

FORGET NAKED 600S, NOW
THERE'S A NEW BREED OF NAKED
MIDDLEWEIGHTS STRIPPED OFF
READY FOR A GOOD SPANKING

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POWER PLAY



SHIVER ME TIMBERS, YA BASTARD

It's a shame Aprilia couldn't find us a new Shiver to test, because priced at just over £6k with a heap of decent kit and sexiness, performance-per-pound is very appealing. The new model receives a light refinement for 2010, but results in a big improvement. Compared to its rivals, it'll hide from the Japs, but non-adjustable damping, beefy proportions and poor ground clearance keep the Fiddy behind its Euro chums.



With the two no longer on speaking terms, BJ phones Relate for some advice

This is an exciting class, regardless of the lack of fairings and the budget paraphernalia bolted on. Once naturally evolved from naked 600s, a recent European infiltration has seen these middleweights serve a bigger purpose than just getting newbies onto the road.

It's a division on the up. Take the Triumph Street Triple for example – harmless and innocent enough to nurture new talent in the city, yet amply able to provide hardcore hits and harass trackday regulars on the cheap. If that wasn't enough, Triumph gave us the sporty 'R' version without sacrificing usability.

2009's champion returns unchanged this year (bar some snazzy new clocks) but has some fresh competition for the crown. The hugely-hyped Yamaha FZ8 has a lot to prove. It has to warrant its ridiculous price tag and live up to the marketing frenzy created at its during the launch. There's no substitute for cubes, but can the chassis keep pace?

Also reppin' for newness is Ducati's latest addition to the Monster bunch, the 796. I was

the first of many to assume that the new little 'un would replace the cheap-looking 696. It doesn't, instead sitting between the baby Monster and the more than capable 1100. The proven chassis, classy looks and a capacity hike suggest an awesome outcome.

Last year saw the introduction of the funky BMW F 800 R – if you can squeeze 'funky' and 'BMW' in the same sentence. The R was an attempt to lure new buyers into the Beemer brand, and although it's never going to get the spunk flowing over its aesthetics, it at least gets blood flowing to the right area.

That leaves the poor little Kawasaki Z750. The Zed's big bro has benefited massively from a hardcore hit of development in 2010, but the stalwart Seven-Fiddy remains totally unchanged this term. It has experience, configuration and a bargain price to rely on.

This promises to be exciting. Despite the lack of gadgetry and horses on offer, the FB wrecking crew spanked these cheap naked slugs for the only result that matters – and found a few new favourites in the process.

AND YOUR TESTERS ARE



Alastair 'A-Force' Fagan

Quite happy with the middleweight tag, although the discovery of Cadbury's Giant Chocolate Buttons threatens to undo all of his pre-season training.



Benjamin 'BJ' Kubas Cronin

Take any bike's clothes off and BJ sheds his mild mannered exterior for the persona of a man possessed. Ladies suffer the same fate, the poor things.



TRIUMPH STREET TRIPLE R

The standard Street Triple is one of the most entertaining bikes you can buy. In souped-up R form, it's easy to see why it left its rivals for dust last year. A firm favourite.



YAMAHA FZ8

After the fanfare of its launch, the reality set in. Yamaha has thrown a (toy) kitchen sink at the FZ8, borrowing much from the FZ1 – including the massively inflated price.

“A EUROPEAN INFILTRATION HAS SEEN THESE BIKES SERVE A BIGGER PURPOSE”

DUCATI MONSTER 796

New for 2010, Ducati now has covered all bases when it comes to the Monster range with the 796 sitting snugly in the middle of the 696 and 1100. Think Monsters Inc rather than Predator as a guide.

BMW F 800 R

We didn't expect much when BMW announced this bike last year, but came away impressed by its attitude from the launch. The hat, by the way, was a little on the chewy side.

KAWASAKI Z750

The venerable old Zed has always offered great value for money in the class. It's funky, fast and feisty when it wants to be. Kawasaki has a real gem on its hands here, and needs to nurture it for all its worth.

Yamaha FZ8

This year has been a barren one for fresh metal. Thank fuck for the FZ8. Launched by the same marketing men as the big-bong R1, a naked 800 wasn't on our priority list – unless it was a pukka hustler for the loonies. 800cc, you say? Could it be the MotoGP technology trickling down from Rossi's M1? Er, no. If you're after sporting ability, look away now.

Pee-shooter exhaust aside, the FZ8 is right up there on the looks and build quality front. It doesn't, however, look like nigh-on £8k worth. It brags a typical FZ seating position, compact but loadsa room, and you could be sat on the big bro until the wafer-thin bars and non-adjustable suspension become obvious. The rubber pegs give away the 8's true narrative, although the rubber mounts are a nice touch.

But let's start with the good bits. Or bit. Bossing the biggest capacity, and gaining at least an extra cylinder over most, it's not surprising the FZ8 feels luscious on the throttle. The motor, apparently, has 2008 R1 heritage – with just the evident dulling down for a more usable everyday delivery.

The linear and progressive delivery lacks any real talking points, other than being as super-smooth as butter. Being a Yamaha, the FZ8 has a weird lull at around 4,000rpm (due to emissions regs and electronic-induced) but from there is cleanly relentless to the redline without any further hits. Its user-friendly smoothness combines with the rest of

the package to make it one of the easiest to ride at less committed speeds on the road. A light clutch and easy gearbox offer an ally in town, and the brakes are perfectly adequate despite the budget accessories.

