

TANGERINE Dream



TANGERINE Dream

Subtle? I think not! Freddie's supermotarded 520 isn't for shy, retiring types.

Compared to KTM's older LC4-powered bikes the new motor is quite simply in a totally different league.

Lighten Up

So the motor's a real gem but thankfully the good news doesn't end there. Braking, suspension road holding and handling are all capable of maximising the engine's potent output.

Wearing a Bridgestone full wet on the front matched to a Michelin Pilot Race on the rear, outright grip was never an issue. Whether hard on the superb anchs or threading the bike along a twisting back lane, the tyres offered a fantastic level of grip on all road surfaces. Whilst this choice of rubber definitely isn't recommended for road use, I can see why Freddie runs this

petition motor the 520 is as smooth as a pint of the black stuff. And

particular combination. The only fly in the Katosh's ointment however is the 520's light-headedness when hard charging along a bumpy stretch of tarmac.

The problem begins when on the gas at higher speeds. Hit a bump or a slight ridge in the road and the bars can get a bit lively. Whether this is exacerbated by the smaller 17"

wheels offering less giro effect, or the odd tyre combo I'm not sure, but we do know that the latest generation KTM chassis' are prone to head shake in high speed enduro situations, and we've no reason to assume that motarding a 520 will lessen the effect.

Either way the flighty steering never gets really out of shape but it is sometimes enough to make you back off a touch just to be safe. I reckon that setting the multi-adjustable suspension to softer settings would reduce this headshake tendency and also make for a more comfortable ride as well. But you could always go the whole hog and fit an after-market steering damper. With limited test time available, I decided I would rather

'The flighty steering is sometimes enough to make you back off a touch - just to be safe.'

be riding than fiddling - and to be honest the bike always regained its composure almost instantly.

The up-side to this flittish tendency is that the bike changes direction quicker than the Italian government. Flicking it hard from side to side through a rapid succession of downhill switchbacks, I doubt many bikes could live with the booming Katie down a road such as this. Think about changing direction and it's already done. The bike's geometry is clearly from the modern school of thinking - quick and aggressive - which is ideal in the urban environment. Instant acceleration

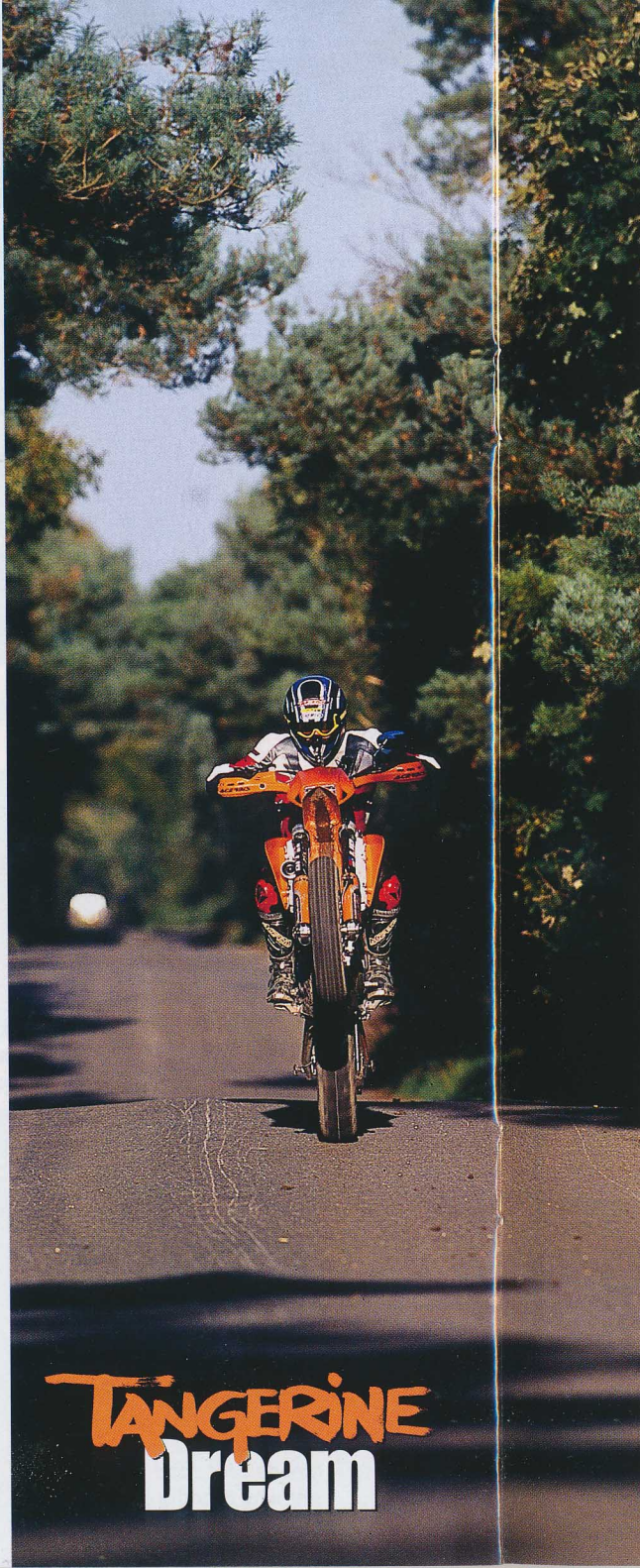
matched with rapid steering and demon brakes are the perfect answer to the question of swift cross-town transport needs.

'The bike changes direction quicker than the Italian government...'

In particular the Braking/FP set-up is nothing short of sensational. Hard charging into a tightening right hander, the brakes offer a serious amount of retardation and (fortunately) great feedback. Strong, predictable with plenty of feel at the lever, you couldn't ask for more. We've ridden other bikes with this set-up with equally satisfying results - the KTM simply stops in less time than you thought humanly possible. Sure, none of this kit comes cheap, but it's clearly money well spent in this particular case and essential for the weekend racer and back lane scratcher alike.

Barrelling along some deserted country roads the 520 can be ridden at a truly alarming rate of knots. Like any other well-prepped supermoto bike, on real biking roads this is the quickest, most rewarding form of transport. Okay the KTM offers very little in the way of creature comforts; in fact the seat is agonisingly painful after more than an hour at a time (optional softer seat foam is available), but quite frankly you're having so

much fun this seems like a minor gripe. After all if you want a bike to ride through Europe you can go buy a Pan European.



TANGERINE
Dream

Right: Up, up and away. Needless to say here at Supermoto Magazine we don't condone this kind of anti-social behaviour...

No, stick to the back roads and enjoy the ultimate thrill of the 520's instant throttle response, sharp steering and awesome braking capabilities. The bike's slim bodywork positively encourages you to get up on the tank, stick out your inside leg and carve a tight line before wheelying away down the next short straight. Then... slam on the brakes and repeat as many times as your body can stand it. And there's the rub: this is a real bike for the committed rider - it's not hard to ride quickly, but it can be hard on the old body. On the other hand the super-smooth motor can be trickled along through traffic without any nasty on/off

carburetion glitches (though the lack of cush-drive can make pulling high gears at low rpm a little snatchy). But the biggest problem is the fact that when you're riding a bike like this, it positively encourages you to ride it hard - all the time.

Oh, Go On Then...

This ability to blend in with traffic and the fact that the bike will fire into life with a simple touch of the button, makes the KTM an almost practical day to day bike. But to use the 520 in this way is a waste of its true potential - akin to cruising the Kings Road in a works rally car. Sure it would turn heads but what a waste. Much better to head out of town and use the bike's considerable abilities to the full and you won't be disappointed. In fact the only time I was disappointed was when I returned it to its rightful owner.

Second Opinion

Having just moved into my new house, the last thing I needed was Si and Crasher tempting me away from the unpacking with the contents of the SM Magazine wonder-wagon. Let's face it, if it had been anything other than a big-bore supermoto or our very own cover girl, they were on a loser.

As it turned out, it was the much talked about KTM 520EXC, lovingly converted to SM trim by Freddie T. Having only ever ridden the older generation KTM LC4's up till now, I wasn't sure what to expect. What I found was a highly spirited, quick handling lightweight machine, blessed with the all important lekky boot.

As tested the suspension was a touch harsh for road

use but that front brake is nothing short of amazing. The hard seat is more comfortable than my Duke-II (*must have a weird shaped butt - ed*), and the ergos are spot on. Number one on my wish list.

John 'Chopper' Harris

Conversion Costs

Basic EXC enduro bike: £5450

Wheels (Talon hubs/Morad rims): £700

Tyres and tubes (street legal): £170

Braking Wave disc: £175

Braking 4-pot caliper: £250

FP radial master cylinder: £225

Panoram speedo/trip computer: £90

Crash hobbits: £40

Acerbis brush guards (inc fitting kit): £60

Arrow full titanium exhaust: £600

Re-jet to suit pipe: £40

Kevlar sump guard: £100

Alternative gearing (15-42): £30

Soft seat foam: £60

Labour to build up from scratch: £150

Contact Freddie Trott MC: 0800 0832182

Thanks: To Freddy for the bike & Red Lodge Karting for the location see their website at www.redlodge.com

TANGERINE Dream



All things considered, despite the high cost of a building a bike like this (and to this specification), Freddy's KTM 520EXC SM offers an amazingly versatile and dare I say it, practical supermoto. The super-smooth motor is blessed with enough

torque and power to keep the petrol-heads happy, and the build quality from the Austrian factory is streets ahead of some of the opposition. The only things I would change would be to add a more stealthy exhaust (less sound equals more ground), slacken off the suspension adjustments for a more supple ride, and fit the optional soft seat foam.

As it comes from Freddy, fitted out with top-drawer components and blessed with a certain indefinable rugged, yet sophisticated feel about it, the 520 is a worthy addition to the big league of supermoto specials. The real question is how has it managed to stay such a well kept secret for so long...?

Plus

- Throttle response/carburation
- Awesome torque
- Power
- Smooth delivery
- Amazing brakes
- Electric-start
- Looks
- Overall performance
- Build quality

Minus

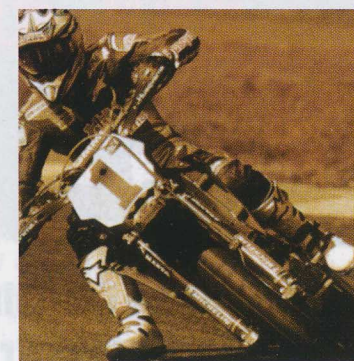
- High-speed stability
- Hard seat
- Too loud
- Expensive to build

TROTT RACING KTM 520EXC SM

Engine:	Liquid-cooled, sohc, four-valve with electric & kick-start
Displacement:	510cc
Bore & stroke:	95 x 72mm
Compression ratio:	11.1
Carburettor:	Keihin MX FCR39
Transmission:	Six-speed enduro or four speed MX
Frame:	Cro-Moly semi-double cradle with alloy subframe
Steering angle:	27mm
Front suspension:	43mm USD WP, 295mm travel
Rear suspension:	PDS WP single shock, 320mm travel
Front brake:	Braking 320mm Wave disc with Braking four piston caliper & FP radial pump
Trail:	113mm
Wheelbase:	1481mm+/-10mm
Seat height:	900mm (approx)
Fuel capacity:	9 litres
Dry weight:	116kg (approx)

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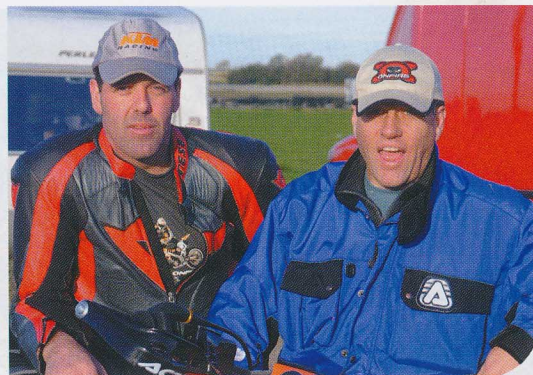
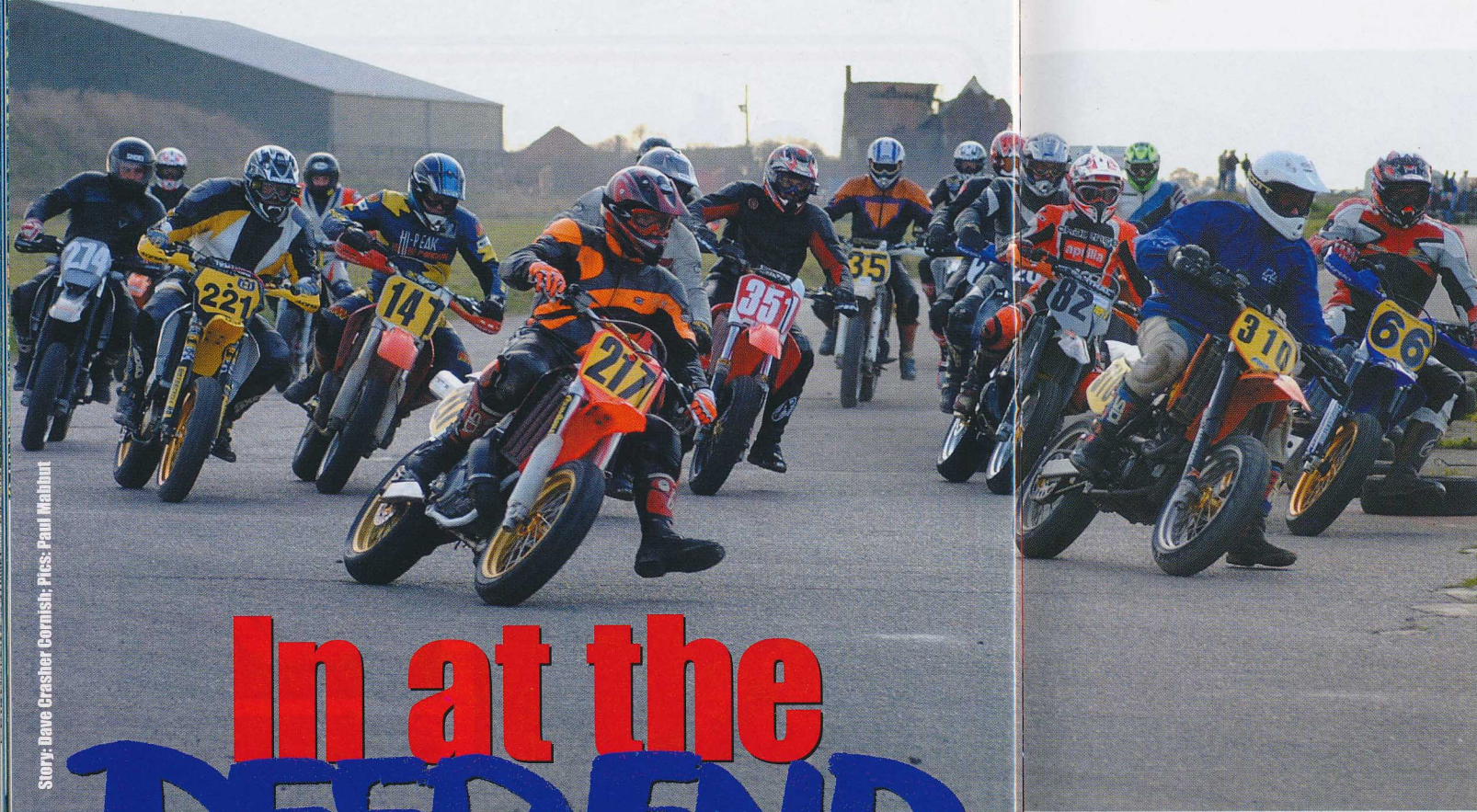
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In at the DEEP END

Tonight Matthew I'm going to be a supermoto racer. For their first taste of supermoto race action, editor Dave 'Crasher' Cornish and staffer John 'Chopper' Harris entered the last round of the 2001 NORA championships. Read it and weep...

