

Touring Motorcycle Segment in Switzerland: BMW R1300RT vs Competitors (Jan–May 2025)

Today's touring motorcycle market in Switzerland is at a crossroads – a new high-tech BMW tourer has arrived, stirring excitement and debate among riders. This report presents a comprehensive social listening analysis and market review focused on BMW's **all-new R 1300 RT** and its key competitors (Honda Gold Wing, Harley-Davidson's touring lineup, Yamaha FJR1300, etc.) during Jan–May 2025. We explore what riders are saying (across forums, social media, and reviews in **German, French, Italian, and English**), how the market is performing, and which attributes matter most to touring enthusiasts. Finally, we provide a weighted resonance index (WRI) of top consumer priorities and strategic recommendations for BMW Motorrad.

Executive Summary

*The BMW R 1300 RT (pictured) represents a major update to BMW's storied RT series, blending cutting-edge tech with long-distance comfort – a combination that has drawn both praise and criticism online. **Social media and forum buzz around the R1300RT surged in late April 2025**, following its official reveal. This new model quickly **commanded the largest Share of Voice** among touring bikes in Switzerland by May 2025, overtaking discussions of Honda's 50th-anniversary Gold Wing and others. **Sentiment is sharply mixed**: Riders laud the R1300RT's **powerful 145 hp boxer engine and innovative features** (like adaptive aerodynamics and a radar-guided cruise control), yet many **criticize its polarizing design and steep price tag**. Competitors like the **Honda Gold Wing** remain respected for their comfort and smoothness but are often deemed *heavy* or “too car-like,” while **Harley-Davidson** tourers are loved for their classic style and brand heritage but viewed as less advanced technologically. The **Yamaha FJR1300**, once a category staple, has faded (discontinued in Europe) – some riders now look to the R1300RT as the modern sport-tourer benchmark, while others stick to proven older models (e.g. BMW's own R1250RT or used FJR) for value.*

In the Swiss market, **touring motorcycles face both opportunities and challenges**. The segment benefits from an affluent, loyal rider base (including many BMW enthusiasts) who demand comfort, performance and cutting-edge tech for long-distance travel. The new R1300RT aligns well with these trends – it's been called “una tourer purosangue... *all'insegna del massimo comfort*” (“a purebred tourer... conceived for long journeys with maximum comfort”) ¹. However, soaring prices and increasing electronic complexity are fueling *buyer hesitation*. Broader industry data shows Swiss riders gravitating toward slightly smaller, cheaper bikes amid economic and regulatory pressures ², meaning high-end tourers must work harder to justify their value. BMW Motorrad's **SWOT analysis** reveals strong brand equity and innovation on one hand, but price sensitivity and aggressive competition on the other.

Top consumer priorities in this segment center on comfort, technology, and reliability. Our **Weighted Resonance Index (WRI)** identifies the 20 attributes most discussed by touring riders. Features like **ergonomics, weather protection, engine performance, luggage capacity** and **value for money** dominate rider conversations (positive or negative), and these should be focal points for BMW's product positioning. For example, the R1300RT's new heated passenger backrest and adjustable side wind deflectors address comfort needs directly ³, while its 10.25-inch TFT display and connectivity hub speak to tech-savvy consumers ⁴ ⁵. Yet BMW must also address pain points – notably **simplifying**

the user experience (some riders find the menu system and “gizmos” daunting ⁶) and **communicating value** vis-à-vis cheaper alternatives.

Strategic implications: BMW Motorrad should **leverage the R1300RT’s innovations in marketing** (radar cruise, dynamic suspension, etc. as differentiators) *while reassuring traditionalists* about design and dependability. Emphasizing the bike’s lighter weight and improved power-to-weight over 6-cylinder rivals can convert those wary of “too much tech” by framing it as performance and safety enhancements rather than gimmicks ⁷ ⁸. Additionally, given the strong sentiments voiced by consumers, BMW can **fine-tune its messaging and future product tweaks** – for instance, highlighting the bike’s comfort and touring practicality (where sentiment is largely positive) and perhaps addressing styling criticisms through accessories or mid-cycle design updates. By aligning the R1300RT’s attributes with what Swiss touring riders truly value – *comfort, endurance, and a balance of tradition and technology* – BMW can solidify its leadership in this segment.

(Next, we dive into the detailed findings behind these conclusions.)

Social Listening Analysis

Volume of Conversations & Share of Voice (Jan–May 2025)

Discussions about the BMW R1300RT skyrocketed in Spring 2025, especially after its late April announcement. On Swiss and international platforms, the R1300RT quickly became one of the most talked-about touring motorcycles. In early 2025 (Jan–Mar), online chatter was fairly evenly distributed among major tourers – the Honda Gold Wing (with buzz around its 50th Anniversary edition) held roughly a third of conversations, with BMW’s older R1250RT and rumors of the R1300RT perhaps a quarter, and the remainder split between Harley-Davidson tourers, Yamaha’s aging FJR1300 and others. **By Apr–May, the balance shifted decisively** in BMW’s favor. Enthusiast forums like Motor-Talk saw lengthy threads on the R1300RT unveiling (stretching to 10+ pages) ⁹, and multiple Reddit posts on r/motorrad garnered significant engagement regarding the new model’s specs and pricing. This surge gave the R1300RT an estimated **40–45% Share of Voice** among touring bike mentions by May, eclipsing the Gold Wing (whose share fell to perhaps ~20% once the BMW launched) and leaving Harley and others with smaller fractions.

Notably, even **before the official reveal**, anticipation was building. A thread on the BMW MOA forum started on April 23, 2025 to discuss the upcoming announcement ¹⁰, and within days many users chimed in with first impressions once images/videos dropped on April 29th. One member pointed out that **BMW hadn’t provided clear press photos initially**, leading to mixed reactions based on video alone (“Not the best videos to get a good look... the RT looks strange. Need to see still pictures or in person” ¹¹). This initial ambiguity didn’t dampen volume – if anything, it fueled more speculation and commentary across social media.

Competitor models generated comparatively less buzz in this period. Honda’s Gold Wing saw a bump in conversation around February, when the **2025 Gold Wing 50th Anniversary edition** was discussed (e.g. on Reddit and Gold Wing forums, some celebrated the new *Bordeaux Red* paint and special badges). However, those discussions were short-lived relative to the sustained debate about the R1300RT’s merits. A Facebook user quipped that BMW “made it into a Gold Wing” and noted *even fully loaded, a Gold Wing comes out about CHF 6k cheaper* ¹², underscoring how the R1300RT’s launch even infiltrated Gold Wing conversations. Harley-Davidson’s touring bikes (like the Street Glide or Ultra Limited) maintained a steady background presence in online groups, often coming up when riders debated V-twin character or styling, but **Harley did not have a specific new launch in early 2025** to

spike its mentions. Meanwhile, the **Yamaha FJR1300** was rarely a focal point – with no new model (production had ended for EU markets), it mostly appeared when riders reminisced about its reliability or considered it as a used alternative to pricey new bikes.

In summary, **the R1300RT dominated the Swiss touring discussion by late spring 2025**. This is evidenced by the high volume of forum posts, article comments, and social media mentions relative to any competitor. “The only class of touring motorcycle I’d ever care to own... I have no interest in the... Gold Wings or the Harleys of the world. I’ll take a BMW R-class tourer any day,” one veteran rider professed ¹³, reflecting how BMW’s new tourer became the reference point in many conversations. Even those who ultimately prefer other bikes often framed their discussion around how those bikes stack up to the new RT. **Share of Voice metrics (estimated):** in Jan–Mar 2025, BMW (R1250RT/R1300RT) might have comprised ~25% of tourer mentions versus ~30% Honda, ~20% Harley, ~15% Yamaha, ~10% others; by Apr–May, BMW’s share jumped to ~45% while Honda fell ~10 points and others saw slight declines. *(These estimates are based on forum thread lengths, social posts counts and anecdotal observation, as precise social listening data by volume is proprietary.)*

Sentiment Analysis and Drivers (Positive, Neutral, Negative)

Overall sentiment towards the BMW R1300RT was divided – a roughly equal mix of praise and criticism, with very few truly neutral takes. Enthusiast reactions tended to be **strongly opinionated** in either direction. We conducted a sentiment analysis of the conversations (qualitatively assessing dozens of user comments and reviews):

- **Positive sentiment (~40% of comments):** Much of the positivity centers on the **R1300RT’s features and performance**. Riders welcomed the increase in power and torque (145 hp, up from ~136 on the R1250RT) and the inclusion of cutting-edge tech. “Design-wise... I think it looks great. It’s about time BMW got away from the whale-ish/bulbous look it’s had for its tourers,” wrote one rider, who felt the new styling was **modern and appealing** ¹⁴. Others lauded specific features: “*The movable panels on the side are pretty interesting. The heated passenger backrest, seat and grips are a nice addition,*” noted a forum member on BMW MOA ¹⁵. Such comments reveal genuine excitement about **comfort and safety enhancements** (active aerodynamics to keep feet dry, radar cruise control, etc.) and appreciation for BMW’s engineering. Some long-time BMW riders expressed **brand loyalty and relief** that the RT series “still [sets] the benchmark” for touring bikes ¹⁶. For example, one commenter enthused that the R1300RT is “a big enough step forward over its predecessor to contend with any [tourer]...makes a case that it’s still the benchmark” ¹⁷. Many positive posts also mentioned **ride quality and handling potential** – while test rides by consumers were not yet available by May, the weight reduction in certain areas (new wheels saving 1.4 kg of rotational mass) and revised chassis led some to anticipate improved agility ¹⁸ ¹⁹. Indeed, a common pro-BMW refrain was that the R1300RT manages to pack **luxury features** like a K1600 or Gold Wing, but in a **lighter, nimbler package** (281 kg, far below a 360+ kg Gold Wing) ²⁰. This resonated with riders who found Gold Wings “too heavy and tupperry” (plastic-clad) ²¹. Positive sentiment drivers can be summarized as: *advanced technology, enhanced comfort, reputed performance, lighter weight relative to peers, and brand trust*.
- **Negative sentiment (~40% of comments):** Equally vocal, detractors of the R1300RT focused on **three main pain points: design, cost, and complexity**. The **styling/aesthetics** drew heavy criticism in early discussions. “*BMW [is] literally [messing] around now seeing how ugly they can make a bike that still sells,*” one Reddit user hyperbolically complained ²². The new front-end look – with its very large windscreen and angular lines – was likened to a “robot bull” ²³ or “Judge Dredd’s bike,” with a commenter saying BMW has gone back to making bikes that look like “toy bikes” ²⁴. Perhaps the harshest indictment came from a self-identified loyal RT owner: “...this

has to be the ugliest bike by far from BMW and I have owned one or more of every body style of the RT since '96. I would not even test ride [it] if this image is correct," he wrote when seeing leaked photos ²⁵. Although design preference is subjective, **negative sentiment about the R1300RT's appearance was widespread**, especially among older, long-time RT fans who favored the classic look of earlier generations (one even said *"in my opinion, the RT with the 1150 engine was the last pretty one"* ²⁶). The **price** was the second major negative driver. With a base price around CHF 21–22k (and **easily soaring above CHF 30k** with options) ²⁷, the R1300RT struck many as overpriced. *"You REALLY have to want a 1300 boxer in your sport tourer to pay > \$30k for this new RT,"* one rider noted, pointing out that *"so many pre-owned R1250 RT and K1600 GT [are] available with similar amenities"* for far less ²⁸. This sentiment – that the **new RT doesn't deliver proportional value for its high cost** – was echoed across forums. Some compared it to competitor pricing: for instance, commenters noted a fully loaded **Honda Gold Wing Tour** (with DCT) could still undercut a maxed-out R1300RT by several thousand francs, despite the Wing's six-cylinder engine and legendary long-distance comfort ¹². Lastly, the **complexity of new tech** fueled negative sentiment, especially among riders who prefer simpler machines. A German contributor on Motor-Talk exemplified this, saying *"Ich möchte ein Auto mit Knöpfen ... und [eins] das ich vielleicht sogar selbst reparieren kann... So wie in den 70ern..."* – essentially yearning for the simplicity of the '70s, with a machine that **doesn't interfere or confuse with tech** ²⁹. Referencing modern bikes' rider aids, he continued, *"I'd gladly swap my old RT for a great new 1300, but these new features just creep me out... I'm sure I wouldn't figure out the menu toggling and have zero desire to drive that heap of chips (electronics) around"* ³⁰. This striking quote encapsulates a significant thread of negative sentiment: fear or mistrust of **excessive electronics**, concern that more software means more to go wrong (or distract the rider), and nostalgia for the mechanical purity of older bikes. In sum, negative sentiment drivers were: *dislike of the new styling, high purchase cost (and cost of optional packs), and skepticism about reliability/usability of the high-tech features.*

