

MOD GODS

TOPPLING THE TOP DOG IS NO EASY ASK, BUT IF ANY BIKES CAN, IT'S THE RUNNERS-UP IN EACH CLASS

WORDS BY: SIMON 'ROOTSY' ROOTS PICS BY: LOW IMAGES

AS SOON AS WE DECLARE A BIKE FIRST, WE AUTOMATICALLY RELEGATE ANOTHER MACHINE INTO SECOND PLACE

TRIUMPH DAYTONA 675

What's not to love about the Daytona 675? Triumph messed about in this class with inline fours, but once they built the triple they found the magic formula, and stuck with it.

HONDA FIREBLADE

Given one hell of a nosebleed when the BMW came along, but it remains one of the most perfect bikes ever made. Does it need an HM Plant transformation to topple the BMW though?

BMW S 1000 RR

Top dog in 2010 and the way the Japanese manufacturers are running scared with few 2011 models, it looks likely to stay that way for some years to come. A marvelous machine.

Being number one is a poisoned chalice. As soon as you get to that coveted spot you suddenly become a target for everyone else to aim at. It's not vindictive or vengeful, it's just how the world works – no more so than in the biking world.

We're proud of our testing regime here at Fast Bikes, and any bike that takes the top step deserves the glory and adulation we heap on it. But as soon as we declare a bike first, we automatically relegate another machine into second place.

As competitive as the bike industry is, there's usually not much to choose between first and last, so the gap between first and second is almost always infinitesimally small and can come down to such seemingly trivial matters as tyre choice and suspension set-up.

Using careful use of well-sourced parts, that gap can usually be bridged with subtle refinements to the runner-up's engine and chassis. So what does it take to make the leap onto the top step of the podium? That's what we're about to find out.

Picking the winners of each of the significant sportsbike classes as your targets to topple, we then assembled the runners-up in each category and treated them to a lot of love.

Knowing what it should take to kick the class kings in their crown jewels, the lavishing varied, from a light breathing on to a full-on, no holds barred commitment of cash depending on the width of the gap that has to be bridged.

So we have the Triumph Daytona 675 taking on a lightly modded Kawasaki ZX-6R in the supersport category, the closest of all classes. A track-focused Ducati, a JHP built 1198 S, takes on the big twin winner, the KTM RC8 R. And in the big boys class, a tricked-up Honda Fireblade takes on the might of the BMW S 1000 RR.

We had planned to run a Ducati 848 lavished with loveliness against the venerable GSX-R750, but the 848 took a dive at the last minute, rendering direct comparison impossible. But Alastair's experience in the 848 Challenge puts him in the perfect position to judge whether its worth treating your Ducati to some Gixer-beating aftermarket sexiness.

We're answering the eternal question. Should you buy the best, or build the best? There's no wrong answer, just degrees of right ones, but to make sure, we've also asked a tuner's perspective of the right choice to make.

AND YOUR TESTERS ARE



Simon Roots

Loves current bikes, hates depreciation. Reckons new bikes are pointless because you get better value from a current bike tricked up to the nines. Tight? Not really.



Alastair Fagan

Loves food – hates empty plates. Thinks that celery should be banned for wasting precious calories, and is always bemused by hamburgers not containing ham.



KTM RC8 R

The RC8 R proves that you don't have to make the most mumbo to be declared best on test. KTM's engineers made the R one of the most intuitive bikes in the world to ride play out on road and track.

KAWASAKI ZX-6R

Was so close to knocking the 675 from top spot, and is in many ways the Triumph's equal. So lightly breathed on in this form, the 6R should push the Brit bike hard.

DUCATI 1198 S

It looks like a race bike, but this 1198 S is a JHP Racing customer bike, used on the road and trackdays. Like the stock bike, it's super strong, but its not just the engine that's been tuned – exactly where the stocker struggles.

If you don't engage 'Slick' mode, the BeeMmmWyou won't let you do this



Modded Kawasaki ZX-6R v Triumph Daytona 675

The Triumph Daytona 675 won this year's supersport battle by the slenderest of margins – gnat's cocks are bigger. The Kawasaki ZX-6R, as complete as it is, couldn't match the character of the inline triple motor and the advantages the configuration delivers in a dynamic environment. So if the advantage is in character alone, does the Kawasaki stand any chance?

Some bikes feel natural right from the start. The ZX-6R doesn't. With its tall Gilles rearsets giving the bike John Deere-like levels of ground clearance, the once comfortable, spacious bike suddenly takes on a new, meaner demeanor. No, it takes more time to adapt to the cut and thrust of Kawasaki life.

