



# THE ROAD GLIDE:

# LOVE IT OR LEAVE IT!

## 2017 HARLEY-DAVIDSON ROAD GLIDE STANDARD

Story and Photos  
by Koz Mraz

*The Road Glide, one of Harley's most controversial motorcycles was introduced as the "Tour Glide" in the 1979 with only 19 FLT's produced that year. Different than any H-D models before, in that it had a fixed fairing that was attached to the frame and did not move with the handlebars. An odd beast to say the least in those days. In 1998 it became the FLTR Road Glide. This was using the same frame and motor assembly as the Electra Glide, as before, but with a completely redesigned fairing. Whether you want to call it Sharknosed or I want to call it Futurerama's Bendernosed, it is without doubt, Harley-Davidson's most visually identifiable motorcycle. And consequently, nothing else in the line rides like a Road Glide.*

### FIXED FARING:

In fact, fixed faring motorcycles are the preferred touring design across the board and Harley says that owners of its Road Glide and Road Glide Special models ride the most miles per year of any of its customers. First, fixed faring design uncouples wind buffeting and weight from the handlebars, no need to wrestle all the mass at 80 mph. Secondly, the new wind-tunnel-tested fairing also has three vents which direct smooth, cooling air toward the rider, while also preventing turbulence caused by a big fairing pushing the air aside at speed. And finally, in 2016 the fairing was moved 2 inches closer to the rider to make it easier

to read the gauges, access the infotainment system's touchscreen, and the triple split stream vents. One vent is below the windscreen and two on either side of the bright-white Dual Daymaker Reflector LED headlights. These vents are designed to stay open in all but really cold or wet conditions.

Riders sit in a fresh bubble of smooth air so you can hear the superb audio system at highway speeds. Thanks to the sculpted shape of the fairing (designed using computational fluid dynamics and wind tunnel testing). For touring, a tall windscreen is suggested; get the optional 13.5-inch windscreen for serious touring.

Also Harley-Davidson offers optional air deflectors that mount between the tank and fairing, taking advantage of the new Road Glide aerodynamics.



You can purchase these snap on wind deflection that fit in the engine guards in front of the gas tank. They are only 39 bucks and add additional wind deflection in the rider's cockpit. (See photos with part numbers below).

The vents draw lots of fresh air into the cockpit, but there is very little turbulence. Even at highway speeds I felt only a mild flutter atop my helmet and at my shoulders, and the quiet air pocket made it easy to hear the audio system and navigation commands.

I am a huge fan of this triple split-screen venting. Designed to pressurize the cockpit area and thereby eliminate head buffeting and being frame-mounted, there is no ill effect on the steering of the bike, which exhibits great straight-line stability and knocks through

highway sweepers with ease. With its furrowed brow the "Bendernose" fairing is more menacing and distinctive than its predecessor.

#### THE ENGINE:

I am sure you've read all about the Milwaukee-Eight 107 (107 cubic inches, 1,750cc) with precision oil-cooled cylinder heads for this Road Glide. Just in case you missed that; Compared to the Twin Cam 103 and 110, the Milwaukee-Eight's increased displacement, higher compression ratio and four-valve cylinder heads provide 50 percent more intake and exhaust flow capacity resulting in 10 percent more torque across the board. Bikes equipped with the new engine are claimed to accelerate much faster off the line (8-11 percent quicker at 0-60

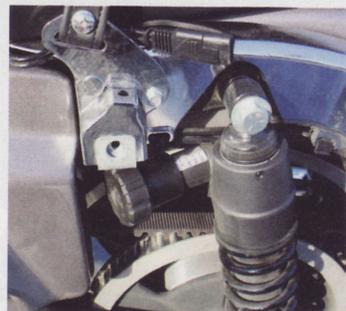


mph) and in top gear roll-ons (11-12 percent quicker at 60-80 mph). Better air flow and combustion, including the use of dual spark plugs for each cylinder, are said to improve fuel economy. Precision oil or liquid cooling of the cylinder heads as well as repositioning the rear exhaust pipe and relocating the catalytic converter improves heat management, providing a more enjoyable riding experience for the rider and passenger.