- **Neutral or mixed sentiment (~20% of comments):** A minority of posts were ambivalent or tried to balance pros and cons. For example, some users reserved judgment on styling until they could see the bike in person (*"It looks strange... need to see still pictures or see it in person"* ¹¹). A few acknowledged both sides: one Redditor said they *"also like the design direction... The GS looks good to me too... not in love with the GSA... maybe it'll grow on me"* ³¹ – indicating an openness to the new look, albeit with some hesitation. Another common neutral stance was **"wait and see"** – many riders, even if concerned about something (be it looks or reported issues), wanted to **test ride** the R1300RT or read professional ride reviews before final judgment. For instance, one commenter noted that *active aero flaps sounded gimmicky*, but *"guess it will have to be ridden to be believed"* ³². By May, a few professional test rides had been published (in magazines and on YouTube), which tempered some fears by providing first impressions. These reviews were largely positive about the RT's ride and features, which some forum users cited to support a more neutral/positive stance (e.g., one BikeSocial review deemed it "the most impressive touring bike on the market" and praised its handling and equipment ¹⁶). **Neutral sentiment** often came from these more **fact-based evaluations**, or from pragmatic buyers comparing options without emotional attachment. For example, on r/MotorradDeutschland a user advised someone torn between a discounted R1250RT and waiting for the R1300RT: *"I'd actually test ride both to make a reliable decision... then decide which suits you better"* ³³ – a very rational approach. Still, even these posts acknowledged issues (that user conceded the R1300RT offers "nothing... that I don't already have" on the 1250, except maybe adaptive cruise, implying a lean towards the cheaper older model).

Sentiment drivers summary:

- **Positive:** New **engine performance** (power/torque), improved **power-to-weight** (lighter than big competitors) ³⁴, advanced **tech/features** (adaptive cruise, semi-automatic gearbox, electronic suspension) ³⁵, **comfort enhancements** (heated seats/backrest, better wind protection) ¹⁵, **brand prestige & touring legacy** (many police and veteran tourers ride BMW in CH), and **modernized styling** (for some, a welcome update from old design) ¹⁴.
- **Negative:** **Design/styling dislike** (especially among brand purists) ²⁵, **high price & cost of options** ²⁸, concerns over **tech complexity/reliability** (preference for mechanical simplicity) ³⁰, **fear of first-year model issues** (some referenced R1300GS's early teething problems and worry the RT might be similar ³⁶), and even **weight gains** – while the RT is lighter than a Gold Wing, it's actually ~2–3 kg heavier than the R1250RT it replaces (281 kg vs ~279) ²⁰, which a few detail-oriented riders noted, quipping that despite “lighter engine and wheels... it comes in a couple kilos heavier” ²⁰ (this was a minor point but shows how no detail escaped scrutiny).
- **Neutral:** “Wait and see” attitudes, **conditional acceptance** (e.g., styling might be okay “if I see it in triple black, maybe it'll look better” – a common refrain was that the bike looked better in darker colors which hide some of the bulk ³⁷), and **comparative mindset** (weighing pros/cons vs other bikes objectively).

Overall, **sentiment leaned slightly more negative in tone initially** (especially right after launch, dominated by styling and price criticisms), but it began to **trend upward (more positive)** as more information and reviews came out in May. By end of May, the sentiment distribution was roughly balanced. Importantly, even negative commenters often *wanted* to like the bike – many are BMW's core audience expressing tough love. As one forum user said after harshly panning the looks, “*Keep in mind this is just an artist's interpretation... It may not be this ugly when it comes out*” ³⁸ – indicating even skeptics were open to being proven wrong, and some later conceded the bike looked better in official photos than in the leaked images. This passion on both sides underscores how engaged the community is, which is ultimately a positive for BMW provided they can address the concerns.

Dominant and Emerging Discussion Themes

Through January–May 2025, several **key themes** emerged in the social conversation around touring bikes. Below we detail the dominant topics and a few emerging or shifting themes, along with illustrative examples:

- **Comfort and Ergonomics:** It's no surprise that comfort is *the* dominant theme for touring motorcycles. Riders frequently discussed seat comfort, wind protection, and passenger accommodations. For the R1300RT, the addition of a **heated passenger backrest** was a hot topic – many applauded it, noting it enhances long-distance comfort for two-up riding ¹⁵. On forums, riders compared **riding position** between bikes: “*It's too cramped for me. I'm 196 cm tall... the pegs are just too high. I wish it had a peg lowering kit,*” one tall rider commented regarding the R1300RT ³⁹. This highlights that while the RT is built for comfort, ergonomics for very tall riders can be an issue (a theme across all sport-tourers – Gold Wing and Harley tourers tend to offer more leg room by design). Wind protection came up in jokes and praise: the RT's stock windscreen is “*borderline aftermarket size... might look better with a shorter screen,*” one user quipped ⁴⁰, implying it's *huge*. Yet that huge screen, coupled with the new side deflectors, was also seen as a **comfort advantage** (less wind fatigue, drier feet in rain). Gold Wing discussions consistently revolve around its famed comfort (plush seats, armchair-like pillion with backrest, smooth engine). “**Maximal comfort**” is expected in this class; as an Italian article declared, the

R1300RT is *“esplicitamente concepita per i grandi viaggi all’insegna del massimo comfort”* – explicitly designed for long trips with maximum comfort ¹. Thus, comfort remains the **number one theme**: any bike in this segment is judged heavily on how it pampers rider and passenger over hundreds of kilometers.

- **Features & Technology:** The touring segment has become a showcase for high-tech features, and this was a dominant discussion theme, especially with the R1300RT introducing several new technologies. **Radar-assisted adaptive cruise control** was a major point – riders noted the RT now has a front radar like the one first seen on the R1250RT’s 2021 refresh, but improved (BMW says the radar unit is now better integrated – “The radar unit is not ugly,” one MOA forum user even joked while posting close-up pictures ⁴¹). **Electronic suspension (Dynamic ESA)** and its benefits (auto-leveling, adjusting for load) were brought up, particularly when comparing to bikes like the Gold Wing (which has an electrically adjustable suspension preload) or older bikes like the FJR (which in later years had electronic suspension too). The **10.25-inch TFT display** and its connectivity features generated buzz; many commented on the sheer size of the screen (“a 10.25-inch widescreen experience... almost Tesla-like” as one article described ⁴) and the integration of navigation and smartphone connectivity. However, this also led to debate: some love having all the gadgets, others find it overwhelming (as noted in sentiment, the TFT interface on previous RTs was considered fiddly by some – *“nothing about fixing [improving] the R1250RT’s biggest flaw – the TFT and its quirks”*, one person lamented that the new model didn’t explicitly address the user-friendliness of the interface ⁴²). **Semi-automatic transmission (Shift Assistant Pro):** The R1300RT offers a clutchless shifting option (and in some markets a full **“Adaptive Smart Shift (ASA)” semi-auto gearbox as an option** ³⁵). **This sparked discussion of how it compares to Honda’s DCT on the Gold Wing – some BMW riders are purists who insist on manual shifting, while others are intrigued by the idea of semi-auto on a tourer (especially in heavy traffic or mountain hairpins).** Safety and rider aids are another feature theme: **ABS Pro (cornering ABS), traction control, hill-start assist, tire-pressure monitors – these are all expected now. One emerging sub-theme is “too many electronics?” – i.e., at what point do features become distractions or potential failure points (again referencing that Motor-Talk user who feared the “heap of chips”).** Keyless ignition, heated gear integration, TPMS, adaptive headlights (**the RT has a new adaptive turning headlight**) – **each got mentions here and there, with most riders appreciative of these, since touring riders often ride in all conditions and such features enhance convenience and safety. In summary, technology is both a selling point and a contentious point, but unequivocally a dominant theme. The R1300RT in particular was often discussed in terms of being “fully loaded”: “a technological masterpiece in sporty design” as a BMW promo video touted, and many online discussions essentially picked apart whether each piece of that tech was useful or not.**

- **Performance and Ride Quality:** While comfort and tech take center stage, the underlying **engine and handling performance** is an important theme for many riders – especially those who emphasize the “sport” in sport-touring. The R1300RT’s **power increase** (145 hp) and **lighter handling** (due to a new chassis and weight distribution) were frequently noted. One BikeSocial review pointed out the RT now has a *better power-to-weight ratio and higher payload capacity than even BMW’s K1600 six-cylinder tourer* ⁴³ ³⁴, which riders discussed as a **pragmatic trade-off**: you give up the smoothness/prestige of a six-cylinder, but you gain agility and almost the same real-world performance. Some riders on forums commented that the RT might be the **sweet spot between a pure sport tourer and a luxury tourer**: *“I have no interest in the K16s or Gold Wings... [The RT] is the only class of touring bike I’d care to own”* ¹³, implying it offers an ideal balance of power and weight. On the other hand, a few themes emerged comparing performance limits: **Gold Wing’s flat-6 engine** is revered for its ultra-smooth torque and some mentioned that no twin can match that silky character (Bennetts noted in cons that the RT’s twin

might “not have the prestige of a four or six in this category” ⁴⁴). **Harley’s V-twins** were brought up mostly in terms of character and torque – some riders simply prefer the rumble and low-end grunt of a big V-twin, even if the bikes are slower and heavier. **Handling in twisties:** a number of Swiss riders (with the Alps as their playground) highlighted that the RT and FJR1300 are **far more agile in mountain curves** than a Gold Wing or Harley. One theme was *confidence vs bulk*: many said something like “I like the Gold Wing, but it’s just too heavy... an ugly bike doesn’t make sense” ²¹ – essentially meaning no matter its power, a Gold Wing’s 380 kg weight and bulk (“Tupperware”) reduce the fun on tight roads. So, the **sportiness** of the RT (and FJR to an extent) is valued. Another performance sub-theme was **brakes and suspension**: the RT has innovative EVO integral ABS and Dynamic ESA; Gold Wing has linked ABS and a **double-wishbone front suspension** (which some love for its smoothness, others find it numbs feedback). Riders did compare these: a few BMW aficionados argued the **Telelever front end** (on previous RTs) offered great comfort but some felt it isolated feel; interestingly, the R1300RT **ditched Telelever for a more conventional fork** – this was noted in a few discussions, with some wondering how it affects handling. While a niche point, it shows the depth of performance talk. Overall, performance is a strong theme, especially among riders who *don’t* want just a couch on wheels but a bike that can hustle. As one UK reviewer concluded, the R1300RT is a “curious mix of sporty touring and automated tech” – meaning it tries to please both the rider demanding engaging performance and the rider wanting effortless touring ⁴⁵ . Conversations reflect this duality.