But once you're attuned to life at

16,000rpm, you soon see that the ZX-6R is a clear and present danger to the Triumph. Like a leopard can't change its spots, the Kawasaki can't deny it's an inline four 600cc sportsbike. Hence it can only be ridden one way to get the best from it – hard.

The Triumph Daytona looks as if it's destined for the track alone, but the fabulously flexible motor works in practically every scenario. Even with the Kawasaki's boosted power figures, thanks to the LeoVince Evolution exhaust and mapped PC V, there's still

plenty of lethargic midrange to get through before you burst into the screaming top end. Unless you match your gear ratio to the tach's red zone, the inline four whimpers away while the Triumph roars.

DON'T BE FOOLED BY

This pair on track. If you're a circuit junkie then your best bet will be any R6 from 2006 with a chunk of money for it



The ace up the Kawasaki's sleeve is the extra revs the ZX-6R has to play with. You may not even be aware of them, but ping the throttle long and hard and you'll be rewarded by the crest of a wave that would have any surfer salivating. But there's no getting away from the fact that the Triumph is easier and more accessible to ride – at any speed. It's fuel injection is better stock than the Kawasaki's modded.

One of the most important changes from stock, that transforms any Japanese sportsbike, is the rubber. The swap from Bridgestone's BT-016 to the Japanese firm's grippier BT-003 releases the Kawasaki from the shackles of the OE tyre. It needs this change to combat the Triumph's Pirelli Supercorsa – one of the simplest, yet most effective, dowries Triumph could have ever blessed its favourite child with.

Now with feel, trust

With a bigger bulge of power, the Kawasaki can either show off – or get down to business



You can run, ZX-6R, but you can't hide from the 675's inherent brilliance

JHS JAMES' OPINION



KAWASAKI ZX-6R

Sell it and buy a Triumph! Only kidding. The best place to start is with an exhaust can, but make sure it's a good one, one where the manufacturer has conducted proper R&D rather than eyed it up to fit. Don't expect big power gains, what you're after is rideability. The next step is a Power Commander III or V and some time on the dyno. Consider a Bazzaz too, especially if you're considering a quick-shifter in the future. They're doing good deals at the moment and you get traction-control and a quick-shifter included. Other than that, it just needs setting up.

James' verdict 7/10



and grip on its side, the Kawasaki can really take it to the 675. The Triumph feels lithe and able to arc on a whim, while the Kawasaki's extra width gives it a more substantial and solid feel. Showa's Big Piston Fork, fitted to the ZX-6R, offers a refined feel compared to the extra movement from the 675's unit.

Even with its long wheelbase, the Kawasaki is responsive to input, turning tight and changing direction easier than the Triumph, although there's little to touch the British bike knee deep in a long turn. Brake-wise, the Kawasaki's stiffer feel gives you the impression that there's always a little more to come.

But the Triumph remains irresistible and a BMW S 1000 RR-type bomb needs to be thrown into the mix to surpass not just the Triumph's character, but it's ability, too. The rumour prevails that BMW have got a 600 waiting in the wings, not that they'll confirm it. Until then, this battle is still as close as ever.

Verdict 7/10

The ZX-6R is now complete, but still can't quite overhaul the sublime Triumph Daytona 675

✦ CRISPER MOTOR, STRONGER BRAKES
✦ STILL NEEDS REVVING, FEELS TOO WIDE

THE SWAP TO STICKY BT-003 TYRES RELEASES THE ZX-6R

ENGINE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LeoVince can Mapped PC V HEL brake lines Gilles rearsets BT-003 RS tyres 112bhp 	
	<p>TRACK 8</p> <p>Pin sharp and stable</p>	
CHASSIS	<p>FAST ROAD 9</p> <p>Got guts to go with glory</p>	
	<p>HOOLIGAN 8</p> <p>Absolutely loves a wheelie</p>	
	<p>NEW RIDER 4</p> <p>A pussy cat at low revs</p>	
	<p>DESIRABILITY 7</p> <p>It's nice, but not that nice</p>	

Modded Honda Fireblade v BMW S 1000 RR

Trying to match the ability of BMW's S 1000 RR has been an impossible task for the Japanese quartet of litre bike contenders. Beating it? Good luck with that. Forgetting the incredible electronic spec of the top-of-the-range model, BMW got the fundamentals right first time, creating a bike whose dynamics are uniquely brilliant.