Yamaha reckon this isn't a bike for beginners. They obviously

haven't ridden it. It wouldn't scare a delicate 70-year-old with dementia and is far from intimidating, which is no bad thing. Sure, it's fun around the sweeping roads and buzzing to work, but ultimately there's no charisma. Attitude? It wouldn't retaliate if you shagged its mum. It's been wrongly positioned in the market and is unsure of its existence. For starters, it comes on BT-023s (touring rubber) yet they're

DON'T BE FOOLED BY

Wheelies for the camera. These are just pop-ups and the FZ8 can't keep 'em up for much longer than this. Shame.

“KNEEDOWN IS ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE, YOU LOOK LIKE A COMPLETE NOBBER”

claiming a proper naked sportsbike. Sorry Yamaha, but it really ain't.

With pegs 10mm lower than the FZ1, it's not surprising the 8-Ball touches down early – too early. Kneedown is almost impossible, unless you don't mind looking like a complete nobber, hanging off like a baboon. The unconventional method of tipping the bike into a turn, with you leaning away from the bike, works best. At mediocre angles, the FZ steers quickly and feels light on its rubber. It's up there for agility tests, just not anything more challenging.

Moaning over, the springs at the front are well damped and offer plush road holding, looking after the nose-end's weight superbly. With no screws to turn, you have to put up with the soft and bouncy ride, although it is more sophisticated and controlled than the Z750.

Despite the neural feel at a standstill, there's too much weight on the rear and too much squat from the under-damped shock. Dialling in some preload may alleviate the slack.

The FZ8 falls short by a long way, unless you want an overpriced naked bike that's severely limited. It's slightly cruel pitching the Yam against such strong opposition, but that's where Yamaha want it to sit.

Verdict 5/10

It's an improvement over the FZ6, but that wasn't tricky to execute. Think of it as an overpriced commuter.

✚ MOTOR, EVERYDAY RIDING, SMOOTHNESS
✚ GROUND CLEARANCE, SET-UP, PRICE

BENJAMIN'S OPINION

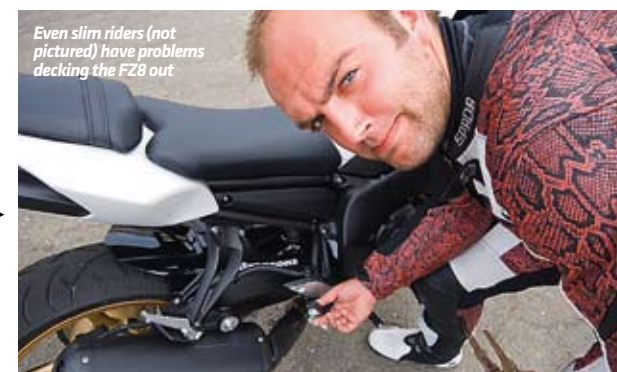


Surely I can't be the only one a little disappointed with the new 800, seeing as the lengthy marketing campaign had us all truly intrigued. It looks pretty good, much like the thou', but sporty it is not. The engine is grand; nearly as powerful as the 675, but feels more wholesome, as it should with an extra 125cc. And on the road it does a great job, and is the best here at the everyday and touring duties. But try and get heavy with it, and you hit a brick wall, so to speak. The ground clearance, or rather lack of it, is unfathomable. Tracks, corners or roundabouts, it just makes life such a drag.

BJ's verdict 6/10

The FZ8 is an exciting bike – for about a nano-second

POWER PLAY



YAMAHA FZ8 £7,799



ENGINE

The 779cc engine has the same gearbox as the 2008 R1 but runs a lighter clutch with two less friction plates and larger springs to give it a lighter action. The crank is the same design as the R1's but has been lightened to allow it to rev faster and with less resistance. The cylinders run the same 53.6mm stroke as the FZ1 but have a 9mm smaller bore

CHASSIS

The aluminium die-cast frame and swingarm are identical to the FZ1's while the 43mm USD fork is non-adjustable. The shock has adjustable spring preload and the brake calipers are monoblock four-piston units. The tank has been re-designed to allow the rider's knees to be closer together, effectively reducing the reach to the ground

Highlights

- ▷ R1-derived motor...
- ▷ ...but 'all-new'
- ▷ FZ1 chassis
- ▷ Simple
- ▷ 211kg (kerb weight)
- ▷ 93bhp

TRACK

Too low and too slow

FAST ROAD

Still too low but easy to come

HOOLIGAN

No chance, next question?

NEW RIDER

Perfect for ditching the 'L's

DESIRABILITY

Nice lines but lacks swagger

1

3

1

9

5

Kawasaki Z750

Prior to this test, we trawled the country in hope of finding a Z750 and didn't get lucky. The only press bike was busy, Kawasaki dealers had no demos available, and even HQ couldn't get hold of any more from the factory. Sales must be good then, and the lack of brand-new bikes heading into showrooms indicates a new bike for 2011, surely? Hopefully.