- **Price and Value: A major theme**, touched on in Sentiment but worth detailing, is “*Is it worth it?*” Riders in Switzerland are keenly aware of pricing (bikes are expensive here due to VAT and import costs). The R1300RT’s price was debated in virtually every thread. Many posts cross-shopped alternatives: “*for that price, I could almost buy three NT1100s, or an NT1100 plus an adventure bike and still have money left*” one rider exclaimed ⁴⁶ , referencing Honda’s much cheaper NT1100 touring bike (not as premium, but very budget-friendly). Others, as mentioned, compared to used market: “*I hope everyone loves it and upgrades, so I can buy a 2018+ RT with ABS Pro [used]*” joked one commenter ⁴⁷ – implying the new bike will drive down used prices. There was also discussion of **BMW’s package pricing strategy** – several German-language comments noted how the base price is reasonable *on paper* (BMW announced CHF ~20k base, slightly lower than some expected), “*aber... dank diverser Pakete... preislich ins Uferlose treiben*” – “but thanks to various packages and more-or-less useful stuff, [you can] drive the price to no limits” ⁴⁸ . This is a clear theme: **option packs** (Comfort, Dynamic, Innovation, etc.) are basically required to get the full experience, raising the price significantly. One user calculated an RT with necessary options and luggage would run ~€24,500 in Germany ⁴⁹ ; in Switzerland it’d be similar in CHF. The **value proposition** relative to competitors: Gold Wing’s MSRP (~CHF 25k for base model) vs RT (~CHF 21k base) came up, noting the Wing includes many things standard that BMW charges extra for (like audio system, DCT option, etc.) – but also acknowledging the Wing is still pricier comparably equipped. **Harleys** are expensive too (a fully dressed Harley can be CHF 30k+), but Harley loyalists justify it with brand and resale value. Some forum members mentioned **resale values**: BMW RTs tend to hold value decently but maybe not as much as Harleys (which have a cult market). This led to a minor theme: *maybe wait for a year or two and buy the R1300RT lightly used*. Given the rapid tech updates, a segment of consumers consider staying one generation behind to save money – an insight for BMW to consider (perhaps offering attractive financing or trade-in deals to keep people buying new).
- **Reliability & Maturity:** This theme became more pronounced toward April/May, influenced by reports of the R1300GS’s first-year issues (since the GS with the same engine came out in late 2023). On r/MotorradDeutschland, one user warned: “*According to the GS Europe forum, the 1300 is really problematic. Still, after more than a year since its release... The 1250 is finished and mature*”

and up to €10k cheaper. I wouldn't think twice" ³⁶ . This clearly shows a theme of **trust in proven models vs skepticism of new releases**. Many echoed this: the R1250RT (and even competitor models like the Gold Wing which has been essentially the same since 2018) are "known quantities" with any initial bugs ironed out. In contrast, the all-new R1300RT (new engine, new electronics) is an unknown – some fear **software glitches, recalls, or niggles**. Indeed, one expert review mentioned the R1300RT will only reach dealers by **July 2025** and implied it's essentially a 2026 model year ⁵⁰ , which suggests production delays. A Reddit user in April mentioned *"there are problems with the production line... they're way behind on the number they need to make"* ⁵¹ , indicating that early demand or manufacturing issues could affect availability (another reliability/operations concern). While most discussions did not dive deep into mechanical reliability (the boxer twin is generally trusted, and no one expects Honda-like perfection from BMW but rather "good enough" reliability with warranty support), *perceived reliability* is nonetheless a theme. The FJR1300, for instance, often came up in the context of bulletproof dependability – *"that thing will run 200k km with just oil changes"* is a typical comment about FJR's. Some older riders said they'd stick to bikes without too many electronics in part *because* there's less to break. For BMW, this is a double-edged theme: its engineering prowess is admired, but high complexity makes some wary. **Swiss riders**, who often tour far afield (Alps, surrounding countries), want to trust their machine won't strand them. So, expect reliability (and how much all the high-tech is tested) to be a continuing theme.

- **Design and Styling:** We touched on this under sentiment, but to reiterate as a theme: **looks matter** to many riders, even in this utilitarian segment. A striking number of discussions revolved around the appearance – the word "ugly" came up frequently for the R1300RT. Many compared it to previous models (some liked the R1150RT or R1200RT aesthetics more; some even said the 2005–13 RT had similarities to the new one in profile ⁵²). Interestingly, some **Harley and Gold Wing riders** chimed in on forums saying essentially: *"While I can tolerate an ugly car, an ugly bike doesn't make sense"* ²¹ – implying a bike must stir some pride or emotional connection in looks. That user was actually a BMW forum member considering alternatives if BMW "blew the design". On the flip side, **Honda's 50th Anniversary Gold Wing** in its special red/black paint was largely praised as *beautiful* (even by those who don't want the bike, they admit Honda did a nice job cosmetically). Harley's styling (classic batwing or sharknose fairings, lots of chrome or dark custom finishes) remains a draw – it's part of the reason some would choose a Harley over the techno-modern BMW. So the theme is: **design is not just an afterthought**, it can affect purchase intention. The R1300RT's polarizing design became almost a meme early on (with the "Judge Dredd bike" comment spreading around ²⁴). By May, as people saw the bike in person at dealers or shows, some warmed up to it, posting real photos that looked better than press renders. Design will continue to be discussed as deliveries start – whether it grows on riders or not is to be seen, but certainly, styling is a theme that emerged strongly in this launch window.

- **Community and Use-Case Discussions:** Some themes were about *how* these bikes are used and by whom. For example, **long-distance travel stories** cropped up – riders talked about upcoming tours (Dolomites, North Cape, etc.) and which bike they'd trust for the journey. **Two-up touring** vs solo touring was a sub-theme: the Gold Wing and Harley Ultra typically cater to couples touring (huge comfy pillion provisions), whereas an RT or FJR might be seen as equally capable two-up but a bit sportier solo. People discussed if the RT's new features benefit the passenger (the heated backrest definitely does, also better seat). Another emerging theme is **age and touring**: many active on forums are older riders (40s-70s). One 78-year-old explicitly said he's "locked into the older designs" and would stick with what he has ⁵³ . Others in that demographic talk about downsizing – e.g., thinking if the RT is too heavy and maybe switching to something like a mid-weight tourer (some mentioned Honda NT1100, or even adventure bikes which are tall

but lighter). This hints at a broader theme of the touring segment needing to also appeal to *younger* riders. There was scant mention of truly young riders (20s/30s) in these conversations – touring bikes tend to attract a mature crowd. A challenge discussed in industry circles (and alluded to in the Cruizador report) is how to keep touring bikes relevant in the future. Some dealers and publications are noticing younger riders prefer adventure or crossover bikes for touring. This theme is more in the background of our period (Jan–May) but it underpins the SWOT analysis later: the touring segment must contend with generational shifts.

In summary, the **dominant themes** in Jan–May 2025 touring bike discussions were: **comfort, tech features, performance, price, reliability, and design**. These are longstanding pillars of discussion but were colored by the influx of a **new high-tech BMW** and a **milestone Honda model**, which gave fresh angles on each theme (e.g., *tech vs simplicity, modern vs classic styling, high cost vs value retention*). **Emerging themes** included a growing concern about value (in a tightening economy) and the question of how much tech is too much. By comparing Jan–Mar to Apr–May, we see the focus shifting from speculative talk (e.g., “what will BMW announce, maybe radar cruise?” earlier in the year) to concrete comparisons (“it has radar, how does that stack up against Gold Wing’s features?”). One could say **the conversation matured** alongside the product news – becoming more specific and, for BMW, more challenging as riders scrutinized every detail of the R1300RT.

Jan–Mar vs Apr–May 2025: Trends and Changes

The period of analysis naturally breaks into two phases: **pre-launch (Jan–Mar)** and **post-launch buzz (Apr–May)** for the R1300RT. There were noticeable shifts in conversation volume and tone between these phases:

- **Jan–Mar 2025:** This was a relatively **steady period** with no major new model releases in the tourer segment (the Gold Wing 50th Anniversary news in early Q1 was the only notable event, plus some rumor milling about BMW). Conversations in this phase were more about **existing products and general touring topics**. Swiss riders discussed prepping for the upcoming touring season (bike shows, routes, etc.) and many threads focused on comparisons of *current* offerings: e.g., “Should I buy a BMW R1250RT now or wait for the rumored R1300RT?” was a question posed on a German-language subreddit ⁵⁴, generating discussion on the pros and cons of waiting. The sentiment in these early conversations leaned practical – people acknowledged that “the RT has always lagged by 1-2 years behind the GS’s new engine” (so a new RT was expected in 2025) ⁵⁵, and some decided to hold off purchases until more info came. During this phase, **Honda Gold Wing had a slight spotlight** with the anniversary edition: a few posts on r/motorcycles and Gold Wing forums around late Feb talked about the special color scheme and whether Honda might introduce any tech updates (some speculated about “touchscreen, adaptive cruise, suspension” for the ’25 Wing, though in reality the changes were mostly cosmetic ⁵⁶). **Harley-Davidson** discussions in Jan–Mar were mostly status quo – riders sharing winter upgrade projects on their tourers or planning group rides for spring. **Yamaha FJR1300** was rarely mentioned except in contexts like “What’s a good used sport-tourer to buy?”.

In terms of sentiment/trends: **Jan–Mar discussions were moderate in volume and generally positive-neutral**. Without a new trigger, there were fewer heated debates. Riders spoke from established positions (Gold Wing fans praising its comfort, BMW riders praising RT’s handling, etc.) but often amicably. For example, a BMW MOA thread from Feb 2025 shows members lightly discussing their bikes and incremental upgrades, with no controversy. The social listening data from this period indicates **lower overall volume** – on average, perhaps 30–40% of the message volume of what April–

May would bring – and conversations were **more evenly spread among different brands/models** (as previously noted in Share of Voice).

- **Apr–May 2025:** This phase saw a **spike in volume (estimated 2–3x increase)** in touring bike chatter, driven almost entirely by the **BMW R1300RT launch (April 29)**. The first week of May was especially intense on forums and social media as everyone dissected the news. Volume trends show a peak in the first few days of May, with hundreds of comments across Reddit, dozens of forum posts, and many YouTube review comments coming in. After mid-May, the volume tapered slightly but remained higher than early-year levels as more people weighed in or reacted to early test ride reports.

The **tone also shifted**: Apr–May discussions were **more polarized and argumentative** at times (e.g., design debates, new vs old bike debates). For instance, early May on r/bmwmotorrad one could see back-and-forth exchanges – some defending BMW's choices, others bashing them, leading to lengthy comment threads. This contrasts with the calmer tone of Jan–Feb when nothing provoked such strong opinions. Another change was that **competitors were now discussed largely in relation to the R1300RT**. In a sense, the BMW became the reference point: *"Is the Gold Wing still relevant now that BMW has adaptive cruise and similar luxury?"*, *"Will Harley loyalists consider switching to an RT for more tech, or stick with what they know?"* – these kinds of questions popped up in online discussions. We also saw **emerging topics in Apr–May** that were not present earlier: *production delays*, *first-year reliability concerns*, and *dealer experiences*. By May, a few Swiss and German dealers had demo R1300RTs on order, and users reported on what their dealers told them (e.g., delivery timing in June, allocation numbers). This kind of granular discussion naturally only occurs post-launch.

Sentiment in Apr–May skewed as described earlier: an initial wave of negative sentiment (immediately post-launch, lots of critical comments on looks/price) followed by a slight correction as more info came out. If graphed, sentiment would show a dip into negative territory in very late April/early May, then a gradual climb toward a more neutral balance by end of May. The **drivers of sentiment also shifted**: pre-launch, any sentiment was mostly hypothetical (e.g., "I love my current RT, hope the new one isn't too expensive"), whereas post-launch it was reactionary to real attributes (e.g., "It is too expensive!" or "It looks better in this real photo than I expected").

To quantify a bit: Suppose we measure sentiment by the ratio of positive:negative comments each month – **January** might have been something like 3:1 positive (because people were mainly happy with their current bikes or excited for the season), **February** neutral (Gold Wing talk had both excitement and indifference), **March** perhaps 2:1 positive (some anticipation for new RT building), then **April** swings to 1:2 positive:negative in the immediate aftermath of the reveal (lots of complaints initially), and **May** settles to ~1:1 (balanced mix as more viewpoints are heard). This aligns with observed behavior (noting this is a qualitative estimate).

The **content of discussion** Jan–Mar vs Apr–May also differed in specificity. Early in the year, topics were broad: *"Best touring bike for 2024?"*, *"What mods to add for comfort?"*, generic comparison threads, etc. In contrast, Apr–May threads were very specific: *"R1300RT First Impressions"*, *"R1300RT vs R1250RT – should I upgrade?"*, *"Gold Wing 2025 model changes"* (the latter triggered by Honda's April press release), etc. The community's attention was clearly focused on the new releases and making decisions around them.

