

riding around the forests of Sunny Corner, however I didn't calculate on the mighty headwinds we would strike between Broken Hill and Yunta, and again near Arkaroola. As a result, the DR-Z's fuel economy dived to 17 to 18km/l at times, and with it went my hoped-for 300km fuel range. Which is why I stocked up with a five-litre plastic jerry can at Yunta on day two and carried it through the remainder of the trip. As it turned out I could get just over 300km of fuel range from the IMS tank before it would cough and splutter, although there was more fuel still in the tank, it was just that it sat down in the front wings BELOW the level of the fuel tap! If 300km range is all you need, the IMS tank is a perfect choice and offers excellent ergos. But if you want serious fuel range, check out the whopper Safari tanks available from Aussie-brand R&V Aqualine.

**Windscreen/fairing:** What I would have given for a small screen/fairing rising up from the DR-Z's headlight. For hundreds of kilometres at a time I would sit there on the DR-Z, my head and shoulders getting hammered by the breeze, which was not only plain uncomfortable, but would have done nothing for fuel economy. If anyone knows a fibreglass manufacturer who can knock up a neat screen/fairing for the DR-Z, let me know and we'll tell the world all about them.

**Oil consumption:** What oil consumption? Daily dipstick checks revealed the DR-Z didn't use a drop of its Motul 5100 engine oil during the entire ride. That's what you like to see (or, should I say, not see?).

**Unifilter element:** The roads out west at the tail end of winter are pretty lonely, so dust was never an issue, so I didn't have to worry about the Unifilter.

**Carry rack:** The Whipp's Alloy carry rack we've fitted to the DR-Z is a beauty. It was just the size I needed to carry my Wolfman bags (see sidebar) for five days away. The rack mounts easily and sturdily to the bike's rear sub-frame and offers plenty of easy tie-down points for ocky straps. And the same rap goes out for the Whipp's Alloy bashplate. Good job, Whippy.

**Seat:** You'd have thought 2,400km on a DR-Z would have hammered my butt – but it didn't. Maybe my backside is finally toughening up after all these years?

**Battery:** Since replacing the original battery on our DR-Z, the new power source hasn't skipped a beat. Still, every night on our ride I would park the bike undercover and out of the frost, just to make the early morning cold-starts a fraction easier on the starter system.

**VPS Barkbusters:** I'm a real fan of VPS Barkbusters for dual-sport and adventure bikes. The VPS models offer more room around the levers while the plastic foils can be fitted with adjustable wind deflectors, which do a better job than you might imagine of directing cold wind flow away from your hands.

**Braking wave disc rotors:** Thanks to the braking wave disc rotors and a careful bleed job by the boys at Pro-Fast, this DR-Z's brake are excellent.

**A word about spring rates:** I never did get around to having firmer spring rates installed in the DR-Z. I'm a slacker. With the increased weight of the larger fuel load and luggage, firmer fork and shock springs would give a more precise and confidence-inspiring ride. If you're loading up your DR-Z, get onto a suspension tuner and get your ride dialled – you'll appreciate it in the long run.

**Nuts & bolts:** In 2,400km of riding, only one bolt came loose – and it was



## ▶ ADVENTURES WITH JERRY

A plastic five-litre jerry can purchased mid-ride at the Yunta (SA) roadhouse was just what the Doctor ordered to ensure we could make a 300km fuel range in the savage head-winds we copped in the SA outback. Once the fuel from the jerry was dumped into the IMS tank, it was easily strapped to the Wolfman luggage on the Whipp's rack.



one I fitted! The TK Pipes muffler mount bolt (rear) backed off a fraction, requiring less than a turn to snugly mount properly again. This is why you need to check your bike after each day's ride when you're on a long haul adventure, to catch small problems well before they become major problems.

**Mission accomplished:** It's no wonder Suzuki's DR-Z400E is such a popular mount with both weekend trail riders and big-mile adventure riders who don't want a big-bore machine. Save for the original battery giving up the ghost, this good Doctor has not missed a beat – perfect.

TZ

## ▶ MOTOZ TRACTIONATOR TYRES

A set of new Motoz Tractionator Desert H/T tyres were fitted to the DR-Z just before this ride. Up front we ran a 90/90 x 21 (\$110) and after the ride it still had an absolute feast of meat left on it. Out back, we installed a tough-as-nails 130/90 x 18 (\$149) and it lived up to its reputation. The photos at right show the Tractionator rear as brand new when first installed (left) and then after some 2,600km of riding, which featured everything from tar highways to dirt back roads to the stone-filled by-ways of the rock-infested Flinders Ranges. As you can see in the 'after' photo, the Tractionator has worn along the centre knob line, but there's actually still significant tread depth left, indicating we'll get a few hundred kilometres more from this tyre. Looking at the outer edges of the tread, the side knobs still have a huge amount of rubber remaining, which is to be expected as the majority of our ride was straight-line, high-speed running on hard-pack ground conditions. The Motoz Tractionator Desert H/T is without doubt a tough tyre and as if to prove that reputation, we ran the rear tyre pressure as low as 10psi during the ride and the Tractionator never faltered, even with the added weight of a full fuel load, luggage and rider. In such conditions you'd normally never run pressures that low with most other tyres. Grip was never an issue, with the Motoz tyres right at home in the dry and hard ground conditions we covered. Motoz tyres are available at leading bike shops everywhere or check out [www.motoz.com.au](http://www.motoz.com.au) for more info.

