

**A FINAL LOOK BACK**  
LAST ISSUE EVER! 1993-2017

# SPORT RIDER

MAGAZINE

OCT./NOV. 2017

SPORTRIDER.COM



**COMPARISON**

**NAKED superbikes!**

APRILIA TUONO V4 1100 RR vs.  
KTM 1290 SUPER DUKE R

**RIDING TIPS**

**USING YOUR LEGS**





# THE GSX-R EFFECT

THE RARE PHENOMENON THAT  
OCCURS WHEN A NEW MOTORCYCLE  
IS INTRODUCED THAT COMPLETELY  
CHANGES THE OVERALL DIRECTION  
OF THAT MOTORCYCLE CATEGORY.

## THE EVOLUTION OF A LEGEND

PART 3  
OF A SERIES

**What is a GSX-R?** What does it take for a motorcycle to carry the GSX-R badge? For over 30 years, those four letters have owned the sportbike category. Suzuki engineers have continued this tradition of performance by creating the fastest and most technologically advanced GSX-R ever built.

The new 2017 Suzuki GSX-R1000 features an all-new, inline four-cylinder, power plant overflowing with innovative Suzuki-developed engine technologies that deliver unbelievable performance in any situation.

Combine this all-new GSX-R engine with a new ultra-compact chassis, premium suspension components, and an extensive menu of advanced electronic features and you've got the perfect Suzuki sportbike for the street or the track.

**The new GSX-R1000 is here; ready to change the world all over again.**





**GSX-R 1000**

Experience all three new GSX-R1000 models at [SuzukiCycles.com](http://SuzukiCycles.com)

 **SUZUKI**





PROGRESSIVE.COM

**PROGRESSIVE**

1-800-PROGRESSIVE

Progressive Casualty Ins. Co. & affiliates. \$75 per year premium excludes state fees and taxes, and is not available in AK, GA, HI, MA, & SC.





## DEPARTMENTS

- |    |           |    |                      |    |              |
|----|-----------|----|----------------------|----|--------------|
| 6  | HOT SHOT  | 58 | BITCHIN' FRESH KIT   | 66 | PARTING SHOT |
| 8  | WHEELSPIN | 60 | RIDING SKILLS SERIES |    |              |
| 12 | MAILBOX   | 62 | SR TESTED            |    |              |

in this issue

Oct./Nov. 2017

## NOTEWORTHY

### 16 First Ride: Dual Personalities

BMW creates yet more spinoffs from its R nineT platform with the Racer and Pure models

### 18 Ride Review: 2017 Zero SR

Commuting through the LA jungle on electric motorcycle manufacturer Zero's hot-rod SR model

### 20 First Ride: 2018 Suzuki GSX-S750

Suzuki infuses some needed major updates to the 2018 version of its GSX-S750

### 22 Nuviz HUD Helmet Device

A function-packed head-up display that you can mount to any full-face helmet

## FEATURES

### 24 Cover Story

#### Love, At Last

The Tuono RR and Super Duke are both incredible machines, but only one can have our undivided attention

30 TestRuber: Pirelli Diablo SuperCorsa SC

### 34 A Final Look Back

The best stories and issues from 24 years of *Sport Rider* magazine

### 46 A Religion Called Ducati

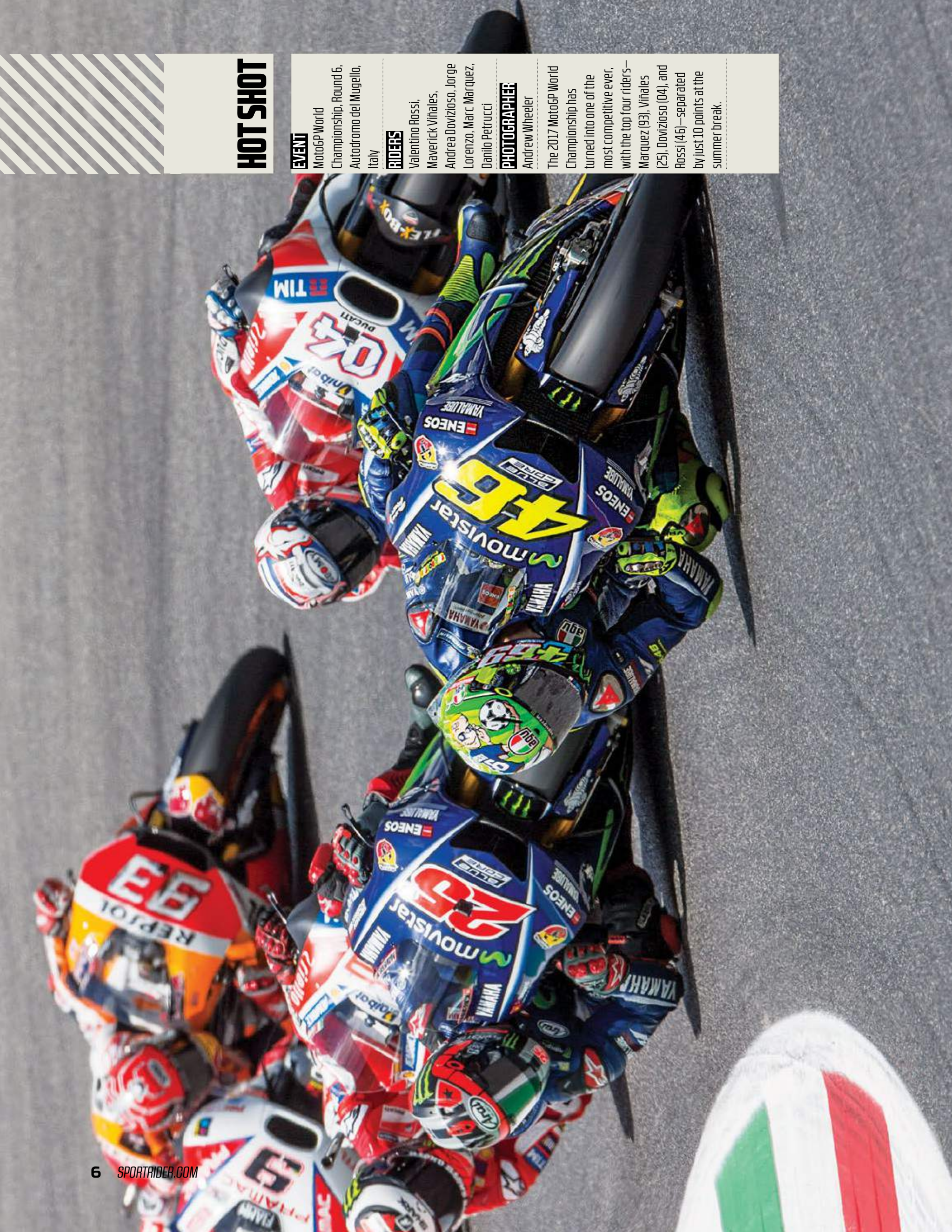
There are many companies where employees take pride in the brand they work for—but the enthusiasm displayed by the people who work at Ducati is on another level

### 52 Racing's Last Open Frontier

The Suzuka 8 Hours is more like an eight-hour sprint than an endurance race, and there are no spec tire or ECU rules—may the best team win







# HOT SHOT

## EVENT

MotoGP World  
Championship, Round 6,  
Autodromo del Mugello,  
Italy

## RIDERS

Valentino Rossi,  
Maverick Viñales,  
Andrea Dovizioso, Jorge  
Lorenzo, Marc Marquez,  
Daniilo Petrucci

## PHOTOGRAPHER

Andrew Wheeler

The 2017 MotoGP World  
Championship has  
turned into one of the  
most competitive ever,  
with the top four riders—  
Marquez (93), Viñales  
(25), Dovizioso (04), and  
Rossi (46)—separated  
by just 10 points at the  
summer break.





# SR880

## SMALL BUT *NOT* BORING

The SR880's radial design and Aramid carcass is specifically designed for next evolution, entry-level sportbikes such as the Ninja 250/300, CBR250/300, R3, and RC390. More traction, better handling and longevity that's an exceptional value.

IN ASSOCIATION WITH  
**WPS**  
DISTRIBUTED BY  
**HardDrive**  
AMERICAN V-TWIN PRODUCTS

**Shinko**  
*Motorsports*  
**Tires**

[ShinkotireUSA.com](http://ShinkotireUSA.com)





BY KENT KUNITSUGU

## WHEEL SPIN



# IT'S BEEN A GREAT RIDE

*Sport Rider* magazine comes to a close after 24 fantastic years

PHOTOGRAPHY BY KEVIN WING

» As I write this final *Wheel Spin* column, I'm feeling a mixture of gratitude and optimism, with an obvious tinge of sadness. Exactly 23 years ago, after some coaxing by the previous staff of *Sport Rider* (Nick Ienatsch, Lance Holst, and Jason Black), I quit a lucrative job at the municipal power utility to join the staff of *Motorcyclist* magazine. It was a choice between making a lot of money doing something that was, well, okay, or making less money doing something I was passionate about. I remember my mom telling me at the time, "If you're working at something you really love to do, don't worry—you've hit the jackpot already." As usual, she was spot on.

Thankfully, then-*Motorcyclist* Editor Mitch Boehm saw some potential in me, and it was the beginning of an incredibly rewarding and awe-inspiring journey. After three years as Road Test Editor at *Motorcyclist*, I was given the opportunity to take over the reins at *Sport Rider*, and I grabbed it with both hands. I've had the chance to experience things in the motorcycling world that I never even dreamed about, and I've met some amazing and talented people along the way. From

racing the Isle of Man TT, to spending two weeks touring in the Alps, to riding Grand Prix-level race-tracks all around the world, to riding all manner of national- and world championship-caliber race-bikes, and more. Make no mistake—I've lived this dream with maximum appreciation for how blessed I've been to be in this position, and I hope I've been able to put you readers in my boots during all these incredible experiences.

But the most rewarding part of this journey is knowing we've helped some of our readers along the way, whether by assisting them in making the right choice of motorcycle or aftermarket product, providing a balanced viewpoint on a particular subject, breaking down a technical aspect into something the average layman can understand, or getting them to think more about their riding and improving their riding skills. Our responsibility to provide you with the most unbiased and thorough information was something I took very seriously, and it made writing stories and putting a magazine issue together a bit more laborious than usual because I wanted to make absolutely sure there were no mistakes or misleading statements. But

all that stress and work was more than worth it when someone would write in or walk up to me and say that they'd based a purchase decision on our information and were elated with the results. That type of satisfaction with your job can't be beat, and I'm proud of the magazine that covered the sportbike world like no other.

I've had the opportunity to work with and learn from some really great and sharp people in this industry but most especially the staff that has been directly involved with *Sport Rider*. From the editorial to the production staff, to the ad sales and digital management teams, there's always something you can learn from someone, and I tried to soak up as much tips, tricks, and info as I could. This industry is certainly close-knit like no other, and it's one that I've been a part of for the better half of my life.

Even though all good rides come to an end, there's always the next one waiting in the wings. Where that one is for me, I'm not sure yet. But I've certainly enjoyed my ride with all of you here. Perhaps we'll meet somewhere at a riding spot in the future. Until then, keep the rubber side down, and continue to enjoy your ride! **SR**





**SDI®**

**Enjoying Sport Rider & Supporting  
our Friend Kent Kunitsugu Since 1999**



www.motonation.com



# MAKE THE FAST LAST.



**GET MORE OF WHAT GETS  
YOUR MOTOR GOING** with a  
K&N® High-Flow Air Filter,™ designed  
to increase horsepower with more  
airflow. And enhance your upgrade  
with a K&N Wrench-Off® oil filter  
with high-flow synthetic media,  
ideal for synthetic oils. Find your  
filters and order online today.

**KNFILTERS.COM | 800-858-3333**



**SUPERIOR AIRFLOW.  
SUPERIOR PERFORMANCE.®**

# Sport Rider

Editor in Chief **Kent Kunitsugu**

Senior Vice President, Managing Director **Andrew Leisner**

Executive Director, Sales/Marketing **Tim Collins**

Content Strategy Director **Kurt Hoy**

Digital Director **Brian Schrader**

## EDITORIAL

Associate Editor **Michael Gilbert**

Assistant Editor **Will Steenrod**

## ART DIRECTION AND DESIGN

Senior Designer **Ralph Hermens**

## CONTENT SERVICES

Director **Matthew Miles**

Managing Editors **Terry Masaoka, Irene Gonzalez**

Copy Editor **Jessica Matteson**

Web Producers **Alan Takushi, Serena Bleeker**

## PHOTO AND VIDEO SERVICES

Photographers **Jeff Allen, Julia LaPalme**

Video Producer **Spenser Robert**

Associate Video Producers **Stephen Potter, Bert Beltran**

## CONTRIBUTORS

Gold & Goose, Brian J. Nelson, Kevin Nixon, Manuel Pecino,

Andrew Wheeler, Kevin Wing

## EDITORIAL OFFICES

15215 Alton Parkway, Suite 100, Irvine, CA 92618;

(760) 707-0100; srmall@bonniercorp.com

## ADVERTISING

Business Development Director **Katelynn Kovaleff**  
(760) 707-0087

Business Development Director **Ross Cunningham**  
(212) 779-5042

Digital Business Development Director **Sadie Huemmer**  
(760) 707-1067

Business Development Manager **John Simanovich**  
(760) 707-1054

Digital Business Development Manager **Mary Hannah**  
**Hardcastle**  
(760) 707-1086

Business Development Specialist **Jason Gearld**  
(760) 707-1070

Detroit Advertising Director **Jeff Roberge (248) 213-6154**

Sales & Marketing Operations Manager **John W. Scafetta**

Integrated Program Coordinator **Joy McGivern**

Sales Operations Coordinator **Kaitlyn Thompson**

Digital Campaign Manager **Ray Gonzalez**

Digital Campaign Manager **Michael Smart**

IT/Office Manager **Camilo B. Viray Jr.**

Director, Human Resources **Kim Putman**

Business Manager **Connie Lau**

## MARKETING

Senior Marketing Manager **Ashley Roberts**

Integrated Marketing Manager **Nichole Starkey**

Consumer Engagement Director **Corey Eastman**

Events Operations Manager **Tonia Troncone**

## PRODUCTION

Production Director **Rina V. Murray**

Print Production Manager **Julie C. Greene**

## SUBSCRIBER SERVICES

For Customer Service and Subscription questions, such as  
Renewals, Address Changes, Email Preferences, Billing, and  
Account Status, go to sportrider.com/cs. You can also email  
SRcustserv@cdsfulfillment.com, in the US call toll-free  
(800) 800-5667, outside the US call (515) 237-3697, or write to  
Sport Rider, PO Box 6364, Harlan, IA 51593.

Reprints **Email reprints@bonniercorp.com**

Retail Single Copy Sales **Procirc Retail Solutions Group,**  
**Tony Dibisceglie**

Related Publications: *Cycle World, Dirt Rider, Motorcyclist,*  
*Hot Bike, Baggers*, and other specialty magazines.

**PRINTED IN THE U.S.A.**

# BONNIER

Chairman **Tomas Franzén**

Head of Business Area, Magazines **Lars Dahmén**

Chief Executive Officer **Eric Zinzchenko**

Chief Financial Officer **Joachim Jaginder**

Chief Operating Officer **David Ritchie**

Chief Marketing Officer **Elizabeth Burnham Murphy**

Chief Digital Revenue Officer **Sean Holzman**

Vice President, Integrated Sales **John Graney**

Vice President, Digital Operations **David Butler**

Vice President, Public Relations **Perri Dorset**

General Counsel **Jeremy Thompson**



This product is  
from sustainably  
managed forests  
and controlled  
sources.



*SPORT RIDER* (ISSN 1065-7649, USPS Permit #11-651) October/November 2017; VOL. 25, NO. 6. Published 6 times per year in December/January, February/  
March, April/May, June/July, August/September, October/November by Bonnier Corporation, 2 Park Avenue, New York, NY 10016. Periodicals postage paid at  
New York, NY, and at additional mailing offices. Copyright © 2017 by Bonnier Corporation. All rights reserved. Reprinting in whole or part is forbidden except  
by permission of Bonnier Corp. **MAILING LIST:** Occasionally, we make portions of our subscriber list available to carefully screened companies that offer  
products and services we think might be of interest to you. If you do not want to receive these offers, please advise us at (515) 237-3697. **POSTMASTER:**  
Send all address changes and all UAA to CFS, Non-Postal And Military Facilities to: Sport Rider, PO Box 6364, Harlan, IA 51593. **SUBSCRIPTION RATES:** US and  
US Possessions \$19.95 for 1 year (6 issues). Canadian orders \$29.95 and international orders \$39.95. International order must be paid in advance and in US  
funds only. Canada Post: Publication agreement #40612608. Canada Return Mail: IMEX Global Solutions, P.O. Box 25542, London, ON N6C 6B2.



# NOTHING STOPS **FASTER**

**LATEST**  
VMD CLASSIC ROTORS

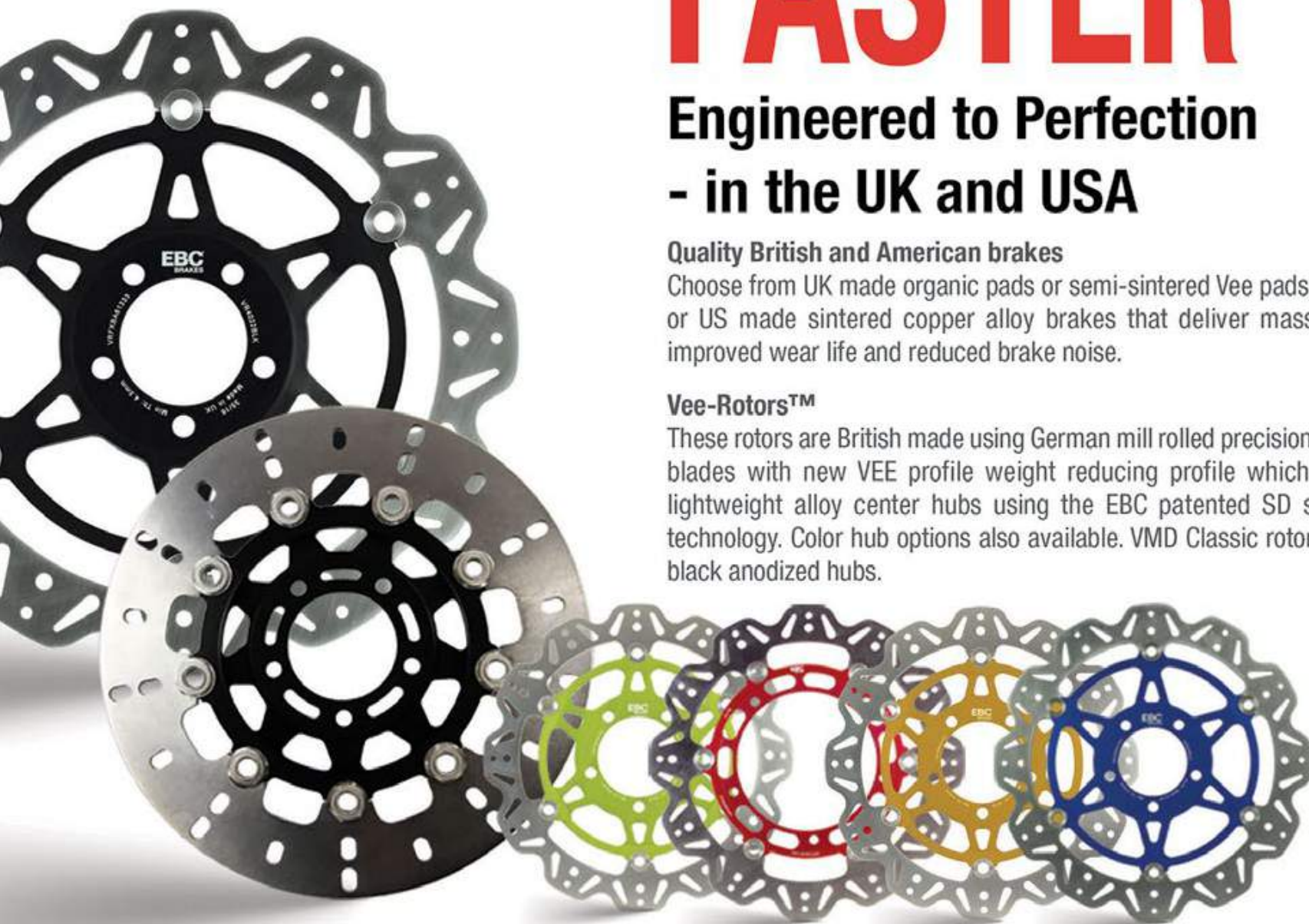
## Engineered to Perfection - in the UK and USA

### Quality British and American brakes

Choose from UK made organic pads or semi-sintered Vee pads for feel and control, or US made sintered copper alloy brakes that deliver massive braking power, improved wear life and reduced brake noise.

