

The DebStar

In the first part of this project (*RB* August 2007), I helped my friend Debbie choose and install some parts to improve her small-displacement cruiser for use as a good touring bike. Pleased with the bike's power and reliability, we concentrated on ergonomics and comfort, adding a windshield and upgrading the stock seat, pegs, grips, and levers. With that mission accomplished, the next obvious addition for a tourer was a set of saddlebags. Intrigued by a company relatively new to the cruiser market, we ordered a set of Tsukayu leather-covered hard bags for the DebStar.

I was shocked when the bags arrived less than two weeks after placing the order. Since they were coming all the way from Japan, I hadn't expected them for at least a month. The packaging itself was quite impressive; the two bags were separated and surrounded by layers of hard Styrofoam and packing material. This company must really know what it's doing, because the box retained its shape after all those miles and the typical shipping abuse it probably received.

The bags are well-made and good-looking, and they offer excellent storage capacity. The lockable latches are easy to use and come with a set of three keys. My only criticism of the bags is that the lids can't be opened all the way, because the arm that holds them up is fairly short. This makes loading a little more difficult than it needs to be, but it's nice that the lids stay up on their own. The leather looks and feels first rate, but only time will tell how it will hold up in varying weather conditions. I like how the leather matches the aftermarket seat we installed,

Integrated Taillight Kit

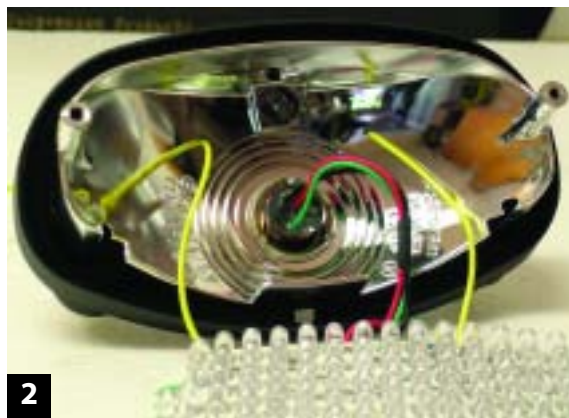


1 After removing the stock brake light lens, you need to cut off the two plastic ridges on each mounting stalk with a sharp blade.

and we didn't have to worry about scratching or scuffing it during installation.

Because the V Star Custom's turn signals are mounted on the fender struts, they must be removed when adding any kind of hard saddlebags. Debbie wanted to swap out the rear brake light for something brighter. I showed her the Clear Alternatives products. I installed this company's taillight integrator board kit on my Suzuki Bandit and have been very pleased with it. We ordered the kit with a clear lens for the DebStar. These LEDs are brighter and use less battery power than stock. And this particular kit incorporates a running light, brake light, and turn signals all in one. It comes with two resistors to slow the blink rate, but they get very hot and seem a bit fragile to me, so I ordered the Clear Alternatives Electronic Flasher. It's just as easy to install, and it doesn't get hot like the resistors do. To install it, simply remove two wires from the stock signal harness and plug them into the Flasher unit and then zip-tie it, out of sight, near the stock unit.

While I can think of a lot of other great things to add to Debbie's V Star, she's pretty anxious to actually start riding it again, so I guess I'll have to give it back to her.



2 Drill two small holes in the plastic light housing and pass the integrator board's yellow wires through. The other wires simply plug into the outlet where the brake light bulb used to be.



3 We had to remove the stock V Star's turn signals to accommodate the saddlebags. We removed the fender struts to access the signal stalk bolts.



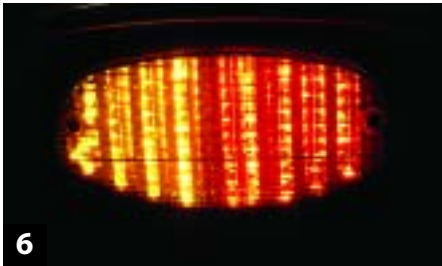
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We then lifted the rear fender to access the wiring behind the brake light. We unplugged and removed the stock signals, crimped a new set of quick-connector male ends (not supplied) to the integrator board's yellow wire ends, and plugged them into the stock wires.



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We remounted the fender and struts, and slipped the integrator board onto the brake light mounting stalks. We then secured it with the two rubber O-rings for a tight, secure fit.



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We attached the stock gasket to the new clear lens with some silicone gasket, attached that, and gave it a try. The new lights are much brighter than stock, and the signals are impossible to miss.

Saddlebags



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The Tsukayu instructions recommend cutting and taping a strip of the foam packing material to the muffer for use as a spacer. We found that two strips provided the perfect platform and height. We loosely mounted the brackets to the right side of the bike.



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We sat the bag on the foam and used a bit of tape to hold it, so we could stand back to check the exact mounting position. Ideally, we'd line up the top of the bag with the Travelcade Profiler seat installed in Part 1.



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Once satisfied with the position, we tightened the brackets. We transferred the mounting point positions by chalking up the brackets and pressing the bags against them. Then we knew exactly where to drill our holes.



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We now had the brackets attached to the bags and were sure it all lined up, so it was time to transfer the hole positions to the other bag. We taped the other set of brackets to the mounted brackets and chalk-transferred the points to the second bag. This method ensures an exact mirror image, so the bags will line up evenly when mounted on the bike.



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We drilled the holes in the other bag, slid in the bolts and washers, and then attached them to the brackets on the other side of the bike.



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Once everything was attached, we tightened it all down.



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The leather-covered bags follow the curve of the Profiler seat perfectly.



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The bags provide plenty of locking storage capacity, and they've helped us successfully convert Deb's little cruiser into a nice tourer. **RB**

hard data

CLEAR ALTERNATIVES
Electronic Flasher \$14.99
Integrated Taillight Kit \$89.99
866/CLR-LENS
www.ClearAlternatives.com

TSUKAYU
Leather-covered Hardbags \$539
www.Tsukayu.com