

ALL OF THE ABOVE

PART MOTORCYCLE, PART CAR, PART ATV, ALL FUN - BY DAVE STALL

I have been riding motorcycles my entire life, starting when I was five years old, doing crazy moves in a dirt lot behind my house, and continuing to this day, although these days I try to ride inside the lines. As a bike enthusiast, I am always open to trying all forms of motorcycling, but back when a group of three-wheeled motorcycles came to the market, I was not a fan. It was more than just being a two-wheel purist.

Riding the three-wheel Can Am Spyder was frightening when they first came out and I was provided with a tester.

(Can Am has made huge strides, and their rides are much improved today.) Not to be outdone, Polaris came out with the Slingshot, which appeared to be a half-car-half-motorcycle love child.

I rode up from San Diego to Los Angeles on my Harley-Davidson Electra Glide Classic to pick up our tester, a Polaris Slingshot SLR. The press guy from Polaris had said I needed to wear a DOT approved helmet on the Slingshot, and riding my hog up allowed me to have a nice long ride with my helmet on. Once in LA, I received the Slingshot, got a quick walkaround and rode back to San

Diego. There, I went straight to the California Highway Patrol office to confirm that I really, really had to wear a helmet. The officer said he was not sure—they were still discussing it. I took this to mean helmet optional, of course.

Cool! So off came the helmet. I stored it in the lockable storage bin behind the driver's seat (there's another storage box behind the passenger seat, as well) and hit the road. Four miles later, I was pulled over by a Highway Patrol officer, who of course asked me where my helmet was. I said that I had just been told at the CHP office that I didn't have to wear a helmet. He then pointed out the sticker on the Slingshot that



read this vehicle is licensed as a motorcycle and you must wear a helmet. Should have listened to the press guy. (Note: In Arizona, the Slingshot is registered as an autocycle, just requires a driver's license, and we don't have that helmet law. But bear it all in mind if you drive yours to California.)

The officer let me go after I put the helmet back on. A few miles later, I found the silver lining. Without the helmet, you can't hear your passenger or the radio, but with it on, you can hear the passenger and radio clearly.

The 2017 Polaris Slingshot comes in three models: S, SL, SLR. My choice for a test ride was the top of the line SLR. (New for 2018 is an SLR LE.)

The engine comes from Chevrolet—an Ecotec 2.4-liter dual overhead camshaft four-cylinder producing 173 horsepower at 6200 rpm. It comes in at 166 pounds foot of torque. Since the Slingshot weighs in at 1749 pounds, this is a nice setup with no lack of strength when you want it. The fuel requirement is 91 octane, manufacturer recommended for maximum fuel economy and performance.

The transmission is a very efficient five-speed manual with a dry single plate clutch disc operated by hydraulics. The tuned suspension feels great on this model, as does the steering, which is rack and pinion with assist from Polaris's EPAS speed sensitive steering. The system stiffens steering input as the Slingshot gains speed, a nice improvement over the old three-wheelers. Coupled with traction control, which an experienced rider (not me) may elect to disable, the Slingshot is nothing but a fun ride, with no control or stability issues to get in the way of enjoyment.

Tires on the SLR are two different sizes. The fronts are Kenda SS-799 225/45R18s and the rear

is a Kenda SS-799 305/30R20; all three are mounted on alloy wheels, on all Slingshot models.

The Slingshot's interior has been upgraded considerably since it first came to the US. Seats have great bolstering and are easy to adjust, and dash operations are simple and easy.

Safety features include ABS (Anti-Lock Brakes) ESC (Electronic Stability Control) and Traction Control. Adequate LED lighting assists the driver during nighttime driving. These are the same kinds of safety features you would find in a car.

Is a Slingshot for you? Only one way to find out, and you don't even have to get a motorcycle license to try a Slingshot. So stop by your Slingshot dealer and take one out for a spin. Try to get up on the freeway, and remember: the longer you ride/drive it, the better you will feel getting around in an open air vehicle with almost 200 horsepower and weighing less than 2,000 pounds. If you must have a roof, Sling Mods makes a pretty cool aftermarket roof system for the Slingshot. ■

SPECIFICATIONS: SLINGSHOT SLR

ENGINE.....	GM Ecotec 2.4L 4-cyl GDI
DRIVE BELT.....	rear carbon fiber reinforced
HP/TORQUE.....	173 hp / 166 lb-ft
TRANSMISSION.....	5-speed synchro/reverse
STEERING.....	speed sensitive rack & pinion
DRIVER AIDS.....	ABS, ESC, traction control
BRAKES.....	298mm vented, cast iron, alum hub
WHEELS / TIRES.....	forged aluminum
	F: 18x7.5 / 225/45R18, R: 20x11 / 305/30R20
LENGTH / WIDTH / WB.....	149.6 / 77.9 / 105.0 in
GROUND CLEARANCE.....	5.0 in
WEIGHT.....	1749 lb
FUEL / CAPACITY.....	91 octane / 9.77 gal
MPG.....	not stated

BASE PRICE.....	S.....	\$19,999
	SL.....	25,499
	SLR.....	28,999
	SLR LE.....	30,999



(Below, left to right) The Polaris Slingshot Ride Command infotainment system (included on SL, SLR and SLR LE, optional on S trim) features a seven-inch touchscreen, phone integration, Bluetooth/USB, customizable vehicle information screens, and turn-by-turn nav (included on SLR and SLR LE; optional on S and SL). Optional black quilted comfort seats have additional cushioning, softer surfaces and distinctive stitching (\$799). Rear fenders come in two sizes, depending upon model (\$699-799). Marine compliant 200-watt RMS premium audio runs \$799.

