pistons on the front caliper. Essentially the 2 middle pistons of the front 6-piston design are

linked to the rear brake system (30-40% of the overall front capacity). The remaining four other front pistons remain solely for the front brake system. The foot-activated parking brake is conveniently located on the



left side behind the floorboard.

Gearing on trikes has been a topic of much debate for years, because trike conversion manufacturers cannot alter the existing gear ratios on an OEM trike due to DOT and legal specs. What this translates to is: at times sixth gear is anemic at best. Some trikers attempt to deal with the drag by tire size alterations, or there are third parties who address this. Harley-Davidson on the other hand can address gearing in the manufacturing and design stage. Their current trike driveline ratios are different than for the motorcycle touring line-up, as they optimize for a good balance between acceleration, top speed and passing power (60-80 mph). The Freewheeler exemplifies this and the power band feels like a traditional



TRUNKS HOLDS 2 FULL-FACED HELMETS

motorcycle, drop a gear on the Milwaukee-Eight 107, twist a fistful of throttle and she moves. Even in sixth I had additional torque. Freewheeler felt at home at 80 in 6th to me, yeah it's a ticketable offense but I'm just sayin'.

A 49mm telescopic front fork and a pair of air-adjustable rear shocks suspend the Freewheeler 4.9 inches above ground with an easy-to-manage 26-degree steering head and nearly 4-inches of rake. The steering damper reduces slow speed wobble

and helps stabilize the front tire over rough roads on a trike.

Harley-Davidson trikes' rear suspension is a solid axle design. It feels quite taut at low speeds. Independent suspension is generally more forgiving but in this case, with a trike this light and responsive the solid axle performance accentuated the hot rod sensibilities with snappy cornering and NASCAR-like lane-changing ability.

When you're on the long haul, there's an electronic cruise control for a more relaxed ride. The 6-gallon tank claims 234 miles but I found that pushing 200 is far more realistic.

Reverse is standard and easily activated, so you don't have to hunt for accessible parking, a must on a trike. Powered by the starter motor, when the bike is idling in neutral simply press the R toggle button on the left controls and an "R" lights up in the speedo. Then press the R button again and you're moving in reverse. It's not designed to back you up a hill, just remove you from awkward parking spaces.

The Freewheeler won't start unless you're in neutral, you can't just grab



2017 TRI-GLIDE AND FREENWHEELER

the clutch and hit the starter. Freewheeler utilizes the same clutch and actuation system as a TriGlide. The H-D trike is equipped with a higher clutch torque capacity using the A&S clutch (higher capacity over the standard clutch).

The low profile trunk fits two full-face helmets and I like that the trunk lid opens right-to-left clear of any passengers. I wholeheartedly recommend owners immediately get the clear protection for the rear fender paint work. They take the brunt of road debris and protection of your paint should be considered.

Freewheeler handlebars rise 12-inches above the clamp and are positioned closer to the rider for easier operation while maintaining an ape-hanger style. The factory gunfighter seat was reshaped to shift the rider closer to the bars. The integrated grab rails are standard but the optional slip-in passenger backrest is a passenger must-have. \$26,339 for the Vivid Black, \$26,892 for Color Paint color options. Cruise control and reverse are standard.

AVAILABLE OPTIONS:

- Slip-in passenger backrest.
- The model-specific detachable windscreens makes distance touring a breeze.
- Rear rack for additional luggage comes in very handy and adds a stylish hint.
- The rear chrome bumper also adds style not-to-mention the protection afforded.
- The Freewheeler comes in five color options (Vivid Black, Bullet Silver, Quartz Black, Amber, Laguna Orange (as shown) and Velocity Red Sunglo).
- 12-inch mini-ape handlebar brings hand controls close to the rider and reduces required turning force
- Soft-grip passenger grab rails
- Dual Halogen headlamp
- Ergonomic hand controls with intuitive design and tactile feel
- Hydraulically linked braking system
- Foot-activated parking brake
- Air-adjustable rear shocks
- Streamlined, low-profile front fender
- Enforcer Cast Aluminum wheels; 19-inch diameter front wheel
- Chrome dual exhaust with slash-down mufflers
- Full-length rider footboards with heel/toe shift levers