Sooner or later you simply have to put up or shut up, and in this particular case we ('Chopper' Harris and myself) had been talking about racing supermoto for more than 18 months. But you know how it is; the same old excuses get trotted out time after time. 'Oh I'm working that weekend or 'I haven't got any tyres/leathers/decent brakes' etc. But this time when 'Chopper' rang and told me that he had entered us both in the last NORA round at Blyton Raceway in Lincolnshire I had no time to come up with a decent excuse. In fact I have to admit that the last supermoto race I attended was the Race of Champions at the Bologna show, where

The start of yet another race as riders jockey for position into the first bend

the stars of GP and Superbikes take on the world's best motard racers in an end of season blow-out. I can remember gazing out across the track, open mouthed and speechless at the amazing sight of the world's elite locking bars and sliding six abreast into the first corner, before charging off down the straight to repeat the process for another ten laps. Awesome. Truly awesome. I knew there and then that I had to get involved in some way or other, but actually compete myself? Are you nuts? How on earth can any sane person leap onto a raucous, highly tuned, slick-shod dirtbike and get

totally sideways on tarmac, whilst trying to avoid being nerfed into the tyre wall by 30 adrenaline-crazed head-bangers? It goes against all known self-preservation instincts. But I couldn't deny that it all looks fun and incredibly cool. And just think of the kudos of standing at the bar on a Friday night re-calling tales of backing it into turn one, drifting around the outside of Ady and wheeling past the chequered flag stood on the seat. Hell I could dine out for months on that one. Anyway that's basically how we came to find ourselves stood in the paddock area at Blyton Raceway at some un-Godly hour last November. Somehow in the gloom of a freezing early winter's morning an ex RAF bomber base didn't quite have the same glamour as Bologna. But hey, we were here and we were going supermoto racing for the first time. Unloading the bikes from the back of the pick-up there was still no sign of life from the collection of tents, Transits and motor-homes, just an impressive pile of spent beer bottles hinted that we weren't alone. 'Chopper' began to strip down and prepare his Supercomp for scrutineering, which we were told would open at 7am. I hadn't even ridden my race bike. A kindly dealer (who should have known better) had leant me a fully street legal piece of Italian exotica that

Chopper and Crasher! A lethal combination of ignorance and incompetence...

'But I can't deny that it all looks fun and incredibly cool...'



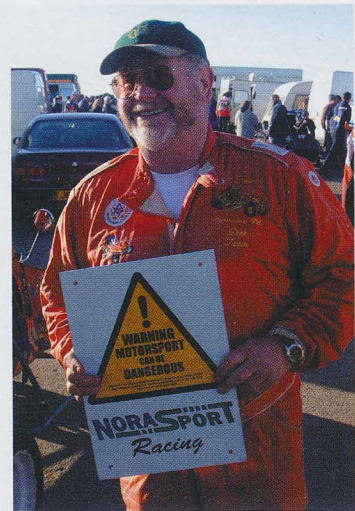
In at the DEEP END

Above: It might not look wildly exciting but you try riding a slick-shod dirt bike on gravel...

we'd picked up the night before on the way up to the circuit. Now for me this isn't something new. You see, with my previous job spent testing for sister publication Trailbike and Enduro Magazine it was (and still is) considered quite normal to hop onto a brand new dirtbike having never ridden it (or even started it up) literally minutes before the start of an event. So I figured I could just wobble around in practice, find my way around and get the feel of the bike. And then take my time to get up to speed in each race before taking the chequered flag, big trophy and all the glory that goes with it. 'Chopper' however had other plans. Never one to do things by halves he was determined to use all of his schoolboy moto-cross experience to 'go-for-it' from the off. I kept reminding him that the last time he raced, Noddy Holder was at number one and that tarmac was much less forgiving than a sandy MX track. But I could see that he had plans to get his new KTM up front and give it his all.



By the time I'd levered on a pair of full race wets (onto the rims!) and stripped off all the unnecessary road gear, a few bleary eyed faces began to appear and before long we had both bikes scruti-



Left: Supermoto is renowned for having one of the friendliest paddocks in any form of racing...

neered. We joined some of the other guys (and girls) in a walk around the circuit. The start straight was about 300m long, which went into a tricky increasing radius left-hander. Before a short straight led onto a gently curving 200m section of compacted, damp earth. Through a few tight and twisting corners the wet and muddy broken concrete didn't look like it would offer much in the way of grip. Then the track opened out onto a flat-out dash with a tricky looking high-speed chicane placed at one of the fastest parts of the course. Finally the circuit took in a small detour into the turnip field before heading back in the general direction of the start/finish area. First impressions of the Blyton track struck me as being a tad dangerous. Zero run off with tyre walls which may be okay for cars and buggies, but a hard charging supermoto bike can quickly get out of shape, and in places the tyres actually form the edge of the track. Still ever

'The track opened out onto a flat-out dash with a tricky-looking high speed chicane...'

the optimists we discussed lines and tactics with the other racers who told us the track layout was in fact nothing unusual at all. Whilst getting kitted up into my enduro gear, I noticed that all the other competitors were wearing full road race leathers. Now was not the time to discover that I had got the wrong protective clothing, but the regs do allow a free choice of riding apparel. And I figured I would be happier racing with my knee braces under my off-road jeans than wearing leathers without the extra security for my fragile joints. Anyway I didn't plan on sliding down the pot-holed broken surface that masqueraded as a race track - the idea was simply to turn up, have some fun, check out the race format and return next year to win the championship. Easy really. The call was announced for the D-group (the starter group) to make their way to the grid for the start of free practice. This is when my day started to go seriously Pete Tong. Trying everything I'd learnt over the last 20 years of riding four-strokes, my Latin thumper refused all attempts to light up. In my panic I thought maybe I'd flooded the motor but this bike wasn't blessed with a manual de-compressor and so I couldn't even purge the cylinder of unburnt fuel. By this time I had a small crowd of willing helpers all having a go at kicking over the high compression motor but it was all in vain. There was absolutely no way the bike was going to start. Chucking the bike against the tyre wall I ran down pit lane just as 'Chopper' Harris was finishing his practice session. I almost pulled John off his KTM and set off for the starting grid. Surprisingly I was waved straight onto the circuit. Gunning the 620 through the gears it suddenly struck me that I had never even ridden the 'Chopper' mobile before. Uh-oh!

Left: Husky pilot shows exactly how it should be done. Good on ya' mate, give it some...



All sorts of different styles work in this sport: feet-up, feet down, or whatever you feel is right

Taking it easy through the first couple of turns I gassed it onto the first dirt section and almost lost the plot as the back end lost grip and stepped out. Time

for a rethink. The problem I was having was that for all intents and purposes I was at the bars of an extremely capable dirtbike, which is nothing alien to me at all. But when fitted with road race tyres, off-road traction is almost non-existent.

