

Global POWERSPORTS

By Alastair Walker

Enter Alpos

Alpos are a new bike luggage company based in Slovenia, part of the former Soviet Eastern Bloc states.

These hard cases are available in 32-liter and 36-liter sizes and weigh just 6.2 pounds in the smaller format.

Alpos uses 1mm sheet aluminum with sectional aluminum components to construct the cases, making them both lightweight and robust. The top-hinged lids open from the rear edge and

close against a rubber seal to keep out water, dust and other elements, while the Alpos cases themselves are resistant against corrosion, and all weather conditions and extreme temperatures.

With strong, synthetic-covered safety spring handles, Alpos cases may be adapted to mount with most popular hard luggage rack systems, and adaptor kits are available to secure each case to the rack from the inside of the carrier, so that it cannot be removed from the bike when locked. Alpos are retailing the cases at €150 (\$290) per pair. Visit www.alpos.si for more information. ↵



Show snippets

↵ Mot Oh! 2008 Attracts 220,000

The Mot Oh! 2008 show attracted some 220,000 visitors, up around 10 percent over the inaugural 2006 event, plus 5,200 press and trade delegates from May 7-9, according to the organizers.

Despite rain affecting the outdoor demo ride sections of the show, which was held at Fiera Expo, Barcelona, Spain, the show saw a 15 percent rise in the number of exhibitors, despite the general credit crunch problems affecting Spain's economy. Interesting show fact; With 265,000 motorcycles and scooters registered for road use, Barcelona is the second most 'bike mad' city in Europe after Rome, Italy. ↵

↵ BMF Bucks Trend

Another show doing good business back in May was the UK-based BMF Show, which pulled in 73,000 public visitors on May 17-18, according to the organizer, a rider's rights group, the British Motorcyclists Federation.

Some 600 stand exhibitors attended, with many reporting strong buyer interest in new bike apparel, helmets and gloves, plus accessories aimed at touring riders. The UK is currently seeing a general economic slowdown, but new bike sales in the adventure touring segment, custom bikes classes and sales of basic commuter machines capable of making the \$11 per gallon unleaded last longer are all bucking the trend, according to the MCI association. (And you thought you had it bad at \$4 a gallon!) ↵

End Of The Road For Cheap Chinese Bikes?

Economic Factors Forcing Prices Up

Rising raw material and labor costs will force Far Eastern OEMs to raise their wholesale and retail prices of small bikes and scooters in the near future. The process is starting now, with modest increases, but the wholesale costs of bikes and many component parts could increase dramatically within 12 months. Kymco of Taiwan recently announced that it would have to raise prices on its small commuter models by up to 5 percent, according to the *Taipei Times*. Kymco say that they paid around 18 to 20 percent more for metal and plastic this spring compared to last year.

Dawn magazine in Pakistan reported in April that local assemblers of Japanese and Chinese scooter brands were hiking up prices at their dealerships, and European-branded Chinese products, like the Sachs 50cc range, have jumped about \$1,800 on their retail price in the past six months or so.

The reason that the era of low-cost Asian-made commuter scooters may be coming to an end is two-fold; first off, the demand for raw materials like steel, copper and high-grade alloys is surging across the booming Asian economies. Injection-molded plastic parts are made from oil of course, which is predicted to hit \$200 per barrel by mid-summer 2008 — get set to see a rise in hard plastic bodywork parts, too.

The other factor which will force manufacturers to charge more for scooters and small bikes is the rise in food prices across the Far East. A weakened supply of staple commodities like wheat and rice have raised their prices across Asia, and that means general wages will likely have to rise, or governments in Asia will see food riots.

This correspondent predicts that the stark choices facing both manufacturers in Asia, and their hard-pressed workers, will result in a 15-20 percent increase in the out-of-the-gate factory price per unit of sub-150cc two-wheelers over the next 12 months, depending on the severity of the oil price spike. My advice is buy five containers of 125-250cc scooters or commuter motorcycles now, and sell 'em when gas hits \$5 per gallon ... you can't miss. ↵



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