

# Ride

Longer, harder, further, deeper. We've taken a fresh look at our testing program and revamped the way we ride and evaluate long-term test bikes to bring you a clearer picture of what ownership entails.

**T-RIDE:** 2015 SHERCO 300SE-R  
**RRP:** \$11,990  
**HOURS TO DATE:** 22.5

## LOOK FOR THE STAMP...

This Torture Tested stamp indicates the bike is a "T-Ride". That means it'll have predominantly hours, not parts, put on it.



# REFINED RIDE

Here's how to improve the French two-stroke's durability and rideability without busting your budget.

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Having now lived with Sherco's 300SE-R for six months, I've gotten to know the bike pretty well, and I've managed to make it significantly better via relatively few mods and set-up tweaks. I've added practical protection, improved the chassis' balance

and trimmed some weight from the machine. And while it has taken some trial and error – through a combination of changes to the power-valve, gearing and jetting – I've finally found an engine setting that delivers user-friendly power for a wider variety of terrain. It's still got that prodigious grunt,

but it now finds rear-wheel traction much more effectively. And that translates into a bike that's less fatiguing – and much more enjoyable – to trailride or race.

Here's an insight into the refinements I've made in recent months to the 300cc flagship of Sherco's two-stroke range...





## USABLE POWER

At our recent 300cc two-stroke shootout, the Sherco blew its KTM and Beta counterparts away in drag races. But in tight terrain – where a more controlled and progressive surge of power is called for – the Sherco’s aggressive mid-range hit made it harder to get the rear tyre hooking up. That, in turn, affected line selection and energy expenditure.

So the first thing I did to address the issue was look at its gearing. The standard 14/49 sprocket combo is a pretty good all-round option. It gives you a top speed of about 155km/h in sixth and works well for cruisy trailriding. But to keep the engine in the meat of its power in tighter bush, it does leave you shifting from second to third, and back again, far too often.

So I shortened the gearing by going to a 13-tooth countershaft sprocket (which is what Sherco dealers now recommend their customers do). This 13/49 combo (which is about 7% shorter than standard) relegates first gear to waste-of-time walking pace, but allows you to carry third gear for

a greater majority of slower corners. In the bush, you end up using mainly third and fourth gears, rather than rapid-fire shifting between second, third and fourth. And fewer shifts alone makes the bike a lot easier to ride smoother and more consistently.

In reality, though, the gearing change is more of a band-aid solution. It simply masks the fact that the Sherco’s power comes on abruptly in the mid-range. The genuine improvement came when I altered the bike’s jetting – by fitting a kit developed specifically for the Sherco by JDJetting. This creates crisper power across the entire rev range, with the biggest improvement noticeable at lower revs. And that’s important because it means the transition into the mid-range – where the Sherco hits too hard with the standard jetting – is smoothed out substantially.

The revised jetting and gearing combine to generate a broader, more user-friendly power curve. These changes transform the 300SE-R’s ride because, when you’re less preoccupied with gear-shifts, you’ve got more time to focus on where you’re going and on enjoying the ride. 🏍️



## PARTS FITTED...



### RADIATOR GUARDS

For a decade now, Force Accessories has consistently produced some of the best protective components for dirt bikes on the market, and the Australian company’s new billet radiator guards are particularly impressive. At \$249, these black-anodised billet units cost about \$50 more than Force’s standard fabricated guards, but they’re lighter and stronger (unlike most other billet guards, they use an extra web machined into the rear for added strength), and a whole lot quicker and easier to fit. Plus their new grill design reduces airflow by less than 10% at lower speeds.



### FOAM FILTERS

The Sherco’s standard foam air filter is a quality Twin Air unit. But because you can’t pull the foam’s layers apart, it’s difficult to wash properly, which can compromise airflow. That’s why I opted for a ProComp2 from Uni Filter, whose two layers of foam can be separated (to wash and oil them thoroughly). I run this yellow filter for long rides and/or dusty conditions. For short rides or races, or in wet conditions, I swap it out for Uni Filter’s blue 02 Rush Air filter, which uses a single-layer foam to maximise airflow and horsepower.



