

STEALTH AIR HORN – PART II

I have previously posted a pictorial on installing trumpet-style air horns in a concealed fashion behind saddlebags. I recently bought another style of air horn, the Stebel Nautilus, and decided to try to hide it on another Aero (Ilsa in Arizona). Here's the approach I used:

The first step is to lift the motorcycle on a motorcycle jack so you have room to work underneath. With the ground clearance involved, this is a virtual necessity. And, as can be seen in the photo below, I strongly recommend using tiedown straps to stabilize the bike.



The plan is to mount the Stebel Nautilus in the area of the swing arm pivot. To do so effectively, it's best to locate it as high up as possible, for several reasons (you don't want it to be the lowest point on the bike, it keeps the air horn bells up out of the slipstream and therefore they should stay clean, and the higher up it's installed the less conspicuous it is). I bought a plain old heavy 4" x 4" x 90-degree angle from Home Depot, and cut one side down to about a 3" length which corresponds to the web width of the stamped swing arm assembly at the pivot point. The swing arm is pretty thick, so the mounting bolts need to be 3" long or more. I also chose to go with a pretty small diameter on the bolts,

because drilling larger holes would possibly weaken the swing arm. Also, the Stebel Nautilus doesn't weigh much, so big-league Grade-8 bolts aren't needed to support it. Here's a layout of the parts before assembly:



At this point I should mention that the Stebel Nautilus is available in a couple of horn bell orientations. Note that I chose the type with the horn bells (outlets) at the bottom of the assembly and pointing horizontally forward. It's vital to mount the compressor so that it's vertical, or it will burn itself up from lack of oil lubrication. I felt this horn bell orientation would direct the sound forward, which is what I wanted. The other style of horn bells would point straight down at the ground, which for some might be OK if they want to "broadcast" the sound all around the bike. I personally prefer to direct the sound forward, since that's usually where I think the threat is coming from.

The Nautilus has a mounting bracket that is slotted, and is designed to fit over the head of a hex head bolt. Just the way the dimensions worked out, I had to grind the nut and exposed threads of the hex mounting bolt for clearance, otherwise the horn would rub against a tubular engine mount crossmember. It is no big deal, but here's a photo of how much material I had left after grinding on the nut:



Now, drill two holes in the horizontal leg of the angle bracket, then use it as a template to drill two holes up through the bottom and top surfaces of the swing arm. Shim with fender washers as needed for proper clearance, and tighten things up using lockwashers. That's all there is to it. Here's a view from below, note the coolant reservoir position to get oriented. Figure out where you are? Hope so.



You hopefully can see the bottom of the cylindrical compressor that's built into the Nautilus assembly, and notice I've commandeered the toe off El Wifo's pantyhose to cover up the horn bells. My thinking here is that this pantyhose stuff will hopefully keep dirt out of the horn assembly, yet will allow a lot of sound to pass. Dunno if this step is necessary or not, but I felt it sure couldn't hurt.

Here's another closeup photo looking slightly down from the side of the bike into the area of the swing arm pivot.



Here's what you see if you get down on your knees next to the bike when it's off the jack and parked. If you're standing next to the bike looking down at it, you can't even see the air horn.



Well, anyway, that's what I was trying to accomplish.

It's a pretty simple mod, and if any of you want to tackle it and have questions, please don't hesitate to contact me at CaptainDoc@rockisland.com

Regards,

Doc Weston

P.S. Well, after I first posted this, Bama came up with another great idea. He merely bought some very cheap clamp-type bracket that's used for electrical conduit, and clamped it on the tubular engine mount crossmember that's ahead of (toward the front of the bike) the swing arm pivot. In typical Bama fashion, his is a great idea, and very inexpensive. Oh well, live and learn. Here's a pic from Bama of the approach he used:

