

KLR650 Timeline – Gen 1 and Gen 2 ('A' and 'E' models)

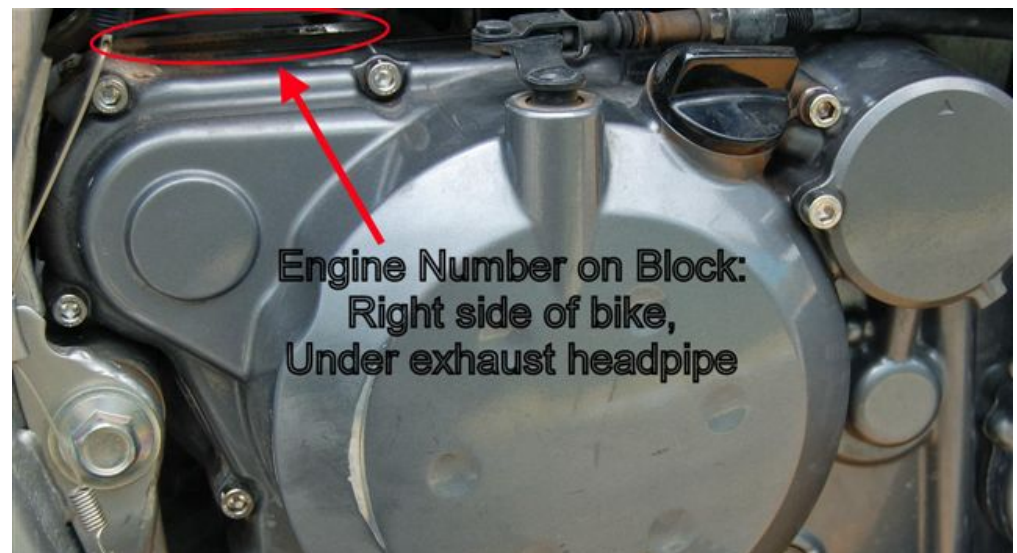
(Updated May 14, 2021 by Bill at Watt-man.com)

Kawasaki produced the KLR600 from 1984-1986 and released the first generation KLR650 in 1987, also known as the “A model”, which was produced up through 2007. There are also “B-model” (Tengai, sold from 1990-1993) and “C-model” (KLR650C, sold from 1996-2001) bikes that are not covered in this article. In the early years, there were North American bikes (denoted “NA” in the photos) and a separate set of color schemes used on Non-North American bikes (denoted “Not NA” or “NNA” in the photos).

Kawasaki made several notable changes for the 2008 model year and designated that bike as the “E model” but most people refer to it as the “Gen 2” bike, which was produced through 2018. This was followed by a 3-year hiatus (no 2019, 2020 or 2021 model) but Kawasaki has announced the return of the Gen 3 KLR650 in 2022, so we will see what letter designation they use. Until we learn more, this article will focus on the A and E model lines only. I have a second article titled “KLR650A and E Production Estimates and ID Numbers” that dives into the identification numbers and works in concert with this set of timeline photos.

My current guess: there were 153,000 bikes produced (66,000 Gen 1, 87,000 Gen 2).

Don't confuse **Frame ID number** (typically called the VIN, or vehicle identification number) with the **Engine ID number**, as I'll discuss both below as well as in the other production article. Engine number data is certainly sketchier - I don't receive as much data from Thermo-Bob customers on this front. Overall, the engine numbering system breaks into three categories, and the switches didn't occur with the '96 engine changes, or the shift of motorcycle production to Thailand in 2002... or the E model introduction in 2008. Very non-intuitive at first blush!



The first engine ID set are the “AEO” engines (for instance KL650AEO12345). These started in 1987 with 00001 and ended in 2002 somewhere around 54500. They do NOT match the frame number.

The second engine ID set are the “AEA” engines (for instance KL650AEA12345). These started in 2003 with #03323 and ended in 2013 somewhere up around 96,000. They DO match the frame number for the 2003-2007 bikes only.

After hitting 100,000 engines, the third engine ID set are the "AEAA, AEAB, AEAC and AEAD" engines (for instance KL650AEAA1234). These are used on the 2014 through 2018 bikes, the A/B/C/D meaning "11, 12, 13 and 14" for the first digit of the engine number (i.e., AD1234 means engine number 141,234. They DO NOT match the frame number.

