

The BMW K 1600 GT

cede - Christoph Dimter - Assessment Year 2011 at km 22.000

Translation: Thanks to my friends s.h.gonnens-holthusen

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Small declaration: Why an assessment of 2011 in 2015?

Being a german guy I made that assessment in 2011 after 22000km with the GT in german language...

I learned know some new friends, who red this assessment in the internet and then phoned me...

One of them was Sigi, some months ago - she said hello with an email, she is very interested in technics and motorcycles - Sigi and Holly also drive a GT, and she pushed and begged me to say „Yes“ to a translation of this assessment.

We should let know this paper also to the english spoken motorcycle-world, she said.
Of course that made me proud a little bit and I said OK to the translation, which Sigi, being an english girl, began at once...

We have finished now the whole thing, 4 years after buying the GT.
She, yes she has now the age of 70 000km and after all these funny kilometers I have to say, although 4 years are gone, about 95% of all statements are valid also concerning the actual GT, of which I drove some the last 10 months...

And another thing was important for me - being authentic!
So I begged Sigi not to use „High English language“, I also did not use high german language -
I am a complitely unpretentious 64 year old guy in retirement...

For 35 years I worked at Porsche, developing race-gearboxes and never have forgotten to drive motorcycles
- till today for about 600 000 km...

Having some experience concerning technic, gearboxes and motorcycles I risked to make an assessment
and what should I say:
A lot of people have been taken with my „work“ - so did Sigi...

If you now are interested in this assessment: Have a lot of fun - like I have with my GT and do not forget:
We are not in Paradise here, what means, you'll find both, a lot of very good parts but also things you should
never find on a 24 000€ bike...

Nevertheless you'll find out soon:
I would buy her at once once again - the best motorcycle money can buy today!

The BMW K 1600 GT

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Just a brief preamble:

The winter of 2010/11 was one of getting acquainted with the K 1600 GT, at motorcycle shows, and being haunted by a wild K 1600 GT dream which led my steps to the boys working for the German „MOTORRAD“ journal.

And they in turn invited me to embark on a 5000 km test tour of comparison in Spain, of the K 1600 GTL vs Goldwing...

Well, to be quite honest:

At this point I had already ordered my red GT after a test ride of just 400 km...

And to be even more honest: in what was to follow next, silence is the better part of valor...as in real life, I did come to experience the ups and downs of life with my GT...

Maybe I still have a bit of a wistful hankering after those 35 years of my working life at Porsche, developing racing gearboxes and just maybe, that is why I am continually „grouching“, improving and disapproving, documenting and making notes and suggestions:

In short: this is possibly the most comprehensive assessment of the BMW K 1600 GT that has ever been conducted, and here is another thing:

Those 500.000 km over 42 years should, in combination with my working life's experience, suffice for me to deliver a well founded, compelling and reliable but naturally also somewhat subjective assessment of this motorbike...

I have divided it in 5 parts, in order to render it clear and explicit but also a bit entertaining:

- 1. Assessment in Text Form**
- 2. Table of Assessing the Main Groupings**
- 3. Assessing Individual Points**
- 4. Assessment of Individual Points in Text form**
- 5. Small table of my YouTube-K1600GT-Clips**

It should be obvious that such a subjective assessment will be governed by my personal preferences and dislikes.

By the same token this assessment will relate to its purchase price, its weight and the field of its competition, i.e. with a view to Kawasaki 1400 GTR, Yamaha FJR or BMW K1300 GT and perhaps also Honda Goldwing.

Each one of the main grouping (see 2. Table of the main groupings), which are, of course subject to different emphasis, could be a killer criterium for me - I collated them with this in mind.

1. Assessment of the BMW K 1600 GT in Text Form

So here we go...

First test ride in Stuttgart-Vaihingen: a gigantic lump of iron is parked in front me.

Long, fat, doesn't really turn anyone on, almost a tad impersonal, with some pretty individual solutions as to wheels, parts of the fairing, and somehow its general line, but then again not really so...

Never mind, after a first 400 km test ride I return home, mildly enchanted:

Sound, suspension, comfort, power and torque, brakes, ease of handling, yes, ease of handling and and and ...fairly impressed me - gearbox, drive train or transmission and further horrible noises rather less so.

But again never mind - I immediately ordered the bike - at age sixty (2011) I can't and won't wait, until BMW have eventually completed or finished the development of this bike in all aspects - this, one has to say, being their usual way of doing things...

Summer arrived and so did my GT and six months and many kilometers later (solo or with pillion) she and I have become real good buddies.

Engine

The outstanding technical feature of the GT is - of course, their 6-cylinder motor.

No individual throttle valves, no variable intake channels and certainly no adjustable camshafts - a well behaved little motor with just about 100hp power output per litre - thank God!

But what this motor, on demand, manages to do with the GT is simply awesome and stunning:

Cruising quietly and incredibly gently through towns and villages at 1200 rpm in 6th gear, and not even needing to shift down whilst overtaking.

Should the guy you want to overtake be an ambitious BMW-driver - switch down a gear, or two even, if he be an Carrera 911...

Revs above 5000rpm are rarely needed, not even with a sporty riding style and in normal road and traffic conditions.

At 4000 rpm and 140 km/h the GT is quietly humming along - she quite easily could do this at 3500 rpm - after all, she has sufficient torque.

However, a somewhat longer or extended transmission or even an extended 5th and 6th gear would result in reduction of background noises and whining primary drive noise and not last but not least fuel consumption.

