

# HYOSUNG ST7

## A KOREAN ALTERNATIVE TO THE AMERICAN V-TWIN

**They say:** "The style you want at a price you can afford."  
**We say:** "Acceptably cool and surprisingly quick."



Hyosung's full-court press on the American motorcycle market continues with the introduction of the ST7, which finds the Korean company's ubiquitous 678cc V-twin cradled in a classically styled cruiser chassis. A larger bore bumps displacement enough to be rounded up to 700cc, thus the ST7 moniker on the tank. Front to back, the bike fits the bill almost perfectly. Flared front fenders shroud attractive machined-aluminum mags shod with fat Shinko rubber, supported in the front by a stout fork. Backswept bars provide the proper upper-body position for cruising, while the seat and footpeg layout keeps your butt back and your boots appropriately far forward. It's not a cruiser without a phat exhaust, and the pair of slash-cut mufflers dominates the bike's right flank. Generous use of chrome creates the desired visual impact while shielding your view of the engine's incongruously small cylinders and coolant hoses.

The smooth-running heartbeat of the 90-degree V-twin will never be mistaken for

the rhythmic pulsing of a 45-degree American motor, but the fuel-injected, water-cooled DOHC mill does a commendable job of hustling the Hyosung down the road. Aside from a slightly bigger bore and a five-speed (rather than six) gearbox, the ST7's engine

is in essentially the same state of tune as Hyosung's GT650R sportbike, which means it spins as high as the Suzuki SV650 engine it's a copy of. With what feels like a 10,500-rpm rev ceiling, the ST7 is surprisingly fun to flog and impressively quick. Although the bike tips the scales at a claimed 538 lbs.

ready to ride, the Hyosung's small engine is unencumbered by the weight, launching off the line and accelerating to freeway speeds midway down the entrance ramp. Triple-digit

velocities are not out of the question, and making a pass is as easy as rolling open the throttle. The ST7 positively stomps the Honda Shadow Phantom we tested a few months back, and handles pretty well, too.

In addition to the quick-spinning character of the engine, the Hyosung's ability to strafe



Due to the high-revving nature of the ST7's engine, its 4.8-gallon fuel payload doesn't get you as far as you might think, and the bar-graph fuel display is rather capricious.

corners was pleasantly surprising. Unlike most cruisers, touching down hard parts takes some serious lean angle, something the ST7 accomplishes with aplomb. That big front tire makes the bike steer sluggishly, but it changes direction easily enough and quickly settles into the prescribed arc. The single-disc front brake is functional but far from powerful as delivered. Moving the perch down the handlebar so your fingers pull closer to the end of the adjustable-reach lever (instead of an inch outboard of the pivot) dramatically improves leverage and thus feel and function. The rear brake is likewise a single-disc, and works well for fine-tuning your velocity.

The view from the broad saddle is as good as that of anything made in Milwaukee, providing an unhampered perspective of the road framed on the bottom by the glinting metal of the top triple clamp, tank-top instrument panel and wide handlebar. The mirrors are large and well-positioned, although the reflection is distorted around the edges. Movement through the five-speed gearbox is smooth and crisp, and clutch action is reasonably light. Power is delivered to the rear wheel via a toothed rubber belt, which is shielded from the elements by chromed covers. Conveniences include a built-in tension gauge on the lower belt cover, steering lock, helmet lock and dual trip meters. The rider's seat pops off with the turn of the key, permitting access to the battery and fuse box. Though the passenger seat comes



Liquid-cooling and overhead cams aren't traditional cruiser technology, but that's how the Hyosung creates more than 60 horsepower from its meager 41 cubic-inch capacity.

off with a single bolt, the ST7 apparently isn't meant to roll solo; there's an unsightly bracket that remains bolted to the fender and the passenger peg brackets are welded to the steel-tube frame.

Something has to give, and in the ST7's case, it's the suspension. More accurately, the fork and shock don't give; they're stiff and limited in travel, which makes riding over rough roads especially uncomfortable. The riding position doesn't help the situation, curving your spine in that slumped posture your teachers warned against and compressing your intervertebral discs in a way only your chiropractor will appreciate. Add to that the unobstructed windblast afforded by the open cockpit, and freeway stints of more than 50 miles are a challenge. The ride is much better around town, although throttle response at low rpm is fiercely abrupt and the engine hits with the jolt of a 10-pound slide hammer whenever you roll on or off the gas. Other complaints have to do with the finish: Some orange peel is evident in the maroon metal-flake paint and there's inconsistency in the quality of the many chromed components.

Still, the ST7 is well-fettered and finished for a \$7300 ride, and performs as good if not better than most bikes in the beginner class. If you can look beyond the Hyosung's country of origin, you'll see it has everything a newcomer to the class could ask for—except excessive vibration and a bar-and-shield logo.

### tech SPEC

#### EVOLUTION

Hyosung's ubiquitous 649cc V-twin punched out to 678cc and shoehorned into a classic cruiser chassis.

#### RIVALS

Honda Shadow Phantom, H-D Sportster 883 Low, Kawasaki Vulcan 900 Classic, Star V-Star Custom and Suzuki Boulevard C50.

#### TECH

Price	\$7299
Engine type	I-c V-twin
Valve train	DOHC, 8v
Displacement	678cc
Bore x stroke	81.5 x 65.0mm
Compression	11.5:1
Fuel system	EFI
Clutch	Wet, multi-plate
Transmission	5-speed
Claimed horsepower	62 bhp @ 8000 rpm
Claimed torque	47 lb.-ft. @ 7500 rpm
Frame	Steel twin-spar
Front suspension	41mm S&T fork
Rear suspension	Dual S&T shocks with adjustable spring preload
Front brake	Hyosung four-piston caliper, 300mm disc
Rear brake	Hyosung two-piston caliper, 270mm disc
Front tire	120/80-16 Shinko 712F
Rear tire	170/80-15 Shinko 712R
Rake/trail	33.0°/5.6 in.
Seat height	27.2 in.
Wheelbase	65.9 in.
Fuel capacity	4.8 gal.
Claimed dry weight	510 lbs.
Colors	Black, red, white
Available	Now
Warranty	2 yrs., unlimited mi.
Contact	Hyosung Motors America, Inc. 5815 Brook Hollow Pkwy. #B Norcross, GA 30071 770.447.5571 www.hyosungmotorsusa.com

### VERDICT ★★★★★

An affordable and fun entry-level cruiser that will give the other bikes in its class a run for their money.