I'll add some details of the somewhat-confusing engine ID system below in the descriptions of model years 1996, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2007, 2008, 2012, and 2014. Again, the other article dives into this in more detail.

Happy viewing.



1987: The KLR650 is introduced at an MSRP of \$2,999. Production is very strong at around 8,700 bikes. (It took almost 20 years to get back to this production level: the 2006 model was the first to finally eclipse the 8,700 bikes/year value).

This color of blue plastic will be used on all North American bikes up through 1993, and that white rear fender will also make it all the way to '93. The '87 and '88 are the only years that reference “liquid cooling” in the graphics, in these instances on the rear side covers.

We've seen red '87s, but they appear to only be Non-North American bikes.



1988 - A2
NA color scheme with NNA rear splash guard



1988 - A2
NNA



1988 - A2
Also NNA



1988 - A2
Also NNA

1988: MSRP rises to \$3,149, and wow, there are 4 versions! This is the second year where Non-North American bikes have a separate color scheme. Most commonly seen are the blue bikes; in North America, with white fenders and side covers, and otherwise with blue fenders and side covers. It appears 1988 is the only year where the front fender got a sticker, saying “**DOHC 4-Valve**”.

Production: around 4,700 bikes. On the right is a nice brochure shot of one of the bikes not available in North America.





1989 and 1990: The photo on the left appears to be a pre-production photo from Kawasaki. The 1989 and 1990 bikes look the same, but on actual production models, the engine displacement was printed on the seat as shown in the photo on the right. I believe the left photo from Kawasaki simply has a 1988 seat. MSRP was \$3,499 in '89... not sure what it was in '90. Production hit an all time low: around 1,400 in '89, and only 600 bikes in '90! Yikes!



1991, 1992 and 1993: Engine displacement has shifted back to the rear side covers. I'm under the impression that you can't tell a 1991 from a 1992 from a 1993 without looking at the ID numbers on the frame and engine. The only non-stock items I see here are the tires. MSRP in '92 and '93 was \$3,699 and \$3,899 respectively. Production: around 750 bikes in '91, 1,200 in '92 and 1,500 in '93.

Some people call these a "Barbie KLR" due to the color scheme, but buckle up to see the '94 and '95 on the next page. THOSE are the Barbie bikes.