Enter Gae, a buddy of ad-man Charlie. She kindly lent us her minter after she passed her test a few months ago while her hubby has the Z Thou'. And that's a perfect example of how the Seven-Fiddy fits into society, sorting the steady and providing a stepping stone to the hardcore. Forget urban terrorist. It's more suburban fluffer. After the half-hooligan original model, development took a turn for the soft, with more weight and less power. The only upshot is how easy the Zed is to pilot.

An apparent front-bias and sporty poise get the adrenaline flowing, initially. But like the FZ8, looking down to being greeted with low-slung rubber pegs gives the game away. Track riding and balls-out scratching on the roads aren't on the Zed's agenda. It can handle small lean action and fast sweepers easily,



KAWASAKI Z750 **£5,999**



ENGINE

The old ZX-9R motor gets another makeover with a focus on midrange. Reworked cam profiles, smaller diameter intake and exhaust ports, and meatier crank webs all optimise low to mid-rev performance. The top end gets a new ignition pulse rotor. The new fuel injection unit has ultra fine injectors, but smaller bodies.

Highlights

- ▶ ZX-9R motor
- ▶ Aggressive looks
- ▶ Non-aggressive
- ▶ Shit suspension
- ▶ 203kg
- ▶ 90bhp

TRACK

Need to get the suzzie sorted

FAST ROAD

If there's no bumps and corners

HOOLOGAN

Possible antics but still a softy

NEW RIDER

The perfect plateau from learner

DESIRABILITY

Looks good but new'n coming

CHASSIS

A new engine subframe to beat vibrations allows the rigid, rubber engine mounts to be relocated. The engine is closer to the bike's centre of gravity. A 41mm USD fork offers limited adjustment, with the rear suspension unchanged. Brakes get minor updates, including triple petal discs to reduce unsprung weight.

steering with precision, if a little sluggish on initial turn-in. Feed it tighter sections and the lack of ground clearance and its sheer flubber-lubber intrudes to frustrate. She's a heifer.

Although the pegs limit fun time, even if you were to fit aftermarket rearsets, the suspension would need reworking and is the shabbiest in this company. We're not sure how it left the factory in this state.

Soft and pliable, the Zed feels tidy over small bumps and swells, tracking roads well – as long as you're not on the pipe and riding sensibly. But the damping is desperately uncontrolled in both compression and rebound throughout the whole stroke, and we're not just talking about thrashing the granny out of it. It bucks and protests at harsh input and works the OE Dunlop Qualifiers harder than most – a scary prospect.

The rest is in place for an easy life: it fuels well, the brakes are good and it's comfy, even if the tank splits the legs. A power plant derived from a ZX-9R doesn't sound too exciting, and in real-time it isn't. Although it'll keep pace with most here and brags a

healthy midrange dollop, the Zed's motor lacks involvement, especially with the new wave of charismatic twins and triples. It hits a brick wall before the limiter, and you have to keep the throttle inline with the engine revs for maximum benefit.

At no point does the Seven-Fiddy grab you and pull you into the ride. You're not going to lose out in a straight line against the rest until you get to some corners, but bragging king of terminal speed brings little redemption in this class. It mulled the rest of the Jap naked and won its place among this elite, but now it's a step too far for the Kwacker.

While the Europeans seem to get the mix right, the Japanese are lacking. It's all too obvious that Kawasaki can build bonkers sportsbikes, highly capable and ready to shred. But there's too much of void between the decent bikes in the range. Let's hope 2011 sees a return to the hardcore. ▶

Verdict

6/10

Price is on its side and it's easily the best of the Japs, but it desperately needs refresh to compete again

- ✦ MIDRANGE, BRAKES, PRICE, EASINESS
- ✦ SUSPENSION, SPORTING ABILITY, BLAND

DON'T BE FOOLED BY

Buying new. Find a bargain original because it'll still out-gun this one and you'll save thousands.

BENJAMIN'S OPINION



This particular Zed wins the noise contest, hands down. It sounds like a mini GP bike through the stubby SP Engineering carbon can. As standard it's often throaty, but here we have an example of how a relatively low-cost mod is able to transform a bike that usually lags behind its rivals. It also looks mean as hell in white. The rest of the bike is typical Z750 fare, and from a performance perspective, we can't wait for the new one we expect to see in 2011, especially if it apes its new big-bro's sporting credentials. If you can't wait, then at least the price is on your side.

BJ's verdict

6/10



FORGET URBAN TERRORIST, THE ZED IS MORE SUBURBAN FLUFFER



It's cheap and, to a point, cheerful. But there are bigger and better laughs to be had

BMW F 800 R

Stopped at a gas station, I watched in amazement at Saunders searching for the Beemer's fuel cap. After I while, I took pity and put him out of his misery, explaining that the F 800 R is a little backward, just like our big-nosed Trojan. Tank on its arse, asymmetric aesthetics, and the chain is on the wrong side. But that's as wrong as it gets, even for a Beemer.

The BMW surprised us this year. Maybe it's the love we've shown for the Bavarian's S 1000 RR that has us rethinking the F 800 R, a different mindset and banishing preconceptions of Captain Boring and his slippers. Or is it the new motorsports colours?

Jumping off the Beemer and onto the others feels like pulling out of Venus Williams

and dipping into a midget. Its physical presence houses anyone without intimidation, big and long, and ergonomically the comfiest. It also has the least amount of wind protection, should that shit matter when choosing a naked bike.