This, of course would take a bit of courage:

After all, there are enough „experts“ in forums, journals and pubs, who would judge a loss of 0.2 seconds a doomsday scenario...

Of course, I am not well behaved all the time and every now and then I allow my pretty sex, oh sorry, six to roar and rampage, and the things that are happening then in the longitudinal dynamics, live somewhere in the realm of the super-sport bike!

What the GT is firing off between 1500 rpm and 8000 rpm I've only ever experienced on one other motorbike in a comparable fashion - no, on two actually: over the last 10 years I owned 2 Hayabusas...

Hayabusa and GT can do what none other achieves:

Deep down in torque cellar you find endless torque and from the middle range right to the top almost limitless power.

That the GT manages to deliver the whole spectrum so gently, easily, unstrained and really cool is to be attributed to her 2 additional cylinders and additional 300 ccm capacity.

Oh, by the way, whether you do this solo, with pillion, or with or without the full caboodle of your holiday luggage or on a 10% hill, is only of minor importance:

This beast will pull any time and anywhere, just the way an ox does, and she feels safe, as if she were performing in a ball gown.

At 5000 rpm plus she dons sports gear and gives a roar, it makes you weep (for joy).

In all this under any load, at any torque you are presented with a (slightly too loud) wall of sound, which is simply overpowering and ranges from a gentle lamb to a tyrannosaurus rex on the war path.

And just to carry on enthusing a little longer:

My foot pegs (no, not those „fear nipples“ -i.e. the little metal stubs at the end of your foot pegs - they are long gone) have been scraped and my genius of an onboard computer shows an average consumption of 5.3 ltr per 100km - such I have never yet come across in this class:

I take my hat off, BMW!

The long and short of it is this:

This engine is a major feat and compared to the first K 1200 four-cylinder-motor it is brilliantly applied - up to now I cannot recall a single instance when the engine did not behave exactly as I expected and as I would have wished.

But wait:

The engine responds to quick throttle action with a marked and incomprehensible delay in rev increase.

Whilst driving, this goes relatively unnoticed. When double-declutching or blipping the throttle, however, this is negatively noticeable and is not at all compatible with this otherwise well mannered motor...

An issue to resolve!

There are two huge limitations, which are only partly of a motor tech spec nature, but needs to be mentioned here, nevertheless:

The primary drive comes from the crankshaft via gearwheels which in turn offload power transmission to the clutch, and because the crankshaft bearing cannot transmit axial forces, so those gear wheels cannot be helical gearings = noise reducing.

However, what BMW have presented here and choose to subject its customers to is 'beyond the pale':

According to its nature and in any gear, at any torque, whether in traction or thrust, with other words always, the primary drive whines, hums, pipes an annoyingly persistent wail, which not even road or air stream noises at 140 kph manage to drown out!

It is hardly consoling to get the acoustic impression at times of maneuvering a jet plane...

With the exception of the Triumph Street Triple (which is rather allowed to do such a thing) I never had to suffer such embarrassing primary drive noise.

An issue to resolve!

And then you have this first gear shift kick:

Why must a 6-cylinder have such high idling revs (950 rpm) ?

At 650 rpm the gearbox input shaft, co-revolving due to the usual remaining drag torque of the wet clutch, would rotate noticeably slower and would thereby also significantly reduce the extremely noisy, mechanically painful and pretty embarrassing gear shift kick (the rotating input shaft is abruptly braked to zero revs - the vehicle in any case being stationary at the time) !

It is just conceivable, that in that case the oil pressure could be insufficient or that the water pump might not circulate sufficient coolant...

An issue to resolve!

Chassis suspension

Regarding the chassis, without exception, only gratifying things can be reported.

In order to steal the „Über-Experts“ thunder straightaway, let me say that I am by no means a „chassis expert“.

So I have never understood why one of you once wrote that those beemers fitted with Hossack forks are unresponsive, which since then has been repeated parrot fashion by the whole tribe.

I just mount the thing and set off, totally unpremeditated and unprejudiced.
I see absolutely nothing of the front wheel - an enormous cockpit with loud speakers on the left and on the right is spread out in front of me and I gingerly take my first corner - take it easy....
After two hours with this giant beast, somewhere in the northern regions of the Black Forest she briefly kisses the ground,
first left then right - find it on YouTube: <https://youtu.be/alX9q-3Zabs>

Well, I certainly did not find any lack of responsiveness - to be precise, with regard to road handling, I found she lacked absolutely nothing and this is still the way I feel about it today:

As a 60 yr old Granddad I have ordered a motorbike with an ESA, of course, and I am over the moon with the entire running gear:

Before your first ride on the GT you don't even dare to dream of the things you can do with this 340 kg heavy lump of iron:

You are on your own on the road somewhere in the mountains, wifey and luggage are safely ensconced in some Spa hotel, and you listen to your own singing, whistling, hooting with delight.

You thunder up some fantastic mountain pass in Italy, Switzerland or France (Jauffen maybe, Flüela or, better still Bonette and colleagues) and in between you get scared of yourself:

You have possibly never ever rumbled up anything and now you do this, enjoying a sense of safety and driving comfort hitherto unknown (not all passes are smoothly ironed out race tracks).

Okay, okay, I'll be brief:

A few days later you ride along the same pass again, with wifey, with luggage on the back, homeward bound:

After a few turns this sense of going into a groove returns and twenty minutes later your girl on the back gives you a sharp poke in the ribs and you realize:

This wasn't exactly more modest than your recent solo trip!

What is it I want to say?

It is like that lovely engine:

An absolute all-rounder is this chassis suspension!