1994 - A8
1995 - A9
NA



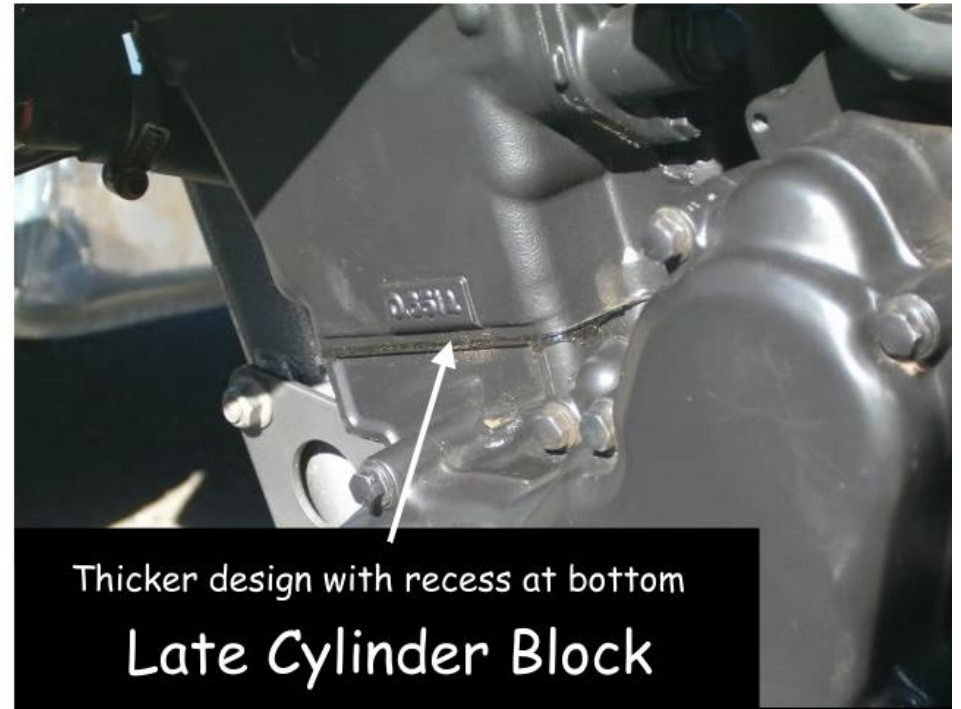
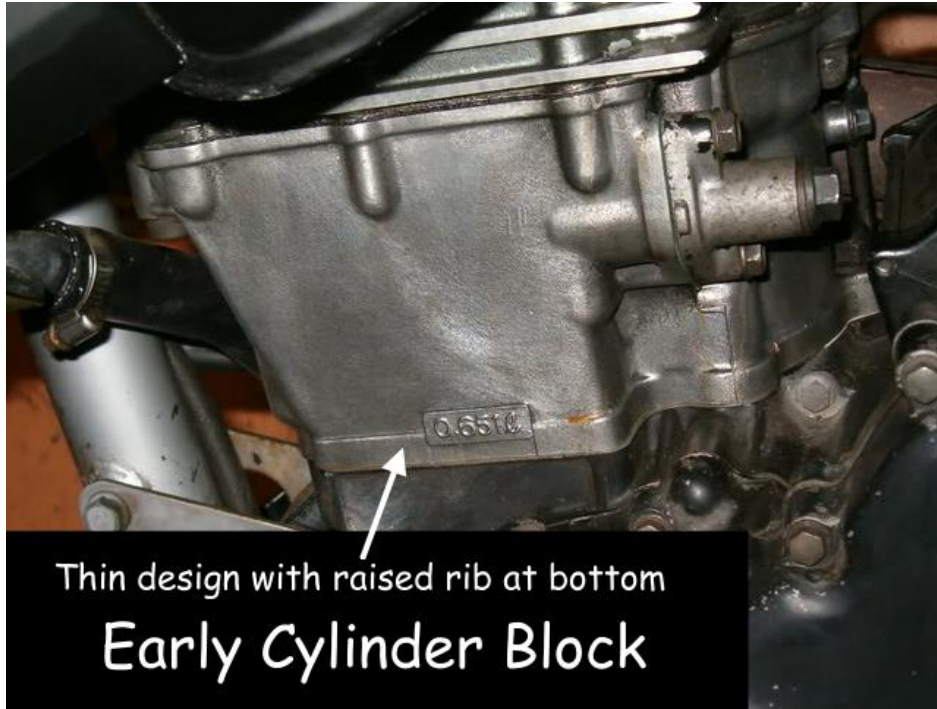
Courtesy of "Cherokee Chuck"

1994 and 1995: MSRP rises to \$4,199 and \$4,449. These are the peak of the “Malibu Barbie” KLR years. Wild, eh? Check out the purple fork gators and purple seat. The word "Kawasaki" makes it back to the seat after a 5-year hiatus and will stay there through the 2007 model year. Production: only ~900 bikes in '94 and ~1,000 in '95.



1996: MSRP rises to \$4,749 and we begin an 8-year run of green bikes. However, the 1996 model year is quite unique in that many changes occurred *during* the model year... changes to the cylinder head, balancer sprockets, cylinder, countershaft sprocket retention method, clutch, and flywheel rotor to name some. It is not my intent to catalog all the changes here as they are more clearly documented at Chris Krok's informative KLR650 FAQ (www.bigcee.com/klr650faq.html). It does appear that the full run of 96's utilized the black engine and "late model" block (see the next page), and I believe it is the only way to cosmetically tell a 1996 from a 1997/1998 bike, where Kawasaki made the change to an engine color of "hammertone" which is more of a silver/grey. Production: only 850 bikes in 1996. Interestingly, Kawasaki did not change the engine numbering system, continuing on

with the 'AEO' identification method (see page 1 and my other article). The biggest internal engine change – the change in the balancer sprockets – supposedly occurred around engine 32206.



One of the changes that occurred for 1996 comes up frequently enough in KLR discussion that I'll cover it here.

On the left is an "early" block ('95 and earlier) and a "late" block is shown on the right ('96 and newer). The early block is smaller around the cylinder sleeve and water jacket, thus it has to 'step out' to match the rib height at the very bottom of the block. The late model block is larger, so it actually steps *in* at the bottom. You can even see this difference in the reduced protrusions of the cylinder head bolts and cam chain tensioner as well. The late model block is required for 685cc and 705cc overbore kits, but you can use the 658cc kits (that is not a typo) with the early cylinder block.



1997, 1998: I'm unaware of how to tell the two years apart cosmetically. If it wasn't for the engine color issue, the '96 looks like these bikes. MSRP was \$4,799 for both years. Production: only 750 and 1,500 bikes respectively.

1999 - A13
NA



1999: MSRP is unchanged again, still at \$4,799. Now we will get into a string of years where it's easy to see the differences between each model year. Although this photo appears to use a different color of plastics from the previous year, the '96, '97, '98 and '99 bikes all use the same color green. Production: around 1,900 bikes.



2000: A well-defined one-year model run. MSRP rises \$100 to \$4,899. Production: around 3,100 bikes.



2001: MSRP rises to \$4,999 and will hold here at this price for the 2002, 2003, and 2004 models as well. 2001 is another well-defined one-year model run. It might not be clear in this photo, but I believe 2001 and 2002 both had brown seats and brown fork gators. Model year 2001's production was around 3,600 bikes. Kawasaki produced KLRs over a shortened production run to have additional time for shifting production to Thailand. I think the last 2001 bikes were manufactured in February of 2001 and had frame numbers near 73600... and engine numbers (remember, still the AEO type – see page 1 and the other article) just under 50000.

2002 - A16
NA



2002: The other brown seat / brown fork gator year. Production shifted to Thailand and the Vehicle Identification Numbers on the frame started over again at 00001. Production: around 3,300 bikes. Interestingly, the engine numbers continued on from the previous year, still being identified as “AEO” engines (see page 1). The last 2002 bike had a frame number around 03300, but the engine number was around AEO 54500.

2003 - A17
NA



2003: One more green model year. It appears that the same green was used on the 2001, 2002 and 2003 bikes. The seat and fork gators went back to black in 2003. Production continued to increase, now around 3,900 bikes for the year. Kawasaki changes engine ID numbers, now using the “AEA” identification system (see page 1). This allows them to start the engine ID numbers over, (a year after frame ID numbers started over but they want them to match) – so the first 2003 KLR, which has frame ID 03323, gets engine AEA 03323. The frame ID and the engine ID will now match for 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006 and 2007 only.



2004: Green is changed to red, the rest stays the same. This same red, no matter what the camera implies, is used on 2004, 2005, 2006 and 2007 red models. The “650” designation is still on the rear side covers but is now a small sticker. I haven't had an "NNA" bike to post in a while but here is an '04 from Australia, and what do you know, the rear fender extension still seems to be a quick way to tell them from NA bikes. Don't be confused by the non-stock seat and tires, the rest of the bike on the right looks stock. Production starts to increase as Kawasaki made about 4,400 bikes, over a shortened 7-month production run.



2005: MSRP rises to \$5,099. The “650” designation goes onto the gas tank shrouds, so it leaves the rear side cover placement where it had been almost from the beginning. This is the first time that the rear side covers are blank. This is the last of the traditional "A1, A2, A3..." identification scheme - the A19 was as high as that designation went. See below for the change in 2006. In 2005, Kawasaki made about 5,900 bikes, which shows another increase.



2006: MSRP rises to \$5,199. 2006 is the first time that North American bikes are available in more than one color. The bright “Kawasaki green” makes its first appearance, and red was also available. The 2006 bikes are commonly (and mistakenly) called "A20" bikes but the official Kawasaki designation is A6F. The 'A' still stands for KLR650A, the 6 now references the model year, and the F means the ‘first production run’. It’s rare to have second production runs, but it does happen as you’ll see in 2014 and 2018. In 2006, Kawasaki sold ~8,700 bikes, which is another increase and for the first time, a production quantity larger than the 1987 bikes.