Thankfully, the über-long wheelbase doesn't hamper handling. BMW seems to have blended stability and steering without compromise, while shockingly maintaining some whoop-whoop factor. Being a Beemer, the F 800 is more stable than Red Rum with rigor mortis, the steering damper virtually redundant; you'll struggle to upset the chassis.

It's not as sharp in the twisters as the other Europeans, but makes up for it with predictability and assurance. The magic carpet road

DON'T BE FOOLED BY

The GS DNA – the R is much more fun with none of the Evan and Charlie links. Proper good value, too.



manners and exquisite balance mean that a Street Triple will never be too far away on the Queen's highways.

The R is surprisingly adept on the circuit. It's far from boring, but its serenity allows you to take the piss, brimming you with confidence. Slam on the anchors and let the grossly agricultural ABS do the work. We're sure BMW didn't rate trackdays highly in the design brief, but the gear position indicator sways that opinion, as does the amazing ground clearance. You'll definitely get a prize for rocking up to a trackday on the F 800 R, for sheer balls alone. Just be wary about the OE tyres; buying a BMW is like playing rubber roulette – the Sportec M3s are a league ahead of the Continentals on some that leave the showroom.

Even the soft set-up is hidden well by its balance and poise, with well damped springs. You just don't feel bumps on the F 800 R. The conventional set-up goes against the BMW grain, but it works better than any of its cantilever nonsense would.

The 800cc, although down a few cylinders, has a buzzy and snappy characteristic and feels faster than the science says. Yes, the parallel twin sounds like a moist fart and gets a bit



You buy a nice new bike and then someone goes and scribbles over it

vibey as the redline approaches, but it brings involvement and excitement, particularly against the bikes on the previous pages. It's one of very few that get better the longer you stretch the cable, rewarding you for nearing the limiter. It still has a wide spread of power which makes things easy on the road and a doddle in town.

Despite the Chris Pfeiffer signature and stunning colours, it takes an experienced stunting veteran to draw any hardcore action from the F. Well,

either that or a crane. It wheelies in first gear – just – at 5mph with a harsh right hand and a whopping dollop of clutch. Pfeiffer's a talented little fecker, but he can't do half of what he does without a whopping rear sprocket. And the ABS intrudes for everything else, rendering skids and even stoppies for Chrissy P only. This action is best reserved for machines with at least another cylinder. ►

Verdict **8/10**

'Fun' and 'BMW' can now be muttered together. Big, but highly capable at a whole range of tasks

✦ MOTOR, HANDLING, COMFORT, BALANCE
✦ MARMITE LOOKS, A LITTLE SOFT

THE PARALLEL TWIN SOUNDS LIKE A MOIST FART

BENJAMIN'S OPINION



After writing this, I'm going to immediately check as to whether this 'replica' is vastly different from the stock bike. Why? Well this was awesome on track. The stocker is bouncier and more user friendly, where I found this bike more capable, and up for a lot more fun. At least, that's how it seemed, and it loved hacking through Gloucestershire's A and B-roads with it's tail, and front wheel, firmly up. If I have to complain about anything, it's that it isn't the smoothest ride at a slow pace, through unwelcome vibrations and buzzes from the parallel motor.

BJ's verdict

7/10



Q. How many journals does it take to find a fuel cap?
A. More than this

BMW F 800 R **£7,615**



ENGINE

The 798cc parallel twin is similar to the F 800 S, using a high-tech cylinder head, close to that of the K 1200. It has 46mm throttle bodies, while the fuel tank is now under the seat. This helps balance and gives the air intake its preferred route and large volume airbox. The F 800 R also uses Kinematic engineering which helps throttle response.

CHASSIS

The aluminium torsionally stiff frame is similar to the original F 800, but with a new double-sided alloy cast swingarm. To optimise weight and balance, the engine is a load bearing element, bolted directly to the frame above the swingarm pivot. 43mm telescopic forks and a monoshock rear both have 125mm of travel. Steering damper is standard.

Highlights

- ▷ Bi-polar naked
- ▷ Steering damper
- ▷ Crash bars
- ▷ Chain drive
- ▷ 177kg
- ▷ 87bhp

TRACK

Pretty able, if a tad soft

FAST ROAD

Right up there

HOOLIGAN

First gear monos only

NEW RIDER

It's big but friendly

DESIRABILITY

You gotta love a Bee-Ern

Even with engine protection, the F 800 R is a trick looking machine with lots of lean

Ducati Monster 796

Talk about family planning. The Monster kids have been sprouting rabbits recently with the 696, 796, and 1100 all popping out in the last two years. Ducati wanted to bridge the gap between the baby 696 and the fully-fledged 1100 Monsters, but apart from a touch more go-go and a single-sided swinger, there ain't much between the '96s. Everyday riding won't uncover the performance gains.

The Monster is simultaneously a little bit camp and a little bit cool, a bit like Russell Brand. You're definitely not going to gain hedonistic points with your mates when you

pull up to Sunday footy match on one of these, but you might get laid when you rock up to Costa in the high street. It's definitely a niche bike, and one you'll probably want before you've even passed your test.