If solo, solo with luggage, with pillion, with pillion and luggage - one cruises in high comfort, travelling smoothly, having fun thanks to its dynamics - adjust the ESA and expect and get the highest levels of sophistication!

Pronounced lean angles, negligible fork dive during braking, riding and leaning into alternating bends or corners, unbelievable, what this chassis suspension achieves - yet again, chapeau - it's hats off!

Oh yes, those extremely important black round Metzeler Z8 things are also part of the Chassis.

....am totally happy with those tyres:

Tyre grip across the entire surface, they are unperturbed by braking force, maximum vehicle weight, are inconspicuously good in any riding conditions (on wet roads I am rather a scare pants), comfortable, with good even wear even after the third set and high performance to the very last mile and:

I have never before achieved 6000 km with just one set...(6-cylinders apply input with many small input- and tyre saving torque peaks; the fewer cylinders the higher the torque peaks which causes more wear and tear in a comparable torque and performance category...)

END OF PART 1/4

BRAKES

And so to an equally important topic -

It doesn't have an easy job, that brake of the BMW...

Just let me make this clear from the start: this task has been mastered, with plaudits!

A novel level of safety enters the world of motorcycling with this brake:

- An unprecedented sense of safety coupled with tremendous braking power
- Finely adjustable delivery of braking force
- No more 'scares' in emergency and forced braking procedures (integral brakes with load dependent brake force distribution)
- Optimum level of assistance whilst riding swiftly along mountain passes
- Right foot is in resting position
- Negligible front end dive when braking hard
- Braking hard into bends without any problems
- Undiminished braking power during mountain pass riding with maximum heavy load
- Very little righting moment whilst braking during cornering

And so on, and so on - She sometimes "hisses" a wee bit whilst braking, but I forgive her that.

And for this it is, for the third time, "Hats off!"

Right, and now it's getting really tight:

CLUTCH/GEAR BOX/ DRIVE TRAIN

For decades now this has been a typical and sad BMW state of affairs:
gear train/ transmission

And this right at the start:

Quite frankly, it's a purchase killer, what BMW choose to subject their 20.000+ Euros customers to:

But one thing after another:

The first item in the drive train is the clutch, and apart from its inability to separate a 100% due to its structural set-up, which in turn is responsible for this unmentionable 1st gear engaging clunk, there is not much to fault it on:

- The smallest amount of operating force is needed (brilliant!), just a slight pulsing of the hand lever.
- Good and finely adjustable delivery (I often drive off in 2nd gear by mistake...)
- Inconspicuous functionality
- Varied noise from the clutch box - see "4. Assessment of Individual Points in Text Form"!

And thus to the Gear Box:

I am hardly complaining about the shift forces of the six way claw gearing, and the somewhat overlong or over-extended shift travel one can live with.

But that all up- and down gear shifts should have to be „learned“, and even when concentrating, only every second shift change is acoustically bearable (ok, slightly exaggerated perhaps, but only slightly!), then it is quite obvious: Task not accomplished!

An issue to resolve!

Holding gears engaged - another issue:

Again and again gears jump out! Not cleanly engaged?

Fiddlesticks: After 500.000 km I think, I am quite capable of changing gear and my Hondas, Kawas, Yamahas and Suzukis have repeatedly confirmed this during my 42 years of riding!

An issue to resolve!

Nope, we haven't quite finished with the gear box yet:

Alright, I have learnt to identify noises, in particular drive train noises, and also to filter them out of those complex vehicle noise carpets or surfaces. But what the 5th and 6th gear in the region of 2000 rpm under low load deliver accoustically, does not require an „expert's ear“!

This tremendous street tram wail is due to either poorly designed gear tooth mesh or equally bad manufacturing quality!

Meanwhile I have grasped why I am not more often confronted with this issue by the trade press: Only few Motorcyclists (and biker mag boys) have the ability to identify different specific noises and furthermore, to attribute them to individual components.

Be that as it may, but in the car industry such a 5th and 6th gear would call for change...

An issue to resolve!

Let's continue with the issue of noises - to up the level is yet always possible-because we are dealing with a BMW drive train:

As in a claw gearing the claws of two gear wheels of differing wheel revolutions have to engage through positive -locking in order to transmit power, so the claws require a so called clearance angle (between 20° and 40°).

When the gearbox has been put in gear, the two gear wheels are able to turn towards each other within this clearance angle, i.e. during traction the claws are positioned at the one side, during thrust at the other side of the claws.

So between traction and thrust there is a clearance angle of 20° to 40°, which represents nothing other than an amount of 'free play' during the traction and thrust change in the drive train.

The task for the engineer is now to minimize the extent of this technically necessary play in a claw transmission by implementing various measures in the gear train:

This is solved to 50% in the FJR, solved well in a GTR and sensationally well in a Vmax - all those examples mentioned are heavy piles of iron with high capacity, high torque and - cardan shaft drive:

In the BMW K 1600 this is cause for deepest concern beyond compare:

Just about every, even the smallest load change - i.e. ever so gently opening the throttle and ever so gently closing - Clunk, shift gear: clunk, reduce throttle: clunk, continually: clunk

An issue to resolve!

You can watch a lovely Clunk- video on YOU TUBE, and especially listen to it.

We did not 'put it together' because of the clunk - we just intended to make a wee bike ride video on a super mountain pass (Passo Pian delle Fugazze - Italy).

We mounted a GoPro camera with a suction cup onto the left rear pannier, so that I could film my friend Nils, who followed behind on his Yamaha Vmax.