2007
NEW MODELS

Kawasaki

ALL NEW



✓ ALL NEW BODY + SEAT

✓ ENGINE UPGRADE

✓ NEW SUSPENSION + BRAKES

MODEL NEW MODEL NEW MODEL NEW MODEL NEW MODEL

EXPECTED AVAILABILITY LATE 1ST QTR 2007

PRICE, COLOUR & FINAL SPECIFICATION TO BE CONFIRMED

KLR650

Kawasaki
Let the good times roll.

Close,
but not
in time
to be
called
a 2007.

2007: MSRP holds at \$5,199. Kawasaki is working feverishly on the KLR650E, which is the replacement for the KLR650A. This flyer implies that the new bike might be the 2007 model, but that's not what was sold as the 2007 bike.



2007: The last 'A model' is produced. These are the last bikes that have a frame ID that start with JKAKLE^A. Following in the new designation format, the 2007 model is the A7F although some mistakenly call it the "A21". We have another 2-color year: the green bike goes away, and the first black KLR appears in its place... and the red bike stays in the lineup. To meet release of the 'E' model late in the first quarter of 2007 (flyer above), 2007 KLR production only runs 8 months and stops in December 2006. Still, these bikes are snapped up by those who want the 'old style' KLR, and Kawasaki builds ~7,500 bikes over a very-short 8-month window. This allowed Kawasaki to sell the upcoming 2008 model early as you'll see below. The last bike has frame number and engine number 35443 according to Kawasaki.



2008: The KLR650E is released. KLR people refer to this as the “Generation 2” bike and it was the most serious redesign since the bike’s introduction in 1987... and the MSRP climbed only \$150 to \$5349. In keeping with the new designation format, these are designated the E8F. E is for KLR650E, 8 again for model year, and F... again for first production run. Three colors were offered: Candy Lime Green, Blue 21, and Sunbeam Red, the final two with "Galaxy Silver" as a background. These pictures, like the one a few photos up of the first E models, are pre-production images with a different rear brake line and caliper that was not sold to the public. See the 2009 models below to see what caliper and brake line were utilized for the '08's and beyond. Overall, the 2008 model gained around 17 pounds although the published value climbed by 51. The 2008 weight at 386 dry is accurate... the 2007-and-earlier advertized weight of 337 dry was a lie since day 1. It was more like 369 dry. There were a whopping **15,700 bikes** produced for this model year - a huge jump and the largest of any one model year - but to be fair, the very early start meant that the 2008 model was manufactured for **17 months** in one long production run. At this point, Kawasaki claimed the KLR was their 4th best-selling bike of their entire lineup.

These are the first bikes that have a frame ID that start with JKAKLE**E**, so Kawasaki restarts the frame ID numbers at 00101. However, since they’re still using the “AEA” engine ID system (see page 1 and my other article), they pick up with that first 2008 model having an engine number in the high 35000’s.

Kawasaki changes the right engine case to eliminate the rubber plug in the 'kickstarter hole' that is an artifact from the KLR600 and changes the left engine case to eliminate the "Kawasaki" text over the flywheel. Unfortunately in this change, they also mistakenly drill the lower starter idler gear shaft support hole too deep in the left case of EVERY 2008 bike, resulting in the "Deep Hole" issue that is not solved until part-way into model year 2009. In the meantime, people install spacers in the hole to correctly position the shaft.



2009: MSRP climbs to \$5,599. Frames and racks go to black for the first time and three color combos are maintained. The 'green' bike was changed to black *with* green and is referred to as "Ebony". The blue sure looks like the same color but is now called "Oriental Blue". And the red is the same, still known as "Sunbeam Red".

After making the first 5,000 bikes for the 2009 model year, Kawasaki realizes their "deep hole issue" (see 2008 description above) and corrects it by properly drilling a stepped hole in the left engine case (alternator cover) so that the lower starter idler gearshaft is properly positioned. We've narrowed down the changeover pretty tightly: bikes with VIN of 20749 or lower have the deep hole, bikes with VIN 20803 or higher have the fix. If you have one of the 53 bikes between that range, tell me (watt-man@cox.net) what you find when you yank your alternator cover.