So how do you go about challenging that hegemony? Well, how about giving the BMW's closest rival a 16bhp advantage in the meat of the midrange for a good start? While we've all been blinded by the 180bhp-plus figures from the BMW, the Fireblade can be coaxied into giving more go where it matters by the simple use of an Arrow end can, a pair of Power Commander Vs and a map that Ordinance Survey would be proud of its accuracy. This puts the 'Blade back in the game. Top end power can only be released with the use of the HRC ECU, but this omission will only be missed by racers and pub bores alike.

The ruthlessly efficient Dynojet Quickshifter negates BMW's advantage here, so all the



DON'T BE FOOLED BY
Getting a standard Beemer. The TC and other bits are all optional extras but worth their weight in gold.

Electronic aids could stop this sort of nonsense, but BMW decided not to. Well done them



HONDA FIREBLADE C-ABS £11,375



ENGINE

The new compact and lighter lump uses a separate sleeveless cylinder block that aids rebuilds in racing. A new head configuration adds power and sheds weight, with shorter valve lengths. Titanium intake valves shave 500g, towards a total saving of 2.5kg from the engine. The new forged pistons are 1mm wider and have a 1.5mm shorter stroke, contributing to higher revs and faster pick-up. Slipper clutch is now OE.

Highlights

- ▶ Arrow can
- ▶ Pair of Power Commanders
- ▶ Dynojet Quickshifter
- ▶ Ten Kate goodies
- ▶ Lighttech levers
- ▶ 163bhp

TRACK

Sweet, but for the grunt

FAST ROAD

Stunning on a blast

HOOLIGAN

Turn the ABS off and have fun

NEW RIDER

Not super scary at low revs

DESIRABILITY

The best of the lops

CHASSIS

Mass centralisation is again the key here. A new four-piece cast aluminium frame saves weight and increases rigidity. It's 300mm slimmer, with a new steering head cast for the ram-air. The swingarm is 11mm longer. The suspension is essentially the same, but the fork span is down by 10mm and the offset is up by 2.5mm for sharper response. New monoblock calipers add power and shed weight, along with light wheels.

BMW has left in its armoury is its sublime traction control system. The only thing the Fireblade can rely on is its own honest delivery – and this is a machine as honest as the day is long.

The drive the 'Blade persuades the excellent Michelin Power Ones to deliver to the road is astonishing. From as low as 4,000rpm, the Honda just grips and goes, leaving the BMW struggling like a 600 in its wake. Taking full advantage of the plumping through to five figures, the tractable delivery, grip and predictability of the 'Blade totally transforms it. The BMW makes up lost ground through clinical neck-wrangling, but the fun lies with the old order. Cranked over wheelies on exits, the front lifting in fourth over crests, and the rear smearing itself all over an exit like boot polish are all included in the price.

Despite this onslaught of grunt, the BMW merely needs to be ridden differently to achieve the same, if not better, results. In the hands of those that have been indoctrinated into the BMW way, the levels of abuse that the traction control can let you get away with are ridiculous. I trust it, but my brain just won't let me use it.

But to focus on the engine does BMW's chassis engineers a massive disservice. It's the complete package,

the complete integration of every dynamic element, and would be nothing without the sharp purpose and accurate execution of any input.

The Fireblade can't hide its apparent size in this company, not even the high-mounted Ten Kate rearsets completely eliminated the feeling of size and space. The BMW apes the feel of a furiously focused supersport machine, willing to dive bomb into any corner as readily as any Stuka. Poise is the Fireblade's natural stance, beautifully balanced at both ends, with only minimal changes required to the near sublime suspension. But with the midrange's brutal bolstering, set-up goes out the window, with the shock passing responsibility to the tyre. The fork needs plenty of firming to cope with the stresses of speed and stopping – the latter improved with the addition of Brembo Road and Track pads.

The end result is a disturbance in the 'Blade's inherent balance, demonstrating that the BMW is not just the culmination of 180 trick ponies, but is rather truly complete.

Verdict

8/10

The Honda's motor is willing, but the chassis isn't able

- MEGA MIDRANGE, QUICKSHIFTER, CONTROLS
- SOFT CHASSIS, NO TRACTION CONTROL



THE HONDA GRIPS AND GOES, LEAVING THE BMW STRUGGLING LIKE A 600

JHS JAMES' OPINION



HONDA FIREBLADE

Get an exhaust on it! The Arrow can on this 'Blade makes more power than full-systems. They're on offer, so you get more power than a full-system, for less than half its price. A Bazzaz would bring it in line with the BMW's electronics, but it's also worth considering HRC kit. For less than £2k an HRC loom will help eek 10-15bhp, you just have to peg in the lights. That also means you could use the HRC power-up kit, then we'd really be cooking.

