



Upgrade your Motorcycle's Horn
The Stebel Nautilus Compact Series Air Horn

<http://www.stebel.it>
by Judy Mirro

It's intimidating enough to stop a deer in its tracks, make it spin on its hooves and head right back into the woods from which it came. Well, that, at least, was my first week's experience with my most fun birthday toy of the summer. The Nautilus Compact Dual-Tone Air Horn from Stebel of Italy has an amazing 139 decibels of sound. Some have said it sounds like a freight train barreling down on them or an eighteen wheeler out of control and headed straight for them. Be prepared, when you press the horn button after mounting yours – take a full step back. It is a good thing I ride with ear plugs and a full-face helmet, or I would likely go deaf every time I used it. Better yet, go to the Stebel web site and press the "horn" button for a sound sample.

I hate that motorcycles typically come with those silly little "meep-meep" horns, and in the past I have upgraded to the dual electric Fiamm horns (also Italian-made). While they are better than the factory horns with which we are all familiar, they lack greatness. They require a bit of wiring, some fuses, aren't as loud as the Stebel, and cost even more.

A pleasant gent from Pennsylvania shared dinner with my good friend Jon, my sweetie Bill and me one evening during a recent national motorcycle rally. We discussed everything that riders could possibly discuss during dinner. When we were through filling our bellies, we geared up and headed outside. Our dinner companion had a beauty of a vintage BMW Slash 5 and could hardly wait to let me hear his horn that we had been discussing earlier. I nearly fell over. "Man-o-man, that thing is LOUD!", I exclaimed. We were all



quite surprised by the tiny horn. I turned and looked at Bill: "That's it! I know what I want for my birthday!" Timing was tight, so I didn't think Bill could pull this one off, but Bill was generous -- he hustled and purchased one through eBay and even included the installation as part of my gift. What every good Italian girl needs -- a very loud Italian horn to sound off now and again. The compact styling adds ease of installation on unfaired motorcycles and there are few parts and pieces to the system. For faired bikes like mine, it does get trickier for the do-it-yourselfer.

If you are not comfortable with electrical wiring and creative mounting (Bill fabricated an aluminum mounting bracket for me), it is best to have your dealer perform the installation. With a purchase price of about \$35.00, the Stebel is a steal on eBay.

This birthday horn was installed on my Ducati 900ss. Right now my R80/1050 with its R90s fairing has dual Fiamm horns, but they are fading fast from age and years of use.

Stebel claims their air horn can be heard three blocks away. Just ask any of my neighbors up or down the hill. I have used it to warn drivers straying from their lanes and the results have been fabulous. They look over at me in disbelief. Did that noise really come from "that" motorcycle? Of course, they move immediately -- then they look in disbelief. Perhaps they can't believe they have responded to such a small piece of machinery. But it was the noise they responded to -- that loud burst of I'M HERE! With the Stebel and my left thumb at the ready, there is no doubt everyone can hear me when I need my presence known.

I read something about the decibel scale, that for every three points you go up the scale, the sound doubles. The Stebel Nautilus Compact horn produces 139 dB of sound which puts out 800% of sound energy more than the higher priced Fiamm which produces



130dB of sound energy. Pretty impressive. Definitely time to upgrade my other street bikes.

Why, just Thursday morning, on my way to work, I got to test out my air horn again, this time on a coyote trying to cross my path while I was riding the Interstate. He didn't stand a chance. Of course, I did apply the brakes, but never needed to come to a complete stop since he was already headed for the high country when the Stebel started blasting. Hee, hee, hee!! I love being loud.

Specifications:

Sound output: 139 dB

Operating voltage: 12 Volts

Absorbed current: less than 18A

Fundamental frequency: 530 Hz / 680 Hz

Weight: 1.3 pounds (600 grams)

Dimensions: 5.9" x 4.4" x 3.7"

Reaction time: <90 milli-seconds

*The manufacturer notes the horn should be mounted so the cylinder is vertical – with the horn facing down.

Available colors: Black only in Compact (Red or Chrome also available)