### Vee-Rotors™

These rotors are British made using German mill rolled precision stainless steel rotor blades with new VEE profile weight reducing profile which are mounted onto lightweight alloy center hubs using the EBC patented SD square drive button technology. Color hub options also available. VMD Classic rotors are available with black anodized hubs.



### American Made

EBC sintered pads – powerful braking with stainless steel radiator plates to reduce heat and noise.



### Semi-Sintered V-Pads™

Long lasting semi-sintered Vee pads for heavier bikes and classics, for sintered life and organic pad type feel.



### EBC Square Drive™

The patented EBC Square-Drive™ button/rivet system ensures rotor blades can expand, cool and stay perfectly flat and straight during heavy braking - probably the only true floating rotor system on the market today, giving you powerful, smooth brakes without vibration.



## MAIL BOX READERS FIRE BACK

*Sport Rider* welcomes your comments, criticisms, adulations, and cash. Keep in mind that all materials sent to the editors will become the property of *Sport Rider* and cannot be returned. We reserve the right to cut your sentences into tiny little bits.

### LETTER OF THE MONTH

#### MIRRORS DURING TRACK TESTING

For us noobs and plebes, we have to take mirrors off or tape them up to remove the looking back factor. Outside of the fact that you guys know what you're doing at speed, why is it that you always test bikes at the track with the mirrors still on the bike?

On a side note, I think I found Waldo! In last issue's "Twisted Speed" test with the BMW S1000RR and Aprilia RSV4 RR: When did the Beemer get matching-style headlights?

**Mike Von Recklinghausen**  
Waitsfield, VT

*When we conduct our testing, we'd rather keep them as close to stock as possible unless otherwise noted. We realize that most trackday organizations require riders to remove mirrors whenever possible rather than taping them up, but with some bikes (i.e., the ones with turn signals integrated into the mirrors) it's a lot more work than just unbolting the mirror stalks, so some trackday people let you simply tape them.*

*As far as the BMW S1000RR suddenly sporting symmetrical headlights, you're probably referring to the opening photo in the story where the bike appears to have matching headlights (versus the asymmetrical setup it has had since the beginning). The way the photo was taken with the lighting that day, it only appears that the S1000RR has matching headlights because the outer lens of the right-side headlight isn't visible in the shot. If you look at all the other shots, you'll notice the headlights are still the trademark asymmetrical (non-matching) design.*

*For his sharp eye, Mr. Von Recklinghausen has earned himself a pair of new Sidi Arcadia Tex boots from the great people at Motonation. Constructed from a combination of double-stitched leather, suede, and Cordura panels, the Arcadia Tex boots have that rugged "work boot" look along with motorcycle-capable features. Fully internally padded for max comfort, the Arcadia Tex boots have reinforced internal heel and toe areas, internal ankle protection caps, an anti-vibration inner sole, a nonslip*



*rubber lug outer sole, double-stitched leather shift pad, and a removable arch support pad. The boot also has two different ways to put it on: The rider can choose between the lace-up closure with steel Sidi eyelets or the zip closure with Velcro flap at the top. Available in black or brown, in sizes 7-11.5 US/40-46 Euro, for \$179. For more information, log on to [motonation.com](http://motonation.com). —Ed.*



#### TRIUMPH STREET TRIPLE RS

I have been riding my 2012 Ninja 650 for five years now. I am ready to take a jump up in performance and horsepower. My initial leanings were toward a 600cc sportbike, but your article on the new Triumph Street Triple RS has me thinking. I really like the sportbike specs with the more standard ergos.

I was looking at weight differences when I noticed the article states 366 pounds dry weight and in the specs 366 pounds wet. I am assuming a typo of sorts.

I foresee a test ride on the new Triumph in my near future.

**Joe Gaydos**  
Monument, CO

*Yep, you are right, Joe, it was typo that got past us. The correct wet weight specification for the 2017 Triumph Street Triple RS is 419 pounds with a full tank of fuel and all other fluids installed, ready to rock. —Ed.*





*all the joy*  
in the world  
can be found  
on two wheels



**GEICO** *Motorcycle*

**geico.com | 1-800-442-9253 | local office**

Some discounts, coverages, payment plans and features are not available in all states or all GEICO companies. Motorcycle and ATV coverages are underwritten by GEICO Indemnity Company. GEICO is a registered service mark of Government Employees Insurance Company, Washington, D.C. 20076; a Berkshire Hathaway Inc. subsidiary. © 2017 GEICO



# THE NEXT EVOLUTION EXO-R420

THE WORLD'S LEADING FULL-FACE DOT/SNELL  
HELMET UNDER \$150 JUST GOT BETTER!



**SOLIDS**   
MSRP \$149.<sup>95</sup>



**TRACKER**   
MSRP \$159.<sup>95</sup>



**SHAKE**   
MSRP \$159.<sup>95</sup>



**SUGARSKULL**   
MSRP \$159.<sup>95</sup>



**TECHNO**   
MSRP \$159.<sup>95</sup>

The all new EXO-R420 helmet continues to set a new standard for ScorpionEXO's full-face street helmets at a very competitive price point. An all new performance advanced LG® polycarbonate shell is more aerodynamic and smaller resulting in an ultra-lightweight SNELL-approved helmet. The aero-tuned ventilation system uses a large top vent and mouth vent engineered to allow more airflow to the riders head while maintaining low noise levels. The EXO-R420 features our new Elliptec™ II faceshield ratchet system and EverClear® No-Fog coating. It 's also equipped with our KwikWick® II comfort liner which is moisture wicking, anti-microbial, quick drying and can be easily removed to be washed.

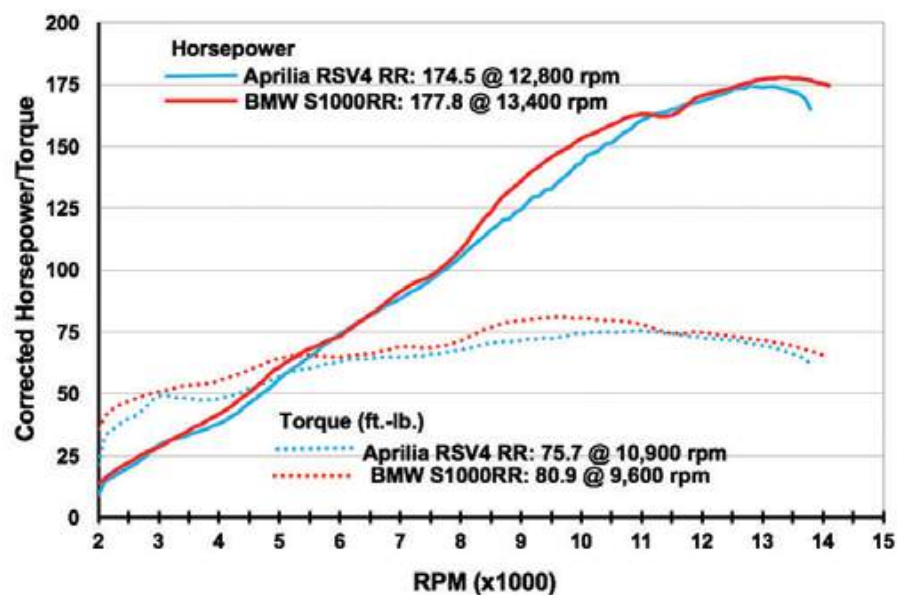
Clear faceshield included. Dark smoke and other faceshield options are sold separately.

 **SCORPION**  
SCORPIONUSA.COM **EXO**®

Additional colors and styles are available. [SCORPIONUSA.COM](http://SCORPIONUSA.COM)

Dealer Inquiries contact us at 888-672-6774

     
@ScorpionExo #ScorpionExo



## DYNO CHART MIX-UP

I'm enjoying the Aug./Sept. issue but have a query about the power charts on page 48 (Aprilia RSV4 RR vs. BMW S1000RR). You're claiming the BMW makes 2 hp more than the Aprilia, but it sure looks like the Aprilia makes more torque at the stated rpm. What am I missing?

Frank John

Brooklin, ME

Unfortunately there was a mix-up in the numbers given to the art director when he plotted out the dyno graph for the Aprilia and BMW comparison. Here is the correct dyno graph showing the proper torque curves for each bike. —Ed.

## SLICK VS. TREADED TIRES

I am a longtime reader of *Sport Rider*, *Cycle World*, and *Motorcyclist* magazines. A question has bugged me for a long time: Has anyone ever done a comparison of slicks against treaded sportbike tires? I do realize all super-bike races (in dry conditions) are done on slick tires. I am aware that the more surface area in the contact patch is the accepted norm. I still can't help wondering if a radial tire with treaded area in the contact patch might be



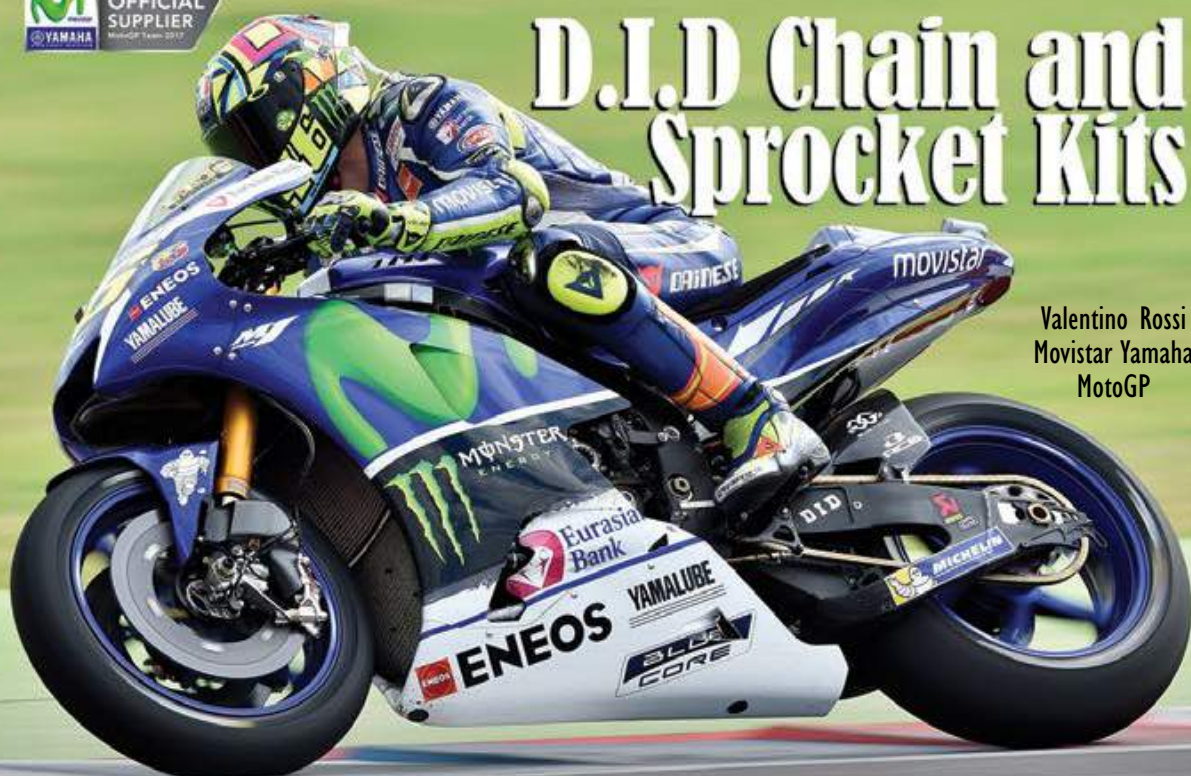


aided by the small treaded cuts acting like small fingers gripping the asphalt. I know this sounds like a complete novice, however I have never seen data—as in a deliberate comparison—to see if a treaded tire might be as effective as a slick or better. Also, I am wondering if the treaded area might cause the tire to overheat, but with the advance in material composition could such a tire be designed to be as good or better?

**Rex Gunter**  
Santa Clarita, CA

You probably weren't reading SR back then, but way back in the December 2006 issue, we ran a tire test comparison story titled "Jeopardy." In that tire test, we compared tires from five categories: slicks, DOT race, high-performance sport (trackday), sport (street), and sport-touring tires. In order to show a more relative comparison, we obtained those five types of tires from two manufacturers, Dunlop and Michelin.

As far as the results, the slicks obviously turned the quickest lap times and were the most confidence inspiring; but the DOT race treaded tires were only about half a second behind at Buttonwillow Raceway's 1.7-mile West Loop, and their overall performance wasn't that far behind the full racing slicks. Yes, the more actual surface area of rubber in contact with the pavement helps a great deal, but there's a lot more to it than that. The microscopic makeup of the tire, the carcass design, profile, etc., all play a role in how well a tire actually grips. Tread sipes decrease overall grip in dry conditions on asphalt. And tread sipes actually do cause more heat to be generated from tread flex. —Ed. **SR**



Valentino Rossi  
Movistar Yamaha  
MotoGP

# D.I.D Chain and Sprocket Kits



## Simple Choice - Quality Solution

- Gold or unplated ZVM-X or VX Chains
- Premium Quality steel rear sprockets
- Chromemoly countershaft sprockets
- Kits replace your stock OE gearing
- Available for Honda, Kawasaki, Suzuki, Triumph & Yamaha Sport Bikes

Hard acceleration creates chain flex that causes power loss. VX & ZVM-X chains have increased rigidity to minimize flex and fight power loss.



**VX SERIES**  
**PRO-STREET CHAINS**  
Available in Gold or Unplated



**ZVM-X SERIES**  
**SUPER STREET CHAINS**  
Available in Gold or Unplated

Model Number	Weight per 100 links	Tensile Strength	Wear Resistance	Maximum Disp. cc
428VX	2.66 lbs.	7,420 lbs.	2,700	350c.c.
520VX2	3.35 lbs.	8,210 lbs.	3,500	750c.c.
525VX	4.05 lbs.	9,220 lbs.	3,600	900c.c.
530VX	4.27 lbs.	9,220 lbs.	3,800	1000c.c.
520ZVM-X	3.59 lbs.	8,745 lbs.	3,500	1200c.c.
525ZVM-X	4.65 lbs.	10,428 lbs.	4,000	1300c.c.
530ZVM-X	4.85 lbs.	10,428 lbs.	4,000	1400c.c.



Call or visit our website for additional information  
**www.didchain.com**  
**615.323.4020**





# DUAL PERSONALITIES

BMW creates yet more spinoffs from its R nineT platform with the Racer and Pure models

» With the “classic heritage” motorcycle craze continuing to move along at full steam, manufacturers are scrambling (pun intended) to create new models styled after this increasingly popular genre. BMW has been exploiting its own rich past via the very adaptable R nineT boxer twin platform that has already given birth to several hot-selling current models.

For 2017, BMW has released two new versions of its successful R nineT “oilhead” boxer: the R nineT Racer and the R nineT Pure. The R nineT Racer

harkens back to the days of the original R90S of the '70s and '80s with its stretched-out café racer ergos, slinky half fairing, and solo tailpiece. The R nineT Pure is actually a more conventional take on the R nineT, with styling slanted more toward the '70s and '80s, and comes with a full catalog of optional components and accessories to fully customize the bike to your individual tastes.

Both bikes use the R nineT's classic 1,170cc DOHC oilhead boxer twin, so while the claimed 110 hp doesn't sound that impressive on the spec sheet,

the claimed 86 pound-feet of torque makes up for that in the real world. There's plenty of responsive grunt anywhere past 3,000 rpm that gets either bike moving forward smartly at the twist of the surprisingly long-turn throttle. Like the original R nineT, the Racer and Pure models aren't bristling with electronic rider aid trickery, though ABS is standard, and BMW's ASC traction control is available as an option.

Despite their budget-conscious origins, the Racer/Pure's nonadjustable 43mm conventional fork and single shock with rebound damping and



spring preload adjustability do a good job of soaking up nasty urban pavement while keeping the chassis under control. Granted, we didn't exactly run through any canyon roads at a heated pace during our half-day ride, but the few twisty portions of road we did encounter were attacked with zeal, and we met with no issues. And while the R nineT Pure's intended customer obviously won't be looking for back-road scratching at every opportunity, the Racer rider—as the model name and nice-looking BMW Racing white/blue/red livery imply—likely will want to relive the R90S heritage through canyon roads. The brakes were also more than up to the task, with the dual Brembo four-piston calipers and 320mm disc combination with ABS hauling both bikes down from speed with authority when desired.

Once you get beyond the engine and chassis/running gear though, the R nineT Racer and R nineT Pure are about as different as chalk and cheese.

As you'd expect from a bike with a competition-style moniker, the R nineT Racer's ergos are classic café racer, with a very long reach to the bars that stretches you out over the elongated tank, putting a lot of weight on your wrists. Similarly, the footpegs

are positioned fairly high and rearward to complement the natural race-jockey stance. And don't expect much wind protection from the sleek frame-mounted half-fairing, as the windscreen is little more than a dress accessory.

By contrast, the R nineT Pure is just that: the basic R nineT package distilled down to its original roadster essence. No racy bodywork or scrambler underpinnings—just a stripped-down version that is very similar to the first R nineT of three years ago. The riding position is very upright standard style, which seems comfortable until the firmly padded saddle has your behind yelling for mercy after 30 minutes.

What will likely be one of the bigger appeals of both the R nineT Racer and Pure is the price. Due to substituting a conventional fork and standard-mount brake calipers along with other omissions and substitutions, the Racer and Pure come in several thousands under their other R nineT brethren. The R nineT Pure starts at \$11,995, while the R nineT Racer stickers at \$13,295. Either way you look at it, these two are probably the best editions yet of BMW's classic roadster. **SR**

The R nineT Racer has a classic-looking analog speedometer and tachometer in the cockpit. The tiny windscreen is more for style than function.



The Pure's cockpit is basically that: not much more than a speedometer with a small LCD info panel. The conventional handlebar has a medium rise for upright ergos, though the thinly padded seat keeps things from getting too comfy.



## 2017 BMW R nineT Racer/Pure

MSRP	\$13,295/\$11,995
<b>ENGINE</b>	
TYPE	Air/oil-cooled, DOHC opposed twin
DISPLACEMENT	1170cc
BORE X STROKE	101.0 x 73.0mm
COMPRESSION RATIO	12.0:1
INDUCTION	BMS-MP, 50mm throttle bodies, single injector/cyl.

## CHASSIS

FRONT TIRE	120/70ZR-17 Metzeler Roadtec Z8
REAR TIRE	180/55ZR-17 Metzeler Roadtec Z8
RAKE/TRAIL	27°/4.7 in. (118mm)
WHEELBASE	58.8 in. (1493mm)
SEAT HEIGHT	31.7 in. (820mm)
FUEL CAPACITY	4.5 gal. (17L)
CLAIMED WET WEIGHT	485 lb. (221kg)/483 lb. (214kg)





# ZERO-SUM GAME

Commuting through the LA jungle on electric motorcycle manufacturer Zero's hot-rod SR model

**>>** It's been a while since we last rode an electric motorcycle, and the excitement has died down from a few years ago when they were all the rage. So when we were given the opportunity to ride American electric motorcycle manufacturer Zero Motorcycles' sporty SR model for a few weeks, we gladly grabbed the keys.

The Zero SR sports the company's Z-Force 75-7R IPM (Interior Permanent Magnet) air-cooled, three-phase, brushless motor that pumps out a claimed 70 hp and 116 foot-pounds of torque, with the Z-Force 13.0 kWh Li-ion Power Pack battery

pack holding enough juice to go a claimed 161 miles in city riding, or 101 miles on the highway at 70 mph. All power is direct drive from the motor (no transmission), and in the Zero SR's case, through a carbon-fiber-reinforced belt drive.