Despite looking like a Lurcher trying to shag a Jack Russell, BJ was shredding on the lil' Monster, on road and track. It oozes confidence, and has the reactions and accuracy of a water boatman in a hot bath, with unbelievably quick steering. It's definitely the most nimble here, gobbling tight sections up with complete ease and revelling in Pirelli's ripping Rosso rubber.

Good ground clearance helps track

antics, as does the fact that this is a Ducati that actually holds a line and is able to adjusted throughout the turn. Its short and stumpy stature obviously helps with the flickability and handling, but with the wide 'bars also make the riding position a little weird during badass cornering. The whole experience takes some getting used to.

We're certain Troy Bayliss wasn't heavily involved in the development of the 796, and that clipping apexes wasn't a priority at Bologna, but it's more than capable on track. Zipping to work and thrashing on the roads is what the 796 is all about, though.

Unlike the Japanese duo, these budget non-adjustable suzzies do little to worry the Monster. It can get a little nervous over bigger bumps and gnarly road sections, but that's the nature of the trellis construction frame. It's a taut set-up and handles its weight as well as the better-kitted Triumph, even if your arse



Unlike its rivals, deck this Monster out and you'll have something to shout about

DON'T BE FOOLED BY

Non-adjustable suspension. Very occasionally you'll find some that isn't that bad.



DUCATI MONSTER 796 £6,995



ENGINE

The Desmodue 803cc motor uses new, lighter crankcases to save over 1.2kg over the casings of the 696. The crank uses an 848-type flywheel, while the motor is stroked to achieve the new capacity (66 from 57.2mm). The upped compression ratio of 11:1 (from 10.7:1) takes advantage of the Siemens (not Marelli) electronics. The exhaust is a 2-1-2 using 1mm thick tubing. There's an APIC wet clutch.

CHASSIS

The torsionally stiff tubular trellis frame has been mildly tweaked to improve riding position. Seat height is down compared to the 1100 while the bars have risen. Seat shape has changed, too. Dry weight is listed at an impressive 167kg. 43mm Showa forks control the front with a Sachs shock set at the rear. Brembo radial calipers chew on 320mm discs. ABS is an option. Changeable fairing panels are called Logomania.

Highlights

- ▶ 803cc Desmo
- ▶ 'Middle' Monster
- ▶ Single-sided swinger
- ▶ Fatter rear hoop
- ▶ 161kg
- ▶ 73bhp

TRACK

Cobbles corners but still slow

FAST ROAD

Non-adjustables don't interfere

HOOLIGAN

Too camp to get truly hooley

NEW RIDER

Small, nimble, but snappy

DESIRABILITY

Sexy little Italian requires taste



IT HAS THE REACTIONS OF A WATER BOATMAN IN A HOT BATH



We're loving it, loving it, loving it, we're loving it like this

sometimes hovers in no man's land.

So can it tail a Street Triple? The one word answer is 'no'. But, it ain't far off. It's only when the 'Mac opens up and straight line grunt is paramount. You have to be more precise with the Ducati and work harder for your buck, as the 803cc motor (we know, it's confusing) is easily the weakest on test, yet feels more exciting in comparison to the better endowed Japanese. When you consider that KTM squeezes almost as much power from half the cylinders in their Duke, the Monster clearly could do better.

It's fairly gutless below 4,000rpm then hits hard with some decent midrange punch, but this only works in a narrow band, a la most Ducatis. It fades fast after 7,000rpm, meaning your left boot gets more of a working than on others.

The rest of the package is typically Ducati-refined. Throttle connection and fuelling is spotless and the clever Ducati clutch mechanism (it's a one-finger job) makes for smooth downshifts without the need for too much concentration – so you can focus on looking good. But the brakes

are a touch on the shabby side, despite the braided lines, and we'd expect more from Brembo radials.

Like its Euro compatriots, once you get past the niche looks, the 796 can adapt to most riders and surroundings. It'll stunt, despite guff brakes, and it loves a wheelie, keeping a nice balance between its masculine and feminine side.

Supposedly a transition bike, there's more on offer for the less experienced, but there's also not a lot that can offer the fun-factor of that this humble little Ducati 796 can. ▶

Verdict

8/10

A sassier, slightly sportier addition to the family. Still niche Latin-erotic but well worth considering.

- ✦ THRILLS, HANDLING, SHARP MOTOR, STEERING
- ✦ BRAKES, WEIRD POSITION, SLOW IN COMPANY

BENJAMIN'S OPINION



Wow! Sorry, I mean, WOW! The chassis on this weeny little Monster is superlative inducing, once you get used to the weird, over the front-wheel riding position. Initially, it always feels bloody uncomfortable and twitchy, but as soon as I acclimatised it's just as much a go-kart of a motorcycle, as the smaller 696. I'd even go so far as to say it's the equal of the Triumph, except that it's able to use the chassis to its extreme potential, because it makes a lot less power. In fact, the 1100 version still makes less than the Triumph. Go figure.

BJ's verdict 8/10

Triumph Street Triple R

Although the Street Triple collective is Triumph's best-seller, the predicted mass-vogue hasn't really ignited in the UK. It's obviously not the LC for the new millennium that we all expected, maybe because people are still cautious about buying British. It's understandable, but the Trumpet is still one of life's unhidden gems. Here's a Trip' you must take without the worry of a head-fuck.

