

Review and Photography: David Burbach

MotoChello MC-100 Audio System

Single Rider: \$695

Two Up: \$795

www.motochello.com

MotoChello MC-100 Audio System



Jan/Feb 2014 ISSUE
Page 100
Web Page Review

What happens when you take a motorcyclist and audiophile (who also happens to be an electronics engineer) and turn him loose to build a new motorcycle audio system from the ground up (no pun intended)? The answer is the MotoChello MC-100.

Broken down into its components, the MotoChello is a combination of a stereo receiver, touchscreen control unit, intercom system, and a set (or two) of high-quality headphones with microphones, all adapted to fit on your motorcycle and in your helmet.

Let's get this out of the way—this is not a wireless system. There's no Bluetooth or Wi-Fi at all. Everything is connected the old-fashioned way using wires, including those speakers in your helmet. This approach has quite a few advantages. With wires there are no batteries to replace or charge, there's no annoying and usually troublesome Bluetooth pairing, and the system is less susceptible to interference. Oh, and the sound quality is much better.

Of course, there's a down side too. All those wires can be a pain to plug in every time you get on the bike and unplug every time you get off. Be careful to run the wires so that they won't flap around in the breeze or interfere with turning the handlebars lock to lock.

The heart of the MC-100 is the Audio Controller, which has dedicated ports for a GPS, rider and passenger headsets, a radio antenna, an FRS radio and a push-to-talk button (for communicating with other riders), and two auxiliary ports for plugging in a phone, iPod, or a variety of other devices.

The touchscreen display (designed to work with gloves) makes it extremely easy to switch from one input to another, and you can play them simultaneously if you want to. It's great for GPS directions and music, but you can also play the radio and your MP3 player at the same time, you know, if that's your thing.

The point is that MotoChello puts you in total control. You can fine-tune bass and treble, set different volumes for rider and passenger, adjust balance, and set volume levels for multiple devices in relationship to each other.

The rider to passenger intercom is voice activated; simply start talking and the music automatically fades out and returns when you're done speaking. The system only activates the mic being spoken into (minimizing noise), though both users can still speak at the same time (for relational reasons, however, it's best not to).

Bike-to-bike communication requires the use of third party FRS radio, which has its own port and a built in PTT button on the display unit (the kit includes an additional mountable PTT button for a passenger). Range and clarity will depend on the radio itself, but the system works quite well, and connecting cables are included for models from Cobra, Midland, and Motorola. The MotoChello is also compatible with the CB system on Honda Gold Wings.

Installation is painless, and though detailed instructions are included, the system's functions are intuitive and quickly mastered. The sound quality is truly second to none, and the integration of devices is seamless. The display, though not exactly hi-res, is beautiful and housed in a tough, weather-resistant metal case. Navigating the menus is natural, not iPhone natural, but the level of refinement is impressive.

Though there are many audio systems available for motorcycles, the MotoChello is truly unique in its design, purpose, and function. For those motorcyclists who've spent countless hours leafing through old Carutchfield catalogs, this is the motorcycle audio system for you.

MotoChello MC-100 Audio System
 Single Rider: \$695 Two Up: \$795
www.motochello.com



About the author

There's something relentlessly romantic about riding a motorcycle. I'm blessed to know that feeling. With a background in photography and a love for motorcycles, I'm interested in the beauty and honesty of the open road. You'll find me riding Carolina's roads on my Suzuki SV650.