After I first watched the video I was flabbergasted as to what was going on down there behind me :

What I had taken for gear shift kicks, were clunks, but an abundance of them, really many and noisy and continual: clunk, clunk, clunk....!

<https://youtu.be/hvl3v0SNtBQ>

Oh boy, guys, dear BMW folks, engineers, designers, component buying agents, team leaders, heads of departments, management boards!

How can you possibly dump something like this on us?

How can you develop motorbikes over so many years, sell millions of them, make loads of bucks, launch in 2011 a unique and very expensive top vehicle in a league of its own and, after a development period of 24-30 months, release it with such a drive train?

Aaaaarrrrgh ... blood pressure's 160/120 and pulse 170 - now slowly simmering down....
Doesn't completely work though, as the next point is:

QUALITY OF WORKMANSHIP / FINISH

"Thrown together" I once read in some forum - hopefully not in a section relating to safety, or even parts one can't look into....

It is amazing, however, that BMW sell immensely expensive high tech motorcycles with certain parts in the customer's direct line of vision which display slipshod, atrocious workmanship/finish

Examples? Here you go:

The cover of the Sat Nav compartment gapes open by a quarter of an inch on the right hand side

An issue to resolve!

The whole Sat Nav compartment is a complete - sorry, can't think of another description - mess!

An issue to resolve!

Joints and gaps: Motorbike manufacturers just haven't got it yet- wide, tight, medium - no matter, all and any are to be found.

On the other hand: motor housing, parts of the fairing, cock pit, Instrumentation: all in order!

DESIGN

As a somewhat unrecognized designer I would like to get this off my chest (meanwhile I have come to like her a quite well) - yeah sure, it's all a question of personal tastes:

Generally, everything is okay - her general flow line is right apart from the luggage rack's grab handles which unfortunately drift downwards.

But, nevertheless the overall impression that confronts me again and again, is this:

The front end of the motorcycle appears visually too weighty, too wide and too pronounced.

When I look at her, without panniers, I always see a German Shepherd suffering from a deformed pelvis...

I did attempt, by means of a home made "stealth" top box, to shift the visual weightiness upwards towards the rear of the machine.

RIDING COMFORT

Commenting on the comfort of this motorbike would be akin to carrying coals to Newcastle or carrying sand to the Sahara...

Whether we are talking about riding comfort, diverse heating systems or about an unbelievable and superbly accessible wealth of data, or systems only available at BMW: these are State of the Art!

Although I do not care one bit for the design of the handle bars, the sitting posture is brilliant: upright, comfortable and well balanced!

But, of course, even these come not without reservations:

I can't share in the blarney of some magazines regarding wind protection:

There is only just about one position, in which the wind shield works just about satisfactorily concerning wind protection and aero-acoustics - 5 out of 10

An issue to resolve!

In pronounced lean angles, my pillion girl tends to get problems with boots and feet :The tips of my boots (continental size 44) rest on the footpegs and interfere with her boots (continental size 40).

Part of one's riding comfort is also, of course:

When parking the GT, you are in big trouble if you don't also consider how you are going to get her out of that space:

Reversing, on your own, up an incline, and you are lost....

Should you then require help - of strangers or your own - they, the bystanders have something to smirk about....

Or how about turning in a narrow country lane - it's not everybody's cup of tea...

Shoving her onto the main stand: can be done with surprising ease and a bit of know how. Well done!

FEATURES

would be 10 out of 10, if it weren't for this indescribably poor Garmin Navigation system and if I hadn't been really annoyed already about the BMW communication system.

Sometimes one gets the impression, as if BMW were doing things by following some kind of system: One moment tasks are solved really well (much better than by their competitors!) and the next time time round really badly (and much worse than by all the others)

That this happens at the expense of us, the customers'- well- expense and nerves, could prove itself to become some kind of boomerang, time and again.

On the one hand are (still) high sales figures- on the other there is a markedly damaged quality image!

Just briefly regarding this pretty expensive Garmin-Navigation system "BMW Motorrad Navigator 4":

An issue to resolve!

- Whilst en route, it is very longwinded and involved to enter routes into Sat Nav
- programmed Sat Nav routes lead invariably into the centres of villages or towns - what a load of nonsense!
- draws up bends in an unprecise manner or not at all!
- shows up bends in max. zoom as untraceable polygons!
- does not have a matrix for user-orientated settings
- has to be reset longwindedly to original matrix by activating 'return' key five times!
- on tour, breaks up frequently and uploads again very slowly
- etc., etc.....
- Rather convoluted and incomprehensible Mapsource software that takes some time getting used to
- etc.etc.

As mentioned earlier, under the heading Workmanship/Finish and with relevance to the Navigation issues: Cover and housing of the Garmin Navigation are embarrassingly poorly fitted, with plenty of play, and are totally unacceptable!

And here is another big clanger: Our BMW communication system
Generally 8 out of 10 but for us : 0 out of 10!

Whilst riding and right from the beginning I (and thankfully not my wife, otherwise I would have a real problem) was assaulted by the worst of interference noise, and that suddenly, from relative quietness, at speeds above 50 km/h.

This, irrespective of torque or speed, has, indeed, some very strange noise attributes:

It sounds as if someone in a large room is clearly and noisily throwing, pushing and pulling boxes around with a kind of interference noise one would never come to expect from „electronics"....

For a few seconds it becomes quiet again before it assaults me with renewed vigour, so that I am bitterly thinking of those 800 Euros I had paid for it...

And there is another thing: On the one hand those noises appear to happen independently from the bike (when the bike-radio/USB/communication is switched off, the noises gradually increase even then). On the other hand, when riding slower than 50km/h they disappear altogether!

