

# Ztechnik Vstream Z2414 and Z2415 Windscreens

By Steve Lawrence #75444

## The dark art of wind management

**IT'S NO SECRET AMONG R1200GS RIDERS** that the stock windscreen leaves a lot to be desired. Often, riders upgrade to the GS Adventure screen plus "wings." Others begin an often long, and expensive, adventure into the dark art of wind management. Rider height, posture, selected helmet all influence how the wind coming over the screen is felt. How that wind is passed to a passenger perching on the pillion seat is entirely different as the flow is twisted and mixed passing around the pilot's head and torso.

Managing that wind, reaching a sought-for level of silence and comfort becomes akin to dabbling in a dark art. Setting up a large house fan and some smoke bombs in the garage doesn't constitute a real wind tunnel. It just adds to the mystery and the mess.

My own 2006 GS is now carrying its fourth windscreen. After being (unwillingly) knocked about physically, and (willingly) knocked about financially during my search for peaceful air, this one feels like a keeper ... finally! Thank you, ZTechnik, for bringing the VStream to the GS.

The original screen shot rough air across both sides and top of my helmet no matter

how I adjusted the screen's tilt. Along the sides, the sensation was akin to clapping your hands rapidly over your ears. Take a moment and try it. Annoying isn't it?

My second trial was mounting a nicely made "barn door" on the front of the bike. High up, way wide, and it included "lowers" too. Oh yeah, it blocked air all around my helmet: Along the sides, top and away from my lap. It was almost too much protection. No, it *was* too much. I was suffocating, especially inside my Schubert S1. It was too much plastic out there for a GS: Too much ugly on an ugly bike.

My faithful pillion-riding banker and supervisor reported that the huge windscreen set up more noticeably rough air spilling over my helmet and battering her. Back it went, in the face of a 20 percent restocking fee.

The third windscreen, found on sale at an attractive price, gave some added comfort. The poppity-pop down both sides of my helmet and the over-the-head buffeting were diminished. My passenger complained that the wind passed much as it did when

the stock screen was up there.

Funny things happen during the course of playing with wind management. Side winds can easily negate the perceived progress a new windscreen is thought to bring to the ride. In the case of screen three, after several thousand miles that included ferocious side winds, the original benefits seemed to have been blown away.

Last summer, returning from the East Coast to Colorado, riding fast from storm front to storm front, dodging thunder and lightning, and an occasional tornado, the screen at any of its adjustments (up, down, forward, back) gave no comfort, let alone a safe place to hide.

This spring, after a few rides up the newly thawed canyons of the Rockies outside of Boulder and Lyons, Colo., I knew that before any long tours were taken this year, it was time for a better windscreen.

I'd noticed the ads in various magazines for ZTechnik's VStream for BMW's R1200GS line. I liked their claim that the screen pushed the side air up to seven inches away from the pilot's head. Checking their Web

**Left:** The ZTechnik VStream Z2414 and Z2415 windscreens are optically pure enough that photographs taken through them wouldn't show distortion. **Right:** The ZTechnik VStream windscreen doesn't bend the view as it passes into the screen.



site, [www.ZTechnik.com](http://www.ZTechnik.com) introduced me to their "Ride & Buy" program, plus their three-year warranty against windshield breakage. Perfect, I thought, you can't be too careful when it comes to "plastic" on a GS.

Looking further, I found that one of my favorite bling and farkle suppliers, BMW of Denver, was a "Ride & Buy" dealer. During a weekend visit, I made the arrangements for the 19.5-inch-tall Z2414 model that would best fit my 5'9" height. I was soon happily wrenching in my garage, anticipating several days of "tryin' her out."

Not wanting to always look through the screen, I mounted the VStream one notch below the top-most adjustment point. The screen uses all the GS's original windscreen hardware, so there's no "missing parts" to slow things down. Taking off on the VStream's maiden ride, I immediately noticed that, at one notch above middle height, the top edge ran right across where I normally put my line of sight. It was slightly annoying, but I also saw that the screen is optically perfect, and not a hindrance. Objects, including the road's double-yellow lines, don't strangely change their perceived position as viewed above and then through the screen. I think a camera could easily be mounted on the screen's

built-in shelf and distortion-free ride photos or video captured.

Once out on the state highways, traveling at speed, I grinned that there was blessed silence rushing past my helmet even when I popped my visor open a thumb's width or even wider. A couple of quick hand signals exchanged with my passenger received a thumb's up. Serenity at last!

The next day I moved the VStream down to the lowest GS adjustment. Riding with it in this position quickly reminded me of the wind from the bike's original screen. The

passenger was disturbed by turbulence, probably off my head, which set the passing air spinning. One adjustment notch up was a slight improvement, but still not what I was seeking.

One more notch up, putting the knobs right in the middle, gave me the best of all air management worlds. The air was pushed well away from my helmet's sides through the magic of the VStream's patented design. Over the top, on-rushing air was sent high enough so that there wasn't noise, even with my helmet's visor slightly raised.

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One hundred smiling miles later, my pillion rider reported that she was riding in smooth, rushing air. That was good enough for her, and who am I to question that?

On-the-fly adjustments with the Z2414 I first tried were more difficult than with the original BMW screen. During the original mounting and subsequent moves up and down, I was concerned over the screen's tightness. Moving it was, for me, a white-knuckle affair, rather expecting a crack to suddenly spread across my brand new windshield.



**In its middle adjustment, the ZTechnik VStream sits at a perfect height to stay the annoying winds coming at a 5'9" rider.**

At a BMW of Denver open house, I ran into Jeff Wolbers, Product Line Manager, from ZTechnik. Discussing both my satisfaction with the VStream effect and the tightness, he said that newer GS models, including some 2006s and 2007s, required a Z2415 that had 2 mm wider spacing that came when BMW began to redesign the GS for 2008.

Jeff volunteered to express ship me the proper model, and included an FOB return-

shipping label for my present screen. He didn't get an argument from me; I applaud such superior customer service, having worked in corporate marketing for years. A few days later the new Z2415 arrived as promised. It fits perfectly. Quick and easy roadside adjustments are back.

ZTechnik supplies a full complement of VStream windscreens for the GS and GS Adventure models at [www.ZTechnik.com](http://www.ZTechnik.com). Their height runs from 19.5 inches high and 18 inches wide for the GS. Adventure riders may choose VStreams ranging from 21 to 23 inches tall and from 16.8 to 18.5 inches wide. Suggested MSRP is \$229.95 (Photo from ZTechnik) ☺

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