The Zero's chassis is an aluminum twin-spar frame utilizing a fully adjustable 41mm Showa inverted fork and a fully adjustable Showa piggy-back reservoir-equipped shock out back. A single J-Juan asymmetric dual-piston sliding caliper grabs a 320mm front disc, with a single-piston J-Juan caliper and 240mm disc brake in the rear,

both utilizing a Bosch Gen 9 ABS. Wheel/tire sizes are geared toward low rolling resistance, with the 3.00-inch front and 3.50-inch-wide rear wheel shod with a 110/70-17 and 140/70-17 Pirelli Diablo Rosso II, respectively.

Settling into the Zero SR's saddle reveals a fairly low seat height (specs say 31.8 inches, but it feels more like 30.8) and very narrow midsection. Overall ergos are comfortable but a bit confining with very little room to move forward or backward on the scalloped seat. The blue-hued LCD instrument panel is easily readable with important info organized well.



There are three ride modes: Eco, Sport, and Custom. Eco mode caps top speed at 70 mph, reduces power to conserve energy, and sets the engine regeneration levels higher. Sport mode gives you full power and minimal regen settings, while Custom mode allows you to tailor the power and regen settings to your liking via a smartphone app.

We also tested two optional accessories: the Z Force 3.3 kWh Power Tank that extends the bike's range, and the Charge Tank, which allows the use of public EV charging stations to charge the battery three times quicker than the normal six to 10 hours using the standard onboard charger and any 120-volt outlet. Unfortunately, you must choose between the two, as they both mount in the same space behind the frame's steering head.

While riding in Eco mode was expectedly lethargic, Sport mode unleashes enough torque to provide acceleration from around 15 mph to 80 mph that few gasoline-powered bikes can match (the downside is that using that power drains the battery quicker). The SR doesn't seem overly hefty on paper at around 460 pounds, but you can feel that weight when riding the bike aggressively; overall handling manners are a little on

the truckish side (a little more so with the Power Tank) despite the 55.5-inch wheelbase and steep steering geometry, and you can sense that the brakes are working hard to slow that weight.

During a 60-mile commute to/from work (consisting of about 10/90 street/highway riding), the Zero would usually arrive with between 12 and 25 percent battery charge remaining, depending on traffic—and that was riding very conservatively with the Power Tank option. The less highway running we did, the more energy we conserved; the problem is that extended the overall trip time by a significant amount.

In Los Angeles, there are literally hundreds of public EV charging stations, and you can find them with various phone apps. While it sounds on paper like it would be great to take a coffee break somewhere and quickly top up the battery, what we often discovered is that either the stations were all taken up by other EVs or the station would be out of order.

As a short-hop commuter bike, the Zero SR could be good fun, especially if recharge time isn't mission-critical. But the starting MSRP of \$15,995 is a bit pricey, and until the EV charging infrastructure grows significantly, it's a rather limited application. **SR**

## 2017 Zero SR

MSRP	\$15,995
<b>ENGINE</b>	
TYPE	Air-cooled, radial flux, interior permanent high-temp magnet, brushless motor
CONTROLLER	High-efficiency, 775-amp, 3-phase brushless controller w/ regenerative deceleration
MAX. POWER	70 hp @ 3,500 rpm, 116 lb.-ft. torque (claimed)
BATTERY	Lithium-ion, 16.3 kWh max. capacity
<b>CHASSIS</b>	
FRONT TIRE	110/70ZR-17 Pirelli Diablo Rosso II
REAR TIRE	140/70ZR-17 Pirelli Diablo Rosso II
WHEELBASE	55.5 in. (1410mm)
SEAT HEIGHT	31.8 in. (807mm)
MEASURED WEIGHT	467 lb. (w/ accessory hard bags and top case)

**RIGHT** The LCD instrument panel is lit in a pleasant blue hue and provides the important info (especially battery charge level) in an easy-to-read layout. **BELOW RIGHT** A single 320mm disc gripped by a J-Juan two-piston sliding caliper provides adequate stopping power, especially when you add regeneration via the Zero phone app. Fully adjustable Showa suspension on both ends is decent.







# NOT THE SAME OLD GSX-S

Suzuki infuses some needed major updates to the 2018 version of its GSX-S750

**>>** When we rode the original iteration of Suzuki's GSX-S750 two years ago ("Suzuki's New Standard," June/July 2015), we have to admit we weren't overly impressed. Basically a rebadged version of the European-market GSR750, the GSX-S's age and budget build certainly showed, with an uninspiring engine character and excessive heft. Although admittedly it would take a superb bike to knock off the class-leading Yamaha FZ-09, the Suzuki was nevertheless trounced by the game-changing triple in our comparison test ("Budget Blasters," Oct./Nov. 2015).

So Suzuki decided to instill a good number of updates to the 2018 version of the GSX-S750

aimed at spicing up the engine and running gear. The 749cc inline-four now has larger internal crankcase windows to reduce pumping losses, refined EFI maps along with new long-nose, 10-hole injectors for better fuel atomization, plus a larger airbox up top and a new 4-into-2-into-1 exhaust down below. Claimed power is up more than 8 hp over the old GSX-S (112.6 hp at 10,500 rpm compared to the original's 104.5 hp at 10,000 rpm). Shorter final drive gearing helps acceleration even more.

A slightly updated version of the 41mm KYB inverted fork has springs in both legs but only the left side handling damping duties. The rear KYB shock is basically the same (though the steel

swingarm now has a different contour box shape that Suzuki claims is stronger), as are the adjustment capabilities at both ends: spring preload only. Suzuki heard everyone's complaints about the previous front brakes and dumped the old axial-mount, two-piston, slide-caliper units for a pair of radial-mount, four-piston Nissin calipers biting on 310mm petal-style rotors. Other changes include new 10-spoke wheels with Bridgestone S21 rubber (replacing the old three-spoke wheels and old-gen Bridgestone BT-016 tires), a full LCD dashboard, and slightly revised bodywork (including a new bellypan to partially cover the ugly catalyzer collector of the exhaust).





The new LCD instrument panel on the GSX-S750 offers better information in a more readable layout than the old version...with the exception of the bar-graph tach.

Suzuki also infused some modern technology into the new GSX-S750, with the one-push Easy Start system and Low-RPM Assist feature found on the latest SV650, as well as the three-level (plus off) traction control system from the 1000. Reflecting Americans' continuing love/hate relationship with ABS, only the all-black GSX-S750Z comes standard with ABS (along with a \$600 bump in price).

With identical ergos to the previous model, the new GSX-S750's retains the original's comfy feel. Suzukis have never been known as hard starters, so the Easy Start system is kind of superfluous, and with the 750's relative lack of low-end torque, the Low-RPM Assist feature is barely noticeable.

Like the previous engine, power begins to really develop around 4,000 rpm; but instead of the original's somewhat lackluster powerband that quickly goes flat around 9,000 rpm, the newer engine revs quicker and continues making decent power well past 10,500 rpm. No, the new GSX-S powerplant is no GSX-R replica, but the added power significantly raises the Suzuki's fun quotient.

Despite only having preload adjustability, the GSX-S750's suspension rates are fairly well dialed in for everything from urban commuting to canyon strafing. Steering manners are better with the newer Bridgestone S21 tires, but turn-in effort still demands some muscle—the narrow handlebar and

## 2018 Suzuki GSX-S750

MSRP \$8299 standard model;  
\$8899 GSX-S750Z

### ENGINE

TYPE Liquid-cooled, DOHC inline-four  
DISPLACEMENT 749cc  
BORE X STROKE 72.0 x 46.0mm  
COMPRESSION RATIO 12.3:1  
INDUCTION SDTV, 32mm throttle bodies, single injector/cyl.

### CHASSIS

FRONT TIRE 120/70ZR-17 Bridgestone Battlax Hypersport S21F G  
REAR TIRE 180/55ZR-17 Bridgestone Battlax Hypersport S21R G  
RAKE/TRAIL 25°/4.1 in. (104mm)  
WHEELBASE 57.2 in. (1455mm)  
SEAT HEIGHT 32.2 in. (820mm)  
FUEL CAPACITY 4.2 gal. (16L)  
CLAIMED WET WEIGHT 465 lb. (211kg); 469 lb. (213kg)



The previous parts-bin brake system has thankfully been replaced by a set of four-piston radial-mount Nissin calipers and 310mm petal-style rotors.

basically unchanged 465-pound wet weight surely contribute here. Thankfully, the upgraded brakes are a vast improvement over the previous parts-bin pieces; slowing the GSX-S750 is no longer a high-effort, numb-feeling affair, with the four-pot Nissins providing excellent power and feel.

Perhaps best of all, the upgrades to the 2018 GSX-S750 only result in a \$300 bump in price over last year (\$8,299 for the base model, \$8,899 for the ABS-equipped Z model). So even though it may not be a class leader in performance, the improvements along with the lowest price compared to the competition mean the new Suzuki is certainly a much more recommendable choice now. **SR**





There's no getting around the Nuviz's size, which can be a deal breaker for some. While relatively big, the weight isn't really intrusive, and aerodynamics don't come into play until around 75 mph.

# NUVIZ HUD HELMET DEVICE

A function-packed head-up display that you can mount to any full-face helmet

» With technology advancing at dizzyingly rapid levels, it was only a matter of time before a company produced an HUD (“head-up display”) for a motorcycle helmet. The concept is the same as its application on military aircraft: Instead of moving eye focus downward toward an instrument panel and away from the area in front of you (and losing a good portion of situational awareness), you can project important information into the operator’s field of view that can be more quickly and easily accessed.

The Nuviz projects an image into the lower right portion of rider’s field of view via a translucent optical prism housing on the device that attaches by means of a strong adhesive tape to the outside of a full-face helmet’s chin bar (meaning that you can use it with any full-face helmet). The result is an image that can be quickly and easily seen without obstructing the rider’s field of view.

There are four main functions: GPS-based navigation, phone, music, and photo/video capabilities; all are controlled by a small

left-handlebar-mounted remote. There are five main screens that can be toggled through: the main speedometer, Maps, Calls (phone), Music, and Rides. There’s also a smartphone app that allows you to program rides in the navigation page, maintain a profile, and view your stats on rides. Firmware updates are already becoming available that can be easily uploaded through the app.

The main speedo screen displays a digital speedometer, with smaller digits showing the current road’s speed limit (exceeding the speed



limit turns the numbers red, as well as optionally activating an audio warning) plus the road name. If you've planned a route on the Rides screen, a GPS-generated directional arrow also displays distance to the next turn.

It's the navigational capabilities that are the Nuviz's main forte. The Map screen shows a zoomable two-dimensional map that also displays your speed plus max posted speed. The Rides screen allows you to generate and memorize trips, as well as locate the nearest gas station. When you're embarking on a planned route, the Map screen changes to a 3-D-style layout that allows you to see upcoming turns on your route more easily. There are voice prompts for the navigation, though road names are not mentioned.

The Music and Calls screens display info generated by your smartphone via Bluetooth connectivity, so numerous functions for both can be controlled by the remote. We weren't overly impressed with the sound quality of both functions; the system can't overcome wind noise above 60 mph, and max volume significantly increases distortion. People on the receiving end of our phone calls also reported below-average audio quality. Unfortunately there is no intercom

connectivity (you can connect through a Sena or Cardo device), but Nuviz claims it will have communication features updates by the end of the year.

A camera that can capture 8-megapixel still images or 1080p 30fps video is mounted below the prism housing in a ball-swivel so that it can be adjusted depending on how the Nuviz is mounted and the rider's position. Pushing a dedicated button on the remote displays a screen that shows the camera's view and controls whether still or video images are recorded; files are stored in a microSD card (still images are also uploaded to your phone).

There's no getting around the Nuviz's size, though part of that is due to all the functionality as well as the replaceable 3,250 mAh battery that provides a good amount of usage before it needs recharging (we easily averaged about five to six hours that included lots of video and navigational usage). And its 8.5 ounces (not including the mounting plate, speakers, microphone, and wiring) is a fair amount of weight to have on the helmet's chin bar, though it wasn't overly noticeable. Aerodynamic drag and wind noise wasn't an issue until around 75 mph, and the unit is designed to tear off easily in the event of a crash.



There's also the little matter of price: The Nuviz isn't cheap at \$699. The Nuviz definitely has a lot of useful features all rolled into one, and the software infrastructure is there for easy upgrades. If you're not afraid of being an "early adopter" and would like a cutting-edge piece of tech, the Nuviz is worth checking out. **SR**



This rendering of how the Nuviz HUD would look from the rider's point of view is fairly accurate. The display in no way obstructs your view, and it provides information that can be easily discerned at a glance.







A photograph of a motorcycle leaning into a turn on a paved road. The motorcycle is black with red and white accents. The rider is wearing a white and black suit. The background shows a blurred landscape with hills and a clear sky.

# LOVE, AT LAST

*The Tuono RR and  
Super Duke are both  
incredible machines,  
but only one can have  
our undivided attention*

BY MICHAEL GILBERT  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEFF ALLEN





» True love. I had never experienced it until the day I first stepped foot in Italy. A perfect blend of romance, passion, and history, the region pulled me in quick and never let go. Day after day, I fell deeper, to the point where I couldn't imagine going home. This is the effect of Italian things. If you've ever traveled abroad, you probably know the feeling. And if you've ever ridden an Aprilia Tuono, well, you understand exactly where my inner Romeo comes from. Oh, Italy, you sure do know a thing or two about pulling on heartstrings!

Nearby, Austria isn't exactly lacking in personality either. I've never been, but, oh, if the KTM 1290 Super Duke R doesn't make me think that it'd pull just as hard. The question, then, if each of these bikes are a representation of the places they come from, where would I rather be?

To find out, we spent the dog days of a Californian summer putting each motorcycle

through its paces on long highway stints, twisty canyon roads, city streets, and the daily commute. By no means was it as magnificent as bombing through the European countryside, but by the time we finished, we were pretty sure we found the love we were looking for.

The Tuono's 1,077cc V-4 powerplant has a way of pulling—okay, tugging—at your heartstrings from the moment it takes its first breath. It lets out a roar that is raw yet beautiful, and its riding characteristics are much the same. Throttle response is aggressive in Track Mode (which most of us opted for even during most of our street riding), but as long as you're careful with throttle application, it doesn't feel overly abrupt in slower sections of road. Around town, the Tuono's engine works just fine, though the tall first gear requires dragging the clutch out if you want to leave a stoplight with any authority. The straightaways,

however, are where the Tuono's engine works best. Above 8,000 rpm, it builds speed like a pure-bred Italian superbike before finally tapering off at its redline of 12,500 rpm.

The Super Duke's engine takes on the role of a dark horse in this love story because it's deceptively quick. Yes, for 2017 it has grown in displacement to 1,301cc and received a long list of updates—including a stiffened crankshaft, new resonator chambers on the cylinder heads for smoother power delivery, titanium intake valves to support a higher compression ratio of 13.6:1, 10mm shorter intake funnels that allowed KTM to raise the redline by 500 rpm, and a brand-new exhaust system—but the sound at first ring doesn't speak as passionately as the Tuono.

Instead, it sounds mellow—maybe even reserved—with throttle response feeling the same way. Initially, power delivery is very smooth





**ABOVE** The Super Duke R's 1,301cc V-twin is downright impressive. The engine's power delivery is remarkably smooth at initial throttle input, and the power becomes beastly as the engine passes the 5,500-rpm mark.



and subtle, making the need for TC almost zero, but it's by no means weak. The KTM's engine is stronger than the Aprilia lower in the revs, making it a more usable powerplant in the slower sections of twisties or around town. At 5,500 rpm, however, the engine begins to lay down all of its beastliness. From there, its attitude takes a turn from relaxed to angry and wants to pull your arms out of their sockets until it comes time to grab ahold of the brake lever. That's the beautiful thing about the Super Duke's V-twin—it transitions seamlessly between a mellow commuter and full-blown rocket ship by the matter of a throttle turn.

Equally impressive as the Super Duke's powerplant is its chassis agility, which our testers unanimously agreed was its best handling trait. The KTM is light on its feet, especially in transitions where it has to flick from side to side, giving you the ability to flop between twisties with

aggression. The downfall to its chassis is that it struggles to hold its line unless there's heavy load on it, like in wide-open turns. If you're stuck in a slower section of road, the bike pushes wide at midcorner and is nervous at full lean, making it difficult to find confidence to push its limits. Find a faster set of corners, however, and you'll feel the chassis load properly, which helps the bike steer around the corner.

The Aprilia is much the opposite, being one of the most confidence-inspiring naked chassis that we've ridden, regardless of speed or conditions. It's planted to the ground in a way that allows you to hit rough patches of road without the worry of it becoming unsettled while still being nimble enough to rip through tight sections of road and make steering corrections when needed. Side-to-side transitions are the only places the Tuono falls behind the Super Duke, but the difference is

negligible when looked at next to the rest of the Aprilia's advantages.

Braking performance between the Aprilia and KTM are also varying, which is funny because both are fitted with Brembo's top-shelf M50 Monoblock calipers and a Brembo master cylinder. Of course, the Tuono's brake rotors are 10mm larger than the Super Duke's (330mm versus 320mm), which helps outright braking power, but there's more feel through the lever on the Tuono as well. The only drawback to the Aprilia is that an overly aggressive initial bite can make riding in traffic feel choppy and difficult to modulate if you aren't gentle with the lever; but the package is still superior to that of the Super Duke. By comparison, the KTM's brakes lack both feel and power, suggesting that aftermarket brake pads might improve all-around performance.

In defense of the KTM, the ergonomics





package is quite comfortable, and a long day in the saddle is no problem because of its more upright handlebars and lower footpegs. Despite having a chattering vibration through the bars and pegs, and its WP suspension feeling as if it shudders over bumps instead of fully absorbing them, our testers agreed that it's a more relaxing ride than the Tuono. The racy ergonomics on the Aprilia suggests the Italians designed the Tuono to be a superbike with an upright bar on it, which is great for canyon carving, but any lengthy straight-line stints will be taking a serious toll on your body. Seat heights are similar (33.5 inches for the Aprilia and 33.8 inches for the KTM), though the Super Duke's square-shape seat makes the bike feel taller than it is, making stop-and-go traffic a hassle for smaller riders.

Of course, we have to mention the Tuono's fuel mileage. Our measured average came in at 31 mpg, which had us scrambling for fuel around the 120 mile mark. Not the greatest, especially when the KTM's average hovers right around 36 mpg.



**LEFT** For 2017, the Tuono gets upgraded with top-shelf Brembo M50 calipers and 330mm discs. The braking power is more than adequate, but an overly aggressive initial bite on the street hinders their true capability.







## TRACK:

Thanks to Southern California trackday company TrackDaz, we managed to sneak in a day of testing at Buttonwillow Raceway Park, where we put both the Aprilia's and KTM's qualities under a magnifying glass. With these bikes not exactly being designed with outright speed in mind, we punted doing a comparative lap-time analysis and instead focused on gathering impressions of their abilities and fun factors at the racetrack.

A lot comes into light about each bike's electronics packages at the racetrack, especially their traction control systems. The Tuono's Aprilia Performance Ride Control (aPRC) traction control system has eight levels of adjustment (plus off), with each mitigating wheelspin quite well. On a lower setting, such as Level 2 or 3, the system allows for enough rear-wheel slip to help pivot the bike around the corner but not so much as to keep the bike from driving forward. Like its superbike sibling—the RSV4—it struggles with consistency from lap to lap, which makes trusting that it won't snap back on you an issue. The good news about the aPRC system is that it now includes a revised Wheelie Control function as well as a bidirectional quickshifter and Launch Control and Pit Limiter systems that all work quite well.

The Super Duke has many of the same features, but that's only if you purchase KTM's additional upgrades. The Performance Pack (\$475.99) includes a bidirectional Quickshifter+, KTM My Ride (Bluetooth device connectivity), and an adjustable Motor Slip Regulation (MSR) system that controls the amount of engine-braking while

### KTM 1290 Super Duke R

MSRP \$17,999, \$18,775 as tested  
(w/ Performance and Track packs)

#### ENGINE

TYPE	Liquid-cooled, DOHC V-twin, 4 valves/cyl.
DISPLACEMENT	1301cc
BORE X STROKE	108.0 x 71.0mm
COMPRESSION RATIO	13.6:1
INDUCTION	Keihin EFI, 56mm throttle bodies, single injector/cyl.