Production was strong in 2009, manufacturing ~13,600 bikes over a 10-month long production run. In fact, they made way too many for the market as the 2008 financial crash really dropped sales. These 2009 bikes were sold at dealers in 2010 and even 2011 before the supply ran out.



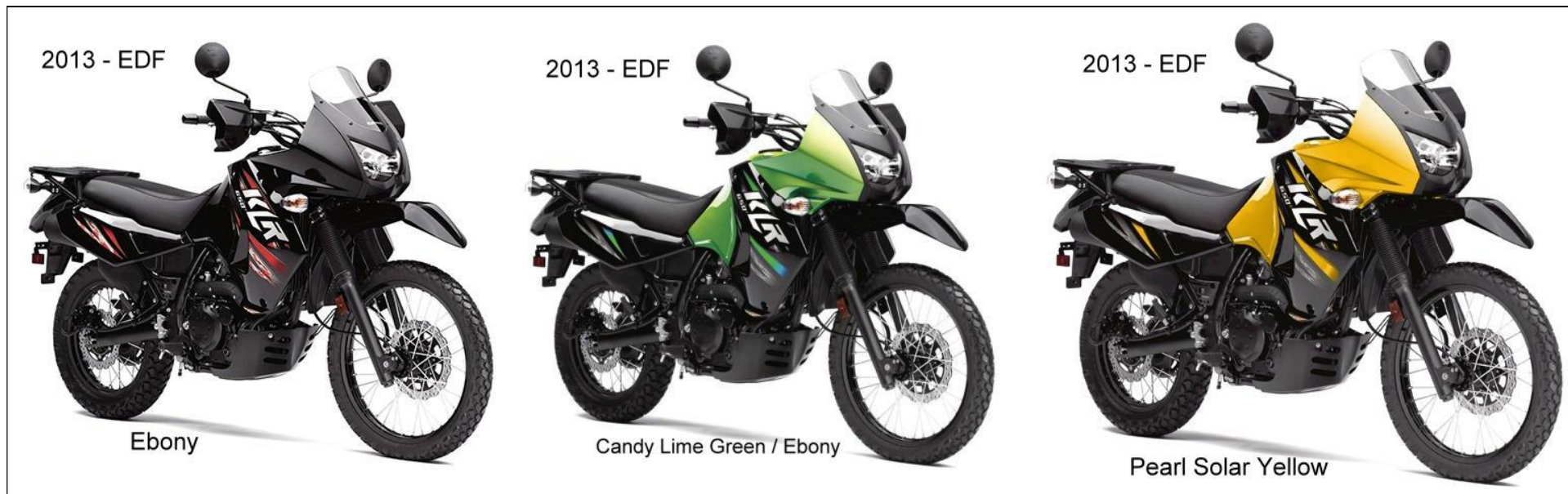
2010: MSRP jumps to \$5,999. Very subtle changes are made from the 09's. The black/green bike is still referred to as "Ebony" and has more green in the graphics. The blue bike sure looks like the same blue but now is called "Candy Thunder Blue". The red is clearly different, and Kawasaki calls the new color "Candy Persimmon Red". All three bikes use black front and rear fenders, which will probably be the way to quickly tell a 2010 from a 2009. Since the economy had slowed significantly and there was a large supply of 2009 bikes, Kawasaki backed way off on production of 2010's and made only about 4,200 bikes! Fortunately, this starts to climb again as the model year changes...



2011: MSRP climbs to \$6,149. Small changes again, but two are very noticeable. The Red bike is now "Candy Burnt Orange" (the first orange KLR650) and after a 14-year run of "Hammeritone" engines from 1997-2010, Kawasaki has returned to black engines like the 1987-1996 models. The rear brake bracket changes from a bolt-on aluminum bracket to a part integral to the steel frame. No one has stepped forward with a reason why, but the long-running 8-fiber plate, 7-steel plate clutch is used up through bike VIN 36159 (engine #72319) and changes to a 7-fiber plate, 6-steel plate design starting with bike VIN 36160 (engine #72320). Production quantities are better- looks like around 6,100 bikes were made for the 2011 model year.



