

Tool Envy: the Effetto Mariposa GiustaForza Torque Wrench

Your bike will thank you.

July 21, 2008 -- When I first heard about the Effetto Mariposa GiustaForza Torque Wrench, I was thankful, skeptical and a little bitter at the same time. Could it be? at long last, an affordable, quality torque wrench that doesn't take up precious space in your toolbox? I no longer wrench full-time, so I wish this thing was around two years ago when I was working for a team. All I had then was my big, bulky Craftsman to inspire confidence in those carbon bars and stems.

Okay, the glass is half full...I have GiustaForza in my toolbox now and that's all that matters.

The Italian brand Effetto Mariposa means "butterfly effect" (although I think mariposa is actually Spanish)--well anyway, the concept is that small actions can have larger, more dire consequences. For instance, a stripped stem bolt on a \$4,000 bike turns customer into extremely unhappy ex-customer. Get it?

GiustaForza means either "just force" or "correct force". Sounds good to me.

I had read a few reviews of the wrench earlier this year and could never really figure out what was going on from the limited photos I saw. I missed their booth at the handmade bike show in Portland this year, so I finally just had to buy one to satisfy my curiosity.



The handy plastic case the wrench the standard model comes in is only about eight inches long. The wrench itself is only about six and a half inches long.

Up until now, the choices for the professional mechanic or the serious bike owner has been limited to the awkward,

bulky, but dependable beam-type wrenches from Park Tool (\$40), the aforementioned affordable Craftsman Microtork (\$65), the conventional-style Pedro's Pro Torque Wrench (\$110) and the not-so-affordable Syntace wrench (\$250). Both the Pedro's and Syntace wrenches use fussy 1/4" bits that cost extra. Professional-grade wrenches for the automotive and motorcycle industry have always been too expensive and/or too bulky. And buying a used torque wrench from a pawn show just isn't a good idea, if you even need to ask. And until now, none of these wrenches were specifically designed for bikes, as far as we know.

I've used the Craftsman wrench in my personal toolbox and in various shops...it's always does an okay job and is easily adjustable. At \$65 it's relatively affordable but it really wasn't made for bikes. It doesn't fit well between aerbars and other tight places and there are limited attachments for the 3/8" drive. If you're a traveling mechanic sometimes you have to leave it behind due to its size and weight. So what we're basically saying is the Craftsman is better than nothing, and you could do a lot worse. It's just okay.



The GiustaForza comes with 16 bits (allens, torx, flathead and phillips) and a magnetic bit holder and extension that allows you to get into those nooks and crannies. If you lose a bit, they're the standard type that fit into cordless drills and are easily found at most hardware stores. There's a thumbwheel at the bottom of the wrench that you adjust the torque setting with. The indicator window is clearly marked, albeit only in Newton- meters. Not a problem since a cheap pocket calculator is also part of my toolkit (when you're sleep-deprived and wrenching in a hotel parking lot, the last thing you need to do is math in your head). Keeping a chart of common torque values handy is also a good idea. I copied one out of the UBI study manual.

The GiustaForza is a winner on space and weight considerations alone. It's easily half the length of a full-size wrench. As far as ease of use, the wrench is well thought out. The click that signals "enough" is nice and pronounced. The shorter length of the wrench gives one a better feel for the amount of torque you're applying (with a longer wrench there's always that "was that enough?" feeling and that fatal temptation to give it just a little bit more). Like most torque wrenches, always turn it back to its lowest setting when stored to preserve its accuracy.



It doesn't ratchet like other wrenches, but whatever, the weight and space savings more than makes up for it. The feel of the wrench is solid. Another window on the other side of the wrench in inch-lbs. would be nice, but most specs stamped on parts are often listed in Nm anyway. The 2-16 Nm range is a little limiting, though. You'll still need at least two torque wrenches to cover the bigger stuff. We'd love to see a slightly larger wrench of the same design by Effetto Mariposa that would cover the torque range for external BB cups and crank bolts (SRAM specs their GXP BB cups at 34-41 Nm and their crank bolts for Red/Force/Rival cranks at 48-54 Nm).

It's not all that often that a bike tool is this well-made and well thought-out. Alberto De Gioannini, the founder of Effetto Mariposa, has a serious pedigree in the bike industry as an engineer, product manager and designer. His experience is obvious in the quality of this product. This tool is a must for any shop or pro mechanic. And if you're a home mechanic with big bucks invested in your ride...your bike will thank you.

--E.C.