In summary, **Jan–Mar 2025 was the calm before the storm**, with steady, relatively benign touring bike discussions. **Apr–May brought a storm of engagement**, largely centered on BMW's R1300RT, causing shifts in volume (up) and sentiment (more divided). For BMW Motorrad, this indicates that their product launch succeeded in capturing attention – *Share of Voice jumped dramatically in their favor* – but also that managing the narrative (addressing concerns) became critical during this period. For competitors, early

2025 was business-as-usual, but by May they were being talked about mainly in defensive comparisons (e.g., is the Gold Wing still worth it? Is Harley going to update its tourers to keep up? What will Yamaha do next since FJR is done?). This period likely provided all manufacturers a candid look at consumer attitudes through the lens of the R1300RT's reception.

Market Review

In this section, we step back from social media chatter and provide a structured review of the **touring motorcycle market in Switzerland**. This includes an overview of market dynamics and trends, a SWOT analysis for BMW in this segment, and a look at the competitive landscape with key strengths and weaknesses of each major player.

Touring Motorcycle Market in Switzerland: Overview & Trends

Switzerland's touring motorcycle market is a niche but vibrant part of the broader motorcycle industry. Swiss riders are known for their enthusiasm for high-quality, long-distance machines – it's common to see Swiss plates on bikes roaming the Alps and beyond, and many Swiss motorcyclists invest heavily in their touring setups (quality riding gear, accessories, etc.). Here are some key characteristics and trends of this market as of early 2025:

- **Market Size & Share:** Exact figures for the touring segment are not publicly broken out, but we can infer from registration data that full-dress tourers and sport-tourers represent a modest share of total bike sales. For example, **MotoSuisse** (the Swiss motorcycle importers' association) reports that 10,701 motos were registered in Jan–Mar 2024 across all categories ⁵⁷. The best-selling models in Switzerland are often naked bikes or adventure bikes (in Q1 2024, BMW's new R1300GS adventure bike was the #1 seller with 354 units ⁵⁸). No pure touring bike made the top 5 models. This indicates that while touring bikes are appreciated, they don't sell in high volume compared to mid-size bikes or ADV bikes. However, **BMW typically occupies a strong position** in the touring category: the outgoing R1250RT and the K1600 series have been popular with Swiss police and civilian tourers. For Honda, the Gold Wing sells in smaller numbers (perhaps a few dozen units a year in Switzerland), and Harleys in the touring family likewise sell dozens to low hundreds annually (Harley's overall brand sales in CH were solid, but cruisers and tourers are part of that mix). The **market share by brand** in touring is roughly: BMW has a large chunk (owing to the RT and also many GS being used as tourers), Honda has some share (Gold Wing largely, as they don't have other big tourers now), Harley-Davidson has a notable share if we include their Grand American Touring models, and others like Yamaha (with FJR, though discontinued, possibly some remaining stock or used) and **Indian** (the Roadmaster, etc., a smaller player) make up the rest. Precise segment shares aren't published, but anecdotally BMW likely leads the touring segment in Switzerland, given the prevalence of RTs. A Swiss motor journalist summarized that touring sales rely on well-heeled enthusiasts; referring to the R1300GS launch, he noted it targets "*une clientèle particulière, au pouvoir d'achat confortable et très sensible à l'argument nouveauté*" – a particular clientele with comfortable purchasing power, very sensitive to newness ⁵⁹. The same applies to big tourers: buyers tend to be older, affluent, and want the latest and greatest.
- **Trends:** Several trends are shaping the touring segment:
 - **Technology Integration:** As seen with the BMW R1300RT, high-end tech is now expected. Swiss buyers can get adaptive cruise in cars like BMW 5-series; now they see it on bikes. The trend is that touring bikes are **flagships for innovation** (radar systems, connectivity, semi-automated

features). This is partly to justify their high prices. The trend is clearly continuing – we anticipate even more rider aids (blind-spot warning, etc.) in the next few years on these bikes.

- **Shift to Adventure-Tourers:** A significant trend impacting the touring segment is the rise of *adventure motorcycles* (like BMW GS, Ducati Multistrada, etc.) as alternatives for touring. Many riders choose an ADV bike for touring duty because it offers comfort and luggage plus the ability to handle alpine passes and occasional gravel. In Switzerland, the GS series outsells the RT by a big margin (as noted, 354 units of R1300GS in just Q1 2024 ⁵⁸), whereas an RT might not reach that in a full year). This suggests that the **traditional sport-touring category has been partly cannibalized** by ADV bikes. Indeed, Yamaha's decision to not continue the FJR1300 likely stems from this trend (focus on the Tracer 9 and Tenere, etc., instead). However, there remains a core group of riders who prefer a lower, more road-focused tourer (some don't like the height or look of ADV bikes). Swiss market trend: a slight decline in pure tourer sales, stable or rising adventure-tourer sales. This is reflected in broader European data as well.
- **Demographics & New Riders:** Touring bikes in Switzerland (and generally) skew towards older riders. A challenge is bringing in new blood. There's a trend of younger riders being more interested in versatile bikes or even staying with cars; the highly specialized (and expensive) touring bike appeals less to someone in their 20s or 30s. Swiss clubs and events often note the aging rider population. That said, the affluent 40-60 age bracket in Switzerland is quite active in motorcycling (often taking it up as a hobby later in life). The market thus caters to a somewhat **mature audience**. This has implications: marketing often highlights comfort and luxury (features appreciated by mature riders), and there's a trend of offering **factory accessories** like lower seats or trike conversions (for those concerned with holding up heavy bikes as they age). There's also a noticeable presence of **touring bike rentals** and tours in Switzerland – some riders who can't justify owning one will rent for trips. The Swiss touring scene is supported by a strong touring culture (TCS Motoclub organizes touring days, etc.), which keeps interest alive.
- **Economic Factors:** Switzerland's economy is stable, but inflation and cost of living have risen in 2024/25. Big luxury purchases like a CHF 25k motorcycle face scrutiny. The Cruizador analysis noted a slight shift to smaller bikes possibly due to cost/inflation ². This means some who might have bought a new RT could consider a cheaper bike or keep their current one longer. However, the truly affluent segment likely continues to buy new – especially with financing options and dealer incentives (some Swiss dealers offering trade-in bonuses or insurance deals to move new bikes ⁶⁰). The Swiss Franc's strength also means importing bikes (especially from EU) can be feasible, but with BMW and Harley having official networks, gray imports are less common for these.
- **Electrification (Distant Horizon):** While not immediately relevant in 2025 (no electric touring bike of note yet), Swiss riders and media do discuss the future of touring in context of environmental rules. Switzerland, aligning with EU, has strict emission standards; Euro5 killed some bikes (like the FJR1300). Euro5+ and Euro6 will come, possibly culling more. There's talk that heavy tourers might be candidates for hybrid or electric in the 2030s. Not a current market factor, but a background trend.
- **Challenges:** The touring segment in Switzerland faces a few challenges:
- **Weight and Manageability:** Swiss roads include tight alpine passes, and riders often store bikes in garages with tricky access. A 350kg bike can be daunting. This challenge is partly addressed by features like reverse gear on Gold Wing or BMW offering hill start assist, but still, there's a physical limit. Some potential customers might opt for a lighter type of bike to avoid handling a behemoth.

- **Seasonality:** Riding season in Switzerland is limited (roughly March/April to Oct/Nov, depending on region). A big tourer might sit idle in winter. This seasonal use can make the high cost harder to swallow, unless one travels to warmer places off-season.
- **Competition from Other Leisure Activities:** High-end touring bikes compete for buyers' money with other luxury hobbies (like a convertible sports car, or travel). A Swiss consumer with, say, CHF 30k might weigh a new bike vs. other indulgences.
- **Dealer Network and Support:** BMW has a strong dealer network in Switzerland, as do Harley and Honda (to a lesser extent). A challenge can be servicing complexity – as bikes get more advanced, some owners worry about needing expensive dealer maintenance (which in Switzerland is costly due to labor rates). This might push some to simpler bikes they can service themselves or trust to not need much service (like Japanese bikes known for low maintenance).

Despite these challenges, **opportunities** are present: - **High Tourist Biker Traffic:** Switzerland sees many touring riders from Germany, France, etc., and the domestic market benefits from that culture. There's a prestige in owning a top-tier touring bike to tackle the mountain passes. BMW and Harley both capitalize on this aspirational aspect in marketing. - **Innovation Leadership:** BMW, being at the forefront, can attract tech enthusiasts. Swiss consumers are generally tech-friendly and appreciate engineering (noting Switzerland's high rate of luxury car ownership, etc.). The R1300RT's innovation can capture those who want "the best bike with all the bells and whistles." - **Customization and Experiences:** Swiss dealers often organize tours, training, etc. The touring segment can be marketed not just as products but experiences (e.g., guided tours for Gold Wing owners, BMW Motorrad Days events). Tapping into that community can strengthen brand loyalty (which BMW already enjoys in CH to an extent).

In conclusion, the Swiss touring bike market in early 2025 is **small but high-value**. It's at a **transition point**: traditional tourers are evolving (like the R1300RT raising the bar), while facing pressure from both *within* (adventure bikes) and *without* (consumer economic concerns and shifting tastes). **BMW Motorrad's new R1300RT arrives at a crucial time** – it can invigorate the segment if it addresses the modern needs, or if missteps happen (e.g., reliability issues, alienating core fans), those customers might drift to alternatives or postpone purchases. The next section (SWOT) will analyze BMW's position in light of this market context.

SWOT Analysis: BMW Motorrad in the Touring Segment

Analyzing BMW's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in Switzerland's touring motorcycle segment:

Strengths:

- **Iconic Product Line & Heritage:** BMW's "RT" series has been a cornerstone of touring for decades. The R1300RT carries forward a legacy of well-regarded predecessors (R100RT, R1150RT, R1200RT, R1250RT). This heritage gives BMW strong brand credibility among touring riders – many of whom have positive past experiences. In Switzerland, BMW tourers are used by law enforcement, reinforcing an image of **reliability and capability**. One rider noted that *from the R1100RT on, he's been hooked* ¹³, showing the RT's loyal following.
- **Technical Innovation & Performance:** BMW leads in integrating technology. The R1300RT exemplifies this with features like adaptive cruise control, a massive TFT with navigation, dynamic ESA, etc. This appeals to riders seeking the **latest innovations**. Additionally, BMW's new 1300cc boxer offers top-tier performance in the segment (145 hp, brisk acceleration, and refined engineering) ⁴³. Compared to competitors, the RT often has an **edge in sporty handling** and

power-to-weight ¹⁹ ³⁴ , making it arguably the best all-around performer (Cycle World dubbed it “the new benchmark for touring bikes” ⁶¹).

- **Balanced Touring Concept:** The R1300RT hits a sweet spot between full luxury tourer and sport-tourer. Many riders find the RT “just right” for European touring – large enough for comfort, but not as unwieldy as a Gold Wing or as spartan as a pure sportbike. As one forum user put it, he has “no interest in... Gold Wings... I’ll take a BMW R-class tourer any day” ¹³ . This indicates BMW has carved out a strong **product-market fit**: riders who want comfort plus dynamic riding enjoyment default to the RT.
- **Brand Image and Dealer Network:** BMW Motorrad is a respected brand in Switzerland, associated with quality and prestige. Owning a BMW carries a bit of cachet (similar to BMW cars). The dealer network is widespread and generally offers good service, which is crucial for touring riders who need support during long travels. BMW also has active owner clubs and events (e.g., the BMW Motorrad Days Switzerland), fostering community. All these contribute to BMW’s **brand loyalty** – many existing BMW owners are likely to remain within the brand for their next tourer, given positive experiences and community attachment.
- **Customization & Aftermarket:** BMW offers a wide array of factory options and accessories (from luggage systems to custom seats, GPS units, etc.) and enjoys strong aftermarket support. This means a BMW touring bike owner can truly tailor their machine. For example, need a higher windscreen or lower seat? BMW likely has an option, or third-party companies (Wunderlich, Touratech) do. This ecosystem is a strength because it enhances customer satisfaction – they can solve most ergonomic or functionality issues via accessories.
- **Financial Services & Programs:** BMW has BMW Financial Services which often provides financing deals. In Switzerland’s premium market, many bikes are bought on financing or lease. BMW’s ability to offer attractive financing (low interest, etc.) can be an advantage to move high-priced bikes. Also, BMW has things like 3-year warranty standard (as noted by Bennetts ⁶²), which is longer than many competitors (Harley standard is 2 years, Honda 2 years). This warranty shows confidence in product and is a selling point.
- **Police/Government Adoption:** Swiss police forces have used BMW RTs historically. While this is a separate fleet market, it influences public perception – seeing RTs as authoritative, reliable bikes. It’s a subtle brand strength.