On the back straight and up into top gear, back off for the left/right high-speed chicane and whoa! The back tried to swap ends with the front and almost fired me into the rather nasty looking tyre wall. It was around this

'The back tried to swap ends with the front and almost fired me into the tyre wall...'

time that I was wondering if this was such a good idea after all. Wobbling around for the remainder of the lap the marshals waved me in for the end of practise. And that was it.

Not even a full two laps and on a bike I'd never sat on before didn't bode well for the first race. Not only that but I still hadn't even started let alone ridden my

own bike yet. At least John seemed happy enough, clearly relieved to get his bike back in one piece. Scratching my head and pondering why the hell my bike wouldn't fire I asked another rider if I could borrow a plug spanner.

Before I knew it, the guy had got the tank and seat off and was busy trying to diagnose the problem. Amazing, I'd heard that the NORA paddock was a friendly place but this was way beyond the call of duty. Anyway to cut a long

story short the motor was pronounced dead due to a complete lack of sparks. Great! The CDI unit was toast and I hadn't even had a ride yet. To be fair to the supplying dealer this was all a bit last minute and the bike had

been running the previous day. I guess it's just one of those things.

'Chopper' had been out for his first race and was uncharacteristically subdued. Apparently it wasn't quite as easy as we had both thought. This concerned me, as John is an extremely quick rider. On the track days that we have ridden over the last couple of years he is quite

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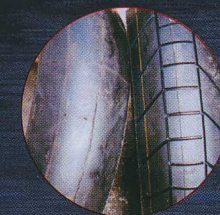
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In at the DEEP END

Fancy bangin' bars on your supermotard, with dozens of like-minded loons? You must be mad...

often the fastest guy out there, caning his KTM Duke past much more powerful bikes. But this was different. Supermoto is like nothing else. Sure an MX, enduro or road racing background helps, but don't for one minute think that it's a foregone conclusion that this will do you much good when mixing it with the motard boys.

Just as I was debating whether to get my gear off and pack up, a knight in shinning AXOs came to my rescue. Word had gotten around the paddock of my miserable plight and Andy Woolley (#71) offered me a spin on his mint YZ400 in the next race. Fantastic, I could race after all. Clearly Andy was totally unaware of my reputation as TBM's one-man demolition squad.

A quick word with the NORA organisation, some deft work with some duct tape over the numbers and I found myself bog last on the grid of 25 riders. I could see 'Chopper' on the row in front so I figured that just maybe I might be

able to hang on to his KTM's coat tails and get a tow around.

The tension on the grid was unbelievable. Riders revving their motors, edging forward on the clutch, eyes glued to the starting flag marshal's every twitch. Then we were off in a deafening wall of sound down to the first left hand corner. All around me riders were jostling for the position for the all-important

racing line. Elbows up and with bikes coming at me from all angles I decided that I should give as good as I got.

Turn one was just plain mayhem. I'd managed to get to the inside line and hold my position about

mid-pack when I got boxed in and riders streamed around the outside. I sneaked a few places back on the dirt section and even managed to overtake two guys into a slippery left hairpin. Wicking up the Yam down the back straight a hard charging two-stroke passed me just as I was about to tip it into the chicane.

Jeez! This was only the D group and it was as cut-throat as the last final at Bologna. Quite simply, in supermoto if

'The tension on the grid was unbelievable then we were off in a deafening wall of sound...'



The nice thing about this form of racing is that two-strokes and thumpers compete on an equal footing

you snooze you most certainly do lose. The rest of the race went past in a blur of hard core, cut and

thrust racing. Every inch was being contested with some truly outrageous overtaking moves. But cruising back to the pits I couldn't help laughing out loud inside my lid. 'Chopper' had done well enough to qualify for the C group. He had obviously been playing his cards extremely close to his chest.

On the fast sections the YZ400 may have been out-gunned by bigger bikes but its lightweight and nimble handling combined with slim ergos allowed me to finish about mid-pack. Not bad considering how much bad luck I'd had. I didn't have the heart to ask Andy for another crack on his immaculately prepped Yam. And I could tell that 'Chopper' was now on a mission and didn't need me spoiling his chances by borrow-

ing and then throwing his beloved KTM down the unforgiving tarmac.

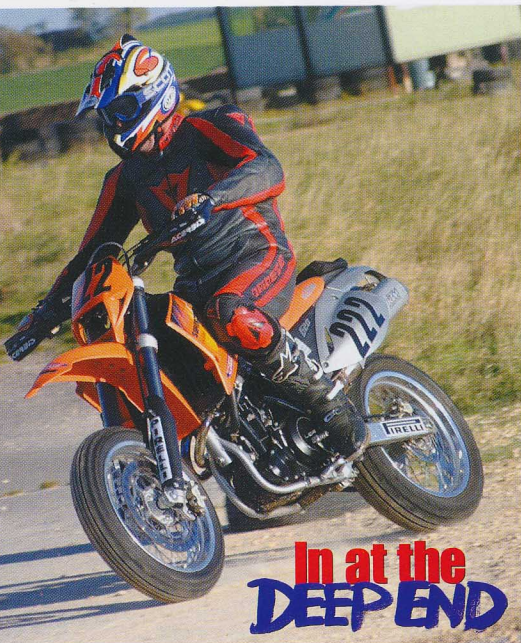
Then NORA regular (and SMM columnist) big Dave Lippet stepped in. He offered me a race on a tweaked KTM660. It was only when I realised that (A) it wasn't even his bike and (B) this thing puts out 65 fire spitting ponies at the merest tweak of the quarter turn quick-action throttle, that I thought maybe this wasn't such a good idea. But Dave and Craig Taylor (the bike's owner) insisted that it would be okay, that the big thumper was actually easy to ride and pulled from nowhere right off the bottom.

Okay, so with the pride of Supermoto Magazine at stake (and just out of interest) I lined up 12th on the next grid. Craig told me to hold the throttle wide open and slip the clutch in second. This was obviously more than my head could take in because I almost looped it and then just about stalled it before I got the big Katie off the line.

But when this thing got in its stride it was nothing short of ballistic. I re-passed those who had got me off the start line and then reeled in a few more bikes before the manic first corner scrap for positions. Bikes and riders were going down like nine-pins, but I somehow managed to scrape by and keep out of danger.

Onto the dirt and I decided that discretion was the better part of valour. Gingerly easing the beast back onto the blacktop and giving the bike its head. Oh my god, sliding, wheeling, sideways and ever faster forwards I hung on for dear life as 660ccs of raw Austrian horsepower catapulted me down the back straight.

I easily had the quickest bike out there. The acceleration almost ripped my arms out of their feeble sockets. The vibration was serious enough to blur my



In the DEEP END

'Chopper' had a pretty good day, taking his KTM Supercomp up into the C-group

vision and I was just hanging on and being taken for an awesome high-speed ride. I really can't remember much about the race except that no one passed

me. Although a CR500 almost nipped past on the line as I pulled an absurdly easy celebratory wheelie.

I was still shaking 30 minutes later. Craig's bike is quite simply the most brutal bike I've ever ridden. Much quicker than my mediocre capabilities, way too much for the average supermoto rider (if there is such a thing). Even 'Chopper' refused the offer of a blast on it in his next race.

The 660's power was so addictive that I went out for the final race determined to improve on my previous best eighth place. The outcome could have been much better this time but as I tried to out-brake another bike into a tight right hander it all went a bit pear shaped. Even though I'd got past and had the line, this guy was having none of it. He pulled off a block pass that McGrath would have been proud of. This pushed me into the tyre wall and I stalled the hi-comp motor.