Starting with a full-on supersport donor bike, it's not surprising the Triumph is the Usain Bolt in this crowd of Caster Semenyas, supremely athletic and able to be ridden without taking a gender

test. The spec sheet continues; Brembo radials, fully adjustable suspension, detuned 675 lump. Even the Magura 'bars look dapper compared to the parts-bin specials of others. It's the closest thing to a proper naked weapon here.

In many ways, the Street Triple's engine brings more to the game than the Daytona – certainly the first generation. Sure, it's missing the howling top-end of its racing sibling, but Triumph substituted this with a sublime shove throughout the rev range, joining the Beemer in a

broad spread of usable power. The shorter gearing artificially spices things. You can afford to be lazy with shifts and run the needle as low as idle in tall gears, although the soundtrack gets addictive the higher the revs are. The motor is a winner in every category – not only peak power, but stunting aptitude, thrashability, and versatility too.

Rather than smack-talking and claiming similar genes to GP technology, Triumph has the real deal with the Street's chassis. Take one Daytona, rip off her clothes and stick on some stumpy MX bars for leverage. While the others suffer from compromise, the Street revels in its

In unfamiliar territory, the FZ8 is about to relinquish its lead gained down the straight



BENJAMIN'S OPINION



It's no surprise the Street Triple R, and the stocker, have no problem selling. Check out used prices for three-year-old ST's. You pay four and a half grand, now, for a bike that was barely over five big gees, brand spankers. That's a ludicrously low level of depreciation, hardly ever seen in the industry, and peace of mind for when it's time to get rid, if you can look after it. And that's hard, because though it'll plod, why would you want to? Ride it like you stole it, and it'll deliver one of the most sublime experiences available on two wheels. You lucky, lucky bastard.

BJ's verdict 9/10



supersport genes, and would revel in a fast-group trackday.

This devastating formula means both unrivalled track ability and road pace. Although the head angle has been relaxed slightly for stability, the Trumpet owns the shortest wheelbase and nothing feels as planted or as good mid-corner. Handling, like the motor, inherits a more neutral feeling and loses the front-end frenzy that the Daytona boasts.

Also boasting the most chic suspension, it's no wonder the Street' feels so superior in most environments. There's no dive on the brakes, no squat on hard acceleration. The chassis promotes composure and the suzzies task all the bump management, thankfully taking pressure off the Euro-spec Dunlop Qualifiers which, aside from a shit turning circle, is all that we can grumble about. It really is a thing to behold.

Anyone who says the Street Trip' is too sporty is talking bollocks. It's like saying Bill Hicks was too funny. Don't be deterred by the fact you can take a screwdriver to the suspension and it's racing DNA. It does everything the others do, and a million times more. It beats to your very own metronome, whoever you are, wherever you are. Could it be the most versatile tool in existence? It's Satan's spawn and God's chief angel rolled into one, but in this company it feels like cheating.

As we've mentioned before, buying British isn't for all and there's still some who will desire Jap dependability. If you do, you're losing out. ►

Verdict 9/10

Unbelievable talent that's in a class of its own. It's not only best on test but one of the best anywhere.

➤ EVERYTHING.....
➤THEY'RE NOT FREE



The deaf and dumb school trip was going well. Until these retardards showed up

TRIUMPH STREET TRIPLE R £6,999



ENGINE

The celebrated Daytona 675 lump gets a new cam profile for more torque, usability, and a redline down to 12,650rpm. The Keihin fuel-injection system uses three 44mm throttle bodies, with multi-spray injectors. Sensors for throttle position, crank position, road speed, and coolant temp are all controlled by the ECU.

CHASSIS

The aluminium twin spar frame comes from the Daytona 675, and it's fabricated from both open-back and closed-back castings. A small increase in rake means stability is improved. Nissin two-pot sliding calipers, pads from the 675, and braided lines make for class-leading anchors and Euro Dunlop Qualifiers are good.

Highlights

- ▷ Daytona donor
- ▷ Road and track blend
- ▷ Fully-adj suzzies
- ▷ Learn-to-wheelie
- ▷ 167kg
- ▷ 96bhp

TRACK

It'll tail any 600 at Mallory

FAST ROAD

Amazing set-up and poise

HOOLIGAN

More than suffice. Wheelie king

NEW RIDER






Tame enough for all

DESIRABILITY

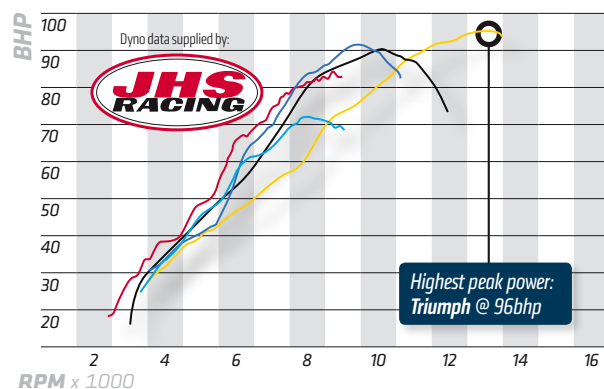
Made in Hinkley, by Hinkley-ites

Like in the wild, this snake suffocates its prey (a burger) before slowly digesting it