As with the Twin Cam engine, the Milwaukee-Eight's rocker arm-actuated valves never need adjustment. But instead of the Twin Cam's dual camshafts there's a single, chain-driven camshaft that's lighter, quieter, less complex and reduces friction. The rubber-mounted Milwaukee-Eight uses an internal counter balancer to cancel 75 percent of primary vibration at idle, for a less eyeball-shaking experience at stops. Harley says the new engine's reduced mechanical noise allows the exhaust note to take on richer tone.

#### THE SUSPENSION:

Harley has moved to a cartridge-style fork and new emulsion shocks for all the touring models, and they're a massive improvement. For starters, the air shocks, prone to leaking down and hardly modern in design, have been ditched in favor of actual spring preload adjustment. One shock is fixed; with the one behind the left saddlebag has a handy hydraulic preload adjuster with unusually broad range. Either remove, or tip the saddlebag back by removing the locks, and twist the dial for your load.



It's that easy and the new shocks have much better control than the old ones. The ride is still soft, but the suspension uses the stroke effectively and is much more compliant over small bumps and highway dips.

The 2017 Road Glide of course





benefits from all of the Project Rushmore enhancements, including a new 49mm fork, Reflex linked brakes, sleeker fenders, One-Touch bag latches and vents, lighter cast wheels, improved hand controls, instrumentation and comprehensive infotainment systems.

The Road Glide is without a doubt "THE" touring Harley-Davidson we distance riders love, for all the reasons stated above. Plus The Bagger Craze of the last decade has elevated the Road Glide to iconic status with its plethora of paintable surface. If you do 200-mile days or 1,000-mile days the Road Glide with the appropriate windscreen, shock adjustments and seat is the touring ticket.

## 2017 ROAD GLIDE MODELS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

The Road Glide Standard (As Tested)  
 The Road Glide Special  
 The Road Glide Ultra  
*See the Harley-Davidson website for details.*



## 2017 ROADGLIDE SPECIFICATIONS

### 2017 Roadglide Specifications

PRICING : Vivid Black \$21,299

Color \$21,799

ABS Option \$795

Security Option \$395

### DIMENSIONS

Seat Height, Laden 25.9 in.

Seat Height, Unladen 26.9 in.

Ground Clearance 4.8 in.

Rake (steering head) (deg) 26

Trail 6.8 in.

Wheelbase 64 in.

Fuel Capacity 6 gal.

Weight, As Shipped 816 lb.

Weight, In Running Order 853 lb.

Luggage Capacity -Volume 2.3 cu ft

INFOTAINMENT: Screen Size 4.3 inch

Watts Per Channel 25.0

Speakers 2.0 Speaker Size 5.25

inch/6.5 inch - P&A Upgrade

Headset Specifications (if

equipped) 16-64 ohms

SD Card, Flash Drive and MP3 - via

USB Connection Supported

Hands-free Mobile Phone - via

Bluetooth P&A Upgrade, Headset

connection required

Voice Recognition Languages: Phone

functions only English (US)

Vehicle Information Screen (Air

temperature, oil pressure and El-

TMS) Standard

Text-to-Speech (TTS) Languages English (US)

USB USB/MTP/iPod/iPhone

Bluetooth Phone/Media Supported

ENGINE: Engine Milwaukee-

Eight® 107

Bore 3.937 in. Stroke 4.375 in.

Displacement 107 cu in

Compression Ratio 10.0:1

Fuel System Electronic Sequential

Port Fuel Injection (ESPFI)

DRIVETRAIN: Primary Drive Chain,

34/46 ratio

CHASSIS

Exhaust Chrome, 2-1-2 dual exhaust

with tapered mufflers

Wheels, Front Type Enforcer Cast

Aluminum

Wheels, Rear Type Enforcer Cast

Aluminum

Brakes, Caliper Type 32 mm, 4-piston

fixed front and rear

PERFORMANCE

Engine Torque Testing Method J1349

Engine Torque 111.4 ft-lb

Engine Torque (rpm) 3,250

Lean Angle, Right (deg.) 32

Lean Angle, Left (deg.) 31

Fuel Economy: Combined City/

Hwy 45 mpg