



**New Bike Test**  
2010 Hyosung ST7

# Korea vs. Japan

The Battle Of The Lightweight Cruisers



*The Hyosung ST7 is a blast to ride, demonstrating surprising power, long-term comfort, and fine handling.*



BY JON LANGSTON  
PHOTOS BY BOB FEATHER

**W**henever I'm feeling a little down, perhaps a bit sorry for myself, I like to call up someone I haven't seen for awhile and offer to buy 'em a beer. Then I bitch about my job: the commute, the stress, the boss — whatever. By the time I'm three or four gripes in, though, he inevitably holds up a hand and tell me to shut the heck up, that I've got the best job in the world, and I shouldn't complain. This usually cheers me right up.

I mention this because it happened again just the other day (although this time I barely made it through one lousy grumble before I got shushed). I also bring it up because, while it seems like braggadocio, it reminds me of a valuable lesson: to never take things in life for granted.

Now, unlike our colleagues from *American Iron Magazine* who are wed in unholy matrimony to one distinct brand of motorcycle, *RoadBike* is fortunate enough to enjoy all kinds of bikes from a variety of manufacturers, and come summer there's always a bevy of fresh horses in the stable. So when two Hyosungs showed up on our doorstep, it was easy to view them askance — especially while they're sitting in the stall next to Ducati's proud Multistrada, Honda's sleek Stateline, Kawasaki's strapping Voyager, Star's killer Raider ... you get the picture. Seniority usually rules when it comes to such matters, so, when presented with the keys to Hyosung's meek ST7, it's fair to say my first reaction wasn't particularly enthusiastic.

The upside of having low expectations is that they're usually exceeded.

As it turns out, the Hyosung ST7 is a blast to ride, demonstrating surprising power, long-term comfort, and fine handling. Longtime *RoadBike* contributor Gabe Ets-Hokin reviewed the Avitar, the company's V-Rod-like 650 cruiser (June 2007), but this new ST7 is the Korean manufacturer's first attempt at a classic cruiser, and it has, for the most part, nailed it. As you'd expect from a first-timer, there are some jitters, but they're mostly cosmetic; and, besides, the positive aspects of this bike are nearly abundant enough as to let you ignore them altogether.

Who cares if the chrome seems a bit way in places? That doesn't affect the ST7's performance. When I fired her up, she replied with a ready rumble, and before long my eyebrows were raised in a steady state of pleasant surprise as I motored along. On the highway, the ST7 displayed ample power where you want it most from a smaller-displacement bike: at its top end. That's a relative term, of course, but this fuel-injected 678cc bike went from 55 to 75 mph a lot faster than I expected it to, and had quite a bit of throttle left once it got there; in fact, I would venture an educated guess that if one wanted to dial it up past 100 mph, one could do so. But I'm guessing, of course.

So right there, within 20 minutes of pulling away, the ST7



impressed me. Every motorcycle is quick off the line, but at freeway speed, to be able to accelerate away from potential trouble with poise and confidence? On a bike this size? Definitely an eye-opener.

As my colleague Laura DeLallo mentions in her accompanying review of the little brother GV250 (there's that seniority thing again), the wording on the standard-issue rider warnings (a decal on the fuel tank and a stamp on the exhaust pipe) is one of the first things you notice when you throw a leg over, and it is rather comical. Something certainly got lost in translation — but that doesn't affect the rider interface on the ST7. The tank-mounted dash is user-friendly, with large numbers on its analog speedo and a digital readout that provides time, odometer, and two tripmeters. The only thing missing is a tachometer, a luxury curiously supplied on the smaller, less expensive 250.



Once I got beyond that and was out on the twisty roads, shifting was a breeze, and the gear ratio on the five-speed transmission was perfectly set-up for the 46 ft.-lbs. of torque the engine provided (note: check out the super-impressive compression this 90-degree V-twin makes, as listed on the spec sheet). The two-piston brakes don't pull as much I'd like on my rear end, but the single-disc, four-piston floater up front provide plenty of stopping power in the nose. Its suspension was ideal for the bike's dimensions, too, once I adjusted the shocks one click tighter. The ST7's handling and maneuverability are far superior to what I figured they would be.

At first glance, I thought the narrow-diameter handlebar seemed a bit lanky for such a long, practically beach-style setup, but it provided a firm, stable grip. Moreover, I found the forward foot controls were perfectly placed for my 34" inseam (although the angle of the shifter lever could be a bit lower). In the end, the ST7 demonstrated a steady, secure ease of movement. I found its ergonomics to be exceptional and its seat cozy, and when combined with that ample freeway power and effortless maneuverability, the ST7 more than proved its mettle as an



2010 HYOSUNG ST7	
LIST PRICE	\$7,299
ENGINE	Liquid-cooled, 90-degree V-twin
VALVETRAIN	8-valve DOHC
DISPLACEMENT	678.2cc
BORE X STROKE	3.21" x 2.56"
COMPRESSION RATIO	11.5:1
FUEL SYSTEM	EFI
MFR HORSEPOWER	N/A
MFR TORQUE RATING	46.46 ft-lbs. @ 7500 RPM
TRANSMISSION	Five-speed
FINAL DRIVE	Belt
OVERALL LENGTH	97.24"
WHEELBASE	66.54"
RAKE/TRAIL	33 degrees/5.59"
SEAT HEIGHT	27.17"
FUEL CAPACITY	4-3/4 gallons
ESTIMATED MPG	49.99
CURB WEIGHT	538 pounds
WARRANTY	24 months, 12,000 miles
2010 COLORS	Black, red, white

all-day rider. I stepped off this bike believing that it ranks among the most comfortable cruisers I've ridden, and that's not an exaggeration. And all-day riding is not out of the question, as the ST7 boasts fantastic fuel economy. Mix 49 miles per gallon with a 4-3/4-gallon tank, and your time between fill-ups might be the longest in its class.

About that class: the one hiccup with this bike that isn't merely cosmetic is a rather unfortunate one. With a list price of \$7,299, the ST7's not the budget-minded bang for the buck you'd think it would be. Despite being the new kid on the block,

the price point on the upstart Hyosung ST7 is pretty much right smack in the middle of the more-established pack. By way of comparison, the larger-displacement (745cc) Honda Shadow RS is only 500 bucks more, and Yamaha's V Star 650 costs about \$700 less. Regrettably, this character flaw is a major one, and it does have an effect on the ST7's overall value.

But, hey, enough with the complaints. I've got the best job in the world, and once again, I've been reminded exactly why that is — this time by the surprising little Korean cruiser that could, the Hyosung ST7. **RB**

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