By the time I'd booted the bike into

life again (second kick) it was all I could do to equal my previous race position. However the KTM's rocket boosters allowed me to take one more position on the last corner. And that was it. Our introduction into the wonderful world of sideways tarmac action had certainly been an eye opener. Much more competitive than I had imagined, but nevertheless a whole heap of fun.

And we'd done it. We had managed (against some terrible bad luck) to not only enter our first supermoto race but to finish without being totally humiliated. John had raced well enough to move up a class and I had ridden three different bikes I hadn't even seen before and not crashed once! Which really is a first for me.

The general opinion that supermoto racers are a somewhat crazy bunch of psychotic axe-murderers is a slight over exaggeration. Sure, out on the track it does appear to be advantageous to leave any shred of common-sense back in the van. But once the helmet has been removed these guys are all such a friendly, helpful and downright thoroughly nice bunch of chaps that will offer words of encouragement, lend tools, tyres (and even their girlfriend if you asked), and would help anyone out of a bind.

Such is the love of the sport that everyone wants it to succeed, and judging by the full turnout at the last round, the future for UK supermoto looks very bright indeed. I do know that we are most certainly well and truly hooked and can't wait until the start of the 2002 season. Anybody want to loan me a bike..?

Thanks: Too many to mention but you know who you are. Particular thanks to Andy Woolley for trusting me with his bike. Also to Dave Lippet and Craig Taylor for the same reasons. The guy racing a Vertemati (sorry didn't get your name) offered help far beyond the call of duty as did his mates. The friendly NORA officials (Mike and Toby) who allowed me to swap and change bikes at will, also deserve a mention. See you back out there in the spring lads....
NORA are Mike Bayliss on 01472 814408 and Toby Taylor on 01869 278220.

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A guide to all the new and used factory supermotos out there...



motor which can have the power characteristics altered by adjusting the power-valve. WP rear shock and 50mm Marzocchi fork combined with the usual 17" rims give the VR-SM a serious but almost practical nature.

Verdict: Tasty Spanish dish.

APRILIA tel 01776 888670

A relative newcomer to bike production, the Italian factory has enjoyed much competition success. Aprilia don't strictly have a supermoto in their current range but the mk one 650 Pegaso was a street moto (half trailie, half moto) and considered to be a match for Gilera's brilliant Nordwest.

Pegaso 125 (1989-94)

124cc, l/c, 2-str single with a claimed 31bhp, 110kg. Stylish but frantic eighth litre screamer, rare and showing its age.

Pegaso 650 (1992-on)

652cc, l/c, dohc, five valve, 4-str, e/s single with 49bhp (claimed), 157kg. Stylish and quick but with a 19" front wheel, the Pegaso uses a punchy 5-valve Rotax motor good for 110mph in standard trim. Early bikes were more



ALFER/FACTORY (see Factory) tel 01597 825817

Well known in its native Spain, Alfer have a small but growing following in the UK.

VR125SM

125cc, a/c, 2-valve, 4-str single, 6-speed. Powered by an Italian made Franco Morini engine the VR125SM has all the usual supermoto styling cues but uses a low level front mudguard.

Verdict: Rare beginner's bike.

VR250SM

249cc, l/c, 2-str, counter-balancer shaft, 6-speed. The Alfer uses the fanatically versatile Rotax

SM and less trailie/tourer although the high and firm seat and lack of real weather protection won't suit everyone.

Verdict: Great motor with heaps of performance from a street legal single, stick a 17" rim on the front for a cheap and practical supermoto.

6.5 Moto

652cc, l/c, dohc five valve, 4-str, single with a claimed 45bhp, 161kg, seat height 845mm. Weird Philippe Starck designed city bike features street/scrambler looks for Kings Road fashion victims.

Verdict: Should have stuck to designing kitchen furniture - though some charm.

BARIGO

598cc, a/c, belt driven sohc, Rotax single. French made range of specialist road & race supermoto bikes. Produced a claimed 60bhp when tuned to Barigo's race spec. Needless to say extremely rare but they do occasionally turn up as an import. **Verdict:** Dare to be different?

BETAMOTOR tel 01535 655970

Italian manufacturer of world beating trials machines offer a 50cc pocket rocket supermoto in either learner legal or full monty 10bhp form.

Supermoto 50

49cc, l/c, 2-str based on the competition enduro bike that has it's own Italian one make enduro championship. Can be tweaked even more by using parts from the KTM 65 kids crosser. **Verdict:** Spaghetti screamer for tiddler fans everywhere.

BMW tel 01344 426565

Although it could be said that it's stretching it a bit to call the GS650 Funduro models true supermotos, the German built bikes offer almost as much performance as a KTM Duke but with heaps more comfort and practicality. The only downside is the GS is a tad porky and suffers from a bit of an image problem for the committed motard rider.

F650 Funduro (1993-on)

652cc, l/c, dohc, 4-valve, e/s, 4-str single. Claimed 48bhp. Earlier bikes were Aprilia built but now production is in Germany. Rotax powered singles first launched in



BMW F650CS

1993 to bring BMW to the masses. Based on Aprilia's Pegaso motor but with four valves instead of five, more expensive, heavier and more civilised with larger tank, stainless exhaust and much lower seat. Great fun to ride and surprisingly quick, the Rotax mill churns out a genuine 46bhp at the rear wheel. Sold in large numbers thanks to BMW's perceived build quality. All models updated for 2000 with fuel injection, twin cat exhaust cans, ABS option and a funky new set of clothes.

Verdict: Solid and sensible city-moto.

F650CS (2002-on)

652cc, l/c, dohc, 4-valve, e/s, 4-stroke single. Claimed 50bhp. New for 2002 the 650CS is the nearest BMW have got to producing a true street-moto. Usual high attention to detail combined with toothed belt rear drive, single sided swing-arm, 17" cast wheels and wacky styling give the Beemer a unique profile. Not quite the sensible alternative to a KTM Duke, but if you can live with the BMW's looks, a good first attempt.

Verdict: Peculiar Teutonic semi-moto.

CAGIVA tel 01202 823344

Italian manufacturer that now owns MV Agusta, Husqvarna and Morini.

Super City 125

124cc, l/c, 2-str single, e/s, 7-speed, claimed 34bhp, 125kg. Outrageously styled supermoto available in 15bhp-learner form or unrestricted trim. The full power version is fast, furious but hard work thanks to the peaky and raucous motor inherited from the Mito sports bike. Great fun



when fitted with sticky rubber and on the right roads can humiliate much more powerful bikes. Still available new and now much more competitively priced. Once had its own supermoto championship series in France. Also available in 50cc and 80cc versions but go for the full power 125 for cheap thrills and surprising bigger prey.

Verdict: Mental teenage fun.
Canyon 500/600 (1996-on)

A/c, 4-valve, 4str-single e/s. 165kg, seat height 795mm. Stylish faired urban-moto, but a tad under-powered with its Euro friendly 34bhp motor. Not really for serious scratcher's but a great city bike for those who like a touch of Latin style.

Verdict: Sheep in wolfs clothing.
Canyon 900ie (1997-2000)

0-a/c, 4-str, desmo V-twin, e/s, 62bhp, 213kg (wet), seat height 825mm. Beautifully moto-styled successor to the Elefant. Fantastic handling matched to the charismatic torquey Ducati 900 motor gives the GC true superbike beating performance. Great fun and almost practical for an Italian thoroughbred. Service history a must.