James' verdict 8/10



Modded Ducati 1198 S v KTM 1190 RC8 R

It's hard to argue against the KTM RC8 R's sheer balance compared to the fundamentally skewed Ducati. As engineering excellence, you can't fault the Austrian machine with its blend of poise and power that's hard to find in any other bike. Ducati, on the other hand, gave the 1198 S a motor designed by Thor and left the chassis to try and cope with the massive forces generated by the 1198cc twin. Buy the Ducati and the spending doesn't stop there. That's not what you want to hear, is it?

So what do you do? There aren't many pimping 1198s on our streets, mainly because Ducati buyers go bankrupt post-purchase. The Ducati Performance Parts catalogue is a coffee table beauty, but doesn't come

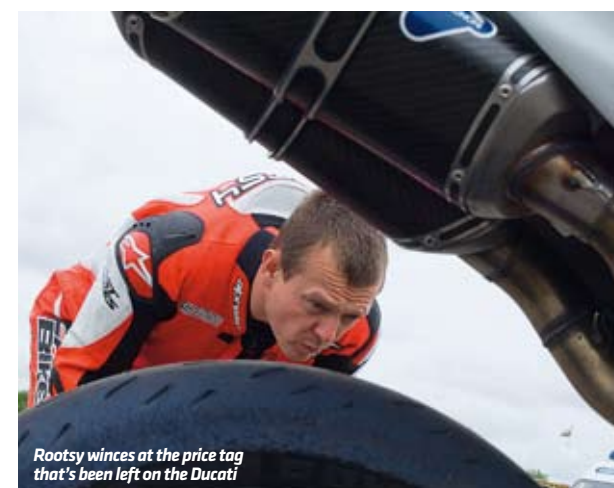
with prices. If you have to know, you can't afford them.

This particular 1198 S started life as a standard road bike, then Ducati tuning legend John Hackett molested it with a budget-busting barrage of go faster goodies. But don't be discouraged by the exoticness; if you can afford a Ducati, you'll be spending pocket money on these upgrades.

To give the Ducati more power is like



DUCATI GAVE THE 1198 S A MOTOR DESIGNED BY THOR



Rootsy winces at the price tag that's been left on the Ducati



The RC8 R is so comfortable mid-corner that Beej is actually finishing his Soduko off

DUCATI 1198 S £16,895



ENGINE

The bore and stroke size have now been increased to that of the 1098R. The valve diameters have also increased by 4% to 43.5mm for the inlet, and 35.5mm for the exhaust. The elliptical throttle bodies have increased by 13.3%, to 63.9mm. The inlet body is the same as the R model, as are the Corse gear ratios. Crankcase weight has been reduced by 3kg, and the S gets traction control as standard.

CHASSIS

The new for 2009 Ducati 1198S retains the same trellis frame from the original 1098, but the 'S' gets treated to spangly Öhlins suspension with low friction titanium nitride-treated sliders instead of the Showa units on the more affordable Biposto model and a steering damper. New 7-spoke forged aluminium Marchesini GP replica wheels are mated to Pirelli Supercorssas, brought to a halt by Brembo Monobloc calipers.

Highlights

- ▷ Termignoni's
- ▷ Nemesis ECU
- ▷ Slipper clutch
- ▷ Suspension internals
- ▷ Accossato m/cylinder
- ▷ 187bhp

TRACK

Now the real deal on track

FAST ROAD

Great ride, great sound too

HOOLIGAN

Just look at the pictures

NEW RIDER

Not unless you're loaded

DESIRABILITY

The last word in cool

9

9

8

2

10



DON'T BE FOOLED BY

Money. If you're prepared to spend £16 on an 1198 S then budget for £20K to get it to run right.

giving John Prescott Viagra – no-one wants to see the results. The 1198 pulverises the RC8 R, especially at the top-end, but we wouldn't mind a broader spread of power and fully reap the benefits of a V-twin. A 70mm full Termini system adds 10bhp and increases the lunacy. The cost? Three large – and your sanity. The combination of rear brake and disciplined right hand is nowhere near an adequate enough anti-wheelie device. The rage is diluted slightly by wider engine usability parameters. It pulls from as little as 4,000rpm and warps your brain right up until the redline.