### RUBBER OPTIONS

For the past six months, I’ve alternated between Michelin’s MS3 and MH3 rear tyres, depending on conditions. But on the front, I seem to keep gravitating back to the Comp VI. Sure, it doesn’t have the MH3’s grip levels on blue-groove, but the Comp VI is so versatile in all other terrain types, it’s the obvious choice for a majority of trailrides or grasstrack. I was hoping to get my hands on some of Michelin’s all-new Starcross 5 hoops, but they were just arriving in Oz as we went to print on this issue. We’ll get the chance to sample them shortly.

## PARTS FITTED...



### FMF SILENCER

After the jetting and gearing mods, I then fitted a slip-on FMF Powercore 2 silencer, which matches the bike’s standard FMF Gnarly expansion chamber nicely. It gives the engine more bottom-end response, and lets it rev harder for longer up top. The FMF slip-on is lighter and shorter than the standard unit, but what I like about it most is that it comes with noticeably thicker and more robust mounting brackets (the standard brackets were starting to fatigue and break). The Sherco is already the best-sounding enduro bike on the market, and the FMF silencer makes it sound even better.



### MUD SLIDERS

To prolong fork seal life (and reduce the risk of seal damage), I fit a set of SKF Mud Scrapers in wet and muddy conditions (and I now carry them in my bum bag in case of unexpected rain). They’re a cinch to fit because you don’t have to remove the front wheel or take the fork legs out of the triple clamps. Simply push the fork’s plastic wear rings out of the way (I zip-tie them under the lower triple clamp) and fit the SKF Mud Scrapers. They slot straight into the outer tube’s locating grooves and their ends are secured by the supplied cotter pins.



### FRESH PLASTICS

I pride myself on riding to my abilities, which means I don’t crash much. The same can’t be said for a gung-ho snowboarder mate who borrowed my Sherco to “just cut a casual lap or two” at the recent Transmoto 12-Hour. Naturally, he cartwheeled the thing before completing a lap, snapping the front guard clean off and doing some collateral damage to the left sideplate and Cycra handguards. The incident did, however, draw my attention to the fact the Sherco’s plastics are a little thinner and more brittle than average. On the upside, they’re cheap and include decals.





## JETTING CHANGES

So, what exactly does the JDJetting kit do to the Sherco's air/fuel ratio to deliver such pronounced gains? Well, the benefits are generated predominantly by the JDJetting multi-tapered needle. While production dirt bikes simply use the 'best-fit' existing Keihin needle, JDJetting fabricates needles specifically to suit the engine characteristics of each make and model of bike. And there's no doubt the three-taper design of its 300SE-R needle ensures optimal jetting right through the rev range – an improvement confirmed by both dyno and track testing.

Specifically, here are the jetting specs we settled on (for sea-level,

using Repsol premix oil at a ratio of 40:1):

- We fitted JDJetting's Blue needle, which is thinner/richer from zero to one-quarter throttle. This helps really smooth out the bike's power delivery as the revs transition from the bottom-end into the mid-range.
- The needle's clip is in the third position from the top.
- With the mainjet, we moved from a 168 back to standard 165.
- The standard 38 pilot jet is retained.
- The air-screw is set at 1.5 turns out.

The JDJetting kit for the Sherco includes a custom-made Red (leaner) and Blue (richer) needle, four mainjets (152, 158, 162 and 165) and two pilot jets (38 and 42). The installation instructions also offer indicative settings for various altitudes and temperatures, along with the suggested sequence of steps to make the jetting either richer or leaner. So for \$150, the JDJetting kit not only gives you more precise jetting than standard Keihin needles possibly can; it also makes sure you've got your jetting covered for a wide variety of riding conditions and power delivery preferences. 📖



LOG ON TO [WWW.transmoto.COM.AU](http://WWW.transmoto.COM.AU)

For more detailed insights into the aftermarket mods and improvements made to our Sherco 300SE-R and 450SEF-R T-Ride machines.