The remainder of included features are as good as the list is long - Without those above mentioned issues the highest 10 would be achieved.

The reason being, amongst other things, that BMW offers intelligent, helpful and effortless systems, which no other manufacturers can offer, for neither love nor money.

TOURING

Quite clearly is the super domain of this wonderful motorcycle:

Riding comfort, dynamics, fuel range, payload, fuel consumption, seat/sitting comfort, panniers, travel data and so on, and so on: all top notch!

As a form of punishment for an ambivalent tank bag and a largely non-functional pseudo-designer luggage rack it gets a huge deduction of points:

Overpriced Tank Bag:

Sidepockets which are creased and ugly and constantly in the field of vision, with an utterly useless and fiddly to pack map compartment, as it far too small!

Luggage Rack:

A carrier which due to its particular coating gets very quickly scratched, which can in no way accommodate woven or elastic luggage straps and which is apparently exclusively designed for the sinfully expensive and monstrously large and equally fairly ugly BMW -Top box - Sorry American Top box Lovers!

And here is another bugbear:

As BMW are specialists for ergonomics I would have expected by now, after all these decades of the indescribable BMW-special-Motorrad-indicator system, that by now they would have come up with something of a good functionality, as, anyway, they had adopted this from Japan:

Far from it: The GT indicator, because of its short paths lacks feedback as much in turn-on as turn-off mode.

COSTS/WARRANTY

From my point of view there is not much to say about this:

high cost - high level of features

A list of highly priced Optional Extras - the others haven't got this at all

Right now (2011) and because of serious technical deficiencies definitely overpriced!

Only 2 years of warranty, extended warranty only possible from date X onwards!

SUMMARY/ PLUS-MINUS

Oh man, I had actually no intention of putting so much down on paper - but actually neither less:

My motorbikes have helped me in the past to overcome various crises, therefore my bike plays a very important part in my life - and, well, that's why I am fairly attached to these piles of iron, which have given me so much already - and that is the reason for this really detailed appraisal.

After I could afford my first BMW, a R75/5, at the age of 22 (after Jawa 250, Yamaha R5, Honda CB 450), R90/6 and R100 S were to follow - All three of them I sold eventually, with disappointment, after technical problems.

The same in 1990, with a K 100RS...

In between there were quite a few good and reliable Japanese machines (Yamaha XS 1100, Hayabusa twice, Suzuki 1400 GSX, Yamaha FJR 1300, Kawasaki 1400 GTR)

As you can see from this, I am not enslaved to any particular brand -
I am a 'Moto-Egoist' !
I just always want the in my view very best motorcycle for my particular needs...

I had been perfectly happy with my GTR - and a 350 km long test ride on the BMW 1300GT had not convinced me otherwise - and as she had newly appeared in motorbike land and did not look that uninteresting either on paper or in real life, I took the 1600GT for a test ride - and ordered one straightaway!

Of course, that unfortunate gearbox I had taken note of immediately ; the 'clunk' drive train, the atrocious first gear kick and some serious deficiencies in finish and workmanship I had already noted with irritation on the test run...

But when you are in love, you like the girl, even if she has green instead of blue eyes , red hairs instead of black and has no rich Daddy....

This is the terrific thing about my love for the GT:
In spite of all those repeatedly mentioned failings - the love has grown and, sure:

Without any hesitation I would buy her again - right now there is no other motorbike in this class, which offers so much excellence at the very highest level.

It is the more unfortunate, that this high level gets dragged down by some very serious issues.

What a great pity, that BMW has, as is so often the problem with them, not finished the development and, once again, we the customers end up as test riders....

Just hoping, as regards the reliability of the GT, that they have not also permitted certain superficialities, and that we may not be 'left out in the rain' when it comes to issues of warranty and goodwill.

So despite all that, I have to say:

**What a Motorrad !
Thank you very much, BMW !
And now get down to dealing with those issue !**

PS

Why on earth are those guys at BMW HQ so very shy of customer contact?

Particularly as it is precisely us motorbike boys who are part of their most loyal customer base, especially when one considers all the things that we (have to) put up with...

Furthermore, motorcyclists most certainly are far more closely identified with their 'brand' than car drivers! And the opinion of the discriminating and experienced motor biker with so many years of riding experience in many cases, could be of far greater value to you than one or other person in the R&D team, who might not even be sure, why and how he ended up in motorcycles.

Just give it some thought, how one could integrate these long serving 'veterans' in an intelligent and purposeful manner in the development phases...

Some of those highly embarrassing issues, as now accumulated in the GT/GTL, would in all probability have been avoided...

The Japanese have recognised this for a long time and they invite suitable customers to these concept and development talks.