Although massively boosted to 187bhp, the engine is more usable and controllable, thanks in part to a British-built Nemesis ECU. This controls just about everything and offers a direct, but predictable, throttle connection that disguises a quick-action throttle. Throw in a slipper clutch that Ducati forgot to fit at the factory and the engine's sorted.

Thanks to stiff suspension and a tight chassis, the KTM exudes feedback but borders on the sadistic side of harsh. Some find it threatening. On the contrary, a standard Ducati feels Mr Whippy soft

JHS JAMES' OPINION



DUCATI 1198 S

Lovely, but it's a heavy one. You didn't want me to say that because going on a diet is the plan, but will cost a fortune. With exhausts the choice is fairly limited. If you want good results, there's only a few to go with like Termignoni. It already has TC so a Power Commander is a cheap option for improvements. Realistically, most people get Termini's through their dealers and the required ECU upgrade, and leave it at that. If you want any more power afterwards, then see a doctor. It's stupid money and for the rich only.

James' verdict 9/10

on the initial stroke, especially on the anchors. This ultimately ruins the chassis and its potential, creating understeer after you've fought it all the way to the apex.

Öhlins aftermarket internals and a shock overhaul go a long way to controlling the Ducati's weight transfer. The weight loss program of this track weapon also makes for more flickable steering (and an obvious lighter feel), with the super-light exhaust taking mass off the arse-end and shifting it towards the front. This

puppy holds a line beautifully. With more set-up time, we could eradicate a few teething issues and get handling on-par with the KTM. That's quite a compliment. The Duke is never going to own the poise or mid-corner stability the RC boasts, but it's amazing what some springs can do.

One thing that is terminal is the severe strain on your torso under heavy braking – and the anorexic tank. Unless you know Nori, it'll be tricky to get hold of a 24-litre race tank, which transforms the ride.

Thankfully, it's the smaller accessories that often get overlooked, but these will end up gaining you more – a bit like the Accossato radial master cylinder that replaces the rather on/off Brembo unit, making braking more progressive.

Spanking another £6k on an already overpriced bile seems bonkers, but the result is a bike that more than matches its rival.

Verdict

9/10

This is the real deal, a 1198 S with some chassis love

- ✦ ASTOUNDING ENGINE, CHASSIS NOW COPE
- ✦ EXPENSIVE BIKE, EXPENSIVE PARTS

Modded Ducati 848 v Suzuki GSX-R750

We could cheat and say that we tested a tricked up Ducati 848 against a stock Gixer 750, but we're not very good at lying. We'd lined up Ducati's heavily breathed on 848 Challenge race bike you see opposite to do the unthinkable and challenge the Suzuki's unbeaten decade of tenureship at the top. But then a former FB parishioner, Rob Hoyles, lobbied it into orbit and wrote it off two days before we were to test it.

Thankfully, Alastair raced the bike at the first round to great effect, kept it upright, and is able to deliver a racer's eye view of the significant changes Ducati has made to the stock bike. Many of the changes make sense for the road, and able it to genuinely be compared against the formidable ability of the GSX-R750.

JHS JAMES' OPINION

DUCATI 848

Really, we're looking at the same as the 1198, with the same price issues. People who buy Ducatis tend to use Duke's own aftermarket gear, which is expensive. A sensible upgrade would be a slipper-clutch, Sigma or otherwise, and that goes for the 1198 too. I'd reduce unsprung weight without breaking the bank, which means a pro-bolt titanium kit. A set of cans with a PC V should top things off.

James' verdict 7/10

❖❖ DUCATI HAS MADE SIGNIFICANT CHANGES TO THE 848 ❖❖



The benchmark of the middleweight class, the GSX-R750 is almost peerless



DUCATI SLIPPER CLUTCH

Straight from the Performance catalogue, the official slipper clutch gives the 848 so much more control while downshifting. Like the rest of the sportsbike range, this should be standard.

TERMIGNONI EXHAUST

Fitting these Termignoni cans and the Y-piece means that you can ditch the catalytic converter, save weight and boost power. 6bhp is added to the 848's already healthy total. An ECU upgrade is available, although not used here. To get the bike breathing properly, Ducati fitted an aftermarket race air-filter to achieve the race limit 130bhp.

