



## HANDY COATING FOR SUPERMONO TEAM

Plasma-sprayed ceramics allow a motorcycle race team to handle hot exhausts with bare hands

Bike racing brothers, Gary and Mick Smith were worried about the heat generated by the exhaust system on their Supermono-class Honda racing bike. There was concern both for the rider and for the machine's performance and durability, due to the exhaust being sited close to both the rider's legs and to the bike's radiator. A traditional asbestos wrap would solve the problem, but it would not be durable and its bulk would restrict airflow and make fast pit stops more difficult.

At the Autosport International Show at Birmingham's National Exhibition Centre, Gary and Mick approached Zircotec. *"We had read a few things about Zircotec in the show preview,"* recalls Gary, who discovered that the company's plasma-sprayed ceramic coatings provided an excellent solution to the team's problem. Their new, single cylinder, 450cc Honda-powered bike was scheduled to appear at the forthcoming London Motor Cycle Show so Zircotec agreed to coat the Milltek Sport stainless steel exhaust system in time for the event. *"We had it back in two days,"* says an impressed Gary.

The entire system was coated including the header and the megaphone. As well as protecting both rider and machine, the zirconia-based ceramic coating allows members of the team to work on the bike the minute it comes into the pits. The laser guided thermometer that they use to check the temperature of the engine, radiator and tyres has indicated that while the exhaust can have an internal temperature of around 150°C, the outside temperature can be low enough for it to be picked up. *"You can take the exhaust pipe off without using gloves,"* says Smith, who believes that this is one of the first, possibly the first, uses of the high-tech coating on a motorcycle.

Zircotec coatings are light-weight and highly durable, lasting up to three seasons in many motorsport applications. They can also help engineers deliver more power by reducing engine air intake temperatures.



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