

Bike's winter hibernation deserves total preparation

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SPECIAL TO THE STAR

It has been a December to remember, but the spring-like weather can't last.

Sooner or later you're going to have to put that motorcycle away.

There are several things you can do to ensure your bike will be just as ready to go as you will be at the first genuine signs of spring.

Taking the time to thoroughly wash and dry your metal horse is an effective way to protect all of its surfaces. The sooner you remove dirt, road grime and prematurely expired insects the better.

A routine comprehensive circle check should be done to ensure no mechanical issues have arisen since your last ride.

Throttle, clutch and brake cables should be inspected and lubricated to prevent premature wear or seizing.

Pros recommend changing and topping up all essential fluids because dirt and other contaminants can accumulate inside your engine, transmission and crankcase while you ride.

During storage, any foreign deposits, unburned fuel, exhaust gases or water vapour can do nasty things to the unseen and intricate workings of your machine.

The gas tank should be filled whenever your vehicle is parked for extended periods in cold

weather. That's because the cold in the tank will create a vacuum that invites unwanted air from the outside. That encourages corrosion.

Gasoline can break down over time, setting the stage for gummed up fuel lines or injectors (or even carburetors depending on your bike.) Adding a simple fuel stabilizer will greatly reduce the potential of this occurring.

Start by taking the time to thoroughly wash and dry your metal horse

After changing and adding new fluids, the engine should be run for a few minutes to work the entire new blend throughout its intended route.

Paying attention to your battery over the winter months can mean the difference between hearing the soulful sound of your engine or nothing at all come spring.

You should remove it from the bike and charge it monthly, or leave it in place and attach a trickle charger.

When a battery is not used regularly, it gradually loses its charge, especially with the strain of electronics such as security systems.

Inspecting your tires regularly

and keeping them properly inflated is always a good idea.

But it's particularly important when the bike will be standing for a long period in one position.

You don't want flat spots where the tires contact the ground. Ideally, one or both of the tires should be raised.

Plastic tarps are often used to protect boats, cars and motorcycles from the elements when the vehicles are not in use.

But some covers trap moisture, increasing the likelihood of corrosion. Breathable, waterproof covers range in price depending on quality and

size, but are well worth the investment.

Even if you have a cover, your bike should be kept indoors in a dry, safe place. Finding the right spot may just be the most important piece of the puzzle.

Many variables such as freezing and thawing or exposure to dirt and chemicals in the air can have detrimental effects on your loved one. And remember that furry critters may be searching for a place to nest.

Going through the winter storage process outlined may seem inconvenient and excessive.

But the effort will pay off when it comes time to wake the beast from its seasonal slumber.