Weaknesses:

- **High Purchase Cost and Optional Extras:** The R1300RT (and BMW bikes in general) come at a premium price. While the base price might undercut a Gold Wing, once you add necessary options (bags, adaptive headlight, audio, etc.), the cost balloons. Users complain it’s “easy to push the price through the roof with options” ⁸ . This complexity in trim and pricing can frustrate customers, and make the RT seem **less “value for money”** compared to, say, a fully-loaded Japanese bike. A well-equipped R1300RT can reach CHF 30k+, testing the limits of what many will spend on a bike.
- **Complexity and Potential Reliability Perception:** BMW’s cutting-edge tech is a double-edged sword. With more electronics and complexity, there are more things that could malfunction. Some riders have experienced issues with BMW electronics in the past (e.g., TFT screen glitches, ESA faults, etc.). The **perception** (rightly or wrongly) exists that BMW bikes can be finicky or

expensive to repair if something goes wrong. One commenter cited ongoing issues with the GS (same new platform) ³⁶, which can scare potential buyers. While BMW has decent reliability overall, it's not bulletproof like a Honda – and any notable failures (e.g., the well-known final drive failures on older BMWs) stick in enthusiasts' memories. Thus, **“unproven first-gen tech”** is a weakness until proven otherwise.

- **Styling Controversy:** The new design of the R1300RT has proven polarizing. If a portion of your core audience actively dislikes the look (some saying they won't upgrade because of it ²⁵), that's a weakness for market acceptance. While styling is subjective, negative word-of-mouth (calling it ugly or “Transformers-like”) ⁶³ ⁶⁴ can hurt initial sales momentum. BMW might need to invest more in marketing the design (explaining its aerodynamic benefits, etc.) or offering color schemes that tone it down. In any case, the **styling is not universally praised**, unlike some competitors (Harley's classic looks, for example, are widely loved by its base).
- **Weight (vs. Sportier bikes):** Although lighter than some competitors, the R1300RT is still ~281 kg – not a light bike. In absolute terms, it's hefty and can be unwieldy at low speeds for some riders. This might turn off riders who are downsizing from heavy bikes. Also, for those who prioritize agility over comfort, the weight is a factor (some might opt for a sport-touring bike like a Kawasaki Ninja 1000SX at ~235 kg or a lighter adventure tourer). So, while an inherent trait of the category, weight can be seen as a weakness in attracting new customers who are intimidated by it.
- **Limited Younger Customer Appeal:** BMW's tourers traditionally appeal to an older demographic. The branding, design, and price don't resonate as much with younger riders. This is a weakness looking forward: if the current customer base ages out, will new customers replace them? BMW hasn't significantly tapped into younger markets for touring (they do better with younger buyers in adventure or roadster segments). The RT might be seen as a “dad's bike” by some young riders, which is an image problem in the long run.
- **Fierce Internal Competition (GS/K1600):** Within BMW's lineup, the R1300RT faces siblings that can steal sales. The R1300GS Adventure, for example, could attract someone who might otherwise buy an RT, offering similar comfort with more versatility. Likewise, the K1600GT or GTL (though a different beast with 6-cyl) sits in BMW showrooms as an alternative tourer for those who want even more luxury or power. This internal overlap means BMW has to carefully differentiate the RT. If not, it could lose sales to itself (a customer might choose a GS Adventure to tour plus have off-road ability, instead of the RT). Given GS's popularity in Switzerland, this is a real consideration.
- **Dealer Service Costs:** BMW maintenance in Switzerland is expensive. The RT's complex systems require expert service. Some riders consider BMW's cost of ownership (service, parts) to be a weakness. It's not uncommon to hear that an annual service or replacing ESA components is pricey. This might push cost-conscious long-term owners towards simpler bikes or doing their own maintenance (which is hard on a bike with many electronics).

Opportunities:

- **Market Leadership & Segment Growth:** With competitors like Yamaha exiting (FJR discontinued) and Honda not radically updating the Gold Wing recently, BMW has an opportunity to **dominate the touring segment** if it plays its cards right. The R1300RT can set a new standard (as some press have said) and capture buyers who are brand-agnostic but want

the best touring bike. If executed well, BMW could grow its market share in touring both in Switzerland and Europe, essentially becoming the default choice for a luxury sport-tourer. This could be aided by offering test ride events, demo tours, etc., converting riders of other brands.

- **Convert Competitor Loyalists:** There is an opportunity to **target Gold Wing and Harley owners** who might be curious about a change. For instance, some Gold Wing riders are aging and might want a lighter bike – the RT could woo them by offering high comfort with less bulk. Similarly, some Harley tourer riders might be swayed by the RT's performance and tech if they're less attached to the V-twin mystique. Focused marketing – like showing an RT in a head-to-head long-distance challenge versus a Gold Wing – could highlight its advantages (handling, safety features, etc.) and tempt others. The key is to identify those sub-segments dissatisfied with their current ride's limitations (Gold Wing's weight in city riding, Harley's lack of modern electronics, etc.) and present RT as the solution.
- **Emphasize Strengths via Marketing:** BMW can capitalise on the positive drivers identified in social listening. For example, many appreciated the **comfort features** – BMW can highlight testimonials about how the heated backrest or adjustable wind deflectors make a real difference. Also, emphasize the **dynamic riding experience** – perhaps showcase an RT carving up an Alpine road to emphasize it's not just a highway couch. In Switzerland, where mountain riding is beloved, this could be persuasive. Additionally, given some negativity on styling, BMW has an opportunity to show the bike in the best light – literally and figuratively (good photography, popular color choices, etc., to shift perception). Since a chunk of the market hasn't seen the bike in person, how BMW presents it at shows or in dealer showrooms can significantly influence opinions.
- **After-sales and Community Building:** BMW can leverage its community (the MOA, local clubs) to create **owner experience programs** – e.g., Swiss Alp tours for RT owners, or advanced rider trainings for touring. These not only add value to owning a BMW (turning owners into ambassadors) but also attract new buyers who see the camaraderie and support. There's an opportunity to strengthen brand loyalty such that existing RT owners upgrade to the new model rather than consider competitors. We saw some owners are on their 4th or 5th RT across decades – those are golden customers to retain.
- **Introduce Mid-Tier Offerings:** Perhaps an opportunity exists to capture those who find the RT too large or expensive – e.g., a smaller "touring" model or a de-contented version. BMW recently introduced the F900XR (an adventure sport) and R1250RS (sport-tourer), but there might be space for something like an **F1300GT** or similar – a lighter, cheaper touring bike for solo riders. If BMW identified that trend of downsizing, an "RT Lite" could keep people in the brand. This is more product development opportunity, but Switzerland's market, with its shift to mid-sized bikes in 2024 ², might welcome such an alternative.
- **Electrification and Innovation Leadership:** Looking further, BMW can position itself as the innovator for the next era too (e.g., exploring hybrid touring bikes or integrating adaptive safety systems before others). Swiss consumers being relatively eco-conscious and tech-forward, BMW could strengthen its image by showcasing concept bikes or future plans for greener touring. This thought leadership can cement BMW as the forward-thinking brand in touring, which could have sales benefits down the line.

Threats:

- **Competitor Actions:** While currently quiet, competitors could react. **Honda** might announce a next-gen Gold Wing with even more tech or weight reduction – a major Gold Wing update could recapture buzz (especially since Gold Wing has a very loyal base who might only be tempted away if Honda stagnates). **Harley-Davidson** is reportedly working on more advanced touring models (rumors of a next-gen touring platform with water-cooled engines and more electronics). If Harley releases something that combines their brand appeal with improved tech, it could steal some who are on the fence. Additionally, **Emerging competitors** like **Indian** (with the Pursuit model, etc.) are pushing into the luxury touring space – Indian's Pursuit has adaptive ride height and a strong engine; while its presence in CH is small, the global pressure is there. Any compelling competitor product can be a threat by drawing away potential buyers or giving them second thoughts.
- **Economic Downturn or Regulatory Changes:** A threat to all expensive motorcycles is an economic slump or new taxes/regulations. If interest rates remain high or if Swiss authorities (or EU) impose heavy emissions or noise regulations, it might drive up costs or limit usage (for example, noise restrictions in mountain passes could make loud cruisers or even any bikes less welcome). Already Switzerland has strict rules (e.g., some passes ban loud exhausts). Such factors could discourage buying a CHF 25k bike you can't fully enjoy. Also, inflation in general – if living costs keep rising, luxury bike purchases may be postponed by customers. The Cruizador data hinting at more people buying smaller bikes due to budgets is a canary in the coal mine.
- **Negative Word-of-Mouth:** The initial negative chatter about the R1300RT's styling and complexity could crystalize into a broader narrative if not addressed. If early adopters of the RT report any serious issues (say some electronic fault, or even minor annoyances like laggy TFT software), it could flood forums and deter buyers. In the social media age, **bad news travels fast**. BMW has to ensure a smooth launch – any recall or prominent failure (e.g., if the adaptive cruise malfunctions in a scary way) could be a PR hit in this tight-knit community. Similarly, if enough influencers or veteran riders stick to the mantra "I prefer my old R1250RT, the new one isn't worth it," that sentiment can spread and become a thought virus harming sales.
- **Shift in Consumer Preferences:** There's a generational threat that the next wave of riders simply might not be interested in traditional touring bikes. If adventure bikes or other formats (like sport-touring crossovers, or even performance electric bikes) gain favor as touring mounts, the segment could shrink. Already we saw how ADV bikes have eaten into it. There's also a cultural shift: younger folks may prefer more do-it-all bikes or even not riding long distances at all (some data suggest newer riders take shorter trips, perhaps due to time constraints or different leisure habits). This long-term threat means if touring as an activity declines, all manufacturers face smaller pie. In Switzerland, environmental considerations and excellent public transport could also play a role – some might opt to travel by train or plane and rent bikes at destinations rather than owning a big tourer.
- **Internal Cannibalization & Overextension:** Mentioned as a weakness, it's also a threat: BMW has to juggle the RT vs GS vs K1600 lines. If the R1300RT doesn't sell as expected, BMW might divert focus to what is selling (GS). They already discontinued the smaller F800GT years ago, consolidating on bigger stuff. If RT becomes a tough sell, the threat is BMW might not invest as much in it in future (which would be sad for RT fans but a business reality). Alternatively, if K1600 is seen as redundant with RT so close in performance, BMW could scale that back – but then cede the ultra-luxury 6-cyl niche. It's a threat in the strategy sense: balancing their touring

offerings so none languish – and ensuring one doesn't inadvertently harm the other's sales (e.g., heavy discounting of leftover R1250RTs could threaten new R1300RT sales if priced too close).

Summarizing the SWOT:

- **BMW's strengths** lie in its rich touring legacy, innovative and well-rounded product (R1300RT), strong brand loyalty, and technical prowess.
- **Weaknesses** include high cost, perceived complexity, a polarizing new design, and perhaps less appeal to new/young riders.
- **Opportunities** involve cementing market leadership as competitors wane, converting riders from other brands, and leveraging the positive aspects of the new RT to broaden appeal (as well as possibly addressing gaps in the lineup with new variants).
- **Threats** come from competitor innovations, economic/regulatory shifts, negative perceptions spreading, changing rider demographics, and the challenge of internal competition among BMW's own models.

Competitive Landscape Analysis

Focusing on BMW R1300RT's main competitors in the Swiss touring segment (as identified: **Honda Gold Wing, Harley-Davidson's touring models, and Yamaha FJR1300**, plus a note on others like **Indian** or **Kawasaki** if relevant):

Honda Gold Wing (Tour DCT): The Honda Gold Wing is often seen as the R1300RT's closest competitor, albeit with a different philosophy. In Switzerland, the Gold Wing has a smaller but dedicated following – typically riders who prioritize maximum comfort and smoothness for two-up touring. The current generation Gold Wing (2018+ design) is a technological tour-de-force in its own right: it has a 1833cc flat-six engine (~125 hp, but gobs of torque), available DCT (automatic transmission), an electronically controlled suspension, Apple CarPlay integration, and so on.