#### CHASSIS

FRONT SUSPENSION	WP 48mm inverted fork, adjustable spring preload, compression, rebound damping, 4.7-in. travel
REAR SUSPENSION	WP monoshock w/ piggyback reservoir, adjustable spring preload, compression, rebound damping, 6.1-in. travel
FRONT TIRE	120/70R-17 Metzeler Sportech M7 RR
REAR TIRE	190/55R-17 Metzeler Sportech M7 RR
RAKE/TRAIL	24.9°/4.2 in. (107mm)
WHEELBASE	58.5 in. (1486mm)
SEAT HEIGHT	33.8 in. (857mm)
FUEL CAPACITY	4.8 gal. (18.2L)
WEIGHT	480 lb. (178kg) wet, 450 lb. (204kg) dry (all fluids, no fuel)

#### PERFORMANCE

FUEL CONSUMPTION	33–39 mpg, 36.4 avg.
QUARTER-MILE	10.32 sec. @ 138 mph
ROLL-ONS	60–80 mph/2.6 sec.

### 2017 Aprilia Tuono V4 1100 RR

MSRP \$14,999

#### ENGINE

TYPE	Liquid-cooled, DOHC V-4, 4 valves/cyl.
DISPLACEMENT	1077cc
BORE X STROKE	81.0 x 52.3mm
COMPRESSION RATIO	13.6:1
INDUCTION	Weber-Marelli EFI, 48mm throttle bodies, single injector/cyl.

#### CHASSIS

FRONT SUSPENSION	Sachs 43mm inverted fork, adjustable spring preload, compression, rebound damping, 4.7-in. travel
REAR SUSPENSION	Sachs monoshock w/ piggyback reservoir, adjustable spring preload, compression, rebound damping, 5.1-in. travel
FRONT TIRE	120/70R-17 Pirelli Diablo Rosso III
REAR TIRE	190/55R-17 Pirelli Diablo Rosso III
RAKE/TRAIL	24.7°/3.9 in. (100mm)
WHEELBASE	57.0 in. (1448mm)
SEAT HEIGHT	33.5 in. (851mm)
FUEL CAPACITY	4.9 gal. (18.5L)
WEIGHT	479 lb. (217kg) wet, 448 lb. (203kg) dry (all fluids, no fuel)

#### PERFORMANCE

FUEL CONSUMPTION	28–34 mpg, 31.0 avg.
QUARTER-MILE	10.28 sec. @ 140 mph
ROLL-ONS	60–80 mph/2.3 sec.





**Kent KUNITSUGU**

**Age: 56**

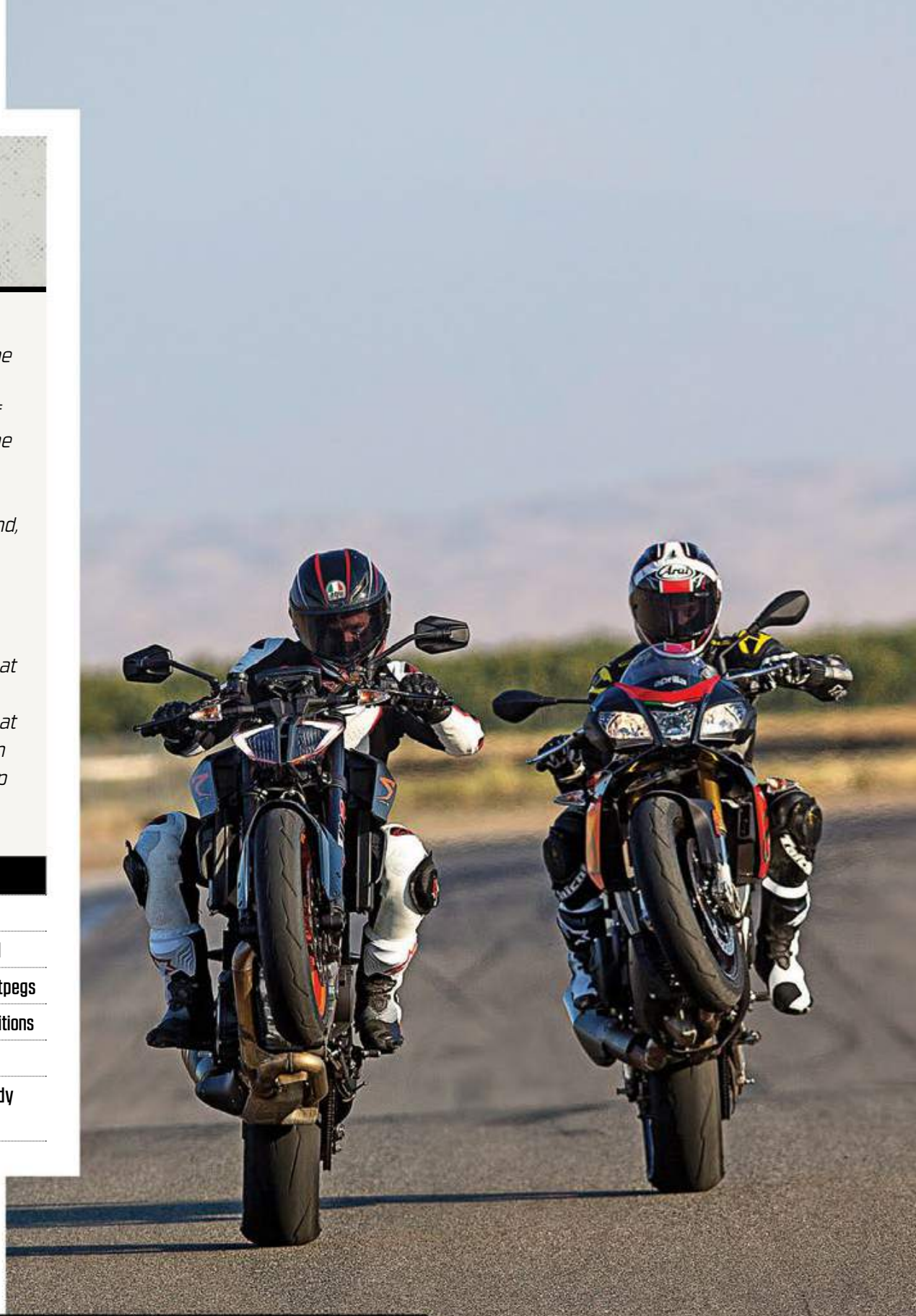
**Height: 5'7"**

*As great a bike as the Aprilia Tuono V4 1100 is (especially on the racetrack), I'd still pick the KTM if I were going to buy a bike like this.*

*Yes, you could buy the factory version of the Aprilia for the price of the KTM, but for the riding I'd be doing, the Super Duke fills the bill more readily. The Aprilia is a beast of an engine in the upper reaches of its powerband, but the KTM's huge V-twin is much more responsive at the rpm and speeds you see on the street. And the agility of the Super Duke makes it more enjoyable at that pace as well. I'd surely be happier with the Tuono at a trackday, but those days wouldn't be very frequent; for the street and canyon riding that would comprise the vast majority of its life in my hands, the Super Duke comes out on top in my book.*

#### TEST NOTES: **KTM 1290 SUPER DUKE R**

- + Comfortable ergonomics
- + Smooth power delivery but rip-your-arms-off speed
- Vibration through the chassis to handlebars and footpegs
- Chassis is overly sensitive to rider input and road conditions
- Numb brake feel and power
- x KTM's Performance and Track packs add to an already expensive price tag



#### TEST RUBBER

#### PIRELLI DIABLO SUPERCORSA SC

**PIRELLI.COM**

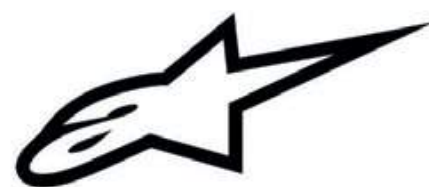


- The Supercorsa SC's rubber impressed the Sport Rider testers with their durability, even in brutally hot conditions at the racetrack. The first drop in tire grip came after two sessions but stayed very consistent through the test.
- Rear tire traction on the Supercorsa is confidence inspiring, making you want to twist the throttle earlier and earlier in the corner.
- Feel through the contact patch of the front and rear tires is nearly perfect, allowing you to know exactly what the bike is doing at all times.
- The Diablo Supercorsa SC has been the control tire of the World Supersport Championship since 2004.



ALPINESTARS PROTECTS MARC MARQUEZ

# ALPINESTARS PROTECTS

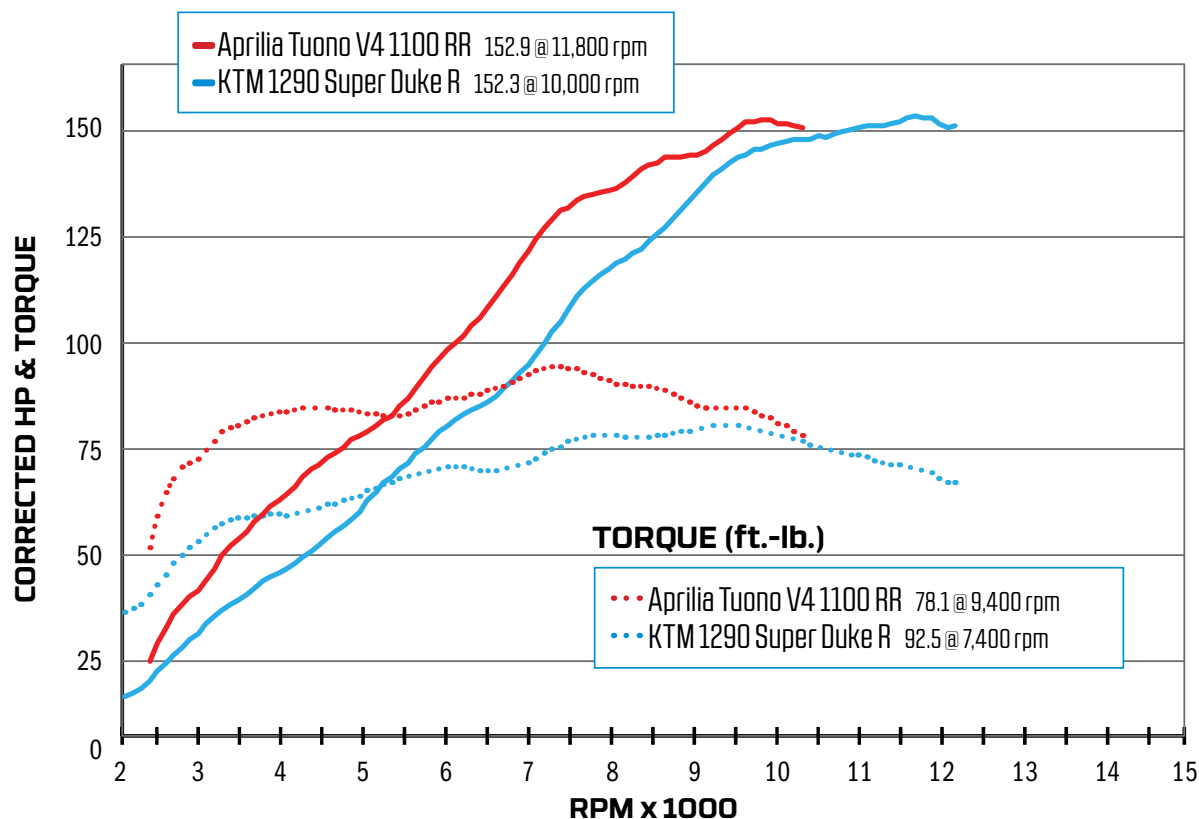


ALPINESTARS.COM  
#ALPINESTARS PROTECTS

**THE GP PRO  
LEATHER JACKET**  
PERFECTION  
THROUGH  
TRUE INNOVATION



## HORSEPOWER



FINAL RATINGS	Aprilia Tuono V4 1100 RR	KTM 1290 Super Duke R
Quality	9	9
Instruments & controls	9	9
Ergonomics	8.5	9
Chassis & handling	9.5	8.5
Suspension	9	8.5
Brakes	9.5	8.5
Electronics package	9	9
Engine power	9.5	9.5
Engine power delivery	9	9.5
Fun factor	9.5	9
<b>RATINGS TOTAL</b>	<b>91.5</b>	<b>89.5</b>

entering corners. Also available is the Track Pack (\$299.95) that opens up the TC system to nine levels of adjustment, enables the ability to shut off Wheelie Control, offers various throttle response settings, and adds Launch Control. The TC system impresses at the track, with it intruding just enough to keep the wheels in line and maintain momentum to consistently get off the corner lap after lap.

The handling characteristics of each bike are exaggerated on the racetrack, which unfortunately includes the Super Duke's uneasy handling. Rolling to maximum lean on the KTM is quicker than the Tuono, as it was on the street, but it's only advantageous if you are gentle with your inputs. Try to wrestle the KTM into the corner and the chassis will begin wallowing underneath you, often not

settling down until you hit the next straightaway. Its struggle to hold a line continues on the race-track too, with testers agreeing the KTM has to ride on the edge of the tire longer to finish corners than the Aprilia. In contrast, the same planted feel the Tuono presents on the street is equally as confidence inspiring on the racetrack, and the aggressive initial bite of the brakes that haunts the Aprilia on the street goes almost unnoticed.

## CONCLUSION:

And so it comes time to decide—where will true love take me? The Super Duke R is an impressive



*In all honesty, I struggled falling for the KTM. There's no question that it's an extraordinary motorcycle, but it still has a few too many quirks for me to consider putting a big chunk of change down on one. And there's that too; the Super Duke R already has a high price tag, and its optional Performance and Track packs set it over the limit.*

*The Tuono V4 1100, on the other hand, had me in love at first ride. It's so close to being a stripped-down superbike, which is exactly what I'd want if I'm looking at entering the super naked category. The chassis package is solid, its engine is ruthless, and its electronics package has functions for everything you throw at it. Fun? Heck yes.*

*The Aprilia is what a naked bike should be.*

### TEST NOTES: APRILIA TUONO V4 1100 RR

- + Planted chassis feel
- + Impressive brakes on and off the track
- + Power and sound of the V-4 never gets old
- Racy ergonomics for the street
- Voracious appetite for fuel
- x Better all-around performance for a lower price

motorcycle. Its engine can charm anyone with its delicate power delivery, yet it has hair-raising top-end horsepower. But there's just something missing. I know that no love is ever cheap, but the additional costs of the Performance and Track packs needed to bring it up to speed with the Tuono makes falling for the KTM a tough sell. Sorry, Austria.

The Aprilia has it all. It's fast, refined, and comes equipped with all the bells and whistles you can ask for on a naked bike. Its engine and chassis are balanced to near perfection—raw yet tamed, nothing else. Once you've had your taste of the Tuono, imagining anything else is a difficult thing to do.

Oh, Italy, how could I ever leave you? **SR**





# DO THE MATH MORE PERFORMANCE + 20% MORE TIRE LIFE =

**Q3 PLUS**  
*SPORTMAX*



@RideDunlop DunlopMotorcycleTires.com. ©2017 Dunlop Motorcycle Tires.





# A FINAL LOOK BACK

» Hard to believe how time has flown by. I remember how excited Nick Ienatsch and fellow former *Motorcyclist* Editor Lance Holst (the two were pulled out from the *Motorcyclist* staff to form the beginning staff of *Sport Rider*) were when they learned that the green light for SR was given in late '92. They'd asked me to help with either photo modeling or testing a few times during their time at *Motorcyclist*, so it was great to see the project they'd hoped for come to fruition.

Just as *Dirt Rider* had branched off of *Motorcyclist* back in '82 to cover the growing off-road market, *Sport Rider* was the "performance-oriented offshoot of *Motorcyclist* magazine providing more in-depth, detailed coverage of sportbikes and racing motorcycles than any other title." The sportbike market at the time was really beginning to take off, with bikes like Honda's groundbreaking CBR900RR turning the motorcycling landscape on its ear, so the timing was near perfect when *Sport Rider*'s April 1993 issue hit the newsstands.

Sportbike fanatics in the USA were ecstatic—finally, a magazine without the other distractions that just concentrated on the sportbike and racing world. And with the manufacturers continuing to introduce an increasing number of sportbike

models, *Sport Rider* was perfectly positioned to provide all the in-depth road tests and comparisons these bikes required. Every aspect of the sportbike world would be covered, from do-it-yourself maintenance and hop-up stories to behind-the-scenes racing tales to, probably most important, increasing the performance of the rider as well.

When I took over the helm in April 1997, I wanted to continue that same direction of content but with some different angles in order to distinguish ourselves from the numerous other magazines that we competed with on the newsstand shelves. SR soon grew to be the dominant sportbike publication in the USA, and our testing methods were later copied by many competitors. During the 20 years since that time, we've not only had to adapt to the rapidly changing sportbike landscape but changes in the publishing industry as well. Through it all, we'd like to think that we've upheld SR's original editorial mantra from '93. It's been quite a journey, that's for sure.

During the 24 years of its existence, there have been some groundbreaking stories in *Sport Rider*'s history. Here's a compilation of those stories (or issues) we thought defined the brand best. We hope you've enjoyed the ride as much as we have.

THE BEST  
STORIES FROM  
24 YEARS  
OF *SPORT RIDER*

BY KENT KUNITSUGU



The inaugural issue of *SR* had an unusual cover, with the images of each Japanese Open Class contender in the comparison test distorted while stacked on top of one another. The content inside set the tone for the magazine's future: The aforementioned comparison test included relevant data and information not found in any of the other motorcycle magazines. Following in the footsteps of *Motorcyclist*, all of the tests (in fact, a lot of the editorial) had a lot of DIY material with plenty of photos for the home mechanic to reference (*SR* was the top motorcycle publication in the company for back-issue demand largely because of this).

Besides an exhaust-system shootout, there was another article that became a frequent story angle in *SR*: testing championship-winning racebikes. Ienatsch was able to ride four machines with a bold number "1" on their number plates: the AMA Superbike championship-winning Muzzys Kawasaki ZX-7R, the Team Valvoline Suzuki GSX-R1186 that took the no-limits-or-rules Formula USA title, the Fastline MCM Racing Suzuki GSX-R1201 that emerged victorious in the AMA Endurance championship, and the WERA Endurance championship-winning Team Suzuki Endurance GSX-R1186.

There were also plenty of racing-related stories from across the world as well. But probably one of the best parts of the magazine (and one that not too many likely noticed) was the small-print disclaimer on the table of contents page: "Much of the action depicted in *Sport Rider* could rip your limbs off if done improperly. The riders seen in our photos are professionals riding under controlled conditions; save the speed for the track. Ride within your capabilities, concentrate, and always wear protective gear, including a helmet."









In a feat that will likely never be repeated, *SR* was able to convince five of the six factory roadracing teams then competing in the AMA Superbike Championship—Yoshimura Suzuki, Vance & Hines Yamaha, Fast by Ferracci Ducati, Harley-Davidson, and Muzzys Kawasaki—to bring their racebikes back to Firebird Raceway in Arizona the day after the final race of the 1995 season and let the magazine's editors flog them around the track (the lone holdout, American Honda's Smokin' Joe's team, couldn't make the test but promised to let us ride their bike at a later date).

The teams even let *SR* do a dragstrip run or two on their bikes. This was during the heyday of American roadracing, when there were numerous factory teams plus factory-supported satellite teams, and the competition was so fierce that manufacturers and World Championship race teams looked to the AMA series for their next star rider.

## FEBRUARY 1996—AMA SUPERBIKES



## APRIL 1997—1st ISSUE w/ KK AS EIC

The first issue with yours truly as the editor-in-chief was chock-full of a variety of content, ranging from a 600cc supersport comparison to a feature story on motorcycling in Japan, after I spent a week at a friend's home in Yokohama immersing myself in the vastly different two-wheeled culture there. There was nothing like motorcycling in Japan in the '80s and '90s; the enthusiasm for both riding and racing—and a burgeoning home industry that fed it—was something that I've never encountered anywhere else since then (sadly, the domestic motorcycle market in Japan today is but a shell of what it was during that time). There was also a feature story on the Italian motorcycle industry, after I spent five days visiting numerous factories there (a few of which unfortunately are no more).