2012: MSRP climbs to \$6,299. The Black theme gets stepped up. Black rims, black forks, black swingarm, black exhaust shield... I'm sure there's more. The black bike's color name is unchanged, but the blue bike is now called "Metallic Imperial Blue with Pearl Stardust". The "Candy Persimmon Red" from 2010 is back on the 2012 bike. Production climbs again – around 8,000 bikes for the 2012 model year. See the engine number discussion in the 2008 description, and you'll find that the gap between frame ID and engine ID numbers has changed very little as the last 5 years have gone by - the 2012's still have engine numbers around 36,000 higher than the frame number.



2013: MSRP climbs yet again – now at \$6,499. The heavily-black-trimmed theme continues. We haven't seen such a bold "KLR" lettering since the 2003 and 2004 models. Interestingly, Kawasaki didn't release the traditional side photos of all bikes so I am showing their ¾ views above. Still offering 3 colors, we now can get a black, green or yellow bike. Color titles are "Ebony", "Candy Lime Green / Ebony" and "Pearl Solar Yellow". The black bike picks up the red theme, the green seems to be the same as the Candy Lime Green color from 2008, and the first yellow KLR is introduced. Production quantities are up yet again, at around 11,600 bikes - the third best production rate in KLR history. The aftermarket should remain strong for the KLR thanks to these quantities!

EEF Model

2014 (VINS ~65000 - 70500)

Only Available
in Australia/NZ



Candy Lime Green / Ebony



Courtesy of Steven Colverd

Ebony



Pearl Stardust White / Ebony

EES Model



2014 'New Edition' (VINS ~73500 - 77200)

2014: A "two-model" year with two production runs. The 2014 is released early (July 2013) with an unchanged MSRP of \$6,499. It is only available in Candy Lime Green in the US, but available in three colors in Australia and New Zealand. Kawasaki makes about 5,400 bikes in June, July and August, then stops production of these "EEF" models. They restart production in November (thus the EES" designation, 'S' for 'second')) with a jump in VINS, releasing the "New Edition" KLR650 which has an MSRP of \$6,599 and all three colors available in all markets. The New Edition gets stiffer springs, a firmer seat and different graphics on the gas tank shrouds. The "650" displacement finally returns to the side covers where it was for 16 years (1987, 88, and 1991-2004). The NE seat sports a visible seam on the side. Kawasaki makes about 3,700 of the New Edition models. Total production of the EEF and EES "2014" model bikes is thus around 9,100.

Since the AEA engine numbering was approaching 99,999 in late 2013, all 2014 model engines now sport an "AEAA" (100,000 plus) or "AEAB" (110,000 plus) designation which allowed the last four engine ID numbers to start back over at 0001. See my "KLR ID" article for further details.

2015 - EFF Models



Candy Lime Green / Ebony



Ebony



Pearl Stardust White / Ebony

2015: Bold new graphics! :) No change to the MSRP, staying at \$6,599 as the bikes are essentially identical to the 2014 New Edition. The only visible change is the word "Kawasaki" moving from the fuel tank fairing to the seat... where it hasn't been since 2007. Production continues to drop, with around 4,800 bikes made for the 2015 model year.

2016 - EGF Models



Candy Lime Green / Ebony



Ebony



Matrix Camo Gray

2016: Little change is noticed. The biggest difference was an elimination of the white bike, replaced by "Matrix Camo Gray". The MSRP for the Candy Lime Green or Ebony bikes was unchanged at \$6,599, but there is a \$300 premium placed on the Matrix Camo Gray bikes at \$6,899. It appears the only other clue of the 2016, when compared to the 2015 model is the lower half of the gas tank shrouds are now glossy rather than using the "carbon fiber" look that the '14's and '15s had. Production drops again, to around 4,200 bikes.

2017 - EHF Models



Metallic Matte Carbon Gray



Candy Persimmon Red



Matrix Camo Gray

2017: Yet another "Bold New Graphics" year: the "650" designation moves from the side cover to the gas tank shroud, which also has a different graphic. The green bike choice is replaced by "Candy Persimmon Red", which was a color used in 2012. The MSRP is unchanged: the Red or Black bikes are still \$6,599, the Matrix Camo Gray bikes are \$6,899. Production drops again, to around 3,700 bikes.