- **Strengths: Unparalleled comfort and refinement** – Gold Wing is famous for its armchair seating, very low engine vibration, and excellent wind protection. Many riders say it's the ultimate machine for eating miles; one can ride 8 hours and feel fresh. It also has a strong reliability reputation – Honda's build quality and engine durability are top-notch, which for some riders puts their mind at ease (a selling point "Honda=bulletproof"). The DCT gearbox is a unique advantage for those who like it – it makes touring in traffic or twisties very smooth and has been praised for its seamless operation. The Gold Wing's styling in its latest iteration is modern and sleek (some call it the "Japanese BMW 7-series on two wheels" for its luxury). The **50th Anniversary edition (2025)** added a bit of buzz with a special livery, appealing to enthusiasts and collectors ⁶⁵. Also, Gold Wing has features like an airbag (in Tour Airbag model) – no other bike offers that level of safety. **Dealer network and resale:** Honda's network in Switzerland isn't as extensive as BMW's, but it's decent, and Gold Wings tend to hold value quite well given their longevity and iconic status.
- **Weaknesses: Weight and Bulk** – at ~380kg (especially the Tour DCT Airbag model), the Gold Wing is significantly heavier than the RT (almost 100kg more). This makes it less agile in mountain passes and more challenging at parking lot speeds. Some riders (like the BMW forum user) find it "too heavy and tupperware-like" for their taste ²¹. Luggage capacity on the latest Wing is surprisingly a weakness: to make it sleeker, Honda reduced trunk space compared to older Wings, which some touring couples lament (the RT with optional big panniers actually can carry comparable or more luggage now). **Price:** A Gold Wing Tour DCT in Switzerland can be very expensive (CHF 30k+ new). It's actually slightly more expensive than a fully loaded RT in many

cases, and that high entry price limits its market. **Less sporty performance:** While it has strong acceleration, it's not as nimble or high-revving as the BMW – riders who enjoy spirited riding may find the Gold Wing a bit boring or cumbersome in tight curves. Also, Gold Wing doesn't (yet) have adaptive cruise or some of the latest gadgetry that BMW has introduced – Honda has been incremental, so in pure tech feature comparison, the new RT edges it out (riders noted for example Gold Wing doesn't have a forward radar for cruise, a point of discussion on forums: "Will Honda add that next?"). Finally, Gold Wing appeals to an older demographic even more so than the RT – that can be a weakness in attracting new customers.

- **Recent sentiment:** Generally positive (people say "wow comfortable, smooth") but some Gold Wing owners themselves expressed envy or at least keen interest in the RT's new features. A Gold Wing owner on a forum admitted the RT's weight advantage: *"I like the Goldwing, but... it's just too heavy and tupperry for me"* ²¹. So, there is recognition that BMW offers something sportier. On the other hand, Wing loyalists might retort that nothing beats the six-cylinder's velvet feel and they'd never go back to a twin. In Switzerland, the Gold Wing remains somewhat niche; it might appeal to a subset like long-distance tourers who often ride with a pillion or even towing a trailer (yes, some do!). In competition terms, the R1300RT now encroaches on Gold Wing territory by offering many similar comforts at lower weight. The Gold Wing's trump card is still that magic carpet ride feel and possibly better two-up spaciousness.

Harley-Davidson Touring (e.g., Street Glide, Road Glide, Ultra Limited): Harley's Grand American Touring models are a different flavor of tourer, centered on style and cruising tradition. In Switzerland, Harleys have a loyal fan base and there are HOG chapters, etc. The models like the **Ultra Limited** (with batwing fairing and trunk) or **Road Glide Ultra** (sharknose fairing) directly compete in function (long-distance comfort with luggage and a big engine), though philosophically they emphasize the American V-twin experience.

- **Strengths: Emotional appeal and brand loyalty** – Harley-Davidson arguably has the strongest brand image of any motorcycle. Many riders buy a Harley touring bike not just for function but for the image, the sound, the community. This intangible factor is a huge strength; some people simply *won't consider anything but a Harley*. Harley tourers offer **relaxed, low-RPM torque** and a distinctive sound/feel that some find addictive. They also often have great passenger accommodations (big plush seats, floorboards, etc. on Ultras). **High customization ability:** Harleys can be personalized extensively (different seats, bars, paint, etc.) and Harley owners often do so, making the bike "theirs" in a way a more factory-loaded RT might not be. **Resale value** is generally good – a well-kept Harley holds value due to demand. Also, the **dealer network** in Switzerland isn't huge but Harley has dedicated dealerships and a strong international network – which matters if touring across Europe (there's usually a Harley dealer or service around if needed). Harley's latest tourers have introduced features like Milwaukee-Eight 114/117 cubic inch engines (plenty of power in a cruising sense), and some electronic aids (reflex linked Brembo brakes with cornering ABS, traction control, etc.), so they are catching up tech-wise gradually.
- **Weaknesses: Lack of advanced tech and handling limitations** – Compared to the RT, Harley tourers are behind on high-tech rider aids (no adaptive cruise, no electronically adjustable suspension on most models, etc.). They are built more old-school (though 2023+ CVO models did get radar for blind-spot detection, showing Harley dipping toes into it, but not widespread yet). Handling is also a weakness: Harleys are heavier than RT (~390kg for an Ultra Limited) and have limited lean angles. On twisty alpine roads, they will scrape pegs and generally not keep pace with an RT or Gold Wing if ridden hard. For riders who care about dynamic performance, Harleys usually aren't the first choice. **Engine performance:** While high torque, the actual horsepower is

low (~90hp), so high-speed passes or mountain climbs with luggage might feel strained compared to the effortlessly faster RT. **Weather protection** is decent on Harleys but arguably less aerodynamic than RT/GoldWing fairings (Harley batwing fairing can have more buffeting). Also, **comfort features** like heating – many Harleys don't come standard with heated seats or grips (though can be added), whereas BMW loads those in packages. **Price:** Harleys are expensive in Switzerland (status symbol pricing), often equal to or more than the RT as well. Paying CHF 35k for a CVO Road Glide is not unusual. This can be a barrier unless one is specifically wanting a Harley. Another weakness is **perception outside the faithful**: riders who aren't committed to the Harley brand often see them as antiquated (air-cooled in some cases, or simply not as bang-for-buck).

- *Recent sentiment:* The BMW-oriented forums sometimes dismiss Harleys as not true performance tourers (like one said he has “no interest in the Harleys of the world” ¹³). However, Harley forums and community in Switzerland focus on different values – camaraderie, customization, and the riding “soul”. So while a direct feature comparison puts Harley at a disadvantage next to R1300RT, the competitive dynamic is that they often appeal to different customers. The threat to BMW is not so much that a rational buyer cross-shops and picks Harley for specs, but that an emotional buyer might pick Harley for lifestyle. For BMW, converting a Harley rider is tough because it's asking them to give up a culture/identity. Conversely, BMW's hope is maybe to attract some who want to tour but without the Harley “baggage” (noise, weight). Harley's newest developments (there are rumors of a revolution in their touring line in a couple years) could change the landscape if they incorporate more tech or even hybrid technology – but as of early 2025, they remain the traditionalist's choice.

Yamaha FJR1300: The Yamaha FJR1300 has been one of the benchmark sport-touring bikes for decades. However, it's important to note **Yamaha discontinued the FJR1300 in Europe around 2021** due to Euro5 regulations (they did a final edition). So by 2025, there are no new FJR's on sale in Switzerland from Yamaha dealerships (unless they have leftover stock). Still, it's a competitor in the sense of many are on the road and people consider second-hand FJR's as an alternative to a new RT. The FJR's positioning is more sport-tourer than luxury tourer – closer to something like a leaner, simpler RT.

- *Strengths:* **Proven reliability and simplicity** – The FJR1300 is renowned for being bulletproof. Many owners brag about high mileage with minimal issues. This gives confidence to tour far with less worry about electronics failures. It's also cheaper than an RT was (when new, it was around CHF 18k fully loaded, and used ones are very affordable). **Performance:** the FJR's 1298cc inline-four is smooth and powerful (~146 hp), actually slightly more top-end power than the R1300RT, with a more high-revving character. It's a bit sportier in feel (some call it the gentleman's sportbike). It's also slightly lighter (~290kg wet with panniers) than an RT, and has a sporty handling geometry. Many riders love its **handling and stability** – it has long been praised for solid touring at speed (hence many police forces around the world also used FJR's). **Feature-wise**, the later FJR's did have niceties: cruise control, electrically adjustable windscreen, heated grips, etc., though not as high-tech as the RT. **Ease of maintenance:** FJR has no complex adaptive suspension (though had optional electronic suspension in some models), and many consider it easier/cheaper to maintain than European bikes.
- *Weaknesses:* The FJR's design and tech were outdated by 2025. The last update was 2016 (LED lights, 6th gear, etc.). It lacks modern safety aids like cornering ABS/TC that the newest bikes have. It also doesn't have the luxury touches (no large TFT, no radar, etc.). For someone who wants the cutting-edge, FJR doesn't cut it anymore. **Comfort:** While comfy enough, it's not as cushy as an RT or Gold Wing – e.g., no fancy seat heating (unless aftermarket), less legroom for rider and passenger. The inline-four engine, while powerful, produces more high-frequency

vibration than a boxer or six, and some find it less characterful (not a big issue, but some riders prefer twins or sixes for “feel”). Crucially, **availability** is an issue: you can’t buy a new one in CH now. This means its competitiveness is via the used market. That’s a different dynamic – someone with, say, CHF 10-15k budget might opt for a used FJR over, say, a much older used RT, because FJR is a reliable bet.

- *Recent sentiment:* On forums, FJR is often brought up as “old but gold.” For example, an RT rider might say “FJR owners are lucky, they don’t have to deal with these new gizmos,” or a potential buyer on a budget might say “Instead of dropping 25k on an RT, I got a 3-year-old FJR for 12k and it does the job.” The FJR thus represents the *value alternative*. However, because it’s discontinued, it’s not seen as a direct rival to the new RT in sales – more in concept. If anything, Yamaha’s absence here is an opportunity for BMW: one less competitor selling new sport-tourers.

It’s worth noting, Yamaha’s **Tracer 9 GT** (a sport-tourer based on a 900cc triple) is in the market and significantly cheaper (~CHF 14k). While not the same class as RT, some might consider it if they want a lighter touring bike. Similarly, **Kawasaki H2 SX** (supercharged sport-tourer) or **Kawasaki Ninja 1000SX** could be alternatives for those who lean sportier. But these are more sport-touring than luxury touring.

Other competitors / mentions:

- **BMW K1600GT/GTL (internal competitor):** The 1600cc six-cylinder BMWs are technically competitors to the RT if someone wants a tourer. In Switzerland, K1600 has its fan base (especially GTL for those who want a “BMW Gold Wing” with max smoothness). The K1600’s strengths are the marvelous six-cylinder power and top-tier luxury (and it’s a BMW so you get same network). But weaknesses include even higher weight (330+ kg) and cost. Some RT intenders cross-shop K1600 if they want more engine or a different feel. As one commenter noted, the new R1300RT nearly matches the K1600GT’s performance but at far less weight ³⁴, making a case to go RT unless you *must* have six cylinders. So BMW has to consider cannibalization here.
- **Indian Roadmaster/Pursuit:** Indian (Polaris-owned) has been pushing touring cruisers. In Switzerland, Indian is a niche brand with limited presence, but the Roadmaster (air-cooled Thunderstroke engine) and Pursuit (liquid-cooled PowerPlus engine) are alternatives to Harley, offering American style with some modern touches (the Pursuit even has adaptive ride height tech, and a robust infotainment). Their volume is small, but they nibble at the Harley segment more than the BMW segment. Still, an Indian Pursuit could attract someone who wants American style but slightly more modern engineering – possibly a threat to Harley more.
- **Triumph:** Triumph’s big tourer (Trophy 1200) was discontinued in 2017. Currently, Triumph has no direct tourer, focusing on ADV (Tiger 1200) which some might use for touring. So not a direct competitor in this space now.
- **Ducati:** Ducati hasn’t made a dedicated tourer in years (the old ST series long gone). The Multistrada V4 is their flagship for touring (some may cross-shop that with an RT if they want sporty touring with some off-road capability). Ducati’s approach is more ADV/Sport, not a classic tourer, so limited cross-shopping except an adventurous buyer.
- **Kawasaki 1400GTR/Concours14:** This was a competitor (inline-4 sport tourer like FJR) but it was discontinued (in EU after 2016). So again, off the table new; few used around.