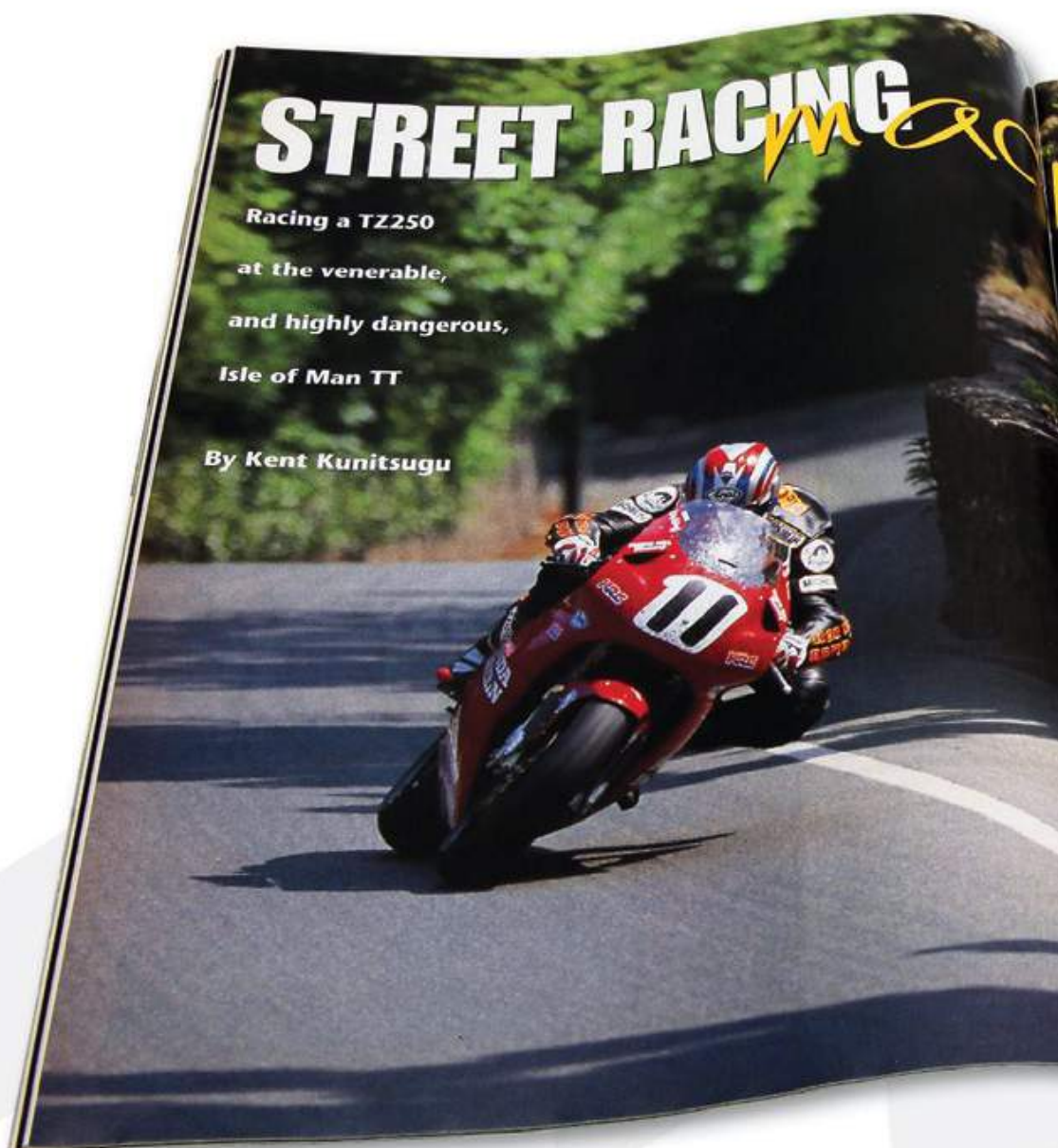
I also wrote a story on the late Sam Wheeler, who self-designed and built a normally aspirated streamliner that went 301 mph (and then 332 mph with a turbo engine). Wheeler then got proper sponsorship from Parts Unlimited last year and was gunning for the 400-mph barrier when his streamliner's drag chute malfunctioned during a Bonneville practice run and it crashed, with the likable Californian succumbing to his injuries a day later.



## OCTOBER 1997—ISLE OF MAN TT

My first Isle of Man TT trip (I returned a year later to compete again) was an adventure of epic proportions. I arrived at the Island only to find my original plan of racing a stock GSX-R600 scuttled due to some confusion with Suzuki UK, but luckily my friend Tom Montano managed to find a TZ250 for rent from Padgetts. The sensation of barreling along public roads at high speed was one I'll never forget.

And somehow, with a total of only eight laps of practice (there were no video games you could study from back then; actual onboard videos were limited to some fuzzy Joey Dunlop footage, and driving the course in a car was basically useless), I managed to qualify for the event with an average speed over the "ton" (more than 100 mph), considered an achievement for a "newcomer" back then. In the Lightweight TT (as the race for 250cc two-strokes was known then), my average speed for the four 37.73-mile laps was more than 100 mph as well, and I left the Island satisfied and full of appreciation for the historic event.



## RACING PHOTO ANNUAL 1999

It was an idea that I thought the senior management would never go for: Produce a large-format, quality-paper, perfect-bound publication filled with the best racing photography from around the world. To my utter amazement, they said yes, and the SR Racing Photo Annual was born. Our first year of publication was 1999, and the newsstand-only magazine (sorry, subscribers, I tried to get them to give it to our loyal readers, but they worried about postage costs) was an instant hit. So much so that it continued on an annual basis for the next nine years.

And why not? It showcased some of the greatest shots from world championship and national championship racing in a way that wasn't trying to be too artsy or clever for its own good. And a good many current racing photographers got their start through the pages of the SR Racing Photo Annual. Being racers/sportbike riders at heart, it was a labor of love for us.





**IT WAS A MISTAKE THAT'S COMMON** when you're trying to learn a new racetrack. I'd turned in a little too early at the entrance of an extremely bumpy 90 mph left-hander, and ended up drifting a little wide on the exit. A minor misadventure, and one that would normally result in some lost time at worst.

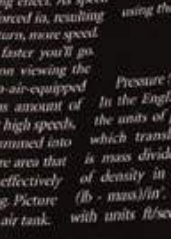
This mistake could have cost me my life.

Most racetracks have plenty of run-off room outside the pavement, and that's like having a safety net. But at the Isle of Man TT, there's no safety net. The course is narrow, and it's lined with power poles, sidewalks, stone walls, buildings, and hillsides.

As I fought to get the bike turned and keep it on the pavement, a steep hillside, with some rather stout-looking bushes, was looming dangerously close to my right. I barely managed to avoid doing an 80 mph bermshot off the hillside, although the bike and I did do a little custom trimming of the aforementioned bushes. It took a second or two to restart my heart afterward, as I contemplated a place to stop and change my underwear. Welcome to the Isle of Man TT.

Main photo: Blasting flat-out between walls and hillsides (like multi-race winner Phillip McCallum, 111) is what the Isle of Man TT is all about. Inset photos, top to bottom: The challenges of the Mountain Course are multi-faceted. My low-level flights over Ballagh Bridge were pathetic, but safe. Bushy's Pub in Douglas during a slow hour. 600cc sidecars are very popular at the TT.

VERY STRONG  
WHO'S BEING CALLED  
WE'VE PATCHES IN  
PLACES



With more and more sportbikes utilizing the "free horsepower" of ram-air induction to help boost power outputs, we decided to measure exactly how much the concept of ram-air was worth.

In Part 1, we took advantage of the already universal adoption of electronic fuel injection in the sportbike world and tapped into the airbox pressure sensor to measure exactly how much airbox pressure was created at various speeds. The amount of pressure generated was surprising on many of the bikes, especially when you consider that there was an engine gulping down huge quantities of air at the same time.

In Part 2, we took those pressure numbers and the exact same bikes and artificially created the airbox pressure while on the dyno to measure the power increase. Those results were even more surprising, with nearly all the bikes exhibiting an increase in power across the rpm range, and not just at triple-digit speeds.

## RAM-AIR TEST

OCTOBER 1999 (PART 1)  
DECEMBER 1999 (PART 2)

### PART ONE

# RAM AIR TEST

by KEN KUNITSU  
photography by FRANK KUNH

Finding out  
who's flowing  
and who's  
blowing

**THE SALES PITCH HAS BEEN LONG AND HEAVY:** "incredible volumetric efficiency," "large volumes of high-pressure air... significant boost in horsepower and torque," "force-fed, pressurized air results in... major increases in horsepower and torque." Ram air is one of the most highly touted advances made for sportbikes in recent years, yet its benefits are rarely objectively stated, or scientifically evaluated. First appearing on Kawasaki's ZX-11 model in 1992, ram-air induction has now become de rigueur; virtually all sportbikes these days come equipped with gaping air intakes on their fairings, along with the proclamations stated above.

### THEORY

The basic concept behind ram air is that a moving bike will stuff air into its forward-facing intake runners, resulting in a free supercharging effect. As speed increases more air is forced in, resulting in more power and, in turn, more speed. The faster you go, the faster you'll go. The first impression upon viewing the gaping maws of some ram-air-equipped bikes is that an enormous amount of pressure must be built up at high speeds, but this is not so. As air is jammed into the opening, the high-pressure area that is created builds outward, effectively stopping more air from entering. Picture a balloon being inflated with an air tank.

If the balloon is sealed to the nozzle, it will expand easily. Hold it slightly away from the nozzle, however, and the balloon will only inflate so far. The pressure build-up can be defined using the Pitot-static tube theory:

$$P = \frac{1}{2} \rho v^2$$

Pressure (P) is force divided by an area. In the English system of measurement the units of pressure are (lb. force)/in<sup>2</sup>, which translates to psi. Density (ρ) is mass divided by volume. The units of density in the English system are (lb. mass)/in<sup>3</sup>. Velocity (v) is air speed, with units ft/sec. Plotting pressure vs.



speed gives a graph that has theoretical pressure rising with the square of speed, and this is why ram air has much more effect at greater speeds. For a speed of 150 mph, the resulting maximum theoretical pressure would be about 27mb (approximately 4 psi). Millibar (mb) is a metric unit for pressure. We used millibar instead of psi to give more workable numbers. Of course, this air has to find its way to the carb mouths, and there is some loss due to the inefficiency of intake runners and the airbox itself. Without going into a lot of theory, suffice it to say that efficiency depends on the relative areas of the fairing intake, airbox intake and the airbox itself; even with a good system the loss can be as much as 70 percent. There is also the nagging problem of the engine gulping air from the system. This will lower the efficiency further, especially at higher speeds.

### THE TEST: PART ONE

So how much horsepower is ram-air induction really worth? Astute SR readers will recall Jon Doran's ram air/dyno test ("Ram air: What's it worth?") in the August '95 issue. While

the article was well done, we decided to take the concept a step further. We took one of Pi Research's advanced, System 3 data-acquisition systems and hooked up one of its air-pressure sensors into the airbox of eight different modern sportbikes. We also mounted a wheel-speed sensor which allowed us to precisely measure and compare road-speed with airbox pressure. Abscording with all the motorcycles to our top-secret, high-desert test site, we then proceeded to wring the piss out of each machine and gather data from each of the top-speed runs.

The results will—as Doran stated in his test four years ago—surprise you. All ram-air induction systems are obviously not created equal. In the following graphs, the upper line denotes wheel speed and the lower line represents airbox pressure.

**Note:** In the next issue of Sport Rider, we will complete the second part of this test by pressurizing the airboxes on each of the bikes to the amount measured by the Pi System—while running on the dyno—to find out just how much power ram air is really worth.



## BLOW YOUR OWN

APRIL 2000 (PART 1)

APRIL 2002 (PART 2)

When Mr. Turbo's Terry Kizer told us he had a new turbo system for Honda's CBR900RR that a customer could install himself and boost power numbers by up to 75 percent on pump gas, we were a bit skeptical. Lucky for us, we had a '99 CBR testbike in our shop, so we had Kizer ship us one of his kits.

Installation was a little more difficult than we anticipated (Kizer's own fuel-injection system replaced the CBR's carburetors), but everything eventually came together nicely. The result was a wheelie-prone 180-hp CBR. Unfortunately an encounter with a wayward automobile saw the CBR suffer some crash damage, so in Part 2, we took the opportunity to dress it up with a custom paint job, aluminum wheels, and other bits and pieces. We tried doing some dragstrip runs, but with the short stock wheelbase and stock ride height, the Mr. Turbo CBR was an absolute handful to get down the strip on two wheels.



## FEBRUARY 2001—SURPRISE INDUCATOR

With Ducati's 748 the bike of choice for many pro racers in the then-popular AMA Pro Thunder class, the upgraded 748R seemed like a natural progression. We pitched the Italian company on the foolish idea of SR's editor-in-chief entering our testbike in the final AMA race of the season at Willow Springs; Ducati took the bait.

We had noted Ducati speed shop Munroe Motors in San Francisco go through the bike to make it race ready; to our dismay, many of the go-fast parts in the Ducati Performance catalog wouldn't work on the 748R due to its different construction, but the bike was fast enough to be competitive. For once with a project bike like this, everything went our way, and I found myself almost stealing the race win from a napping Mike Smith (who would go on to be a factory H-D rider) at the finish line. Making the podium at an AMA National made for a great 40th birthday present.



## APRIL 2001—BABY 'BUSA

Former AMA and Formula USA racer Lee Shierts is also a talented engine builder, and his horsepower-laden machines made their mark in the *Motorcyclist* “Superbikes from Hell” and SR “UFO” contests. When he called and invited me to try his latest creation—a Suzuki GSX-R600 with a 230-hp Hayabusa engine shoehorned into it—I didn’t hesitate in making the trip out to his shop in Charlotte, North Carolina.

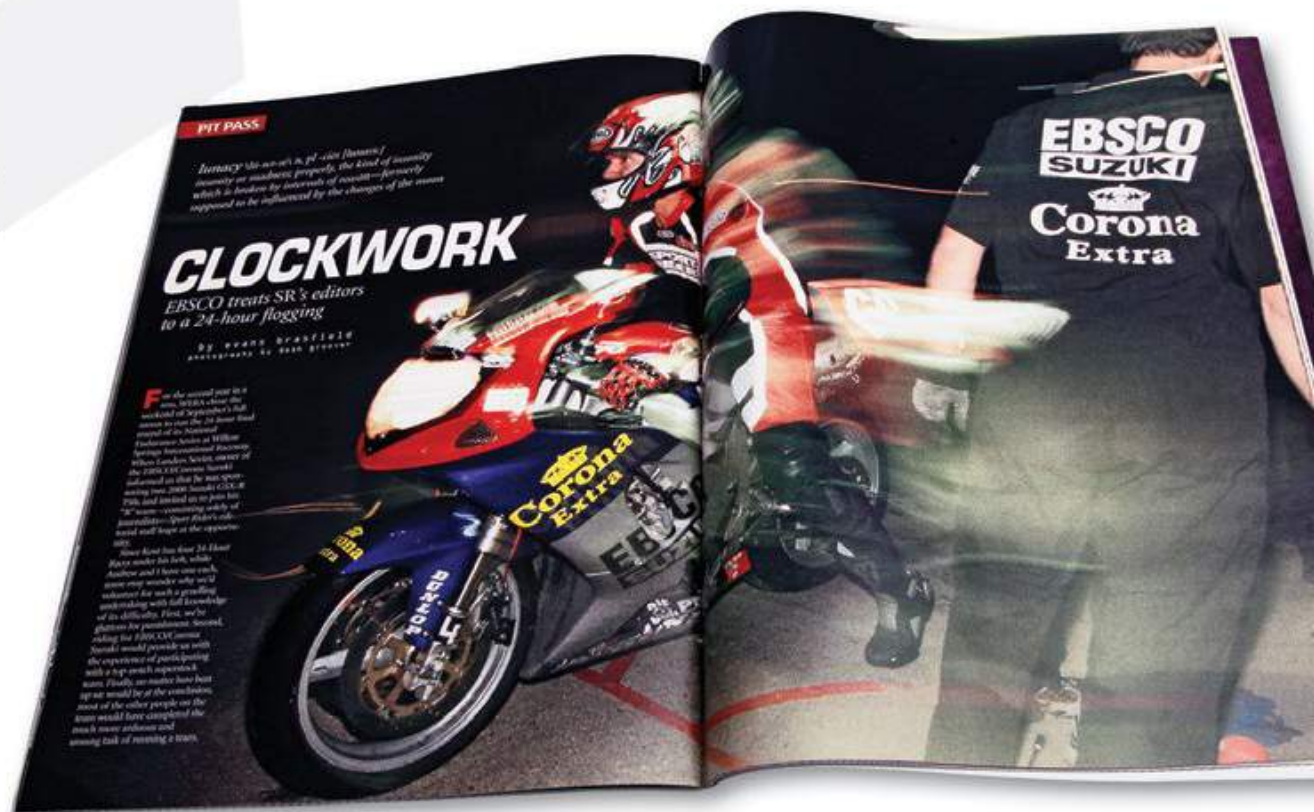
When “unsanctioned” drag racing centers around not letting your opponent know how quick you are, Shierts’ sleeper was rumored to have made him a good amount of wager cash. A trip down to the local dragstrip saw me experience what the term “violent” would be when used to describe a motorcycle. I eventually got enough of a handle on it to turn my first eight-second quarter-mile run: an 8.725-second at 156.16 mph blast that made me understand just what “quick off the line” really means.



## FEBRUARY 2001—CLOCKWORK

In the same issue as the Ducati racebike project, the SR staff (myself, Andrew Trevitt, and Evans Brasfield) found ourselves competing in the WERA 24 Hours of Willow Springs endurance race. Endurance racing was still hugely popular back then, and the Willow 24-hour race always had a stacked field with national-level racers and teams.

We were entered (along with British magazine *Fast Bikes* editors John Cantlie and Jimi Miller) as part of the EBSCO Media Suzuki team on a GSX-R750. Scorching 100-plus-degree temperatures made the first six hours of the race an exercise in survival, and the heat took its toll on the riders; Miller pulled out with heat exhaustion, and even Trevitt had to get IV fluids from our team doctor (yes, we also had a team masseuse) to recover from its delayed effects. Nonetheless, despite a couple of flat tires and a malfunctioning transmission, our team managed to finish seventh overall and second in class.





# Four States, Three Days

The SR gang takes a twisty (and somewhat hasty) tour through California, Nevada, Utah and Colorado

by kent kunitzugu

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY ANYTHING FEELING GOOD PHOTOGRAPHY  
BY NATE KUNITZUGU AND ANDREW TREVITT

Whenever I've pursued road maps in the past, I've usually bypassed the legend in the lower corner that converts miles to inches. I'm also accustomed to ignoring the little numbers that designate the number of miles between each town on the map. If I'm driving along some interstate highway, I don't want to know how much farther it is to the next stop than the last one. I just want to know how far I am from the nearest civilization so I can find a gas station. Road maps simply tell me that there is a highway that goes from here to there.

This year's SR staff was, however, taught me to pay much closer attention to all of those tiny black numbers that dot all of the highways—no matter how crowded—on a modern road map.

We'd been trying to come up with a destination for a road trip, but time constraints at the office precluded us from venturing very far. Then, I received a call back in February from Andy Holobinko, who runs a superbike rental service out of Golden, Colorado, called MotoRack (303.778.1862; [www.motorack.com](http://www.motorack.com)).

"Two guys could fly into Denver, then we could go out and ride down the great back roads out here in Colorado," he enthused. It sounded like a great idea, but we had to wait a few months for the spring show to get most of the

stomach (and good food for tire traction during layovers) off the pavement. Both of us agreed to talk again in May.

When that time came, however, some new developments had arisen. "We'll be traveling to the AMA/WSR races in Laguna Seca in July, and Aprilia's interested in supplying bikes. What if we all rode to Monterey and back?" suggested Holobinko. "The road time out of the office," was my backdoor reply. More imaginative thinking from Holobinko. "That's a one-way road," he said. "We could take a work or bus, about a one-way road to or from Laguna." That idea sounded and side other to me. We could ride from Monterey to Colorado, then just fly home.