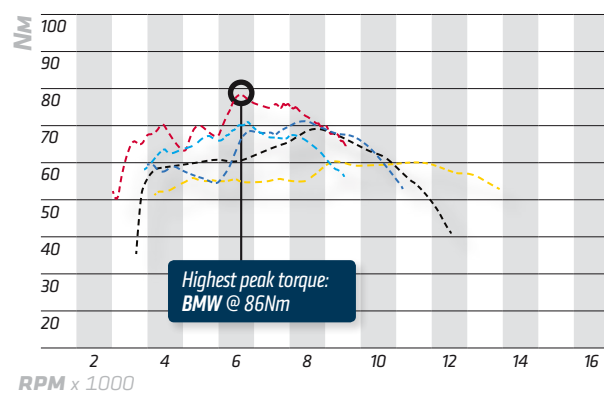
TECH DATA

					
ENGINE	Yamaha FZ8	Kawasaki Z750	BMW F 800 R	Ducati Monster 796	Triumph Street Triple R
Type	779cc, 16v, liquid-cooled inline-4	748cc, liquid-cooled, 16v, inline four	798cc, liquid-cooled, parallel twin	803cc, 4v, air-cooled Desmo V-twin	675cc, liquid-cooled, 12v, DOHC inline triple
Bore x Stroke	68.0 x 53.6mm	68.4 x 50.9mm	82 x 75.6mm	88.0 x 66mm	74 x 52.3mm
Compression	12:1	11.3:1	12.1:1	11:1	12.65:1
Fuelling	Electronic fuel injection	Electronic fuel injection	Electronic fuel injection	Electronic fuel injection	Electronic fuel injection
Tested Power	93bhp @ 10,000rpm	90bhp @ 10,000rpm	87bhp @ 8,000rpm	73bhp @ 12,000rpm	96bhp @ 12,000rpm
Tested Torque	72Nm @ 8,000rpm	71Nm @ 8,300rpm	86Nm @ 6,000rpm	71Nm @ 8,600rpm	62Nm @ 8,200rpm
CHASSIS					
Frame	Aluminium die-cast	Steel tubular backbone	Aluminium twin-spar	Tubular steel trellis	Aluminium beam twin spar
Suspension	USD 43mm forks, non-adjustable	41mm usd fork, pre / rebound adjustable	43mm fork, non-adj	USD Showa 43mm forks, non-adjustable	41mm usd fork, fully adjustable
R Suspension	Monoshock, adj preload	Monoshock, pre / rebound adjustable	Monoshock, pre / rebound adjustable	Sachs monoshock, adj preload and rebound	Monoshock, fully adjustable
Front Brakes	Four-piston calipers, 310mm	Two-piston calipers, 300mm discs	Four-piston fixed caliper, 320mm discs	Four-piston calipers, 320mm	Four-piston calipers, 308mm discs
Rear Brakes	One-piston caliper, 267mm	One-piston caliper, 250mm disc	One-piston caliper, 245mm disc	Two-piston caliper, 245mm	One-piston caliper, 220mm disc
DIMENSIONS					
Wheelbase	1,460mm	1,440mm	1,520mm	1,450mm	1,395mm
Seat Height	815mm	815mm	800mm	800mm	800mm
Dry Weight	211kg	203kg	177kg	167kg	167kg
Fuel Capacity	17L	18.5L	16L	15L	17.4L
PRICE					
Price	£7,799 (otr)	£5,999 (otr)	£7,615 (otr)	£6,995 (otr)	£6,999 (otr)
From	Bransons Motorcycles 01935 474998 Bransonsmotorcycles.co.uk	Kawasaki UK 01628 856750 Kawasaki.co.uk	BMW UK 0800 777 155 BMW-motorrad.co.uk	Ducati UK 08451 222996 Ducatiuk.com	Fowlers 0117 9770466 Fowlers.co.uk