In competitive landscape summary:

- The **BMW R1300RT** is positioned as the cutting-edge, balanced sport-tourer with luxury. It excels in technology, handling, and offers very good comfort – essentially trying to combine the best of Gold Wing and FJR in one.
- The **Honda Gold Wing** remains the king of comfort and engine smoothness, ideal for riders prioritizing two-up luxury and a proven platform. But it's heavy and less agile, and slightly lagging in latest tech. It appeals to a specific rider profile (often older couples, long-haul tourers).
- **Harley-Davidson tourers** represent a completely different angle: lifestyle and tradition. They offer decent touring capability, but far less emphasis on high-tech or performance. They will retain their segment of riders who want the Harley experience. They are less directly in competition with BMW for the same customer's mind – either you're a Harley person or not (though a minority do cross between).
- **Yamaha FJR1300 (and similar sport-tourers)** have bowed out of new sales, making the sport-touring segment an open field for BMW. Riders wanting an inline-4 sport tourer have either to buy used or consider alternatives like Kawasaki's sport-tourers or go up to an RT. This absence gives BMW a near-monopoly in new large sport-tourers in Europe, which is an enviable position (only superseded by the notion that many of those riders have moved to ADV bikes).
- **Adventure bikes** (especially BMW's own GS) are the wildcard competitor: they've already taken a big chunk of the touring market. Many folks who 20 years ago would have bought an RT now buy a GS Adventure and outfit it with panniers. So in analyzing competitors, one must consider that **BMW's biggest competition for the R1300RT might be the R1300GS**. If a buyer walks into a BMW dealership, the salesperson might as easily direct them to a fully-loaded GS as to an RT, depending on preference. For BMW, they win either way, but for the RT specifically, the GS is a threat to its sales.

The competitive landscape in Switzerland reflects global trends but with local nuances: BMW is very strong, Honda and Harley carve out their niches, and Japanese sport-tourers have faded. BMW's new R1300RT is entering as the freshest product, and **it has an opportunity to draw customers from all sides** if marketed well – the Gold Wing owner who wants something lighter, the Harley owner who is tech-curious, the FJR owner whose bike is aging and wants a modern replacement, and the traditional BMW owner upgrading. Each competitor presents a different challenge: Honda on comfort/features, Harley on emotional appeal, etc., and BMW seems to be aiming to check as many boxes as possible with the R1300RT.

This completes the market review and competitive analysis. Next, we translate the social and market findings into an attribute resonance index and recommendations.

Weighted Resonance Index (WRI) – Top 20 Consumer Attributes

Through our social listening and market research, we identified numerous attributes that touring motorcycle consumers value and frequently discuss. We have compiled a **Weighted Resonance Index (WRI)** of the top 20 attributes, ranked by how often and how emphatically they appeared in conversations (frequency + intensity of discussion), adjusted for their relevance to purchase decisions. For each attribute, we note its significance and provide context or a supporting quote. This will help BMW Motorrad prioritize what matters most to customers in this segment:

1. Comfort (Rider Ergonomics & Wind Protection): This is absolutely paramount. Virtually every discussion revolves around how comfortable a bike is on long rides. Attributes like seat comfort, handlebar position, legroom, and wind protection fall here. For instance, riders praised the R1300RT's wind protection but one tall rider noted the peg height was too high for his 36" inseam ³⁹. *Implication:*

BMW should continue to offer various ergonomic adjustments (seats, peg lowering kits, etc.) and tout the RT's superior wind tunnel-tested fairing that keeps riders fresh over hours.

2. Passenger Comfort: A happy pillion is crucial for two-up touring, a common use-case. Features such as a comfortable passenger seat, backrest, and roomy footpegs came up a lot. The R1300RT's new heated topcase backrest got positive mention ¹⁵. Gold Wing and Harley owners often brag about their passenger accommodations. *Implication:* BMW should advertise how the RT is now more pillion-friendly than ever (e.g., heated backrest, wide seat, etc.), and perhaps provide accessories like armrests to further appeal to couples.

3. Engine Performance (Power & Torque): Consumers value an engine that can effortlessly haul two people and luggage through mountain passes. The discussions about 145 hp on the RT and comparisons to the 6-cylinder highlight this. While raw top speed isn't the focus, **smooth, abundant torque** is. Quotes: "the same 143.6 hp twin... a substantial performance hike" ⁷ was noted approvingly. Yet some Harley riders don't care about high hp, focusing on torque feel. *Implication:* Emphasize the boxer's torque-rich character (149 Nm) for instant roll-on power, and how the RT can out-accelerate most competitors uphill even fully loaded.

4. Handling & Agility: How the bike maneuvers, especially when roads get twisty or in city traffic, is a key attribute. The RT is lauded for lighter handling vs heavy tourers. One rider mentioned preferring the RT because Gold Wing is "too heavy and tupperry" ²¹. Being able to confidently handle hairpins or quick swerves without drama resonates with riders. *Implication:* BMW should stress that the RT is not just a highway cruiser but also fun and agile on alpine roads – a differentiator against the more cumbersome competition. Engineering features like the new frame and lighter wheels ¹⁸ ¹⁹ can be highlighted.

5. Technology & Features (Gadgets): This encompasses the suite of modern features: TFT display, navigation, connectivity (Bluetooth, Apple CarPlay/Android integration), adaptive cruise, riding modes, keyless ignition, etc. Many riders were excited or at least talking about these – e.g., the big TFT and connectivity hub got attention ⁶⁶. However, this attribute has dual resonance: positive for tech enthusiasts and negative for those averse to complexity. Nonetheless, it was a top discussed area. *Implication:* BMW should refine the user experience (make sure the tech is intuitive) and market the meaningful benefits of these features (e.g., "Adaptive Cruise makes long highway stints safer and relaxing" – turning a gadget into a tangible benefit). Also, possibly offer "tech-light" variants or reassure skeptics of reliability.

6. Reliability & Maintenance: Riders often voiced concern or praise about how trouble-free a bike is. The FJR's bulletproof rep came up, as did questions about first-year RT reliability. A user explicitly said the 1250 was "finished and mature" and thus preferable to an unproven 1300 ³⁶. Trust in the machine during tours is critical – nobody wants to be stuck far from home. *Implication:* BMW should bolster confidence by communicating testing, perhaps offering extended warranty or service packages. The 3-year warranty is a selling point. Also possibly highlight any reliability accolades or improvements (if, say, service intervals improved or common issues addressed).

7. Price/Value for Money: Highly resonant in nearly every conversation. It's not just the price, but what you get for it. Many compared cost vs features of RT vs others. Some said the RT's high price was hard to justify given cheaper alternatives ²⁸. Value perception can make or break a sale. *Implication:* BMW might consider value-packaged editions for Switzerland (where price is a sticking point), or at least marketing the idea that "you get what you pay for" with the RT – enumerate everything that's included (safety, performance, luxury – essentially positioning it as worth every franc). Possibly combat the price issue with financing offers or including some options as standard for Swiss market.

8. Design & Aesthetics: Surprisingly important given emotional attachment to how a bike looks. People talked a lot about styling (positive and negative). A significant portion finds the RT's design not to their taste ²⁴, whereas Harley's classic style or Gold Wing's sleek lines have their fans. This attribute resonates because a bike is also a passion object. *Implication:* While design is mostly fixed until a facelift, BMW can offer color choices or cosmetic accessories to help riders personalize the look. Also, in marketing materials, show the bike from flattering angles and in motion (some bikes look better in person or moving than in static photos). If there's an Option 719 style package, highlight that too. Essentially, mitigate the "ugly" narrative by showing the RT in contexts where it looks purposeful and appealing (e.g., with rider and passenger in full tour mode against beautiful scenery, so the focus is on the experience, not a quirky detail of the fairing shape).

9. Luggage Capacity & Storage: Tourers care about how much stuff they can carry. Discussions on pannier size, top case volume, etc., are common. The R1300RT introduces **expanding panniers** (16L to 33L) – a point mentioned in Reddit ⁶⁷. However, initial images left some unclear, and Gold Wing's reduction in luggage space was criticized by Wing owners. *Implication:* BMW should promote the clever pannier system (if the RT has it – some sources said it does like the GS). If not, at least highlight the generous standard luggage and additional bag accessories. Provide clear info on how many liters, etc., so riders know an RT can carry as much or more than competitor X. Practical touches like a lockable glove box or charging compartment (which RT has ⁶⁸) also matter.

10. Weight & Manageability: While weight ties into handling, it's slightly different – it's more about the ease of maneuvering at low speed, pushing it around, etc. Riders frequently compare bike weights. The RT being ~60kg lighter than a Gold Wing is a selling point (someone explicitly contrasted 281kg vs 343kg of K1600 ²⁰). Conversely, an RT is heavier than a Tracer or similar smaller tourer, which might scare off some. *Implication:* Continue weight-saving measures and advertise that the new RT, despite added features, is essentially in a middleweight class of tourers. Perhaps mention the low center of gravity due to the boxer engine – making it *feel* lighter than it is. Provide riding courses or tutorials on handling heavy bikes to boost customer confidence (some brands do "learn to handle your tourer" days).

11. Braking & Safety: This covers braking performance, ABS, cornering ABS, traction control, stability, lighting (adaptive headlights) – all contributing to a sense of safety. Many riders take these for granted, but they do talk about things like "cornering lights" or how solid the brakes feel on a mountain descent. The RT's new adaptive headlights and comprehensive safety suite are a strong point. *Implication:* Emphasize these in sales: e.g., *"best-in-class braking distances, intelligent ABS Pro that keeps you safe even when leaned over"*. Safety resonates particularly with older riders who ride two-up – they want to feel secure. Quote perhaps: BMW adding collision warning tech etc., which some employees at dealers were excited about ⁶⁹ ⁷⁰.

12. Rider Aids & Ride Modes: Beyond safety, things like cruise control, hill start assist, quickshifter, etc., were discussed. Adaptive cruise (radar) is new and a big rider aid that got attention. Hill Start Control came up indirectly in some comparisons (some note RT has it, others don't). **Ride modes** (Rain/Road/Dynamic) adjust throttle and suspension – tech-minded riders mention them, while some old-school ignore them. Still, as an attribute it's part of the package people consider. *Implication:* Make sure these aids work seamlessly (feedback from earlier RT's slow menu was a complaint ⁴²). Market them not as "gizmos" but as helpful tools (e.g., hill assist prevents rollbacks in Alps – a nice convenience).

13. Ease of Use / User Interface: A slightly intangible attribute but frequently mentioned: how easy is it to operate all this stuff? The TFT interface, menu navigation, connectivity pairing – these either delighted or frustrated users. As one said, the previous TFT had "quirks and lack of configurability" ⁴². This strongly affects owner satisfaction. *Implication:* BMW must refine the UI/UX. Perhaps include

tutorial sessions for new owners (some dealers do that). Show that the new RT's interface is improved (if it is – they claim better menu navigation ⁶⁶). This attribute often determines whether owners fully utilize features or get annoyed and disengage.

14. Sound & Engine Character: Interestingly, while not as top priority as comfort or power, the *emotional character* of the engine (sound, smoothness, vibe) is an attribute riders notice. Harley and Gold Wing owners in particular are attached to their engine's distinctive feel (potato-potato rumble, or turbine-like whoosh of the six). Some BMW riders love the boxer's growl, others find it less refined than a six. Bennetts noted some may miss a four/six's prestige ⁴⁴ . So this does factor in enjoyment and brand identity. *Implication:* BMW can accentuate the positive of the boxer character – maybe through an exhaust note engineered to please (without being too loud for Swiss regs). Possibly allow dealers to demonstrate via test rides that the slight vibrations of a twin add character but not discomfort. Sound design can influence buying (some might lean Harley for sound alone, or Gold Wing for quietness).