Holobinko seemed confident that the trip could be accomplished in three days. And Aprilia's continued the pot by offering up two of its new RSV1000 Futuras for the tour. Excellent—the perfect opportunity for us to really hammer on the new Italian sport-bike machine in its true element. This was looking better by the minute.

Lacking any experience in the areas we were going to ride through, I left the tour logistics to Holobinko. He handled the route planning, hotel reservations and even arranged for a chase vehicle to follow in the case of an emergency. This allowed us the luxury of

not having to haul some soft luggage on our flight out to Monterey (although the Futuras came standard with hard bags), we could drive all our bags in the chase truck, which would then meet us at the hotel. Just what we needed: a real turnkey operation.

There were four riders total on this tour, with Trevitt representing SR Youth, Steve Mikolas (experienced SR rider) and I would be steering the Futuras, while Holobinko and I would be steering the Aprilia. Holobinko would alternate piloting an Aprilia RSV1000 Futura and the chase truck with his friend Jeremy Brown. The chase truck would allow us to cover a lot of ground without waiting for the tail end to catch up.

All of us finally got together on Monday at Laguna Seca to discuss the tour's planned route. The trip didn't look overly ambitious when initially examined on the map. The first day's ride would take us inland from Monterey through the upper portion of the Central Valley, then down into the town of Hawthorne (in the Nevada desert) for the night. The next day we'd cross the entire state of Nevada, then tumble into the southern section of Utah through Bryce Canyon and Inverness in the

town of Tropic at the end of Highway 12. From there, it looked to be a nice, twisty route into Colorado, ending up in Golden, where MotoRack is based. So in three days, we'd go from Monterey, California, to Golden, Colorado; it didn't seem like that much of a stretch, especially since none of the SR staff had planned a trip of this magnitude before. We would soon find out otherwise.

After eventually getting things together and taking care of some Speedvision activities for MotoRack TV on Monday morning following the races, we left "Motorcade" (in Laguna Seca it was called) at noon. Not exactly what we'd call an "on-time departure" to use the parlance of pilot Holobinko, who flies Boeing 737s for US Airways when not handling MotoRack.

Since summer was in full swing, the temperature at our full suite, it wasn't unbearable, however, and once we encountered a few twisty roads out of (billion), all weather complaints were easily forgotten. Route 140 around Mariposa, with some tight canyon stuff interspersed with long flowing sweeps. Discovering that both the Futuras and FZ4 were in need of some up-piston adjustments, we stopped on Route 99 out of

## DECEMBER 2001—FOUR STATES, THREE DAYS

It seemed like a great idea on paper: Yours truly and Senior Editor Andrew Trevitt, along with frequent guest tester Steve Mikolas and motorcycle rental company owner Andy Holobinko, would leave from Laguna Seca after the WSBK races for a sport-tour run through the Sierra Nevadas, across the northern Nevada desert, pop up through Bryce Canyon in Utah, and then traverse the Rockies into Golden, Colorado.

What it ended up turning into was a three-day torture test that saw us covering huge swaths of twisty road mileage at risky speeds to make Holobinko's overly ambitious destination each day. We experienced everything from traversing Nevada's mind-numbingly-straight-for-miles Highway 50, to dodging so many deer in Bryce Canyon National Park that we had to slow to 25 mph, to riding through a scary thunderstorm in Colorado that saw us nearly defibrillated by lightning numerous times.

## FEBRUARY 2005—SUPERCHARGED ZRX

The late Richard Sims was another "Superbikes from Hell" and "UFO" contest alumni, and he frequently offered us rides on outrageous bikes he'd built for customers. One such beast was a 2003 Kawasaki ZRX1200 with a Magnuson supercharger that cranked out an amazing 200 hp with more than 100 foot-pounds of torque at 5,000 rpm.

This was not some cobby-looking graft either; not only was the finished product build quality and appearance worthy of the best OEM standards, but Sims had to design and build his own custom fuel-injection system to work with the blower that was sandwiched into the tight space where the stock carburetors once lived. The engineering and fabrication that went into the design was incredible, and that was also reflected in its performance; not only was the bike ungodly fast, but it was also as rideable as a stocker, with smooth fueling and throttle response with no hiccups.

Sims passed away in September while assisting in chasing yet more speed records in Bonneville—he will be sorely missed.







## MARCH 2005—FORBIDDEN FRUIT

When I'd put forward the idea of riding Suzuki's MotoGP bike with Suzuki's then-PR manager Garrett Kai, I didn't have high hopes of it working out. But when SR freelancer Alan Cathcart called me and said he would only be joined by one other journalist from my publishing company at an exclusive test of the bike, it suddenly dawned on me that some dreams do come true.

And what a dream this was: Instead of sharing seat time with numerous other journalists in a hectic environment, I would be spending two days with Suzuki's MotoGP test team at the Valencia circuit with no other teams or people present. I was allowed unrivaled access to the team and was able to check out many parts on the GSV-R that were usually off limits to anyone but factory personnel. And when my time to ride finally came, I was able to run a total of 16 laps on the beast, allowing me to get a real feel for its performance (that was obviously off-the-charts incredible). It was definitely one of the most memorable experiences of my career and certainly the kind of stuff dreams are made of.

## DECEMBER 2006—JEOPARDY

For years, readers had been writing in to us asking if it was okay to use Brand X's sport-touring tire on their supersport bike, and some were even asking if a sport-touring tire was okay to use at a trackday. Others would ask if high-performance sport (i.e., trackday) tires are really that much better than a standard sport tire, while some inquired about how much they'd cut lap times if they tried slicks. We decided to finally put all those questions to rest and conducted an unprecedented comparison test between sport-touring, sport, high-performance sport, DOT race, and racing slick tires.

We selected two brands for the five different tires to give a fair and balanced perspective on the results. Like all our track tests, we employed datalogging equipment to show exactly where and how each tire performed; we were the first publication to use datalogging in order to give readers documented information on subjects like this. The results of the comparison were surprising, with less of a performance difference than many anticipated.





## APRIL 2007—EXTINCT BREED

When Dorna and the FIM decided to change the maximum displacement of MotoGP bikes to 800cc in 2008 in a knee-jerk attempt to stem top speeds, that meant the big tire-spinning 990cc machines would soon be history. Previously, a select few journalists from around the world would get to ride one or two MotoGP bikes after the season-ending race at Valencia; I was lucky enough to finagle a ride on not one or two but five factory MotoGP bikes: Chris Vermeulen's Suzuki GSV-R990, Valentino Rossi's Yamaha YZR-M1, Dani Pedrosa's Honda RC211V, Randy De Puniet's Kawasaki ZX-RR, and Troy Bayliss' Ducati Desmosedici GP6.

As you'd expect, it was a day to remember, and hopefully I was able to give SR readers an idea of what each bike was like to ride. Their distinct personality differences (and rider setups) were surprising, to say the least.



## AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2016—UNLEASHED!

The street-legal brother to the outrageous H2R is the H2, and in order to attain that approval for public road use, Kawasaki had to tone down the performance a bit. Naturally, noted performance proprietor Brock Davidson of Brock's Performance decided to unlock the speed potential locked inside the engine. And lucky for us, he pitched us on the idea (and Kawasaki gave the nod) to modify an H2 and run it at the Mojave Magnum top-speed event in Mojave, California.

With nothing more than bolt-on parts and a handful of practice runs, we managed to blast the Kawi through the 1.5-mile speed traps at a mind-altering top speed of 226.9 mph—on a bike with relatively poor aerodynamics. We probably could have gone even faster were we not hampered by lack of gearing due to the H2's countershaft and rear sprocket holder construction. And to top it all off, the Brock's Performance H2 is smooth and polished enough in its overall manners that we could have ridden it home afterward if we wanted to. **SR**





**ECSTAR**  
SUZUKI GENUINE OIL

# FROM THE TRACK TO YOUR GARAGE

**ECSTAR SUZUKI GENUINE OIL  
AND CHEMICALS: NOW AVAILABLE**

Say hello to all new, state-of-the-art ECSTAR Suzuki Genuine Oil. Created by MotoGP technicians and riders, it's the only choice for high-performance Suzuki engines like the GSX-R1000R. Get yours - and ride the difference.

SEE THE FULL ECSTAR OIL AND CHEMICAL  
LINE AT [STORE.SUZUKICYCLES.COM](http://STORE.SUZUKICYCLES.COM)

**SUZUKI**  
PARTS & ACCESSORIES

Suzuki, the "S" logo, ECSTAR, and the Suzuki model and product names are Suzuki trademarks or ®. © Suzuki Motor of America, Inc. 2017.



## Put it where the sun don't shine!

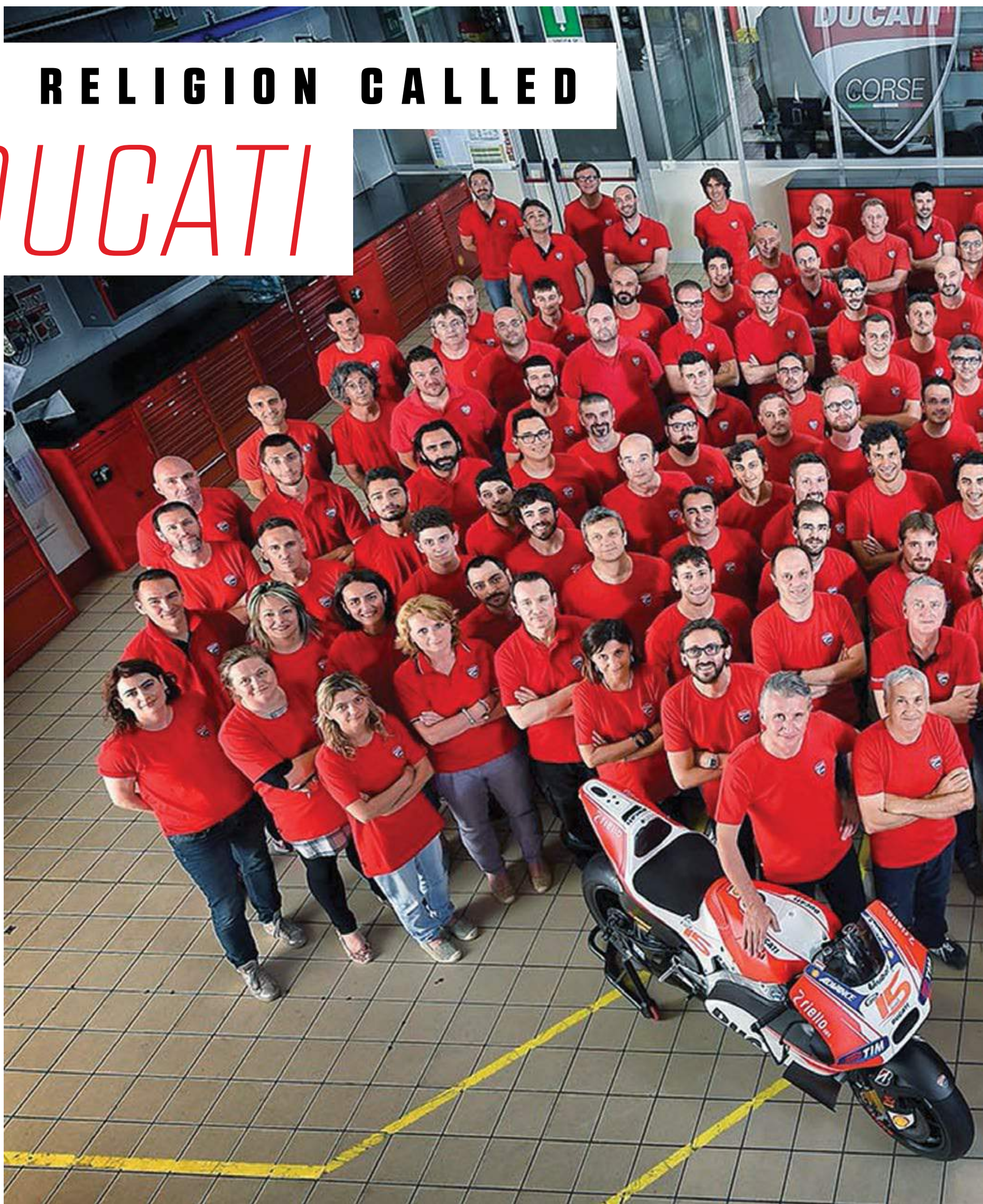
Those dark, hidden places can kill your steel. Dirt builds up and traps moisture. Next thing, corrosion starts. S100® Total Cycle Cleaner is the answer. Its creeping power can get to places you can't reach or even see. Then its penetrating action zaps even the toughest stains. (It's even got a corrosion inhibitor so it washes safely.) Ordinary washes and cleaners can't do all that! No wonder it's been the favorite of bike makers themselves for over a generation. Protect your expensive investment with the best cleaning it can get! Find it at better bike shops.

Learn more at [www.s100.com](http://www.s100.com).





# A RELIGION CALLED *DUCATI*







There are many companies where the employees take pride in the brand they work for, but the enthusiasm displayed by the people who work for Ducati—like the group pictured here, comprising the Ducati Reparto Corse (“Racing Department”) which is a small portion of the workforce—is on another level.

BY MANUEL PECINO  
PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF DUCATI



» For someone who is not from the country where Ferrari was born, it may be difficult to understand how far the passion of the Italians can reach. Especially when it comes to motorcycles and racing.

Donato D'Amato, 28, is from Salerno, in southern Italy. He bears a striking red tattoo on his right forearm: It's Ducati's coat of arms, as red as the blood that flows through his veins. He works as a technician in the Ducati machining department and passionately says he is "living a dream."

Davide Cattabriga is 38 years old, from Bologna, and coordinates the mechanics of the production lines at Ducati. He has the Ducati Panigale suspension tattooed on one of his calves and the Superquadro pistons and cylinders on a forearm. But the tattoo he is most proud of hides underneath his shirt, emblazoned across his chest: an image of the Desmodromic engine. He wanted very much to show it, but he thought it would be rude and incorrect to remove his shirt at his place of work. As in the case of D'Amato, Cattabriga affirms with passion: "This is a good year."

In the hallways and offices, many Ducati engineers can be seen proudly wearing Andrea Dovizioso's commemorative T-shirt for his victory at Mugello. It bears the inscription: "The success made in Italy," a shirt commemorating the Italian rider's triumph at the Italian GP...on an Italian motorcycle with an Italian engine. Inside Ducati's headquarters, the walls and work areas are lined with posters of the rider from Forlì, the same picture used for the huge photograph that hangs proudly on one of the facades of the factory.

Welcome to Ducati Motor, Via Antonio Cavalieri Ducati, 3, in the western quarter of Bologna known as Borgo Panigale, a place where every one of the 1,200 employees—from the CEO to the custodian—are "infected with the red virus." Perhaps ill, some might say, but hopelessly happy.

They say the devotion of the Ducati workers to their brand is the secret to a company in the middle of a challenge, whose analogy would be something like the biblical tale of David and Goliath. For example, 55,000 units per year is Ducati's production. Honda, on the other hand, produces 12 million engines at its numerous worldwide plants over the same period.

In the same plant where the bikes you can buy in any Ducati dealership around the world are built, the Desmosedici GP17s are also assembled, in a separate section of the facility known as the Reparto Corse. These are the technologically advanced machines that brought Dovizioso and Danilo Petrucci to the podium in the first part of the



1

Technician Davide Cattabriga (right) and two co-workers assemble a 1299 Panigale on the production line at Ducati. Having a passion for the brand means you take pride in your work, and that obviously pays off in end-product quality.

2

A huge photo-banner depicting Andrea Dovizioso on his way to victory at the Italian GP at Mugello hangs proudly on one side of the factory complex.

3

Cattabriga's arm tattoo depicts the pistons and cylinders of the Superquadro engine.

4

Would you ever see any other motorcycle manufacturer CEO show this much passion and enthusiasm about racing? Ducati CEO Claudio Domenicali kisses the Desmosedici GP17 after Dovizioso's win at the Italian Grand Prix.



3







2017 season. Competition and commercial winds blow the Ducati sails, especially in the United States, which continues to be Ducati's biggest market in terms of unit sales.

There have been seven years of continuous growth, with a turnover in 2016 of 731 million euros and a profit of 50 million euros. Some say that this situation derived from the entry of Ducati Motor Holding into the Volkswagen conglomerate at the hands of Audi five years ago. But when the CEO of the German group visited all of the workers at Borgo Panigale, his words were very clear: *"Ducati bleibt Ducati"* ("Ducati will remain Ducati"). That is, Ducati would still be Italian. "We were given carte blanche, we cooperated and exchanged data with Wolfsburg [Volkswagen Group Headquarters], but here we continue to decide, they trust us to do well," Claudio Domenicali, CEO of Ducati, explains.

The Germans paid \$962 million for the company in 2012, but then the "DieselGate" emissions scandal three years later forced the huge VW conglomerate to pay \$2.8 billion in fines to the USA's Environmental Protection Agency, plus pledge more than \$18.3 billion to rectify all of the VW automobiles affected worldwide by the scandal. In reportedly looking to "streamline" its bulging business portfolio, the VW Group was said to have instructed its banks to determine interest in Ducati, but the company's supervisory board (which includes several powerful labor union leaders) quickly squelched that idea. In the meantime, the Italians, the proud heirs of a company founded almost a century ago in the basement of the Società Scientifica Radio Brevetti, continue to steer Ducati.

Ducati is a company that mixes a factory, a laboratory of engineering ideas (the only way it is possible to compete in both sport and commercial interests with the comparatively colossal Japanese brands), and a family united by "the blood," in this case, the passion for a brand.

D'Amato, the man with the tattooed forearms, had a dream since childhood. "I'm from the south," he says. "I dismantled scooters and imagined becoming a rider. In my village I worked in a steel mold factory, but one day I left everything and I presented a CV here. It took me a while, it took me some time, but I finally got to work here. I got into Ducati."

For three years, D'Amato has been dealing with crankshafts and connecting rods. "For me it was like entering a family," the Italian mechanic says with a passion shared by each of the workers we spoke with. "Ducati is special; I put my hands on



pieces that will one day be decisive in the world racing championship. After winning in Mugello, the riders were here with us, humble, available... We are a team."

Most of them ride to and from work on the same type of bikes that leave the assembly lines; the employee parking lot is packed with Ducati motorcycles belonging to the factory workers. "I have a Monster 821 and I go out to ride when I have free time," D'Amato says. "How it sounds! You hear the two-cylinder from afar, it's pure music."

D'Amato also confesses that during the party in the factory to celebrate the triumphs, he took Dovizioso aside and said to him, "This year we will win, understand? It's been 10 years since Casey Stoner did his job, 10 years we've been waiting for the second title. It's on the way, and when we get there it will be ours, everyone's."

The party, the event, the family reunion—call it what you will—that took place in Borgo Panigale mid-June to celebrate Andrea Dovizioso's double victory had no shortage of attendees. They were all there: riders, competition department engineers, production plant personnel, those in the administrative department, et al.

Sitting in the first row was Cattabriga, who they say is capable of performing miracles with a screwdriver. "I've been at Ducati for 20 years," the Bologna native notes. "It's something I carry with pride and passion. Yamaha's racing department is as big as Ducati's, but they do not have the Italian genius." Cattabriga has two Panigales in his garage. At Ducati, he works with two friends from Calabria, Giuseppe Curia and Agostino Magliarella. "We have to work hard these days. The quality leap in MotoGP also depends on us...and the engineers of the Reparto Corse from the top floor."

Curia and Magliarella tell us that when they go to the beach, they obviously bring their bright-red Ducati towels. "People are curious and ask if we are fans of Ducati," Curia says. "When replying that we are much more than just that, that we work at Ducati, they look at us with admiration and respect. There is no need to say more." The immense pride felt by Curia and Magliarella is readily apparent.

And that pride was surely soon to grow even larger for one of these three. Cattabriga, Curia, and Magliarella didn't know it, but in the weeks following our visit to the factory, one of the three would be chosen to join the Ducati Corse race team's MotoGP crew. **SR**



1

1

Ducati CEO Domenicali gives Dovizioso an enthusiastic hug as the team celebrates in parc ferme after the Italian took victory in the Mugello MotoGP race.

2

Cattabriga's leg tattoo is made to look like his calf contains an Öhlins TTX36 shock and linkage from a Panigale inside.

