

MISSION-READY

A former motor officer opines on the BRP Can-Am F3 Spyder Police.

By Paul Ballard

I am recently retired after 35 years of law enforcement experience on the Canadian west coast. Nearly one third of my career was on motors. Our Motor Unit was full time, year round and had over 35 motorcycles in the fleet. I have ridden many brands and am familiar with what the market offers.

I finished my tenure with the Vancouver Police Department as a Police Motorcycle Instructor and was the Training Supervisor both delivering and designing operator training from entry level to advanced. I have traveled and participated in many riding seminars and conferences such as the North American Motor Officers Association (NAMOA) Rodeos.

In the context of my experience I can say with confidence that the Can-Am BRP F3 Spyder Police is so different from a traditional police motorcycle that it will immediately cause a discussion as to what it is and why would anyone select this platform.

A first instinct is to try and compare the three-wheel platform to a two-wheeler. My thought was to approach this with an open mind and see how the Can-Am fits into the notions of what a police motor offers to an agency.

Police motors offer visibility in two ways. To the public, attention is drawn toward a highly visible mounted officer. This visibility, or presence, in many cases is enough to bring about improved compliance on the roadway. The Can-Am draws at-

tention and when appropriately decalated by the agency will be a highly visible enforcement platform.

Motors offer the operator unobstructed visibility of the enforcement environment. This results in a motor officer being more efficient in observing behaviours and violations in the operating environment. The Spyder offers this with the stability of three wheels, which are unaffected by head turning and upper body turning of the operator. These operator movements on two wheels can affect stability significantly.

Police motors offer superior braking and acceleration. Standing start acceleration and roll-on acceleration to close the distance on a target are hallmark traits of the police motor with an operator who has mastered throttle, clutch and shifting skills. The Can-Am Spyder checks this box with gusto!

Using a semi-automatic paddle shift system allows fast shifts optimizing the powerband without a clutch. Police motors have highly evolved braking capability and with anti-skid components and correct operator technique, are able to stop in extremely short distances. The Can-Am Spyder with its linked ABS braking and right-foot-only activation meets and delivers on the braking challenge. This is combined with the transmission automatically dropping down in gear so that when stopped the machine is ready to go again.



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Police motors with their greatly reduced footprint and agility offer maneuverability unmatched by any other enforcement platform. Watch a skilled operator under full acceleration suddenly brake with proper input of both front and rear brakes, disengage the clutch and tap down to first gear to a near stop.

The operator then applies proper throttle, brake, and clutch input with full lock steering and reverses direction while heeling the machine over and that turn is done in about a 17-foot radius. This is a maneuverability attribute that belongs to a skilled rider on two wheels.

Next is the ability to thread through traffic limited only by the width of the motor and skill of the operator.

The Can-Am uses a foot brake only to achieve threshold braking. As the vehicle slows the transmission automatically downshifts, full steering input and the platform will U-turn well within the width of two average driving lanes. If less room is available, reverse gear allows a three-point turn. Operator required skills are reduced. The Can-Am Spyder has about a four-foot

width and that dictates its accessibility. It easily rides the most narrow road shoulder. It will mount a curb on an oblique angle and can descend on an oblique angle.

The Spyder Police can travel on most footpaths and bicycle paths while retaining excellent stability on loose surfaces.

Training is another notion that must be spoken to. The motor officer is acknowledged to have taken upon a challenge in operating a vehicle that requires a high degree of skill while conducting the assigned duty. Full time operators are continually building and refining skills.

The Spyder with its three-wheeled stability immediately reduces training time and expense for an agency. Even if the Can-Am were to cost more on initial purchase than a two-wheeler, its reduced required training time will save wages paid in training or sick leave due to injury sustained in training.

Shortened, less physical, training time will have the operator and machine deployed sooner. The Spyder's forgiving car-like braking system is a great feature for an inexperienced or part time opera-

tor who, in an emergency, might revert to a car-like reaction.

This three-wheeler can be made to fit any size of operator, because there's no need have a foot put down while at a stop. Slow-speed loss of balance is not an issue, as the Spyder remains upright.

I see this Can-Am offering to be very mission-capable for traffic enforcement, parade duty, vehicle escort, and congested traffic. Its use in public relations and outreach programs is also very viable. It is handy for crowd management and public order units, and could be used by commanders and supervisors who need to carry extra equipment.

It provides a potential platform for emergency health and fire responders in quick response to congested areas or on gridlocked freeways, and I believe that the Can-Am F3 Spyder Police deserves the attention of law enforcement departments that are in the process of adding to or replacing their current fleet of motors. Ride one and open your mind. It has a place in law enforcement and emergency response.

CAN-AM

COP KIT: BRP consulted with police motorcycle experts to design and equip the Spyder F3-P, which is based on the Y-frame configured F3 model. The police-spec includes accessories such as a siren, LED emergency lights and increased cargo capacity, wired with 12V and USB connectors. Officers can personalize their unit with the BRP's UFIT system of adjustable foot peg positions and alternative handlebars. For cargo capacity, the Police Spyder features a standard aluminum top case and two optional side cases, for a total capacity of 140 litres.