15. Fuel Range & Efficiency: For tourers, range matters – how far can I go on a tank? This attribute is sometimes explicitly mentioned (RT's 24L tank vs others). The RT's tank is around 24 liters giving it well above 350 km range if ridden moderately. The Gold Wing has about 21L, some complain its range is a bit lower. Efficiency also ties in – a lighter bike typically gets better mileage. *Implication:* BMW could boast that the RT has one of the longest ranges in its class, meaning fewer fuel stops on a long trip – a practical advantage for touring Switzerland where in remote passes fuel stations can be far apart. Environmental angle: the new engine likely meets strict emissions, possibly even slightly better economy than the old – highlight that if true.

16. Weather Protection & Climate Management: This includes not just wind but how the bike handles rain, cold, heat. Are there good heated grips/seat (RT yes), do the fairings keep rain off your legs (RT's do quite well, plus new flaps claim to help feet stay dry ³²). Summer heat – some bikes cook riders (big V-twins can throw off a lot of heat). The boxer has cylinders out the sides which some mention keeps feet warm in cold but maybe hot in summer? But likely less an issue than on V-twins. *Implication:* Underscore things like “designed to channel engine heat away” or the adjustable flaps for airflow in hot weather ⁷¹ . When riders see that level of thought, it resonates that the bike is built truly for all-season touring.

17. Brand Reputation & Dealer Support: Many consumers choose a touring bike based on trust in the brand and the availability of support. BMW's brand came up often (loyalty and expectation). Also, knowing you can get service across Europe (BMW has many dealers) is peace of mind. This attribute is a bit meta, but when someone says “I stick with BMW” or “I trust Honda reliability” – that's brand reputation. *Implication:* BMW should leverage its strong Swiss presence – e.g., mention how many service points or how BMW Assistance can help if something goes wrong on a tour (some kind of roadside assistance plan). Also emphasize the heritage of BMW in touring – helps brand-conscious buyers feel part of a tradition.

18. Customization & Options Availability: Riders value being able to set up the bike to their needs – whether through factory options or aftermarket. Several forum posts discussed configuring the RT on BMW's site with different packages ⁴⁹ . The availability of things like taller windshield, different seat heights, etc., is an attribute itself. Harley's strength in customization is huge; BMW is not at Harley level but with Option 719 and accessories, it tries. *Implication:* Offer and highlight a wide range of accessories (cases, lights, comfort seats, etc.). Show some example builds (e.g., “Touring package” vs “Dynamic package” RT) so customers see it's flexible. If a rider knows they can tweak the bike to fit them, they are more likely to commit.

19. Community & Network: Owning a touring bike often means joining a community (organized rides, forums, etc.). The camaraderie and knowledge sharing is part of the ownership experience. While not a feature of the bike per se, it resonates with consumers (Harley has HOG, Gold Wing has GWRRA, BMW has MOA and local clubs). In social listening we see riders quoting each other from forums – that community weight influences decisions (e.g., one citing the “GS Europe Forum” for issues ³⁶). *Implication:* BMW can promote their official clubs, rides, or even include an MOA membership or Swiss BMW club membership with purchase. When buyers see there’s a strong support network, it adds value to choosing that brand.

20. Aesthetics of Instrumentation & Controls: This is a minor one but did appear – how the dash looks, are the controls quality, etc. Some riders prefer analog gauges (older folks maybe; one commented missing simpler dash), others love the new TFT visuals. Control layout – BMW’s wonder-wheel controller got mixed mentions: some love its convenience, some find the menu navigation via wheel cumbersome. *Implication:* Ensure that the touchpoints (switchgear, screen readability) are top-notch because these create the first impression on a test ride. It’s an attribute that’s subtle but can tip a scale – e.g., a potential buyer might choose the bike with the nicer cockpit if torn between two.

These top 20 attributes were repeatedly evidenced in discussions, indicating what **consumers care about most** when evaluating touring motorcycles. BMW’s R1300RT generally scores very well on most of them (comfort, performance, tech, etc.), but faces perception or real gaps on a few (price, design, simplicity).

Recommendation – Attribute Prioritization for BMW: Based on the WRI, BMW Motorrad should prioritize reinforcing and improving the attributes in roughly this order:

- **Comfort (rider and passenger):** Continue to make this a cornerstone of product development and marketing. Every improvement here (like the heated backrest) should be trumpeted. For marketing, perhaps gather testimonials: e.g., *“After 500 km in a day, I felt great – the new RT’s comfort is unbelievable”* ¹⁵.
- **Tech & Safety Features (with user-friendly design):** It’s a major selling point but must be executed well. Prioritize perfecting the user interface and reliability of these features (since tech can backfire if glitchy). Market the ones that clearly benefit the rider (adaptive cruise, adaptive headlight) strongly, as these set RT apart. Perhaps downplay or simplify aspects that aren’t resonating (if menu complexity is an issue, maybe add quick-access buttons or improved voice control, etc., in future).
- **Engine & Performance:** Keep the performance edge. This also means any future updates should ensure the RT is not underpowered relative to peers. The current engine is great – ensure marketing emphasizes both its power and its refinement (maybe noting it’s smoother or less “buzzy” thanks to engine balancer, etc., if applicable).
- **Value Proposition:** BMW should consider how to improve perceived value. That could be by packaging popular options into the base price in markets like CH, or offering inclusive service. Since price sensitivity was high, maybe for 2025/26 they can have a promotion like including panniers for free (since some complained they’re optional). Also, articulate the value: e.g., *“Yes, it’s premium, but you’re getting the pinnacle of engineering – essentially a two-wheeled BMW 7-series – for a fraction of a car’s price”*. Perhaps highlight long-term value: resale, durability, included maintenance plans, etc., to justify cost.

- **Styling Adjustments & Marketing:** Given the mixed styling feedback, for future colorways or minor facelifts, gather customer input. Perhaps an Option 719 style package that tweaks the fairing looks or adds a different windscreen could appease some. In marketing imagery, focus on angles that make the bike look sleek (some commented it looks better in black because it hides bulk ³⁷ – so use that insight). Also, consider physically showing the bike to customers (dealers could have preview events) because many who said “ugly” did so pre-seeing it live. Once people see it and sit on it, some change their mind.
- **Reliability & Support:** Proactively address reliability concerns. Perhaps extend an invite to early adopters to provide feedback, or publicly stand by the product quality (like issuing updates promptly if issues arise – transparency helps). Provide training to all dealers on handling the new tech so that any problems customers have are swiftly resolved – this in turn creates positive word-of-mouth that “BMW service took care of me, no worries on the new model.” Reinforce the message that although it’s new, it’s been thoroughly tested (maybe share some development stories – e.g., “we tested the adaptive cruise for 100,000 km in all conditions”).

By aligning product development and communication with these prioritized attributes, BMW can better satisfy consumer needs and differentiate from competitors. For example, one specific recommendation: **launch a marketing campaign called “#RideAndBelieve”** where potential customers can sign up for an extended test ride of the R1300RT – this addresses multiple attributes (comfort, handling, tech) by letting riders experience them, and directly combats doubts about value and styling (people often fall in love once they ride it). During such a demo, highlight comfort (maybe have them do 200km in a day), show off the tech (instructor shows how adaptive cruise eases highway), and afterwards collect feedback.

Ultimately, focusing on what resonates most – comfort, confidence (safety/reliability), and an exhilarating yet easy ride – will guide BMW's touring bikes to meet and exceed Swiss customer expectations, ensuring the R1300RT becomes a success story in this segment.

Executive Summary (Revisited) & Strategic Implications

(As a closing, we summarize key insights and strategic steps.)

The **touring motorcycle segment in Switzerland (Jan–May 2025)** has been marked by the arrival of BMW's R1300RT, which has reshaped the conversation and set new benchmarks in technology. Social listening reveals that while the R1300RT enjoys substantial buzz and admiration for its comfort, performance, and features, it also faces skepticism over its bold styling, high price, and complexity. Competitors each hold certain strengths – Honda's Gold Wing is the comfort king for two-up luxury, Harley-Davidson offers an irreplaceable heritage and community, and past stalwarts like Yamaha's FJR still symbolize no-nonsense reliability and value – but none combine sportiness and luxury quite like the R1300RT, which has emerged as the **talk of the touring community** in early 2025.

For **BMW Motorrad**, the strategic implications are clear:

- **Capitalize on Strengths:** The R1300RT should be positioned as the ultimate all-round touring machine – **“the best of all worlds”**. Marketing should highlight quotes from real riders praising its ride (“It looks great...finally away from the bulbous look” ¹⁴) and its features (“movable panels and heated backrest – nice additions” ¹⁵). By showcasing its comfort and high-tech advantages over competitors, BMW can attract riders who are on the fence. For example, a

campaign could directly compare trip experiences: *“3 days in the Alps: R1300RT vs. Gold Wing – see why the RT rider ends the day less fatigued.”*

- **Address Weaknesses Proactively:** The two main friction points – **styling and pricing** – need careful handling. For styling, BMW can release the R1300RT in appealing color schemes (perhaps a classic Alpine White with subtle trim, and a darker option to satisfy conservative tastes) and feature it in person at events to let people see it firsthand. They could even engage customers via a survey or forum to gather input for future design tweaks, turning a point of criticism into a collaborative improvement (showing the brand listens). Regarding price, strategic pricing or value-adds in Switzerland (like including panniers or a service package in the base price for the first year) can increase perceived value. Additionally, sales training should arm dealers to **sell value over price** – e.g., break down the cost per day of ownership over 5 years to show it’s “CHF X per day for the ultimate touring experience,” which many might find reasonable for their passion.
- **Leverage Opportunities (Lead the Segment):** With Yamaha and others stepping back, BMW can aim to **dominate the sport-touring category**. This means ensuring any rider leaving a competitor brand finds a welcoming hand at BMW. For instance, BMW could create a **“Touring Upgrade Program”** that offers incentives for owners of Gold Wings, Harleys, FJRs, etc., to trade in for an R1300RT. That not only boosts sales but sends a message that BMW is the new leader in touring. Moreover, by supporting the community (organizing Swiss Alps touring events, dealer demo days on weekends, etc.), BMW can reinforce that owning an RT is not just having a bike, but joining a family of passionate tourers who get together (somewhat akin to Harley’s HOG culture, but with a BMW twist of riding experience focus).
- **Mitigate Threats:** BMW should keep an eye on competitor moves and broader trends. If younger riders aren’t coming to tourers, maybe introduce engaging content like a YouTube series or social campaigns featuring slightly younger ambassadors taking the RT on adventures (to inspire a new audience that touring can be cool and not just for retirees). If economic headwinds persist, be ready to offer financing deals (e.g., 0.99% APR for RT) to ease the purchase. Also, maintain **transparency and responsiveness** about any early R1300RT issues – this builds trust and pre-empts negativity from spreading. For example, if some owners complain about a software bug, BMW could publicly acknowledge and fix it swiftly, turning potential criticism into praise for good customer support.
- **Enhance Customer Experience:** The analysis shows that beyond the machine itself, riders value the *experience* (community, support, ease of use). BMW should ensure that from showroom to service, RT customers are treated as VIP tourers. That could mean offering a first free check-up before a big trip, or a dedicated hotline for touring customers on the road needing assistance. Little things like this cement loyalty and word-of-mouth – an area where Harley excels and BMW can too, with its own style. A rider who feels “BMW has my back wherever I ride” will likely stick with the brand for life.

In conclusion, **BMW Motorrad is well-positioned to strengthen its leadership in the Swiss touring segment**, given the positive reception of the R1300RT’s innovations and the relative stagnation of some competitors. By focusing on the attributes that matter most to consumers (comfort, reliability, value) and learning from the candid feedback (address styling critiques, simplify tech where possible), BMW can fine-tune both its product and messaging. The strategic path forward involves not only promoting the R1300RT’s clear advantages but also **building an ecosystem of support and community** around it, thereby aligning BMW’s touring offering even more closely with consumer needs and aspirations.

If executed effectively, BMW will not only see increased market share and customer satisfaction in 2025, but also create a blueprint for the future – one where the company's touring bikes continue to evolve with rider expectations, staying *“ein Schritt voraus”* (a step ahead) of the competition, much as the R1300RT has aimed to do. As one enthusiastic rider optimistically noted amid the debates: *“The RT makes a case that it's still the benchmark.”*¹⁷ Maintaining that benchmark status is the strategic goal, and it's within reach.

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