Verdict: Sexy Italian TDM.
Navigator 1000 (2000-on)

L/c, dohc, 4-valve TSCC, 90 degree V-twin, e/s, six speed, 96 bhp, 210kg, seat height 850mm. Not as pretty as the Gran Canyon it replaces but now blessed with the amazing fuel injected Suzuki TL1000 motor. All the power and torque you will ever realistically need gives the Navi unbelievable performance. Decent brakes and a sweet quick handling chassis allows the lucky pilot to get the best out of that 'kick ass' V-twin motor. Would make a great track day tool but needs a wacky paint job to match its wacky performance.

Verdict: Italian stallion.

.....
CCM
tel 01254 296300

A range of British built off the shelf SM bikes which are partly responsible for the recent SM boom in the UK. The Blackburn 'bangers' have finally come of age with a range of tough, well made bikes using high quality components and a huge choice of factory options (including tuning parts) available, though the old Rotax lump is definitely showing its age. The CCM race series and track days have spread the SM gospel while the Foggy connection helps the image.



Supermoto 604 dual-sport (1998-on)

598cc, a/c, belt driven sohc, 4-str, e/s, Rotax single. Britain's best selling factory supermoto features a high spec including Paioli or WP forks, WP shock, Talon hubs, Excel rims, Brembo brakes etc. Choice of seat height, power output and colours.

Verdict: British beefcake.
604 RS Roadster (2000-on)

598cc, a/c, belt driven sohc, 4-str, e/s, Rotax single. CCM's first real street-bike in the mould of the KTM Duke. Stylish fairing/tank bodywork gives the bike a more sophisticated image but the heart of the bike remains the feisty air-cooled Rotax. Can be tweaked to 640cc and has a whole range of factory options available including hard luggage!

Verdict: Thug in a Saville Row suit.



R30 Supermoto (2001-on)

598cc, a/c, belt driven sohc, 4-str, e/s, Rotax single. 57bhp, 132kg, seat height 900mm (all manufacturers figures). CCM's latest offering utilising the same air-cooled Rotax mill as the rest of the range but fit and finish are up to road bike levels. Choice of stunning colours for the R30's new body panels and a set of cast alloy wheels set the bike apart from the rest of the range. **Verdict:** A class act.

.....
DERBI
tel 01629 814815

Spanish manufacturer of small bore bikes with a long history of GP world championships.

Senda SM 50

49cc, l/c, 2-str, 6-speed, oil injection, 90kg. Another little Mediterranean built screamer. Light weight, 7bhp and okay suspension and running gear makes it a cinch to keep on the pipe. The Senda SM is a serious alternative for the teenager with attitude. **Verdict:** Cheap fun at 16.

.....
DUCATI
tel 0845 1222996

Famous Italian manufacturer of high performance superbikes has finally launched a sporting but practical street-moto styled bike.

Multistrada TS1000

0-a/c, 992cc, two-valve belt driven, desmodromic sohc, 4-stroke, fuel injection, e/s, 6-speed. 195kg (claimed). Launched at the Milan show, the Multistrada shows that Ducati are prepared to reach out into totally different markets. Amazingly styled and powered by a re-vamped updated version of the oil-air cooled V-twin the Multistrada promises to combine all of the finer points of a supermoto and a superbike.

Verdict: Lust at first sight or Ducati's latest white Elefant - only time will tell.

.....
FACTORY MOTORCYCLES
tel 01597 825817

Part of the Spanish Alfer factory turning

out small bore two and four stroke trail, enduro and supermoto bikes for road and race.

50 Chrono

49cc, l/c, 2-str, 6-speed. Minarelli-powered tiddler SM with high quality Paioli forks TM style perimeter frame and higher spec than most 50s.

Verdict: Rare but well done!

SM 250 Chrono

249cc, 2-str single, counter-balanced, 6-speed. 50bhp (claimed) 103 kg. Awesome looking Rotax powered SM with top quality kit from Marzocchi and Ohlins, Brembo 320mm brakes and a claimed 50bhp, promises superb performance.

Verdict: Rare and even more well done.

.....
GAS GAS
tel 01298 25460

Spanish manufacturer of mainly trials and enduro machines with many recent World championship victories. New for 2002 is a range of trick looking supermotos blessed with quality components, light weight and well priced.



SM50/125/250 (2001-on)

L/c, 2-str single, 6-speed gearbox, hydraulic clutch. Based on the brilliantly capable Gasser enduro bikes the Supermotards shares the same powerful motors and high spec running gear. WP or Marzocchi forks, Ohlins rear shock and 320mm Brembo front disc. At less than £3900 and boasting big-bore thumper beating performance the light-weight 250 stroker makes a serious alternative to big bore thumpers. **Verdict:** Racer for the road.



HM ITALIA 450F MOTARD



require care before parting with hard cash. **Verdict:** The original and some say the best.

HM Italia tel 0039 01391 540133

Competition arm of the Italian importer who takes the CR range of MXers and converts them into ready to roll SM and enduro bikes.

Derapage 50

49cc, 1/c, 2-str single, 6-speed, 80kg (claimed). A serious bike for the serious teenager. Shares the same racer on the road styling as the other HMs.

Verdict: Start 'em young.

HM 125/250/500 Motard

All models liquid cooled 2-strokes with 5-speed transmissions and kick-starts only. Usual fantastic Honda build quality matched to a certain Italian flair means that the HM Motards are a good bet for those who don't trust European build quality. Full lighting kits, fat 17" rims and rubber matched to a fantastic NG 320mm floating disc and standard caliper.

Verdict: Naughty but nice.

HM 450F Motard

449cc, 1/c, sohc, 4-str single, kick-start only, 105.5kg (claimed). Oh lordy it's finally arrived and best of all it's available off the shelf in road going SM form. Okay you have to arrange an import from Italy - but what a bike. Powerful 'unicam' titanium valve, dry sump Honda motor delivers the goods through a five-speed transmission. This combined with a lightweight rolling chassis (alloy beam frame) and top drawer NG stoppers means that the HM 450F Motard will be tough to beat. **Verdict:** Rocket-ship with Honda reliability?

HONDA tel 01753 590500

Unbelievably the world's largest motorcycle manufacturer doesn't currently produce a dedicated supermoto machine, although the XR enduro bikes make a good starting point for a road/track

moto conversion and the two stroke CR crossers make cheap but feisty race bikes once converted.

FX650 Vigor

647cc, a/c, 4-valve, e/s single. 39bhp (claimed) 161kg, seat height 845mm. Powered by a de-tuned air-cooled Dominator lump the quaintly monikered Vigor is the big 'H's closest attempt at a street-moto. Spanish built, cheap but a tad under-powered. **Verdict:** Why bother?

AX1

249cc, 1/c, sohc, 4-str, e/s. Built for the domestic market only the 17" cast wheel equipped AX1 is not surprisingly a rare sight in Blighty. Okay, but like any 250 four-stroke not really up to serious street action. **Verdict:** Stylish city-moto with Honda build quality.

Honda Dall'ara tel 0039 035 257575

Honda Italy's XR specialist converts the XR range into off the shelf road legal supermoto bikes.

XR SM 250/400/650

Honda's range of bullet-proof four-stroke singles gets the supermoto treatment. Dall'ara take a stock bike and fit the usual 17" wheels, brakes etc. Road equipment consists of indicators, rack and rear footrest as well as a street legal lighting system. Available only as an import, at the current exchange rate an XR400SM will cost around £5000. **Verdict:** Cheaper to DIY.

HRD

tel 01937 557000

French built enduro race bikes with a four-stroke street legal 125 and 50 stroker supermoto in the range.

Supermoto 50

49cc, 1/c, 2-str. Stylish entry-level SM bike with good tuning potential.

Verdict: Why wasn't it like this when I was 16?

