



# Motorcycle Collector Series: BMW R90S, by Ian Falloon

Review by Wes Fleming #87301

**ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED IN 2006**, Ian Falloon's *Motorcycle Collector Series: R90S* is the definitive book on one of the most iconic BMW motorcycles ever produced. It went out of print a few years ago, leading to ridiculous used prices north of \$400. Thankfully, a recently released second edition has gutted the used market for this deservedly popular book in addition to providing clean, new copies for R 90 lovers everywhere.

Before becoming engrossed in the information between its covers, the reader is grasped by what is, at its most basic, simply a beautiful book. The high-gloss covers are firm, but this isn't a hardback; the flexible binding lets the book lie open flat without breaking or even straining the binding. This is a book that's going to last for years, and with high quality paper and clean, precise printing, *R90S* is the kind of book that you'll want to keep on the coffee table rather than in the bathroom.

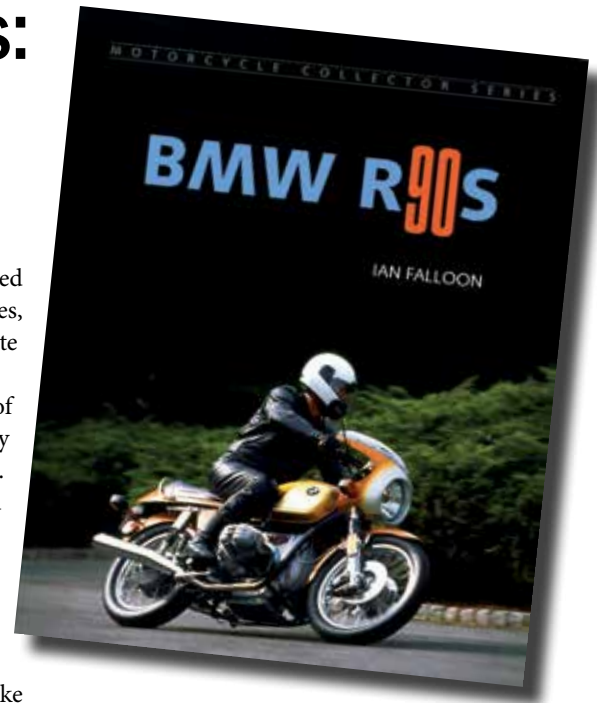
This is as close to a comprehensive history of the legendary R 90 S motorcycle – in all its glory and both its colors – as you're likely to come across. Indeed, most of the histories of this bike I've read on the internet have clearly and unabashedly gotten the majority of their information from this 128 page volume. The technical data is thorough and impressive, especially considering the R 90 S was only produced for three years. From tables of serial numbers to typical motorcycle statistics (horsepower, final drive ratios, etc.), every tiny bit of information an R 90 S fan could ever want is here. Perhaps most engrossing – if you're into that sort of

thing – are the many paragraphs dedicated to flywheel weights, camshaft changes, o-ring sizes and many other such minute technical details.

Even though the amount and depth of the technical data is welcome, what really carries the book is the photographs. Color dominates with some black and white chasers, but the large, crisp, detailed photos are what will keep a reader coming back to this book over and over again. The photos run the gamut from BMW ad campaigns and racetrack action shots to close-ups of brake calipers and carburetors.

An entire chapter at the beginning of the book concisely and effectively recaps BMW's motorcycling history, complete with some sharp photos of the bikes that passed their genes on to the R 90 S. Falloon later dedicates several pages to the R 100 models that functioned as successors to the R 90 S – the R 100 S, CS and RS – and discusses why those models didn't sell as well as their predecessor.

The final chapter in the book is the most useful to everyday riders. While important information about which years of which bikes featured which components (drilled brake discs, Dell'Orto carburetors, Karcoma petcocks, deeper oil pans, etc.) is scattered throughout the main parts of the book, that information, while infinitely interesting, is only important to collectors or buyers trying to make sure their bike is all original or at least restored with period-correct parts. For people who ride a classic bike on a regular basis, the chapter on living with an R 90 S is the real gem of the book. Falloon breaks down the weak points of the R 90 S, not just critiquing them, but also suggesting work-arounds and improvements that can easily turn that barn find into a barnburner of a



motorcycle.

The only noticeable down side to the book from my perspective is the foreword, written by racing legend Reg Pridmore. Back before there was a BMW North America to bring BMW motorcycles into the US, the national importer was a company called Butler & Smith. B&S put Pridmore on an R 90 S in the very first AMA Superbike Championship in 1976; Pridmore won that first championship on a bone-stock production bike. In the foreword, however, Pridmore waxes more poetic about the Kawasaki he rode in his '77 championship season than the BMW on the cover of this book; he barely even mentions his historic R 90 S. Though Pridmore features heavily in the chapter on racing the BMW, his foreword seems tacked on, forced and awkward.

Falloon's medium-format (8.25" x 10") *Motorcycle Collector Series: R90S* would make a shiny, informative addition to any motorcycle aficionado's library, and definitely belongs on the shelf – or coffee table – of anybody who wants to learn or reminisce about BMW's first production superbike.

White Horse Press ([www.whitehorsegear.com](http://www.whitehorsegear.com)): \$29.95