2. Table of assessment BMW K 1600 GT

Main Groupings attainable points	Maximum of	BMW 1600GT
1 Engine	100	86
2 Chassis	100	90
3 Braking system	100	88
4 Clutch/Gear Box/Drive Train	100	40
5 Workmanship/Finish	80	47
6 Design/ Shape and Form	80	60
7 Riding Comfort	80	64
8 Features	80	63
9 Touring	100	80
10 Costs	80	58
11 Bonus-Malus	100	50
<hr/>		
Total	1000	726
<hr/>		

3. Assessment individual no. of points BMW K 1600 GT

Number of points

max. attained

1 Engine

20	18	overall impression
10	9	Power Delivery
20	20	Torque
10	9	Engine Smoothness
10	9	Accoustics
10	4	Engine Responsiveness
10	8	Start-up Characteristics
10	9	Consumption of Fuel/Oil
100	86	

2 Chassis /Tyres

20	19	Overall Impression
10	9	Handling or Manageability
10	9	Suspension/ Shock Absorption with ESA
10	9	Riding Comfort
10	9	Cornering Stability
15	13	Lean Angle
10	7	Wobble Tendency >200 km/h
5	5	Tyre Wear
5	5	Eveness of Tyre Wear
5	5	Propensity of Shimmy
100	90	

3 Braking System

20	19	Overall Impression
20	18	Delivery of Brake Power

20	18	Brake Force Controllability
10	9	Fork Dive
15	13	Righting moment=Aufstellmoment
10	8	Brakes Wear and Tear
5	3	Braking Noise

100**88****4 Clutch / Gear Box / Drive Train Transmission**

5	5	Overall Impression
5	5	Clutch Controllability
5	5	Required Operating Force for Clutch
5	1	Clutch Noise
10	3	Overall Impression Gear Box/Drive Train
10	4	Ease of Gear Shift
10	5	Transmission
10	5	Ability to hold gear
10	2	Drive Train Noise
10	2	Primary Drive Noise
10	2	Engaging 1.Gear
10	1	Backlash/ gear kick 'clunk'

100**40****5 Workmanship / Finish**

20	12	Overall Impression
20	8	Chassis
10	8	Cable and Wire Assembly
10	8	'beneath the seat'
10	8	Bolt and Screw Fittings
10	3	Gaps = Spalte

80**47****6 Design/Form and Shape**

20	16	Overall Impression
15	14	Wheels
15	13	Fairing
10	6	Cockpit or layout of Instruments or dasboard
10	8	Line of tank and seat or saddle
10	3	Luggage rack

80**60****7 Riding Comfort**

15	14	Overall Impression
15	14	Ergonomics Rider / Pillion
10	5	Wind Protection
10	3	Manoeuvrability / Weight
10	9	Lighting System
10	10	Heaters Grips and Seats
10	9	System Network

80**64****8 Features**

20	20	Overall Impression
15	5	Navigation System
5	3	Radio/USB
10	5	Communications System BMW
10	10	Fuel Tank Capacity
10	10	Data (available)
10	10	Diversity of Systems

80**63**

9 Touring

20	19	Overall Impression
15	14	Dynamic Touring
10	10	Range
20	15	Payload
15	14	Panniers
10	4	Luggage Rack
10	4	Tank Bag
100	80	

10 Costs

40	30	Purchase Price at brand new
20	10	Costs of services
20	18	Consumption
80	58	

11 Bonus - Malus

100		Bonus
	50	Malus
100	50	

1000**726****4. Assessment of Individual Points BMW K 1600 GT**

Points	max	achieved
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1. Engine

20	18	<u>General Impression</u>
		What an engine!
		Gentle, well-behaved, wild, velvety, screaming, will do anything from bumbling along in touring, to racing, exceedingly well applied!
		Delayed throttle uptake
		Idling revs: 950 rpm - why so high ?
10	9	<u>Power</u>
		More than enough - even at middle rev range
20	20	<u>Torque</u>
		Thrusting brilliantly from idling, from 1200 rpm plus 6th gear may easily be used
10	9	<u>Engine Smoothness</u>
		6-cylinder -in- line motor just, with 100% mass balancing
10	9	<u>Acoustics</u>
		Highly addictive - tuned to relatively loud

10	4	<u>Engine Responsiveness</u>	
			Reasonably acceptable to good whilst riding but noticeably delayed in double-declutching- not nice and not very professional!
10	8	<u>Start-up</u>	
			inconspicuous and good - sometimes delayed...
10	9	<u>Consumption</u>	fue l/oil
			Average consumption 5.3ltr per 100 km: brilliant! 0.5ltr oil per 8000km

100 **86**

2. Chassis / Tyres

20	19	<u>Overall Impression</u>	
			340kg in total, with a chassis capable of cruising, touring, racing, irrespective of any load: sensational!
10	9	<u>Handling/Manageability</u>	
			Once this pile of iron is rolling its weight becomes negligible...
10	9	<u>Suspension/ Shock Absorption with ESA</u>	
			Comfort/Normal/Sport can be selected for suspension with adapted suspension stiffness = Federhärte for rider/ pillion with single or double luggage: Superbly attuned !
10	9	<u>Riding Comfort</u>	
			Because of ESA, wheel base, weight and attunement, of a high level
10	9	<u>Cornering Stability</u>	
			inspires great confidence in all riding and payload situations
15	13	<u>Lean angle</u>	
			Good to very good - with pronounced cornering dynamics those 'angst nipples' below the foot peg will have disappeared after six months...
10	7	<u>Wobble Tendency >200kph</u>	
			Of no great significance but clearly there - markedly reduced when lowering the windshield somewhat
5	5	<u>Tyre Wear</u>	
			Amazing: 6000km on one set of tyres: 6-Cylinders with 6 small torque peaks instead of 4,3,2 or one cylinder with increasingly higher torque peaks...?
5	5	<u>Eveness of Tyre Wear</u>	
			very pleasing and well matched to the vehicle: resistant against vertical run-out, wheel imbalance and brakes juddering

5	5	<u>Propensity of Shimmy</u>
		almost non-existent: Neither at high payload nor with worn tyres does any handlebar shimmy occur !

100	90

3. Brakes

20	19	<u>Overall Impression</u>
		Unbelievable, what positive impression this well-accomplished braking unit lends to the whole vehicle !