Supermoto 125 Cabrollet

124cc, 4-str, e/s. Amazing brakes and handling let down by an asthmatic

learner legal four-stroke mill. Still could be a cult bike due to its stylish good looks and attitude.

Verdict: Gallic style, reasonable price, dumb name.

HUSABERG tel 01772 612118

Swedish range of competition inspired four-strokes which use what is basically a two-stroke bottom end mated to a four-stroke barrel. Early ones suffered from reliability problems but later bikes (98/99-on) much better. Essentially an exciting, well designed but occasionally badly detailed bike. Awesome electric start engine and six-speed transmissions give any Husey fantastic performance. New models are now even better value after a pricing revision by the owners - KTM.



HUSABERG FS400e

SM/FS 400/501/600/650 c/e (1994-on)

L/c, 4-valve, 4-str single, six speed gearbox. E-models have electric start, 117-124kg, seat height 950mm. Seriously quick, lightweight, high spec thumpers some 470cc versions about using a mixture of 400 and 501 parts. Later bikes have better lubrication systems and a wacky re-style for 2000-on. Available in either street legal (e) or full race (c) trim. **Verdict:** Fast but are you?

HUSQVARNA tel 01962 771122

Previously Swedish but now Italian-owned company (Cagiva) manufacturing a range of dirtbikes and supermoto machines. Earlier four-stroke models were renowned for their good power to weight ratios. The original left-hand kick-start only enduro derived models may seem a tad agricultural by modern standards but still put out an awesome amount of power. Probably the cult supermoto thanks to heavy factory race involvement and of course the brothers Chambon!

SM400fse (2002-on)

398cc, 1/c, 4-valve, 4-str, e/s, single, 6-speed, hydraulic clutch. The first Gasser thumper shares a similar high specification to the 2-stroke range. Ohlins fork is an extra cost option. Under development for over three years the 400SM should prove to be a serious threat to the more established competition. **Verdict:** Mediterranean beauty.

GILERA

tel 0800 203010

Part of the giant Piaggio group with a legendary road racing history. Has recently been concentrating on scooters but thanks to a tie-up with Cagiva and a change of direction at the top, more 'real' motorcycles will appear over the next few years. Let's hope a successor to the original factory supermoto (the 600 Northwest) isn't too far away.

GSM 125 supermotard

124cc, 1/c, 2-str single, 6-speed, oil injection, catalysed exhaust. Attractively styled 125 SM from the famous Gilera stable, Showa usd fork, Ajp brakes and of course 17" rims. Extremely rare sight in the UK but very capable.

Verdict: Worth searching out.

Nordwest 600 (1991-95)

558cc, 1/c, 4-str, e/s, single. 140kg. The granddaddy of all factory supermotos. Cost almost 4.5 big ones when launched but still sold to those who dared to be different. Cast 17" wheels with twin floating Brembos matched to a sturdy set of USD forks and a well-balanced chassis enabled the Nordwest to be hustled along at superbike humbling speeds in the twisties. The stylish Gilera still looks fresh 10 years on but most examples will



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Supermoto BIKE BUYERS GUIDE



HUSQVARNA SM400R

SM50S

49cc, l/c, 2-str single, oil-injection, 6-speed. 92kg (claimed). High spec 50 featuring discs front and rear, 'works'-look expansion chamber combined with the same styling as Chambon's race bike gives the smallest Husky heaps of street-cred. **Verdict:** Dad, buy me a bike!

SM125S

124cc, l/c, six-speed, oil injection single. Modern, superb high spec street legal supermoto with powerful revvy motor and electronic power valve. **Verdict:** Good intro into the world of the motard.

SM400R (2002 on)

398cc, l/c, 4-str, e/s only, single, 5-speed hydraulic clutch, 117.5kg (claimed). The long awaited new generation Husky thumper has finally arrived. Top quality Brembo race spec brakes, usd Marzocchis and Sachs rear shock together with nice touches such as an alloy 8 litre tank lend the new a Husky a works look. A total re-design from early Husqvarna four-strokes, the new electric start bikes promises to carry on the factory's fine racing heritage. **Verdict:** .Looks good. Should be good. Needs to be good...

SM610R/570R

L/c, 4-valve, 4-str single, RAL lubrication system, six speed gearbox, kick-start only. 118kg, seat height 900mm. The original high performance thumper is starting to show its age but still gives heaps of grunt and an eye watering top-end rush. Has a very loyal following but

watch out for bodged four speed M/X bikes that have had conversions. **Verdict:** The big Husky still flies the open class flag for 2002 with the 570.

NOX

570cc, l/c, 4-valve, 4-str, RAL lubrication system. Kick-start only. The Holy Grail for supermoto riders. The limited edition Husqvarna Nox is oozing trickness from every pore of its sexy carbon fibre panels. Titanium exhaust and sub-frame, 'works' spec motor, flat slide carb and GP Brembo brakes help make the Nox the most desirable of all factory SMs. A relative bargain at a mere 12000 Euros! the bike comes with a road legal kit. Form an orderly queue and log onto www.huskynox.it, to place an order. **Verdict:** Better than sex?

SM410/610S (1998-on)

L/c, 4-valve, 4-str, six speed, single, e/s, dual oil pump, counterbalance shaft. Externally similar to the competition motor but this was an all new engine designed for street use in both trail and supermoto form, launched five years ago. Fully equipped and civilised, the new motor's electric start has a back up kick-starter (now on the right). Dual cat exhaust, luggage rack and full instrumentation make for a much more pleasant street machine but add the kilos. Can drag the under-carriage when really going for it. But overall a stylish and sensible alternative to the rough and ready race bred SMR models. **Verdict:** Latin temptress with a Latin temperament.

ITALJET

tel 01709 590000

Italian scooter manufacturer getting in on the SM craze currently sweeping Europe.

125 Mad SM

124cc, a/c, 2-valve 4-str single. Paioli fork and laid down link-less shock, Acerbis plastics and 17" rims. The Mad is built to a high standard for a learner bike - a good intro into the world of SM. **Verdict:** But probably won't live up to its name.

KAWASAKI

tel 01628 851000

Kawasaki like other Japanese factories have almost totally ignored the supermoto scene. With perhaps one exception (the D-tracker) - though perhaps a factory 400 motard isn't too far off. Alternatively the KX motocrossers (in particular the big 500) make ready conversions to the moto scene.

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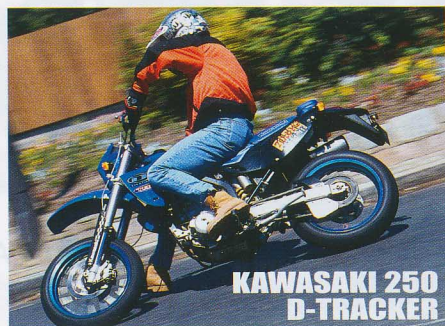
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250 D-Tracker

L/c, 4-valve, 4-str, dohc, 6-speed single, e/s, 127kg, seat height 875mm. Cool looking factory supermoto based on the rather insipid KLX250 trailie. Japanese import only, the D-Tracker has a great handling chassis but is pretty gutless as a hooligan tool. More at home in an urban setting than carving canyon roads. Nice try but needs more power. **Verdict:** Coffee bar racer on a budget.



KAWASAKI 250 D-TRACKER

KL Kawasaki

tel 00390364 335711

Italian importer of off-road Kwaks which converts the MX bikes to supermoto and enduro bikes, then sells them off the shelf. No current importer.

SM125/250

L/c, 2-str, single. The mean, green Kawas converted to SM spec by KL. Lighting kit, side stand but no instrumentation. Spec includes 17" wheels, Braking wave 320mm disc with standard caliper, KL bracket and passenger footrest. SM250 about £4850 at current exchange rate.

