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REF: Engine Control20

Ignition Tuners - Aftermarket (2007-2022)

Buy A Tuner or Have It Tuned

To that very question, here is an excellent response on the subject by aswracing on the XLForum¹⁾.

Taking it to a shop doesn't completely get you out of buying the tuner. Reason being, the shop has to buy an additional tune license for the tuner they already own, in order to use it on your bike. That tune license is typically a couple hundred dollars, and they're going to charge you for it, on top of the charge for actually tuning the bike.

Every tuner on the market, that's capable of tuning more than one bike, works this way.

Consider the downsides of the tune license route. Change your pipe and want to retune? You must go back to that same shop. Change your air cleaner? Swap your cams? Install a big bore kit? Any change you make, you need to go back to the shop that has the tuner that's licensed for your bike. Either that or go to a new shop and pay for another tune license.

What if their tuner breaks or gets stolen? What if they go out of business? You're buying that tune license all over again.

Something else to consider is that a good tuner has an auto tune function in it. You can generally tune the bike yourself pretty decently using this built-in function in combination with your bike's stock narrow-band oxygen sensors.

And yet another consideration is the additional functionality a good tuner brings to the party. For example, the ability to read and clear codes, to set up gauges to monitor what's going on with your motor, trip computers, on-the-fly adjustments, multiple tunes for varying conditions that can quickly be swapped in, etc.

Personally the tune license route doesn't make much sense to me. I'd rather pay for the whole tuner and all the advantages that come with it. But I don't tell other people what they want, and for some reason I don't fully comprehend, some prefer to buy a tune license and have someone else tune it. Your call.

Then he goes on to recommend his tuner preference:

If you do get a tuner, my recommendation is a Dynojet Power Vision PV1B (2007-2013 Sportster) or PV2B (2014-2022 Sportster). It's an amazing device. Although it got discontinued last year, Dynojet recently brought it back. It's the Cadillac of tuners, in my opinion.

If you really want a high quality tune, there's an add-on kit for the PV1B/PV2B called "Target Tune". TT implements wide band sensors for a higher quality tune, as you would find in a dyno tuning environment. But it also implements closed-loop wide band operation, which is something no dyno can do. So in that respect, it's better than a dyno tune.

A cost saving, dumbed-down version of the Power Vision is also available, called the PV3. It has a much smaller screen that's not a touch screen, and a scaled down feature set. They keep saying that an add-on wide band tuning product will be available for the PV3, but it hasn't happened yet. We're selling PV3's into basic conversions for guys to keep the costs down. But for higher power builds, where the quality of the tune is more important, we put customers into the PV1B/PV2B.

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<https://www.xlforum.net/forum/sportster-motorcycle-forum/sportster-motorcycle-general-discussion-and-problems/205434-have-it-tuned-or-buy-programmer?t=2082872>

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