20	20	<u>Delivery of Brake Power</u>
		Excellent delivery, can be applied in any riding situations independent of load, thanks to integral brakes with combined even distribution of braking power to front- and rear axle,!

20	16	<u>Controllability of Brakes/ Feel</u>
		Brilliantly adjustable - slightly doughy feel to the grip, imprecise action point

10	9	<u>Fork Dive</u>
		Clearly -Chassis issue, but nevertheless underpins the sense of safety at high brake performance.

15	13	<u>Righting Moment</u>
		Amazing: It is possible to brake both forcefully into corners as in corners, with very little righting moment

10	8	<u>Brake Wear</u>
		With an average anticipating style of riding, about 20.000 km are feasible

5	3	<u>Brake Noise</u>
		Apparently there is a tendency for brake noise to develop - a slight hissing during braking on 2 GT's

100	88

4. Clutch/ Gear Box/ Drive Train

5	5	<u>Overall Impression Clutch</u>
		Well made, unobtrusive wet clutch with all the pros and cons of this type of design

5	5	<u>Controllability of Clutch</u>
		Good to control or finely adjust - driving off in 2nd gear is without problems easily feasible. Some publications mistakenly blamed the clutch for the drive-off tardiness which is inherent in the mass moment of inertia in the motor

5	5	<u>Required Operating Force for Clutch</u>
		An intelligent power-assisted mechanical unit quite remarkably reduces the required operating forces to a very comfortable level.

END OF PART 3/4

5 1 **Clutch Noise**

I am not entirely sure, if I can attribute this to the clutch: right from the beginning and at uniform, low load and no acceleration there was, in the higher gears, a rising and falling 'sound amplitude' together with a kind of 'cutter' sound (similar to that of an additionally powered agricultural machine...)

Other audible noises from the clutch area are: a soft, subdued but nevertheless clearly audible clicking...

Both noises increase slightly beyond 10.000km..

10 3 **Overall Impression Gear Box/ Drive Train**

One is able to change gear - occasionally and after some practise even noiselessly - a gear box unworthy of such a motor bike!

The drive train is a real collection of unworthy noises - a disgrace, BMW!

A lot of development work will have to be done in this area

Regrettably, as is the norm for BMW : Such happens in the selling phase...!

10 4 **Ease of Gear Shift**

Not much shift force required, but long shift travel, noiseless gear shift is only feasible in part and by concentrating on the procedures and their correct timing

10 5 **Gear Transmission Ratio**

As is the case with all Beemers, even with this mammoth tourer with corresponding torque, the transmission is rather too short!

(One could possibly lose face in the pub over dropping a few tenths...)

10 5 **Ability to Hold Gear**

Time and again a gear jumper: There is no motorbike that after 42 years of development jumps out of gear as often!

10 2 **Gear Box Noise**

5th and 6th gear at low, uniform load in the range of around 2.000 rpm are embarrassingly loud: "StreetTram" noises due to slipshod design and/or manufacture - in car manufacture this would be an issue calling for modification!

10 2 **Primary Drive Noise**

Interesting, what BMW manage to achieve here:

A primary drive which is massively audible in any gear at any torque, in thrust as well as traction mode: pipes, howls, hums...

Even at 140 kph and despite strong headwinds clearly and annoyingly noticeable!

10 2 **Engaging 1st Gear**

Almost even more embarrassing: engaging first gear with a bang so that one fears for the entire mechanics of the bike - those disbelieving stares of passers-by aside..

Just why should it not be possible to markedly reduce the idling revs of a 6-cylinder (!) motor?

10 1 **Play/ Gear Kick 'Clunk'**

To top all noises:

At each and every ever so smallest load change (as in the change from giving and easing off throttle) there is a 'klunk' in the drive train (the clearance angle of the claw gearing is insufficiently damped or muffled).

Totally incomprehensible, that a technology in such a state for such a motorcycle should be released for sale !

The Clunk -Video: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hvI3v0SNtBQ>

100

40

5. Workmanship/Finish

80

20

12

Overall Impression

Quite varied - good:

Motor Housing, wheels, panniers -

not acceptable: Sat.Nav. cover, fit of headlight in housing, joints and gaps, GTL seat has 10 mm play when fixed in position!

20

8

Chassis

Not acceptable: Sat. Nav. cover and housing, Headlight fit, joints and gaps

10

8

Cable Assembly

In order, as far as can be inspected

10

8

"Beneath the seat"

In order, as far as can be inspected

10

8

Nuts and Bolts

Good: just one size (acceptable quality) for many screw fittings

10

3

Joints and Gaps

This topic seems to interest neither motorcyclist nor manufacturers - not good !

80

47

6. Design

80

20

16

Overall Impression

The longer I own her the more I like her - functional love?

By extending the grab handles of the luggage rack, regrettably, a

break in the ascending line was created - that such a thing should be allowed...?

With or without panniers, a visually appealing motorcycle!

15

14

Wheels

Dynamic, visually well matching, interesting choice of colours

15 13 **Fairing**
Well made, assembly in separate sections lends lightness to its appearance

10 6 **Cockpit**
Functional, less space-age would perhaps be better...

10 8 **Fuel Tank - Seat -Line**
The huge fuel tank is well disguised, the general line is almost elegant

10 3 **Luggage Rack**
Pity: The angular design of the grab handles destroys the harmonious flow line towards the rear..

80 60

7. Comfort

80

15 14 **Overall Impression**
Get on the bike and feel comfortable - Everything is there, everything fits, the same in riding - apart from drive train &Co.