FORK INTERNALS

A set of Öhlins 25mm internals have made the stroke much more progressive throughout the whole stroke. Braking no longer is a grit-you-teeth affair with much more support offered by the transformed fork. Weight transfer now feels controllable, meaning that the tyre has less work to do given the same dynamic forces. A shim re-stack, new springs and oil could be a cheaper option, but not as refined as this.

DUNLOP D211 GP RACERS

The 848 was hardly underpowered in the rubber department, but the move from Pirelli Supercorsa Pros to the super sticky Dunlops gives the rear an awful lot to chew on while grip from the front means that the bike leans to its true potential, although feel is a little lacking at maximum lean - when it's reet on it's ear.

ÖHLINS TTX SHOCK

Replacing the standard Showa shock is an Öhlins unit that stops squat under power and has adjustment that is more effective and more precise than fiddling with the stock unit.

❖❖ BRAKING IS NO LONGER A GRIT-YOUR-TEETH AFFAIR ❖❖

TECH DATA

ENGINE

	Triumph Daytona 675	Kawasaki ZX-6R	BMW S 1000 RR	Honda Fireblade C-ABS	KTM 1190 RC8 R	Ducati 1198S
Type	675cc, liquid-cooled, 12v, inline-triple	599cc, liquid-cooled, 16v, inline four	999cc, liquid-cooled, 16 valve, DOHC, inline-four	999cc, liquid-cooled, 16v, DOHC, inline-four	1,195cc, liquid cooled, 4v, 75° twin cylinder	1,198cc, liquid-cooled, 8v, V-Twin
Bore x Stroke	74mm x 52.3mm	67 x 42.5mm	80mm x 49.7mm	76 x 55.1mm	105mm x 69mm	106mm x 67.9mm
Compression	12.65:1	13.3:1	13.1:1	12.3:1	13.5:1	12.7:1
Fuelling	Electronic fuel injection	Electronic fuel injection	Electronic fuel injection	Electronic fuel injection	Electronic fuel injection	Electronic fuel injection
Tested Power	110bhp @ 12,600rpm	112bhp @ 14,000rpm	185bhp@13,000rpm	163bhp @ 12,000rpm	150bhp @ 10,300rpm	184bhp @ 10,000rpm
Tested Torque	65Nm @ 10,750rpm	60Nm @ 11,600rpm	106Nm @9,750rpm	107Nm @ 8,600rpm	112Nm @ 6,750rpm	131Nm @ 8,000rpm

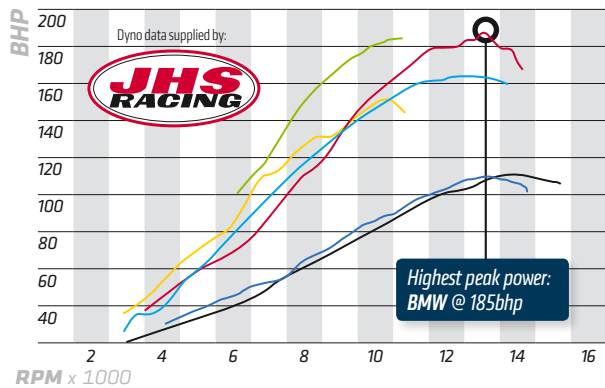
CHASSIS

Frame	Aluminium beam twin-spar	Aluminium twin-spar	Aluminium bridge	Aluminium twin-spar	Chromium molybdenum trellis type	Tubular steel trellis
F Suspension	41mm usd fork, fully adjustable	41mm usd Showa BPF fork, fully adjustable	46mm usd Sachs fork, fully adjustable	43mm usd fork, fully adjustable	WP 43mm usd fork, fully adjustable	43mm usd Öhlins fork, fully adjustable
R Suspension	Piggy-back monoshock, fully adjustable	Showa monoshock, fully adjustable	Sachs monoshock, fully adjustable	Monoshock, fully adjustable	WP monoshock, fully adjustable	Öhlins monoshock, fully adjustable
Front Brakes	Four-piston calipers, 308mm discs	Four-piston radial calipers, 300mm discs	Four-piston radial calipers, 320mm discs	Four-piston calipers, 320mm discs	Four piston, radial calipers, 320mm discs	Four-piston radial caliper, 330mm discs
Rear Brakes	One-piston caliper, 220mm disc	One-piston caliper, 220mm disc	Single piston caliper, 220mm disc	One-piston caliper, 220mm disc	Two piston, fixed caliper, 220mm disc	Two-piston caliper, 245mm disc