2018 - EJF and EJS Models



Metallic Spark Black with
Metallic Matte Carbon Gray



Pearl Solar Yellow with
Metallic Spark Black



Matrix Camo Gray

2018: The end of an era... after 32 years of production, the KLR650 assembly line finally stops on the Generation 2 bikes. The graphic on the gas tank shroud is changed, and the red bike choice is replaced by "Pearl Solar Yellow", which was a color used in 2013. The MSRP goes up \$100: the Yellow or Black bikes are \$6,699, and the \$300 premium is still in play on the Matrix Camo Gray bikes, putting them at \$6,999.

It appears that Kawasaki recognized there was not going to be a 2019 model, as at first they produced their "EJF" bikes for only 4 months (August to November 2017), where the 'F' stands for 'first' production run... then waited nearly a year, and started a second production run of 2018 bikes (known as EHS models, 'S' for 'second') in September of 2018 - when the company would typically be assembling 2019 models. The second production run ran until December 2018. Since some people wanted to grab the last year of the trusty KLR, not knowing if any replacement was coming, total production between the two runs was up at around 6,200 bikes.

On the 'technical' front: Kawasaki finally admitted in 2018 that the fuel tank, which has never had 6.1 gallons of useful capacity but was advertized that way since 1987, holds 5.8 gallons. Only took them 32 years to crack the code.

2019-2021: Silence from Kawasaki. No KLR650 in the lineup. Some people wonder if it's over forever, some wonder if a new two-cylinder replacement bike is in the works, others wonder if this is a repeat of what Kawasaki did with the KLX250: a 3 year absence from the lineup, then the old bike reappears with the same engine, but fuel injection instead of a carburetor...

2022: Turns out the latter case is true. In April of 2021, Kawasaki announces the 2022 KLR650 with fuel injection, and I'm sure we'll all refer to it as the "Gen 3" bike. It is still a single-cylinder 650 and three models are announced:

2022 Base Model:

Base Model



Pearl Sand Khaki



Pearl Lava Orange

This is currently advertised as the "ABS" model but since it can be ordered with or without ABS, we'll call it the base model. Two colors are available as shown above. The MSRP will be \$6,699 without ABS, and \$6,999 with. Weight is advertised as "461 lb curb weight with full fuel and all fluids" so there isn't a direct comparison of the true weight gain from the Generation 2 bikes until we see a few on the street. Interestingly, the fuel tank capacity suddenly is advertised back at the old "6.1 gallon" size, with some people implying that the fuel pump can now 'get all the fuel' out of the tank... I'm

skeptical at this stage, as the extra fuel with the carbureted bike was simply on the non-petcock side of the tank, trapped by it's horseshoe cross-sectional shape. It would seem this problem will still exist unless the fuel pump draws from both sides.

The basic changes to all Gen 3 models, other than EFI and the optional ABS is an LCD instrument cluster with a gas gauge, 2 trip meters, and a clock... yet the tachometer and coolant temp gauges appear to have been eliminated. The headlight is a long-overdue LED, the suspension is stiffer front and rear, the front disc rotor diameter is up from 280 mm to 300mm, and the rear disc is thicker for better heat dissipation. The handlebars are rubber mounted, and the rear subframe is now integrated and not removable.

2022 Traveler:



This is the “Traveler” model, which has the addition of a 43 liter top case and two 12V sockets plus a USB port. ABS is standard, and the MSRP will be \$7,399. Weight is 11 pounds heavier than the base model, advertised as “472 lb curb weight with full fuel and all fluids”. They will all be Pearl Lava Orange.

2022 Adventure:

Adventure



Cypher Camo Gray

This is the “Adventure” model, which loses the top case but adds two 21 liter side cases and adds LED fog lamps, frame sliders and a tank pad. ABS is also standard. The MSRP will be \$7,999. Weight is 26 pounds heavier than the base model, advertised as “487 lb curb weight with full fuel and all fluids”. They will all be Cypher Camo Gray.

Once these models hit the showrooms, we will be able to add more details. I hope this helps you in your quest for more KLR knowledge!

Bill at Watt-man.com, May 27, 2021