DRUID DRIBBLE

Edition 1 Volume 4 – Topic: Lubrication Fluids

For those of you who have ridden a Harley Big Twin for more than a day, before the days of synthetic motorcycle oils, we used to have to put 3 separate mineral based fluids into our scoots. Remember, you have a Primary, a Transmission, and the actual motor itself… all of which are separate compartments within the powertrain of your engine. The fluids within these 3 separate components of your powertrain do not come into contact with each other (i.e., they do not mix). The synthetic oil option was out there for a number of years and to be fair, H-D was a little late in the game developing their own synthetic oil. However, a number of years back, H–D teamed up with Sunoco fuels to develop what is now the Syn3 20W-50 synthetic oil you see for sale in the parts dept of any H-D Dealership.

What is neat about Syn3 oil is that it can be used in all 3 components of your powertrain. This is true if you have an EVO, a Twin Cam, or the Milwaukee 8 series of motors. On Shovelheads, Panheads, and earlier model big twin motors plus Sportster, VRod, and the Revolution Max motors, be sure to ck you owner's / service manual as to the recommended proper fluids.

The benefits of synthetic oils are well documented. In harsh conditions, the synthetic oils tend to hold up considerably better resisting thermal breakdown, resisting gumming up especially in some of the smaller oil passageways, water contamination, and viscosity issues during colder weather. Synthetic oils also tend to last longer than normal oil. There was a time that conventional thought was to extend intervals between fluid changes when using a synthetic oil but the real idea was to provide better protection during that normal interval period vice adding time between service intervals. Change it according to the service interval as recommended. Do we ever hit the exact mileage between services? Well, I for one, the answer for me is no. However, I feel confident that if I go over a service interval by a few hundred miles or so, I will still be protected. I don't make a habit of it but there are times that I am still on the road, away from a dealership. The use of synthetic oils makes me rest easier. Bottom line, oil is cheap insurance.

For most riding styles and the leisurely way, many of you tool around town, this 1 oil only – the Syn3 oil set up for our scoots, works well. Combine this with the Chapter participation cards to get a "free" service, why change your own oil? Yes, you can use other synthetic oils out there and there are some very high-quality oils such as Amsoil, Redline, Royal Purple, Mobile 1 to name a few but again, if you are riding with the Chapter, why not take advantage of the Chapter's participation card and have a Dealership service done.

Understand that they also ck a lot more items on your bike during a service. Items you might skip on a DYI service like for example the coolant level/condition for those equipped bikes or the DOT 3 or 4 levels/condition for your brakes to name two.

However, especially with the larger baggers and trikes, you might notice that there is some significant noise coming from your transmission when shifting gears or perhaps find "stiffness" in shifting or even it becomes difficult to find "neutral" in the shift pattern. If you (pick one or more as applicable) carry a few extra pounds, usually ride 2 up, carry a lot of gear, ride in hot weather, and routinely cruise at high Interstate speeds, you have some options that might make your ride more comfortable.

An option you might consider is when you get a service done, have them put H-D Heavy Synthetic Gear Oil into your transmission which is rated at 80W-140 vice the Syn3 20W-50. This will have some significant positive effects that you should notice immediately.

Another option out there is putting Formula + in your primary vice the Syn3 20W-50. Both are recommended and are excellent for your primary. The Formula + has been around for years and is a mineral based, not a synthetic based lubricant. Reading the different forums, you get the die-hard folks who swear by X, Y, or Z but this option is out there for you to try.

I am pretty sure there is an upcharge to put anything other than Syn3 in your motor, but you spent $20,000 ++++++ to get a H-D. These other options may make your ride more enjoyable and isn't that what it's all about? Anyway, something to consider. F2