3

Dovizioso's victory at the Mugello MotoGP race was not only the team's and his first victory of 2017, but it also put the Italian in the point lead for the championship.

2

3





# HARBOR FREIGHT

QUALITY TOOLS AT RIDICULOUSLY LOW PRICES

800+ Stores Nationwide • HarborFreight.com

**PITTSBURGH MOTORCYCLE** **SUPER COUPON**

**1000 LB. CAPACITY MOTORCYCLE LIFT**

• Diamond plate steel platform and ramp  
• Lift range: 7" – 29-1/2"

Customer Rating ★★★★★

**SAVE \$750**

~~\$429.99~~ **\$299.99**

Compare \$1049.99 ITEM 69904/68892 shown

38062908

LIMIT 3 - Coupon valid through 1/30/18\*

**EARTHQUAKE XT** **SUPER COUPON**

**SAVE \$394** **1/2" COMPOSITE EXTREME TORQUE AIR IMPACT WRENCH**

Customer Rating ★★★★★

**NEW**

• 1190 ft. lbs. bolt breakaway torque

~~\$129.99~~ **\$149.99** Compare \$524.95

ITEM 62891

50041528

LIMIT 5 - Coupon valid through 1/30/18\*

**SUPER COUPON**

**FREE** WITH ANY PURCHASE

**PITTSBURGH**

**6 PIECE SCREWDRIVER SET**

**\$7.97** VALUE

ITEM 62728/62583/47770/62570 shown

38057043

LIMIT 1 - Cannot be used with other discount, coupon or prior purchase. Coupon good at our stores, HarborFreight.com or by calling 800-423-2567. Offer good while supplies last. Shipping & Handling charges may apply if not picked up in-store. Non-transferable. Original coupon must be presented. Valid through 1/30/18. Limit one FREE GIFT coupon per customer per day.

**SUPER COUPON**

**20% OFF** ANY SINGLE ITEM

38052108

LIMIT 1 - Coupon per customer per day. Save 20% on any 1 item purchased. \*Cannot be used with other discount, coupon or any of the following items or brands: Inside Track Club membership, Extended Service Plan, gift card, cases box item, 3 day Parking Lot Sale item, compressors, floor jacks, saw mills, storage cabinets, chests or carts, trailers, trenchers, welders, Admiral, Bauer, Cobra, CoverPro, Daytona, Earthquake, Hercules, Jupiter, Lynx, Poulan, Predator, StormCut, Tailgator, Viking, Vulture, Zurich. Not valid on prior purchases. Non-transferable. Original coupon must be presented. Valid through 1/30/18.

**PITTSBURGH AUTOMOTIVE** **SUPER COUPON**

**#1 SELLING JACKS IN AMERICA**

**RAPID PUMP® 3 TON LOW PROFILE HEAVY DUTY STEEL FLOOR JACK**

• Weighs 73 lbs.

Customer Rating ★★★★★

**SAVE \$69**

~~\$179.99~~ **\$95.99** Compare \$149.98

ITEM 61253/62326/61282 shown

38072149

LIMIT 4 - Coupon valid through 1/30/18\*

**TAILGATOR** **SUPER COUPON**

**NEW** **900 MAX. STARTING/700 RUNNING WATTS 2 HP (63 CC) 2 CYCLE GAS GENERATOR**

• 5 hours run-time @ 50% capacity

Customer Rating ★★★★★

**SAVE \$109.99** **\$89.99**

ITEM 63024 63025 shown

38072770

LIMIT 5 - Coupon valid through 1/30/18\*

**HaulMaster** **SUPER COUPON**

**TRIPLE BALL TRAILER HITCH**

Customer Rating ★★★★★

**SAVE 53%**

~~\$31.99~~ **\$19.99**

ITEM 61914 Compare \$42.98

38072852

LIMIT 7 - Coupon valid through 1/30/18\*

**U.S. GENERAL** **SUPER COUPON**

**30", 5 DRAWER TOOL CART**

• 8100 cu. in. of storage  
• 704 lb. capacity  
• Weighs 120 lbs.

Customer Rating ★★★★★

**SAVE \$990**

~~\$179.99~~ **\$159.99** Compare \$1150

ITEM 61427/63308/69397/95272 shown

38079239

LIMIT 3 - Coupon valid through 1/30/18\*

**PORTLAND** **SUPER COUPON**

**1750 PSI PRESSURE WASHER**

• 1.3 GPM  
• Adjustable spray nozzle

Customer Rating ★★★★★

**NEW**

**SAVE \$99**

~~\$79.99~~ **\$99.99** Compare \$179.33

ITEM 63255/63254 shown

38103015

LIMIT 5 - Coupon valid through 1/30/18\*

**CENTRAL PNEUMATIC** **SUPER COUPON**

**21 GALLON, 2.5 HP, 125 PSI VERTICAL OIL-LUBE AIR COMPRESSOR**

Customer Rating ★★★★★

**SAVE \$49** **\$149.99** Compare \$199

~~\$179.99~~

ITEM 69091/61454 62803/63635/67847 shown

38103521

LIMIT 4 - Coupon valid through 1/30/18\*

**HaulMaster** **SUPER COUPON**

**1195 LB. CAPACITY 4 FT. x 8 FT. FOLDABLE HEAVY DUTY TRAILER**

• DOT certified tires

Customer Rating ★★★★★

**SAVE \$140** **\$259.99** Compare \$399.99

~~\$299.99~~

ITEM 62648/62666/90154 shown

38110832

LIMIT 3 - Coupon valid through 1/30/18\*

**PITTSBURGH MOTORCYCLE** **SUPER COUPON**

**DIRT BIKE STAND**

• 1000 lb. capacity

Customer Rating ★★★★★

**SAVE 63%**

~~\$29.99~~ **\$19.99** Compare \$54.99

ITEM 67151

38110843

LIMIT 7 - Coupon valid through 1/30/18\*

**HARDY** **SUPER COUPON**

**MECHANIC'S GLOVES**

Customer Rating ★★★★★

SIZE ITEM

MED	62434/62426
LG	62433/62428
X-LG	62432/62429

**YOUR CHOICE** **\$3.99** Compare \$5.99

Item 62429 shown

38111151

LIMIT 9 - Coupon valid through 1/30/18\*

**BADLAND** **SUPER COUPON** **Battle Tested**

**SAVE \$410** **12,000 LB. ELECTRIC WINCH WITH REMOTE CONTROL AND AUTOMATIC BRAKE**

• Weighs 83.5 lbs.  
• 21-1/4" L x 10-1/8" H

Customer Rating ★★★★★

Voted Best Winches

~~\$389.99~~ **\$289.99** Compare \$699.99

ITEM 61256/61889/60813 shown

38118805

LIMIT 3 - Coupon valid through 1/30/18\*

**PITTSBURGH MOTORCYCLE** **SUPER COUPON**

**HEAVY DUTY CHAIN BREAKER**

Customer Rating ★★★★★

**SAVE 68%**

~~\$24.99~~ **\$7.99** Compare \$13.99

ITEM 66488

38124150

LIMIT 9 - Coupon valid through 1/30/18\*

**SUPER COUPON**

**SOLAR ROPE LIGHT**

• Great outdoor accent lighting  
• Super bright light

Customer Rating ★★★★★

**SAVE 66%**

~~\$13.99~~ **\$9.99** Compare \$29.97

ITEM 63941/62533/68353 shown

38022898

LIMIT 8 - Coupon valid through 1/30/18\*

**PITTSBURGH** **SUPER COUPON**

**9 PIECE, 1/4", 3/8" AND 1/2" DRIVE WOBBLE SOCKET EXTENSION SET**

Customer Rating ★★★★★

**SAVE 68%**

~~\$14.99~~ **\$9.99** Compare \$32.13

ITEM 61278 67971 shown

38026141

LIMIT 9 - Coupon valid through 1/30/18\*

**COVERPRO** **SUPER COUPON**

**10 FT. x 17 FT. PORTABLE GARAGE**

Customer Rating ★★★★★

**SAVE \$113**

~~\$109.99~~ **\$169.99** Compare \$283.50

ITEM 62859/63055/62860 shown

38030575

LIMIT 5 - Coupon valid through 1/30/18\*

**PITTSBURGH** **SUPER COUPON**

**18 PIECE SAE AND METRIC T-HANDLE BALL END HEX KEY SET**

Customer Rating ★★★★★

**SAVE 47%**

~~\$17.99~~ **\$12.99** Compare \$24.97

ITEM 63167/63166 96645 shown

38047833

LIMIT 7 - Coupon valid through 1/30/18\*

**PITTSBURGH AUTOMOTIVE** **SUPER COUPON**

**1 TON CAPACITY FOLDABLE SHOP CRANE**

• Boom extends from 36-1/4" to 50-1/4"  
• Crane height adjusts from 82" to 94"

Customer Rating ★★★★★

**SAVE \$169**

~~\$169.99~~ **\$99.99** Compare \$269

ITEM 69512 61858/69445 shown

38049478

LIMIT 3 - Coupon valid through 1/30/18\*

\*Original coupon only. No use on prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase or without original receipt. Valid through 1/30/18.

At Harbor Freight Tools, the "Compare" or "comp at" price means that the same item or a similar functioning item was advertised for sale at or above the "Compare" or "comp at" price by another retailer in the U.S. within the past 180 days. Prices advertised by others may vary by location. No other meaning of "Compare" or "comp at" should be implied. For more information, go to HarborFreight.com or see store associate.





# RACING'S LAST **OPEN FRONTIER**



The Suzuka 8 Hours is more like  
an eight-hour sprint than an  
endurance race, and there are  
no spec tire or ECU rules—  
may the best team win



BY MANUEL PECINO  
PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF  
JUN GOTO, YAMAHA RACING,  
AND HONDA RACING







**RIGHT** The pre-race introduction of the teams/riders is a long-running tradition at Suzuka, with the riders sitting along the front straight. Naoe Yoshimura holds a photo of her late husband, the renowned Hideo "Pops" Yoshimura, in the Yoshimura Suzuki team area.



**LEFT** The pit stops at Suzuka are a wonder to behold. The quicker teams can change out both wheels, add fuel, and switch riders in about 12 to 15 seconds; the times actually used to be half that until rule changes for refueling were made for safety.





**BELOW** All of the big factory teams had inflatable pools behind the pitboxes that allowed the riders to immediately cool off after their stint. In the late '90s/early 2000s, some of the big factory teams even used IV fluid replenishment, but the practice was banned after a few years.



Behind the rental-car counter at Osaka's Kansai International Airport, the young Japanese employee asks, "Are you attending the 8 Hours?" After replying that I am (and noting that I have no clothing that designates me as being involved in motorcycles), he states, "I also will go to the 40th anniversary but only for the race on Sunday." He then asks, "Which brand do you support?" When I tell him that I am a journalist, and thus am not supporting anybody, he replies, "Ah, I see! I'm for Suzuki, though I think this year Yamaha is going to win again."

This short and apparently innocuous conversation demonstrated how unique the Suzuka 8 Hours race is. It's hopefully a sign that the event is beginning to regain its prominence among the Japanese public...especially the younger generation who have abandoned it in the last decade or so searching for emotions in other entertainment options.

The buildup to the Suzuka 8 Hours race begins with practice sessions on Wednesday and



**ABOVE** The Suzuka 8 Hours (as well as all other FIM EWC races) uses the traditional Le Mans start, where the machines are lined up on the opposite side of the track from the riders, who must sprint across the track to their dead-engined bikes to begin the race. **LEFT** The punishing heat and humidity at Suzuka mean sweat-soaked leathers, so most of the teams use big fans to blow air through the leathers during downtime to keep them dry and comfy.

Thursday, followed by provisional qualifying on Friday. Saturday is reserved for the Suzuka 4 Hours race (limited to 600cc supersport machines) and the "Top 10 Trial" where each rider is allowed a single flying lap (Suzuka is where the Superpole qualifying concept originated), with the teams' two quickest riders' laps averaged to determine the starting position of the top 10 qualifying teams.

It's that "team" aspect that permeates everything about the Suzuka 8 Hours race. The rental-car employee asked me about which brand I supported, and there was no mention at all of any star rider. The brand loyalty at Suzuka is another difference to other races. At MotoGP races, the fans are often organized by which riders they support—yellow for Valentino Rossi, red for Marc Márquez, black for Jorge Lorenzo—but the grandstands at Suzuka are divided among the colors that represent the four Japanese brands: red for Honda, blue for Yamaha, green obviously for Kawasaki followers, and a different blue for Suzuki fans.

#### A MATTER OF HONOR

For the factories—at the least the "Big Four" Japanese manufacturers—the 8 Hours is the most important event of the year. Yes, MotoGP is the big challenge and the championship that demands more resources, but the Suzuka 8 Hours is special; it's the race that commands respect among the factories.

The race takes place the last weekend of July, which is traditionally the warmest time of the year in Japan. The temperature is usually a bit over 30 degrees Celsius (86 degrees Fahrenheit), but the humidity is terrible, nearly unbearable. Conditions are bad enough that the race takes a physical toll on the riders that lasts for weeks afterward. The heat is brutal enough that all the teams have inflatable pools behind their pitboxes that the riders throw themselves into after they get off the bike (some of the factory teams actually employed IV fluid replenishment in the late '90s/early 2000s, but the practice was eventually banned).

The race is held at the Suzuka circuit, a track considered the mother of all circuits due to its difficulty. It's owned by Honda and is housed within an amusement park also owned by the same company. Needless to say, this race is extremely important to Honda. And you can imagine what it means for the other Japanese manufacturers to beat Honda in its own backyard.

This year's Suzuka 8 Hours had a special flavor: It marked the race's 40th anniversary. And having lost the last two years to Yamaha, for Honda it was a matter of honor to win this year, especially after the order given by Honda Motor Company president Takahiro Hachigo to his employees: "The 40th anniversary of the Suzuka 8 Hours has to be won."

#### 40TH ANNIVERSARY

Knowing that its old CBR was too outdated to compete with Yamaha's R1, Honda understood that the only way to win was significantly update the bike, and that's what it did for this year's race. If you think the launch of the new CBR1000RR was just a coincidence with Suzuka's 40th anniversary year—think again. The truth is the new



CBR1000RR was created to enable Honda to take back what Yamaha had stolen from it in the past two years: the glory of winning at Suzuka.

Honda wasn't "officially" involved in the race, but a look in the pitboxes of the MuSASHi RT HARC Pro and FCC TSR teams showed the reality: Both were strongly supported by HRC. Shinichi Kokubu (HRC general manager of technical development division) and Kazuhiko Yamano (former Repsol Honda team manager) spent the weekend in the MuSASHi RT HARC Pro garage. And the FCC TSR garage was crowded with HRC staff. Some of them used to work for Repsol Honda; others worked for Team Gresini. It was pretty obvious HRC had sent a good amount of resources to Suzuka.

And yet despite the president's message and its new machine, Honda engineers knew that a miracle would be needed to win the race. Although they had been preparing the bike for almost nine months, it wasn't ready to beat Yamaha's R1. This confirms what former HRC Vice President Shuhei Nakamoto told us in April during the GP of the Americas held in Austin: "Our bike is 18 kilograms lighter than the one used last year, but we aren't competitive enough yet in other areas."

Trying to increase its odds by numbers, Honda lined up teams with every possible tire combination, an amazing situation that is now impossible to see anywhere else in the world: The MuSASHi RT HARC Pro and FCC TSR teams used 17-inch Bridgestones, while the Moriwaki Motul Racing team preferred 17-inch Pirellis. The Honda Dream Racing Team was on the 16.5-inch Bridgestones, and the au&Teluru Kohara Racing Team lined up with 17-inch Dunlops. Three different tire makers and two different tire diameters...

Suzuki had also a new bike for the 40th anniversary, but like Honda, the new-generation GSX-R1000R arrived at the race without being ready. In fact, only two teams—Yoshimura and Kagayama—out of nine Suzuki squads in the race used the 2017 GSX-R; the rest raced on the older 2016 version. Electronics were apparently their biggest handicap; because the Suzuka 8 Hours does not restrict electronics, Honda and Yamaha could use the hyper-sophisticated proprietary electronics that are no longer legal in MotoGP. Before the advent of the spec ECU, this was an area where Suzuki was a step behind.

Yamaha and Kawasaki approached the 8 Hours in a more conservative way. Both factories lined up their 2016 bikes with the regular updates. Yamaha had won with its R1 the last two years, while Kawasaki's Team Green had been the only bike to finish in the same lap as the winners. Both made the saying, "A known devil is better than an unknown angel" its policy for this year's event. This included the use of Bridgestone's old-generation

16.5-inch tires, as both teams had a lot of data with them from the previous years.

An example how much the Japanese factories concentrate on the Suzuka 8 Hours is Yamaha and Kawasaki's private test at Sepang in January, when the teams traveled there to test the new 17-inch Bridgestone tires in similar conditions they would face in Suzuka in July. But the weather didn't cooperate, and the long run tests couldn't be completed; so the decision was taken to stick on the 16.5-inch tires.

### YAMAHA WINS EVERYTHING

To describe the 8 Hours race in detail would probably take up all the pages of this magazine. So many things happen, so many anecdotes, details... But in the end, what matters is the final result, and in this aspect there were clearly two winners and two losers in the 40th anniversary Suzuka 8 Hours race.

When I met Kouichi Tsuji—the man responsible for all of Yamaha's racing activities—in the paddock after the race, the usually distant Japanese engineer was surprisingly exultant. "We have won everything! The 8 Hours, the Endurance World Championship, and the 4 Hours race with an Indonesian team." Yes, the most important event of the year for the Japanese Big Four finished with a full bingo for Yamaha.

Yamaha's main factory racing team with Katsuyuki Nakasuga, Alex Lowes, and Michael van der Mark started from the pole position and lapped fast, consistent, and didn't make any mistakes: the perfect script for a long-distance race. For Nakasuga, it was his third win in a row, setting a

new record for a Japanese rider at Suzuka.

Kawasaki was again second when the checkered flag fell at 7:30 p.m. in Suzuka (Team Green also finished second in 2016). The Kawasaki squad did its job well. They were never really in the spotlight, but with consistency and a good pace, they took advantage of their well-planned strategy and the errors of the others. Having won only once in 40 years of the 8 Hours ('93 with WSBK champion Scott Russell and Aaron Slight), it looks like it's time for Kawasaki to go for the victory. Its strong and all-winning WSBK pair of Jonathan Rea and Tom Sykes could be a very strong base to build up a challenging team.

If Yamaha and Kawasaki finished this year's 8 Hours with their job done, Honda and Suzuki were the opposite side of the coin. Probably the most disappointed was Team Yoshimura. It was surely frustrating for the team when Katsuyuki Tsuda crashed in the second lap of the race. Yoshimura Suzuki's one year of work was thrown away less than five minutes after the start. This after Tsuda had managed on Saturday to put the Yoshimura Suzuki in second spot on the grid, meaning Yoshimura's expectations for the race were reasonably high.

We have left Honda for the end of our story, as it was the big loser of its own race. The orders from the boss were not only to be very competitive but also to win. Trying not to lose sight of the Yamaha team, the MuSASHi RT HARC Pro riders made errors, which cost them second position in the later stages of the race. A big disappointment for Honda...or maybe not that much. Because as we said before, back in April it seemed they knew it was going to be an uphill battle to win at Suzuka. **SR**

The Yamaha factory racing team took its third straight victory with the 2017 roster of Katsuyuki Nakasuga, Alex Lowes, and Michael van der Mark (it was also Nakasuga's third consecutive victory, becoming the first Japanese rider to do so). The Team Green Kawasaki squad of Kazuma Watanabe, Leon Haslam, and Azlan Shah Bin Kamaruzaman finished second, and the FCC TSR Honda team of Josh Hook, Dominique Aegerter, and Randy De Puniet in third.