## QUICK TIPS...

- Keep an eye on the lower radiator shroud bolts. Despite the fact these bolts use a larger head for the 2015 model, mine both pulled through the radiator shrouds' plastics after a few low-side crashes. A larger washer and/or alloy collar fixes the problem.
- Speaking of these shroud bolts, the screw inserts they use (which are captive in the radiators) are not sold separately. So you can either spend \$208 to buy a new radiator with the insert included, or (much more sensibly) trot down to your local dealership to buy some for less than \$1 a pop. Note, however, these inserts do require a special tool to attach them permanently to the radiators. It'd sure make life easier if Sherco Australia sold the inserts separately.
- My digital speedo has been a bit temperamental, and I've spoken to a few other Sherco owners who've experienced the same thing. The speedo's LCD display remains 'live', but it inexplicably stops picking up any data. The only way I've managed to fix the problem (a few times now) is to disconnect and reconnect the battery. That seems to reboot the thing.
- If you've got the time, remove both sideplates when you're changing the bike's air filter. Not only does this make it easier to get the filter into position, but it also allows you to see that it's properly seated around the perimeter of the airbox rim.
- After cutting my fingers a few times on the sharp edges of the two red rocker-switches on the handlebars (the engine run and headlight switches) while working on the bike, I chamfered the edges of the evil things with a file.
- The protecting tape that comes standard on the Sherco's rims is tough, good-looking and practical. And on several occasions, the stuff has saved me from scratching the sexy black rims with wayward tyre levers.

## PARTS LIST

SUPPLIER	PART	RRP*	CONTACT
MOJO MOTORCYCLES			<a href="http://www.mojomotorcycles.com.au">www.mojomotorcycles.com.au</a>
	2015 Sherco 300SE-Racing	\$11,990	
	FMF Powercore 2 Silencer	\$459.00	
	13-tooth Countershaft Sprocket	\$68.20	
	LHS Radiator	\$208.75	
	Front Mudguard	\$72.08	
	LHS Sideplate	\$60.50	
FORCE ACCESSORIES			<a href="http://www.forceaccessories.com.au">www.forceaccessories.com.au</a>
	Force Billet Radiator Guards	\$249.00	
MAIN JET MOTORCYCLES			<a href="http://www.mainjet.com.au">www.mainjet.com.au</a>
	JDJetting Kit	\$149.00	
UNI FILTER AUSTRALIA			<a href="http://www.unifilter.com.au">www.unifilter.com.au</a>
	Uni Filter Pro Comp 2 Foam Air Filter	\$39.95	
	Uni Filter 02 Rush Air Foam Air Filter	\$29.50	
	Uni Filter Filter Fix (red-coloured foam air filter treatment)	\$24.75/litre	
GAS IMPORTS			<a href="http://www.gasimports.com.au">www.gasimports.com.au</a>
	Michelin Starcross MH3 80/100-21 front tyre	\$109.95	
	Michelin Starcross Comp V1 90/100-18 front tyre	\$149.95	
	Michelin Starcross MS3 120/90-18 rear tyre	\$134.95	
JWT IMPORTS			<a href="http://www.jwtimports.com.au">www.jwtimports.com.au</a>
	SKF Mud Scrapers	\$55/pair	

\* All RRP's include GST

## NEXT TIME AROUND...

There won't be a next time around for this 300SE-R. It's going back to the guys from Sherco's Aussie distributors, Mojo Motorcycles, who'll be sending me a 450cc four-stroke – Sherco's much-lauded, all-new 450SEF-R – in its place. Many of the parts I've fitted to the 300 will go straight onto the 450, but after shoeing it with a set of Michelin's new Starcross 5 tyres, I'll see what else the 450 is in need of. In the meantime, you can keep abreast of both the 300 and 450's development via [www.transmoto.com.au](http://www.transmoto.com.au)