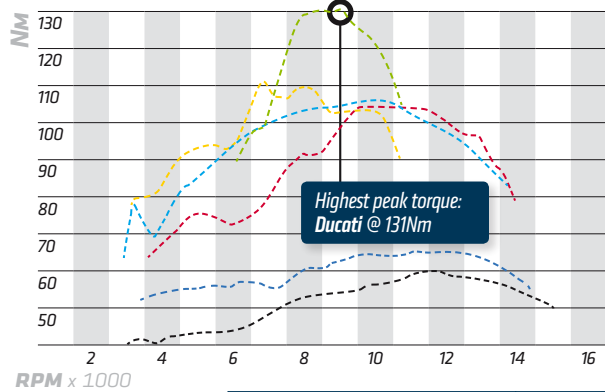
DIMENSIONS

Wheelbase	1,395mm	1,400mm	1,432mm	1,410mm	1,425mm	1,430mm
Seat Height	825mm	815mm	820mm	820mm	805/825mm	820mm
Dry Weight	162kg	157kg	183kg	172kg	182kg	169kg
Fuel Capacity	17.4L	17L	17.5L	17.7L	16.5L	15.5L
Price	£7,589 (otr)	£7,899 (otr)	£12,500 (otr)	£11,375 (otr)	£14,995 (otr)	£16,895 (otr)
From	Fowlers 01179 770466 Fowlers.co.uk	Kawasaki UK 01628 856750 Kawasaki.co.uk	BMW UK 0800 777 155 BMW-motorrad.co.uk	Honda UK 0845 200 8000 Honda.co.uk	KTM UK 01280 709500 KTM.co.uk	Ducati UK 0247 633 5300 Ducaticoventry.com

POWER

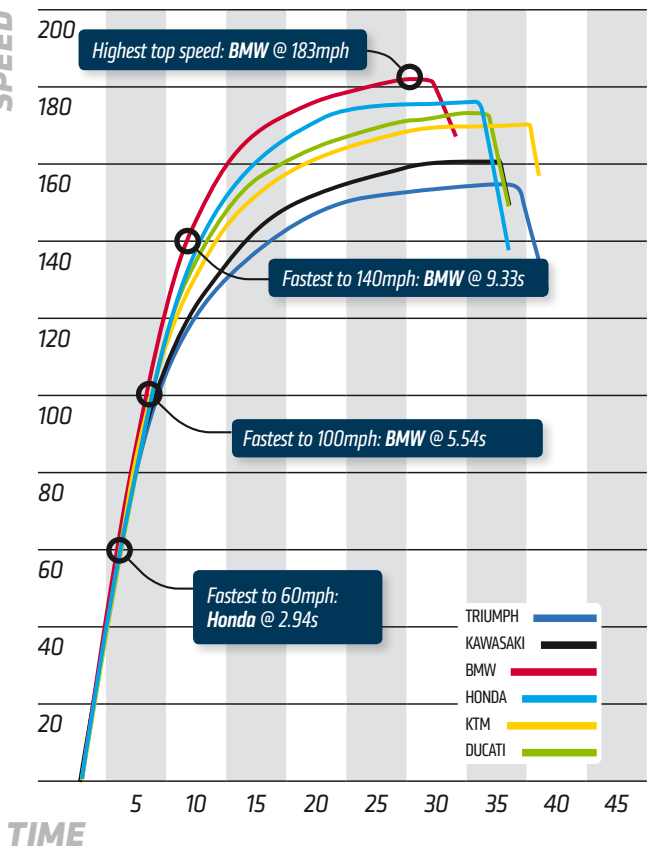


TORQUE



	Triumph Daytona 675	Kawasaki ZX-6R (STD)	BMW S 1000 RR	Honda Fireblade (STD)	KTM 1190 RC8 R	Ducati 1198 S (STD)
0-60	3.12s	3.27s	3.02s	2.94s	3.02s	3.18s
0-100	6.62s	6.46s	5.54s	5.56s	5.81	5.89s
0-140	16.62s	13.59s	9.33s	9.55s	11.42s	10.92s
Stg ¼ Mile	11.20s @ 125.81mph	11.04s @ 129.45mph	10.32s @ 147.28mph	10.32s @ 145.33mph	10.63s @ 136.54mph	10.64s @ 138.49mph
Standing Mile	29.93s @ 151.84mph	29.07s @ 159.31mph	26.51s @ 176.80mph	26.51s @ 175.55mph	27.88s @ 166.43mph	27.60s @ 167.82mph
Top Speed	152mph	162mph	183mph	178mph	171mph	174mph