**MOTOAMERICA**

# FULL THROTTLE MOTORCYCLE RACING

**APRIL 21 - 23**  
CIRCUIT OF THE AMERICAS

**APRIL 28 - 30**  
ROAD ATLANTA

**MAY 12 - 14**  
VIRGINIA INTERNATIONAL  
RACEWAY

**JUNE 2 - 4**  
ROAD AMERICA

**JUNE 23 - 25**  
UTAH MOTORSPORTS CAMPUS

**JULY 7 - 9**  
MAZDA RACEWAY LAGUNA SECA

**AUGUST 11 - 13**  
SONOMA RACEWAY

**AUGUST 25 - 27**  
PITTSBURGH INTERNATIONAL  
RACE COMPLEX

**SEPTEMBER 8 - 10**  
NEW JERSEY MOTORSPORTS  
PARK

**SEPTEMBER 15 - 17**  
BARBER MOTORSPORTS PARK

\* SCHEDULE SUBJECT TO CHANGE



## WATCH US LIVE



HAYDEN ELIAS GERLOFF

BEAUBIER BEACH HAYES

GET YOUR TICKETS AT [MOTOAMERICA.COM](http://MOTOAMERICA.COM) // #FULLTHROTTLE



## BITCHIN' FRESH KIT

The summer riding season has come to an end, and its harsh conditions have probably taken a toll on your equipment. Now is the perfect time to throw out your sweat-coated gear and give your bike a tune-up as we head into fall. Check out the five products below!

### EBC GPFAX BRAKE PADS

Chances are that a summer of riding has roasted your brake pads—well, unless you're so fast that you don't use them! Do yourself a favor and keep yourself safe by replacing your worn-out pads with fresh ones. EBC's USA-made GPFAX sintered street and trackday pads are an excellent option for all-around use because they are designed with longevity in mind while having exceptional fade resistance and stopping power for the racetrack.

**\$85 per set**  
[ebcbrakes.com](http://ebcbrakes.com)



### DUNLOP Q3+ TIRES

Dunlop's new Sportmax Q3+ tires are the perfect replacement for your bike's worn-out rubber. The tires are the next generation of the popular Q3, featuring numerous changes like redesigned rear carcass and a center tread pattern made of a silica-based recipe. The results of the upgrades are a claimed 30 percent more mileage and improved racetrack performance. The best of both worlds? Definitely.

**\$180.96 front, \$232.68–\$271.69 rear**  
[dunlopmotorcycletires.com](http://dunlopmotorcycletires.com)





### 6D ATS-1 HELMET

The seasons are changing at a fast rate, and so is 6D Helmets' ATS-1. The new "medium/small" version of the ATS-1 features an updated version of the Omni-Directional Suspension (ODS) technology that allows the medium/small ATS-1 to be smaller and narrower overall, improving aerodynamics and shedding weight. Besides the ODS, the helmet comes packed with an ultra-light carbon shell, anti-scratch face shield, removable comfort liner, and the ODS air-gap ventilation system.

**\$849.95**  
6dhelmets.com



### SCORPION PHALANX JACKET

Get rid of the smelly jacket you wore all summer and prepare for fall with the Scorpion's newest textile sport jacket, the Phalanx. The jacket has a water-resistant construction and comes equipped with a removable thermal liner vest to keep you comfortable during this season's changing conditions. Other features include a back protector compartment that comes with PE foam, zippered vents, NightVIZ reflective areas, and a dual waist strap for custom fit.

**\$229.95**  
scorpionusa.com

### RK CHAIN AND DRIVEN SPROCKET KIT

Your bike's components have probably taken a beating this summer, and its chain and sprockets are no exception. Offered by RK Excel America, the 520 Aluminum Race Kit comes packed with RK's lightweight RX- or XW-ring sealed gold chains, along with a rear sprocket machined from 7075-T6 aluminum and a cased-hardened steel front sprocket from Driven. The kit is an easy way to refresh your worn-out parts, and its lightweight build will help improve acceleration.

**\$201.95**  
rkexcelamerica.com







# LOADING YOUR LEGS

Using your leg strength can be highly beneficial on the street and the track

BY MICHAEL GILBERT PHOTO BY BRIAN J. NELSON

» Your legs are incredibly strong, so it should seem obvious that making proper use of them while on the bike can pay dividends to your riding. The funny part is that most average riders don't know the capabilities of them and therefore rely heavily on their upper body to ride the motorcycle. Oftentimes this can drive them to the point of mistakes and exhaustion. Why not use your legs to their potential and improve speed, efficiency, and cornering ability as you lap the racetrack or tackle the next set of twisties?

From corner entry to exit, your legs can play a vital role in how your motorcycle steers. For example, adding a small amount of pressure on the inside footpeg with the ball of your foot will help roll the motorcycle to its max lean angle in less time, which will allow you to rush into the corner harder than before. Furthermore, pushing with your legs will lessen the amount of input you need on the handlebars to begin turning. This is important because if the front tire is already under heavy load from trail braking, any excessive pressure to the bars could push it beyond its limit, resulting in a crash.

Likewise, loading the inside footpeg with pressure in the middle of the corner helps with steering. If you find yourself getting a few feet off your normal line, push into the inside peg with your leg to help tighten your corner trajectory. It's no magic fix, but if you're headed toward the edge of the road, it could mean the difference between going off or riding to see another corner. Practice this in longer corners where you have time to analyze how the bike behaves with additional pressure from your feet—that way you know how and when to use it. At the same time, try locking your outside leg into the fuel tank. This will allow you to take pressure off the handlebars and relax your upper body, which will help save yourself energy that you can use later on in the day.

Similarly, using your legs at corner exit can improve your drive onto the straightaways by allowing you to get to the center of the tire quicker. When you see MotoGP riders snapping the bike up under acceleration, they aren't just pushing it with their arms. Instead, they are also applying force to the outside footpeg as they begin accelerating to quickly lift the bike onto the center of the tire,

where they have more grip to use for their drive.

In a chicane, using your legs can increase the speed that your bike transitions from side to side with the added bonus of improving your body's efficiency as you make the transition to the next corner. Instead of aggressively tugging on the handlebars, stomp on the outside footpeg when you need to make your direction change. As the bike becomes vertical, don't sit stationary in the seat. This is where you will find yourself in a squat position before you reach the other side of the motorcycle. Keep pushing, now with your inside foot, as it will continue to speed up the transition and get you into the second half of the chicane faster.

Practicing all of these techniques for the first time will be very tiresome and probably leave your legs feeling sore for a few days—on the other hand, your upper body should feel fresh. Hitting the gym five times a week might not be necessary, but be aware that the more you exercise your legs, the more you can make use of them on the motorcycle. They can be a large key toward faster lap times, better cornering techniques, and improved efficiency. **SR**



# MEET THE SILENT GRAY FELLOW.



William Harley and Arthur Davidson completed their first prototype in 1903 and their earliest production bikes, including this 1908 Model 4, were dubbed "strap tanks" because of the appearance of the fuel/oil tank mounting brackets. While black was an available color, gray paint was first offered in 1908 and any Harley-Davidson so delivered was dubbed a "Silent Gray Fellow" in part because of the well-designed muffler system it shared with the maker's other models.

This Silent Grey Fellow is currently on view at the Petersen Automotive Museum alongside a skillfully curated display of historic and unique motorcycles. Don't miss your opportunity to see these magnificent bikes and learn about their history and impact on the automotive industry.

Purchase general admission today at  
[petersentickets.org](https://petersentickets.org)

**PETERSEN**  
AUTOMOTIVE MUSEUM

6060 Wilshire Blvd, Los Angeles CA 90036

In the Richard Varner Family Gallery  
presented by **BONNIER**



**SRTESTED**

PRODUCT EVALUATIONS



RETAIL: \$382.49

REVITSPORT.COM

# REV'IT! STEWART AIR LEATHER JACKET

**>>** Dutch company Rev'it! is really beginning to make a name for itself in the USA, after establishing a solid reputation in Europe for high-quality products at non-wallet-shattering prices. After debuting in America with conventional sport leather offerings, the motorcycle apparel company's catalog has grown rapidly and continues to expand, with its latest Urban lineup catering to the custom heritage motorcycle movement that has spawned hot-selling motorcycles like the BMW R nineT, Ducati Scrambler, and Yamaha XSR900. These riders eschew flashy-colored apparel for understated casual—and the Rev'it! Stewart Air leather jacket delivers on both style and performance counts.

The Stewart Air is a bit different in that it is constructed using buffalo leather rather than the conventional bovine hide. Note: Don't confuse the term "buffalo" with "bison" in this instance. Although the North American bison is often referred to as "buffalo," when the words *buffalo* and *leather* are combined, they're talking about leather made from the water buffalo species that is commonly found in Asian and Indian countries,

not the bison that are found in the American plains.

The advantages of quality buffalo hide are that it is generally considered to be stronger and more abrasion resistant than cowhide, with the downsides being that it is often heavier and more prone to stretch. The Stewart Air jacket feels a bit heavier than your average leather jacket but not unduly so.

One area where the Stewart Air jacket really stands out is how soft and comfortable it is. The Rev'it! jacket's buffalo leather is made using the "pull up" tanning method, meaning the dyes are infused with natural oils and waxes that help "pull up" the natural colors and make the leather incredibly supple and soft. The Stewart Air literally required no break-in period, and it quickly feels so nice and comfortable that you almost forget you're wearing a leather jacket.

Adding to the comfort level are Rev'it!'s slim, flexible, and lightweight SEESMART impact protection in the shoulders and elbows that surpass EN1621-1:2012 CE-Level 1 standards, while safety stitching throughout the jacket's construction ensures no split seams. No back protector is included, though a pocket for an optional

SEESOFT CE-Level 2 back protector is sewn into the inner liner.

The other area where the Stewart Air jacket impressed us was its ventilation. Fully perforated leather panels in the front and back, along with full perforation on the inner portions of arms, permit a surprising amount of cooling airflow for a leather jacket. Put it this way: We've worn some "mesh" textile jackets that didn't work as well as the Stewart Air and were nowhere near as comfortable. We had no problem wearing it on 100-plus-degree summer days, and we also noticed the Stewart Air didn't seem to absorb the sun's rays and heat up as much as other black leather jackets we've tried. A zip-out thermal liner blocks the ventilation so that you can still wear the Stewart Air in chillier climates.

The Rev'it! Stewart Air jacket has quickly become one of our favorite hot-weather casual riding gear items, and we'd have no reservations recommending it to anyone looking for an understated leather jacket that still has plenty of riding function built in to it. Available only in black, in Euro men's sizes 46 to 60.



# SYKIK X21F TWIN CAMERA RECORDING SYSTEM

**>>** The Sykik X21F is a two-camera DVR system utilizing “endless loop” recording (the oldest file is overwritten when the memory is full) that uses forward- and rearward-facing cameras mounted onto your bike. By employing two IP57 waterproof 1080p HD cameras with low-light sensors and a 140-degree field of vision, the recording quality (VGA for maximum recording time, Standard for full HD at 30 fps, Sports for full HD at 60 fps, and Cruise for 1080p at 30 fps) can be adjusted on the fly through a bike-mounted 3-inch TFT monitor. You can also flip from front to rear views, a handy feature when stopped at traffic lights to ensure a distracted automobile driver isn’t going to make you a hood ornament.

Installation was straightforward but required a smidgen of effort to make all of the connections due to the wires all terminating at well-constructed waterproof plugs. Incidentally, each pair of connection plugs are slightly different, which elegantly takes miswiring out of the equation. But we’d suggest spending a few moments at a table making the connections first before the actual



RETAIL: \$259.90  
SYKIK.COM

install in order to become familiar with each one.

Our X21F had the optional GPS sensor (\$29.95) that records location and includes a Google map in the player so you can associate location to the ride. Sykik’s video player software allows viewing both camera files at the same time; unfortunately, the software is limited in that it only allows viewing without the ability to create your own video files using both cameras or

the GPS display.

Using a pair of 128GB microSD cards (not included), you can record up to 20 hours of riding (10 hours in each camera), which starts when the unit senses movement. One neat feature we were fortunate enough not to test was the Collision G-sensor; if it senses a hard impact, the system saves the front and rear files so they cannot be overwritten.



**MOTOREX**  
Oil of Switzerland

## PEACE FROM WITHIN

Motorex Power Synt 4T is a fully synthetic PAO and Ester-based engine oil, the ultimate in quality and performance for your peace of mind.

[motorexusa.com](http://motorexusa.com)



# ARAI SIGNET-X HELMET



**RETAIL: \$679.95-\$709.95 FOR SOLID COLORS, UP TO \$829.95 FOR GRAPHICS**  
**ARAIAMERICAS.COM**

Created as part of a two-pronged effort by the renowned Japanese helmet company to fit American heads better, the Arai Signet-X is the latest generation of the manufacturer's mid-priced Signet model that is tailored toward "long-oval" head shapes (the Quantum-X, the other half of the campaign, is made for "round-oval" head shapes). By modifying the EPS and comfort liners between the two models, Arai was able to adapt the inner contours to better fit each type of head.

We covered the technical details of the Signet-X in the February/March issue ("First Ride Arai Signet-X and Quantum-X"), so we won't rehash them in detail here. In a nutshell, the majority of updates found on the latest Corsair-X flagship model, such as the Peripherally Belted Super Complex Laminate Construction (PB-SCLC) shell design, Eco-Pure comfort liner, ES chin cover, longer chin bar, and Variable Axis Shield (VAS) system make their way into the Signet-X's construction.

Weighing in at 3.46 pounds (1,580 grams) for a medium-size lid, the Snell/DOT-approved Signet-X sits in the middle of the field weight-wise. Overall

comfort is—as you'd expect from an Arai—outstanding, with the long-oval shape fitting SR's testers like a glove. Even after being fully broken in, the padding still remains firm enough to maintain a snug fit and keep the helmet from wobbling around on your head. Unlike some other brands, Arai has been able to do this without cheek pads that put excessive pressure on your face (resulting in the dreaded "chipmunk" look), contributing to comfort good enough for all-day use.

Aerodynamics are good, though at speeds in the 80-mph range, a little bit of buffeting and lift can be felt, but it's nothing concerning. Vision through the eyepoint is very good in a full-tuck position as well as peripherally on either side. The face shield on our Signet-X sealed well, with no gaps that resulted in whistling noises at speed. Changing face shields with the Variable Axis System is a little labor-intensive—pushing a lever protruding out from the pivot mechanism pops the pivot cover off the helmet (they're tethered to the helmet to keep from getting lost), allowing you to easily pop the shield out of the pivot mechanism, while reinstallation requires

carefully lining up and rotating the shield to attach it properly then snapping the pod cover back in—but it's actually less tricky than the previous AdSIS setup once you get accustomed to it.

Helmet ventilation was very good, though (expectedly) not on the same level as the race-spec Corsair-X. The sliding upper vent adjusters are easy to feel and move with gloved hands, but with only four vents up top (versus seven for the Corsair-X), the Signet-X's cooling effect is not as all-encompassing as the range-topping Corsair-X. But it's still better than 90 percent of the other helmets on the market.

The Signet-X continues Arai's reputation for quality and performance and demonstrates why the brand has built such a loyal following. Prices range from \$679.95 to \$709.95 for solid colors and up to \$829.95 for graphics.

# EK RIVETLESS MASTER LINK SYSTEM



For those who have struggled with either losing the clip of a clip-type drive-chain master link or fumbling with a rivet master link tool, EK Chain has an answer: the "screw" master link.

All that is needed is an 8mm wrench and a pair of regular pliers.

Basically, the EK screw link works by employing longer pins that are actually threaded. Using a long nut on each pin, you install the master link plate by torquing down each nut. Installation is simple: Slide the O-rings and outer plate over the pins, thread on the included 8mm nuts, and evenly torque them down using the wrench. Like other master links, the EK screw link is a press-fit item; unlike a clip-link or rivet-link, the press fit is a little tighter to ensure a permanent assembly. The level of control with torquing down the nuts is very precise. Compress the plates until they are parallel to the outer plates on either side of the

master link then remove the nuts. Use a pair of pliers to snap off the protruding threaded posts with predesigned failure points, and you're done.

We were a little skeptical about the plate's ability to remain on the link without a clip or mushrooming of the pins, but apparently EK has been selling this screw master link in the US for more than three years now. A search of various motorcycle forums showed that all who are using the EK Rivetless Master Link are very happy, with no issues or failures of any kind mentioned. In fact, our example has already endured more than 10,000 hard miles and doesn't show any signs of loosening or failure whatsoever.

The EK Screw Style Links are chain specific and fit the EK SRX2, MVXZ2, and ZVX3 chains in three sizes: 520, 525, and 530. **SR**

**RETAIL: STARTING AT \$14.95**  
**VORTEXRACING.COM**



Print Subscribers Get  
**FREE** iPad® access!



Download the app today for  
instant access!

To Subscribe go to:

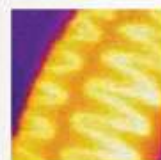
[www.sportrider.com/subscribe](http://www.sportrider.com/subscribe)

Apple, the Apple Logo, and iTunes are trademarks of Apple Inc., registered in the U.S. and other countries. iPad is a trademark of Apple Inc. App Store is a service mark of Apple Inc.

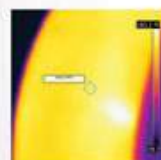


# RADICAL REDESIGN

CHOOSE YOUR LINE



CLASSIC LINE



PROFESSIONAL LINE



THE PROFESSIONAL LINE

STANDARD \$499

3-TEMP \$615

DIGITAL MODEL \$724

The radical new *high density heating element* of CHR's Professional Line Tire Warmers provide the most uniform heat across your heating and tire surfaces.

1.866.HOT.TIRE

CHICKENHAWKRACING.COM

“Like” us on  
Facebook!



[facebook.com/sportridermag](https://facebook.com/sportridermag)

**Sport Rider**  
MAGAZINE

**VersaHaul®**  
VH-SPORT RO  
sport motorcycle carrier  
(chock/hitch sold separately)  
Find a Dealer Near You  
Toll Free: 888-818-9915  
[www.versahaul.com](http://www.versahaul.com)



GEAR RING &  
GEAR NECKLACE

KINEKT.COM (888) 600-8494

**WATERPROOF**  
**USB CABLE**  
**brembo**  
**PARTS AND ACCESSORIES**  
**623-444-5022**  
**KURVEYGIRL.COM**

**RESERVOIR BRACKET**  
**Vesrah**  
**RACING BRAKE PADS**

Over 600,000 Customers  
Served Since 1998

FDA-approved  
medications  
from USA  
Pharmacies

Licensed USA  
Telemedicine  
Physician  
Network

Call 7 days  
per week



HABLAMOS ESPAÑOL

**VIAMEDIC®** CALL TOLL  
FREE

**888-872-2030**

Visit [Viamedic.com/SR](http://Viamedic.com/SR)  
for special offers



## PARTING SHOT



Thanks for riding with us for 24 years! We're looking forward to the next adventure...

KEVIN WING



# READY. FIGHT.

*Rev to the next level.*

*Model selected: The all-new 2018 Suzuki GSX-S750. In a class of its own and tapping in with 750cc of raw performance. There's nothing like the muscular torque and broad power output of a high-revving, inline four-cylinder engine for taking on the neighborhood bully and kicking... well, you know.*

*The Suzuki GSX-S750. It absolutely punches above its weight.*

**GSX-S**750

**ADVANTAGE:** Compact, fuel-injected engine derived from GSX-R technology

**ADVANTAGE:** Low RPM Assist feature seamlessly adjusts engine speed during takeoff and low-speed maneuvering to smooth power delivery and lessen the chance of stalling

**ADVANTAGE:** Four-mode Suzuki Advanced Traction Control lets the rider match sensitivity to road conditions

**ADVANTAGE:** Suzuki Anti-Lock Brake System delivers strong and consistent braking performance

*Experience the GSX-S750 at [SuzukiCycles.com](http://SuzukiCycles.com)*

\*Available on GSX-S750Z model, shown. Traction Control cannot prevent loss of traction due to excessive speed when the rider enters a turn and/or applies the brakes. Neither can it prevent the front wheel from losing grip. ABS is not designed to shorten the braking distance. Please always ride at a safe speed for road and weather conditions, including while cornering. Suzuki, the "S" logo, and Suzuki model and product names are Suzuki Trademarks or ®. © 2017 Suzuki Motor of America, Inc.







BRADLEY**Smith**



Available  
in Black

**Vortice Air**



**SIDI**<sup>®</sup>

S e c o n d o t t o N o n e

Only Sidi boots purchased from an authorized Sidi-Motonation dealer are covered by our product warranty.

[www.motonation.com](http://www.motonation.com)



Toll Free 877.789.4940