

# The Frame Job

BY STEVE LITA

**E**ven the coolest bike has an ugly area. To me that ugliness would be an old state license plate mounted on a stock bracket. You've got to admit, it seems your local municipality didn't put much thought into the mandatory embossed tin plate it makes you hang from the back of your bike. Some companies offer license plate frames for dressing up the eyesore, but here's one that looks good and keeps you safer to boot.

The Big Bike Parts Show Chrome Contours LED license plate holder is a new item that's designed to fit standard 4" x 7" plates. It's made from chrome-coated plastic for light weight, and houses three powerful LED strips. The red across the top serves a dual-purpose as a running lamp/brake lamp, and the two amber strips on either side act as directional signals. I mounted this beauty on a touring Honda ST1100 to augment the stock rear lamps and make my bike more visible to distracted drivers following me. This ought to attract their attention.

Installation is straightforward: assemble the



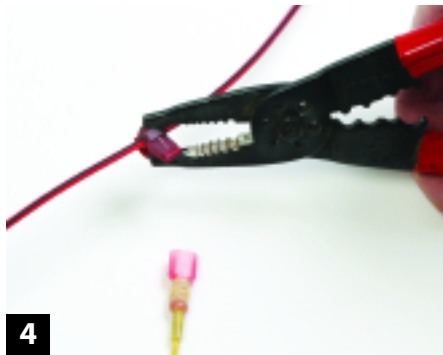
**1** The Show Chrome LED plate frame kit comes with plenty of ScotchLock wire taps.

Contours frame around your ugly plate, hang it with the stainless steel hardware included, and wire it into your bike's rear harness. The blue wire is running lamp, orange wires are signals (they're marked left and right), red taps into the brake lamp, and the three black wires twist together and get grounded. You can do the job with an 8mm wrench, a 2.5mm Allen key, and a pair of wire crimpers. Truth be known, finding a spot on the bike's stock harness to hide the taps and testing various wires for power were the hardest parts, so you might also need a test light for that.

The flash rate wasn't changed because the LED augments the stock incandescent bulb, and now the bike is lit up out back. That makes for better communication of intentions, more good looks, and less ugly.



**2** Apply a dab of Loctite to the stud threads.



**4** Simply squeeze the wire tap onto the appropriate signal wire.



**3** Insert the studs in the back of the frame. I sourced longer studs for mounting this frame to a thick license bracket.



**5** Then a male spade terminal on the license plate frame wire attaches to the tap for power.



**6** The result is a great-looking license plate frame that adds more visibility via a red LED running light that brightens when the brakes are applied...



**7** ... and yellow LED turn signals. RB