SPEED DATA



SPEED TEST NOTES

- TRIUMPH DAYTONA 675**
She flies away from the lights, thanks to a tall feeling that enables you to get over the front and keep the nose down
- KAWASAKI ZX-6R**
Once you've got used to where the tachometer needs to be, the 6R just revs and revs and revs. Proper quick once it's got going
- BMW S 1000 RR**
Gives a little speed away at the start, and not the easiest to launch, but once it's in its stride there's nothing to match it this side of a race bike
- HONDA FIREBLADE**
A tad quicker than the Beemer to 60mph but then the German bike edges ahead. Not much in it and more to hide behind
- KTM 1190 RC8 R**
Like the rest of the bike, easy to get going fast. Stick your chin on the tank and pin it as hard as you dare. Not shy, either
- DUCATI 1198 S**
Tricky to keep the front down with so much torque, but judge things right and it'll get the better of the KTM up over 100mph



It's a sight we've seen all too often – a Beemer celebrating another easy win



THE VERDICT

It's testament to today's top stock bikes that they can weather the storm of modifications that their rivals freely sport. Our core test winners, KTM aside (just), are blooded, but unbowed. And, of course, if they ever feel too much heat from their competitors, then they're free to travel down the mods route, too. But there's another story to be told here. You don't have to chop in your pride and joy, stomach the eye-watering depreciation and then find a couple of grand on top to buy the latest and greatest, because judicious use of after-market parts can be a more cost effective route to your perfect machine. You've got to spend money to save money – well, at least that's what you can tell her indoors as you drop the kids' trust fund on a full system and suspension upgrades. But what we've learned here is that every facet of a bike's performance needs to be developed just to take on the best. You can't blindly chase horsepower, because all too often that's not what lets a bike down. An engine upgrade may solve the headline problem, but weight saving, suspension set-up and tyre choices are equally important. Take the modded Honda

Fireblade, for example. It ticks many of the boxes, with its blunderbuss motor, fancy add-ons and super sticky tyres really making the BMW S 1000 RR work for yet another win. But without the guile of serious suspension set-up it can only compete in certain areas. With ABS and a quickshifter fitted, the only thing the Honda lacks is traction control – and the ability to use it. But as a road bike, where you shouldn't see any TC light except when you start it up, the Fireblade becomes the more useful bike. Thunderous torque shrinks straights, but the finesse of the BMW is hard to replicate in a machine that has different geometry and chassis dimensions. Subtle works, as the Kawasaki ZX-6R demonstrates. The changes to power, slight suspension tweaks and a few well-sourced parts put the Kwak back on parity against the sublime 675. If you were thinking of chopping in your bike, be it any of the other Japanese 600s of the last few years, then the money you'd lose in depreciation you can spend on the parts you need – and still be quids in. But unlike the litre bike battle, with two identical configurations slugging it out, this fight pits two different types of engines and two different chassis solutions. Suddenly an objective decision becomes a lot more subjective, with personal



An orgy of power and money – and Alastair's right in the middle of it. He loves orgies

► preference playing a bigger part. The multifaceted ability of the Trumpet's motor, allied to the inherent advantages to using the triple's layout are elements that the Kawasaki can't hope to overcome – and this will remain this way until BMW shakes up the class and produces an S 600 RR.

Ultimately, money talks. It has to, to put one over the KTM RC8 R. Packing more power into an 1198 S is as dangerous as letting the Taliban loose at a clay pigeon shoot. But it works, just, because it's not solely a power fest and some money has been set aside to solve some of the Ducati's more inherent problems. Like the Fireblade, it needs more set-up time to perfect, but the groundwork has been done in the form of internal suspension tweaks, new ancillaries and the sourcing of a much needed slipper clutch.

The end result is a bike that doesn't ape the KTM, but furrows its own path to greatness. Yes, the motor is one stop short of Dagenham on the District Line – Barking – but the rest of the bike is fundamentally better prepared to cope with the outrageous power and torque delivered through it.

Mods work, it's as simple as that. But they're not miracle workers. They can't overturn certain inherent advantages of its rivals, nor can they rid a bike of certain particular traits. But the right part at the right price can easily catapult your bike right back to the top of the pile. What that right part is, and how much it costs will differ from bike to bike, but for the money you'll save in lost depreciation, you can reclaim your bike's former glory. ☐



Thanks to:

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The 675 shadows the ZX-6R on the track, much like the Kwak has shadowed the Triumph in the garage