15 14 **Ergonomics Rider/ Pillion**
Suits: He and she feel comfortable - during severe lean angles a bit of a tight squeeze between his and her boots...

15 5 **Windprotection**
No specially good marks here: reasonable in only one position, but still relatively noisy

10 3 **Manoeuvrability/Weight**
Can't expect to give good marks for this: You must carefully consider where you park her: Will I by myself manage to move away from here? And when turning in a narrow lane it becomes clear: there is no harm in having a bit of experience!

10 9 **Lighting system**
Mine is fully equipped, inclusive of this genius of a 'round the corner headbeam'

10 10 **Grip- and Seat heating**
Brilliant, although no one freezes immediately at temperatures under 10°C and very importantly: neither does the girl on the back!

10 9 **System Network**
System recognises radio, Sat Nav, USB stick, communications-system - they all recognise each other - these like most other things can be controlled from the handlebars: superbly designed !

80 64

8. Features

80

20

20

Overall Impression

This wealth of features must be worldwide unique at the moment.

That BMW wants to be princely paid for this, I can accept: Even for a royal sum I cannot get this 'box of toys' anywhere else !

15

5

Navigation System

Okay, so it works when I want to get from A to B - but then it becomes awkward:

- When creating routes the 'rag' always directs into city centres!
- Zoomed bends are badly or not at all shown up!
- Mapsource cannot be used en route!
- Operating the Sat Nav is cumbersome and not particularly user-friendly!
- Its Fixation and Integration on the bike are executed without any care, it is subject to a lot of play!

5

3

Radio/ USB

Radio reception is reasonable at best - USB mode is very good apart from very occasionally sticking

10

5

BMW Communications-System

not too bad - One can live with pauses between speaking (blue tooth, single channel) and radio..

However, right from the beginning I have experienced severe interference in my ear phones: Noise as if someone shoves big boxes back and forth (?), independent of torque or load, sometimes (?) affected by speed...

When the vehicle is stationary, there are no interferences..

In my pillion's helmet there is peace and quiet then, thankfully...

10

10

Fuel Tank Capacity / Range

Special marks for this: A 26 ltr fuel tank which one can make full use of, thanks to a very accurate gauge of the remaining range in reserve!

10

10

Data available

A host of data - I'm thrilled to bits!

10

10

Diversity of Systems

The fully equipped models offer a diversity of systems nowhere else on offer, not one of which I want to do without ever again!

80 **63**

9. Touring

100

20

19

Overall Impression

Whinging at the highest level: This is what I am still missing for my ultimate touring happiness: A longer or extended sixth gear!

15 14 **Dynamic Touring**
Dynamic and safe touring with just under 600 kg of total weight - very impressive..

10 10 **Range**
A 26 ltr fuel tank capacity with average consumption of 5.3 ltr per 100 km achieve a range of 490 km : max points

20 15 **Payload**
Payload of 221 kg - one live with that... He 95+She 65 +It 61 (It, the load)

15 14 **Panniers**
Very well made: Appeal, function, finish - unfortunately a weight like lead

10 4 **Luggage rack**
Apparently purely designed to accommodate only the BMW top box...
Attaching elastic- or suchlike luggage straps well nigh impossible!
Silly silvery coating - very easily scratched

10 4 **Tank Bag**
Pretty tiny, but massively over-priced - of any use only and exclusively to hotel travellers.
Accommodates only completely folded-up maps - furthermore, these are awkward to fiddle into the map compartment!
Shoddily finished, insubstantial and creased side compartments!

100 80

10. Costs 80

40 30 **Purchase Price, from new**
Considering what is being delivered, the price would be perfectly acceptable, if BMW had not 'indulged' in also delivering such a transmission.
Nevertheless, the positive parts of the GT/GTL are so convincing, that I just „had to“ spend those 24.000 Euros

20 10 **Service Costs**
Okay, as long as everything that has been ticked off the list by the mechanic, has actually been done.
If not, it is considerably over-priced!

20 18 **Consumption**
Extra points for this: 1600ccm - 175 Nm - 160 HP - 5.3 ltr per100km : Superb!

80 58

11. Bonus -Malus

This deserves extra points:

Torque and Power	25
Gentle and Wild	25
Comfort and Dynamics	25
Touring and Racing	25

Bonus: 100

This deserves a deduction of points

Sat Nav annoys by lacking functionality	10
Primary drive wail	5
Gear Shift deficiencies	6
1st Gear kick	10
Transmission -Clunk	10
Indicator lacks decent feed back in on or off switch nmode	3
Central Unlocking only in part possible, after starting motor	3
Radio is not permanently connected to plus point terminal 30	3

100**50****Malus: 50****1000****726****5. Small Table of my YouTube-K1600GT-Clips**Race track & Black forest: https://youtu.be/MvB_qVrTCVUCol d'Oderen / Elsaß: <https://youtu.be/FMBHTwZ-Q4>Race track: <https://youtu.be/K8EHh5sn5ik>In Italy - Passo Fugazze and Klonk: <https://youtu.be/hvI3v0SNtBQ>Very first GT-drive: <https://youtu.be/alX9q-3Zabs>*Translation: s.h.gonnens-holthusen -13th april 2015**Thank You Sigi & Holly -**You offered the translation and pushed the whole thing!**Today is the 26th april 2015**I am happier than ever with that wonder GT!**She gave me 70 000 great Kilometers till today.**I have had some small problems - no big trouble...**I would buy my baby at once once again!**So carpe diem because tempus fugit!**Kind regards**cede - Christoph Dimter***END OF PART 4/4**