





Race Tech-revalved fork (\$369) and shock (\$387; [www.racetech.com](http://www.racetech.com)), Öhlins steering damper (\$577; [www.ohlins.com](http://www.ohlins.com)), Galfer Superbike brake lines (\$96) and carbon pads (\$160; [www.galferusa.com](http://www.galferusa.com)), Vortex sprockets with an RK chain (\$190; [www.vortexracing.com](http://www.vortexracing.com)), Gilles rearsets (\$500; [www.gilles-tooling.com](http://www.gilles-tooling.com)), LeoVince SBK high-mount factory titanium exhaust system (\$1927; [www.leovinceusa.com](http://www.leovinceusa.com)), and Dynojet Power Commander fuel-injection module (\$340) and Quick Shifter (\$279; [www.powercommander.com](http://www.powercommander.com)). Jimmy then levered a set of my favorite Pirelli Diablo Supercorsa tires onto my bike's wheels and completed the last of the safety wiring on the axle nuts, brake-caliper bolts and exhaust parts.

Next, Jimmy installed a Vortex front fairing stay (\$155), frame sliders (\$60) and swingarm



Details, from top left: Gilles rearsets with Dynojet Quick Shifter, safety-wired brake caliper, Vortex frame slider, Öhlins steering damper and MyChron lap timer. For a full parts list, log onto [motorcyclistonline.com](http://motorcyclistonline.com).

stand spools (\$22). Then came race bodywork from e-racing.com (a steal at \$350 for a full set; [www.e-racings.com](http://www.e-racings.com)), which includes a bellypan capable of holding 5 quarts of fluid as required. Jimmy painted the race bodywork flat-black with a

## I WAS SHAKING IN MY BOOTS BEFORE MY FIRST RACE AT LAS VEGAS MOTOR SPEEDWAY.

rattle-can, which looks good from a distance and is much easier (and cheaper) to touch up in the event of a fall. Last but not least, the finishing touches: a set of Stomp Grips tank grip tape (\$40; [www.stompdesign.com](http://www.stompdesign.com)), my sponsor stickers

and my racing number 357—custom-made by Nancy Chui from Courant Communications. *Voila!* I was ready to race.

Almost. In addition to all the trick bike parts, you also have to gather all the tools you'll need at the track. I used Vortex

front and rear stands (\$180), Suzuka tire warmers (\$375; [www.cyclecynch.com](http://www.cyclecynch.com)) and a MyChron lap-timer (\$250; [www.aimsports.com](http://www.aimsports.com)), not to mention a toolbox, spares box, milk crate full of chemicals, gas cans, awning, chairs, cooler full

of food and drinks, etc.

Racing seemed so glamorous before I actually started doing it, but as I found out, it's hard work—much of which takes place early in the morning. Unload the truck, set up camp, put the bike on its stands, change tires, install tire warmers, remove lower fairing for tech inspection, register, install scoring transponder (rented from WERA), put gas in the bike, clean helmet faceshield and windscreens, etc. Most clubs run a full day's practice on Saturday plus a couple of short practice sessions on Sunday morning. Then you wait ... and wait ... and wait until your race is called. WERA sprint races range from six to 10 laps depending on the length of the circuit, plus one warm-up lap and one cool-down lap. So all told, I got less than one hour on the track all day. For all that money, is it really worth it?

Absolutely! My novice season was unforgettable. I was shaking in my boots before my first race at Las Vegas Motor Speedway and finished in the back of the pack. Frustrated and discouraged,



I persevered and things got better. I started getting faster and finishing higher in the results, until later in the season I finished third and then second. By then I realized how much I loved racing, and I capped off the season by leading the B Superstock race at Vegas from flag to flag!

At year's end I finished second in points in B Superstock and third in B Superbike, which bumped me up to Expert status. So this year is going to be tough! But even if I never win again, I'll be improving my skills riding with the fast guys. For me, that's what racing is all about. And you? You'll have to try it and see. **MC**