POWER



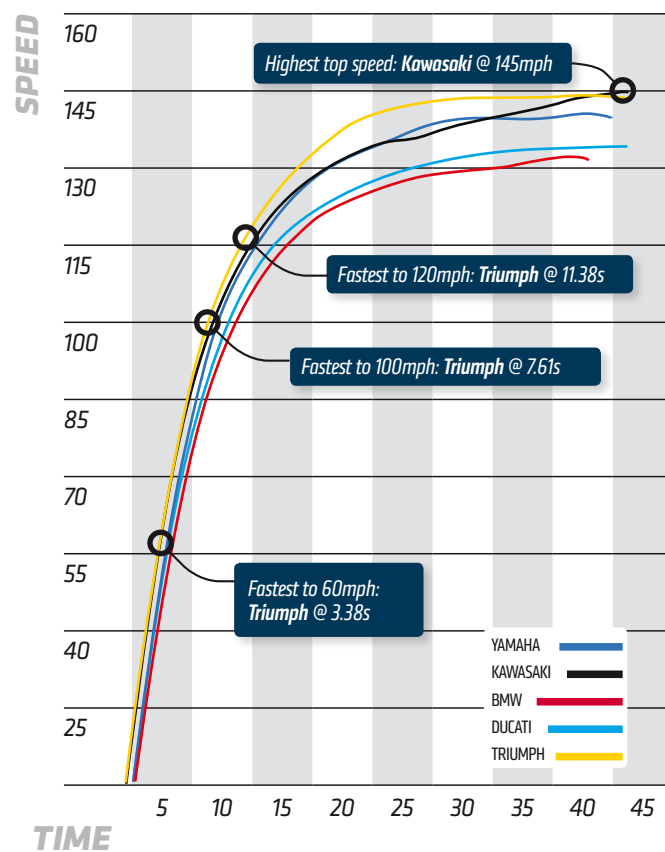
TORQUE



	Yamaha FZ8	Kawasaki Z750	BMW F 800 R	Ducati Monster 796	Triumph Street Triple R
0-60	3.64s	3.50s	3.94s	3.74s	3.38s
0-100	8.10s	7.88s	9.33s	9.10s	7.61
0-120	13.14s	13.06s	15.99s	15.66s	11.38s
Stg 1/4 Mile	11.93s @ 115.87mph	11.68s @ 116.80mph	12.55s @ 110.93mph	12.26s @ 112.55mph	10.56s @ 120.67mph
Standing Mile	32.33s @ 139.29mph	31.74s @ 140.11mph	34.01s @ 129.34mph	33.66s @ 132.43mph	28.78s @ 143.16mph
Top Speed	141mph	145mph	133mph	135mph	144mph

SPEED DATA

SPEED TEST NOTES



26°C



YAMAHA FZ8

Ah, a straight line. This is where the FZ8 shines, using the old R1 engine to great effect. Fast, but it bloody well should be given its capacity and cylinders

KAWASAKI Z750

Loves a decent thrashing, and has the right stance to do it, too. Great top speeds and sharp off the line the Zed never fails to disappoint.

BMW F 800 R

You think the Beemer isn't going to be that quick, then it goes and bursts your bubble. Handy, up to a point, but the parallel motor will get breathy up top.

DUCATI MONSTER 796

The clutch can be a bit grabby and the front wheel can hover a bit high, but respectable performance from the air-cooled lump.

TRIUMPH STREET TRIP R

144mph on a naked 600? Yup, that's what the computer says. Hot poop everywhere else, too. But the temptation to wheelie is always there.



THE VERDICT

It's not just the core categories that continue to flourish and develop, and we have to thank the lesser classes in many ways. Without the BMW GS legacy, there'd be no S 1000 RR. Even the 'budget' bikes are increasing the bang-for-your-buck, and the introduction of fresh faces has upped the standard once again.

Yes, this is a group test, but we have several clear sub-divisions and one solitary winner. With a victor so victorious, it's hard to be objective and restrain from slugging the others. Oh well.

The 'all-new' FZ8 could well be the bike for you. It ain't for us. Aside from a huge phobia of lean and a lack of sporting ability, there's one major problem with the FZ8 - and that's the price. Even some dealers are panicking about their sales pitch. In a class bereft of any technological wizardry, and even any hint of adjustable suspension until you reach Hinckley, looks and no-frills performance are essential. Costing £1,700 more than its civil rival, the Z750, the FZ8 looks nice but is drastically overpriced by at least a grand. Why go 800 when you could go 1000? The FZ1 is far more appealing in our opinion.

The Zed won't outpace the Yammy and suffers from the same

staid Japanese conservativeness. If you walk into a multi-franchise dealership, test ride them both to find similar overall performance and you're going to sway towards the Zed which tings the till at nearly £2k less, aren't you? If you're insisting on Japanese, save the money and rework the suspension.

Then we have the two-pot section. If you like your birds big, ugly and well up for it, you may like the BMW F 800 R. The Beemer out-performs the Japanese in every area and the only reason for dipping out of the Bavarian would be the looks, right?

But it's all about looking good and going fast, and this is the reason the new Monster 796 gets the nod over ►



Life's on the up and up – especially if you're planning on buying one of these



► the BMW. Sure, the 796 gets left in a straight line but the German can't match the Italian's fun factor and giggles-per-pound.

To the final segment, and the championship title, once again, belongs to the Triumph Street Triple R. Few machines can offer such versatility; weekday commuter five days a week, then it morphs into a weekend track assassin. Watch out for my forthcoming entry in the ParkinGO Cup at Silverstone WSB for proof of its track prowess.

The Trumpet leads the Euro invasion that's crushed a once Jap-dominated class, and has

“IT'S HARD TO SEE THE HINKLEY HOONER GETTING BEATEN”

brought along not only raw pace and performance, but also modernism. It's hard to see the Hinkley Hooner getting beaten soon and we're not sure what it's going to take to do so.

So, you're edging 60, your back's giving plenty of jip but you still feel 20? Buy a Street Triple R. On the other end of the spectrum, you're 20, young, dumb and full of cum, and looking for cheap thrills? Buy a Street Triple R. For everyone else? Buy a Street Triple R. There isn't a motorcycle on this planet that can achieve so much for so many for so little. Churchill would have been proud. Oh yes. ☐

Thanks to:

GAE FOR HER ZED, FOWLERS FOR THE TRUMPET, AND OUR BUDDIES AT BRANSON'S MOTORCYCLES FOR THE FZ8 – JUST BE WARNED, JANE IN THE YAMAHA DEPARTMENT IS LIKE AUNTIE WAINWRIGHT FROM LAST OF THE SUMMER WINE; IF YOU ENTER THE SHOP, YOU WILL BUY SOMETHING.