Verdict: Rare greenery.

KRAMIT

tel 01597 825817

Small specialist Italian manufacturer building top spec and extremely trick enduro and supermoto bikes. Using high quality components matched to the highly tuneable and versatile 250 Rotax motor these machines offer more than their fair share of Latin style.

SM250

L/c, 2-str single, adjustable power valve and counter-balanced, left side kick-start, 6-speed

KRAMIT SM250



gearbox, 107kg (claimed). Drop-dead gorgeous styling together with high quality kit (Ohlins, Marzocchi, Excel etc) plus alloy fuel tank and carbon fibre air box and panels give the Kramit a works look. Slim and fast but slightly too specialised for some. The supermoto 250 is available in three versions to suit the discerning hooligan and his (or her) wallet. The entry model is fully street equipped with lights, indicators, speedo etc the intermediate model is for race use only and a full monty factory replica race bike comes with a proven 60bhp and is basically the same machine that won the 250 European championship last year.

Verdict: Serious nutters only need apply.

KTM

tel 01280 709500

The Austrian factory can't seem to put a foot wrong these days. KTM has become a byword for high performance, high quality and high durability that other European manufacturers find hard to match. The first factory (street) SM - the 620 Duke - immediately achieved cult status and with a vee-twin powered 'Super Duke' waiting in the wings, the Austrians look set to go from strength to strength. One of the few factories offering a genuine range of purpose-built supermotards, plus of course virtually all of their current range of mx/enduro bikes will handle conversion. In particular the 520EXC is the first choice for the well-heeled nutter...



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KTM DUKE II



range. Earlier bikes (pre-1998) were 620 models (actual capacity 609cc) but none the worse for it. Top notch (WP) suspension and running gear is up to KTM's usual high standard and durability is legendary. Smoother and hence more comfortable than the Supercomp and with the added bonus of electric start, the main downside is extra weight. A steel sub-frame adds weight but allows passengers to enjoy the sideways action. Re-styled 640 was introduced in 1998 and later bikes hold their values well.

Verdict: The sensible supermoto.

SM660 Factory replica (2002-on)

653cc, l/c, 4-valve, 4-str single, 5-speed kickstart only, 115kg. Bored and stroked LC4 motor with astonishing attention to detail including adjustable ride height, titanium Akrapovic exhaust, carbon fibre air-box/panels etc, factory spec WP suspension Brembo GP billet caliper and disc plus a (claimed) 72bhp motor. Only around 100 bikes will be produced so get your order in quick. 98% the same as Van Der Bosch and Kinigadner's bikes.

Verdict: A true factory race bike.

620/640 Duke (1994-on)

609/625cc, L/C, 4-valve, 4-str single, 5-speed, counter-balancer, e/s (series 3-on), 145kg, seat height 860mm. The cult street moto. Expensive when new and expensive used, the Duke took over where the Northwest left off and carved its own niche in the market. Strangely styled but quite unique supermoto version of KTM's big banger. Stylish twin headlamp fairing and fully street equipped, the Duke is still highly desirable. Series one and two models were kick-start only but with the series three lekky-start versions (battery in right side-panel), sales really took off. Apart from moving the battery into the air-box the Duke remained virtually unchanged until 1998 when the larger 640 model was introduced. The following year saw the totally re-vamped Duke mkII launched which included up-dates to the styling, twin under seat pipes, cast wheels and a

Mikuni CV carb. A new LC8 vee-twin Duke is on the cards which promises to offer a truly awesome level of superbike slaying performance. **Verdict:** Street rod for the discerning motarder.

KYMCO

tel 01743 761109

Taiwanese built bikes offering exceptional value for money if not exactly the last word in styling. Well equipped but a bit lacking in performance.

Stryker 125

124cc, a/c, 4-str, 11bhp, single, 128kg, seat height 860mm. Large bike with a puny 11bhp four-stroke lump to haul it along. Styled a bit like a TDR125 but with about half the horsepower.

Verdict: City use only.

MUZ

tel 01455 213845

German manufacturing concern which arose out of the ashes of the former eastern bloc bike builder, with years of competition history behind it.

125 Supermoto

125cc, a/c, 4-str, e/s single, 133kg. A recent addition to the MuZ range, the 125SM is a well-built and very stylish (similar to KTM) learner bike. Reasonably priced but suffers from a slight image problem. **Verdict:** Once around the bloc...

660 Mastiff

L/c, 5-valve, 4-stroke, e/s single. Yamaha XTZ660-powered moto with totally bizarre styling and wacko paint job - gives the Mastiff a unique profile. Capable handling and reasonable performance matched to a sensible price, make the Mastiff good value for money, but far too weird to score many sales in the UK. Good secondhand buy however, but don't pay too much for one.

Verdict: Oh to be different!

Rieju

tel 01736 333243

Spanish manufacturer of small bore bikes with reasonable looks and performance,

but the usual Spanish build quality.

SMX50 supermoto

49cc, l/c, 2-str, oil injection, single, 6-speed, 90kg. Rev happy Minarelli-powered tiddler punts out over 6.5bhp with the potential for much more. Big bike looks and dimensions together with a comprehensive list of standard equipment gives the Rieju a fantastic smiles per pound factor. **Verdict:** Keep on the gas.

SMX125 supermoto

124cc, a/c, 2-valve, 4-str single, 5-speed, kick-start and e/s. Yamaha-powered beam framed supermoto street bike. Funky styled, nice instrumentation and good spec including Ajp brakes, beefy forks and 17" rims. **Verdict:** Looks better than it goes.

SACHS ZZ125



SACHS

tel 01743 761107

Historical German manufacturer recently re-launched into the UK with a range of stylish, exceptionally well built (but heavy) bikes.

ZZ125

124.8cc, l/c, 2-str, e/s, electronic power valve, 6-speed, single. A quality product from the German factory, fit and finish are better than most but the styling isn't as fresh as some other Euro bikes. **Verdict:** Good value learner-moto.

SUZUKI

tel 01293 518000

Still no true factory built supermoto bikes. But thanks to its superb grunty and powerful lekky start motor, the DR-Z400 is perhaps one of the most popular DIY conversions. RMX and RM Mxers would do likewise for the stroker brigade...

125 Sting

L/c, 2-str, e/s, single, 6-speed, oil injection, cat exhaust. Spitting image of the mkl 620 Duke, the learner-legal Sting offers the junior motarder all of the style and pose value of a real street-moto. Top spec running gear includes Brembo, Paioli, Dell'Orto etc. Sadly the bike went out of production in 1999. **Verdict:** Cool tool.

Supermoto 125

124.8cc, l/c, 2-str, single, 6-speed, kick-start, 104 kg (claimed), seat height 830mm. The latest entry level SM from the Austrian factory offers amazing value for money. WP suspension including KTM's PDS link-less rear shock, alloy rear sub-frame and a whacking great 320mm Brembo up front show that the factory takes the 125 class seriously. **Verdict:** Quality needn't cost a fortune.

SM 620/625 Supercomp

609cc, l/c, sohc, 4-valve, 4-str single, 5-speed, 123 kg, seat height 940mm. Kick-start only competition bike that's been the mainstay of the KTM range for the last decade. Power, stability and dependability are the LC4 powered SC's strong points. Left-hand kick-start and plenty of vibration are the only downsides to what is still an awesome SM. More power and less weight than the electric start LC4 versions the 620SC is a serious bike for equally serious riders. Up-dated (and minor tweaks) for 2002 - capacity now 625cc. **Verdict:** Is your arse hairy enough?

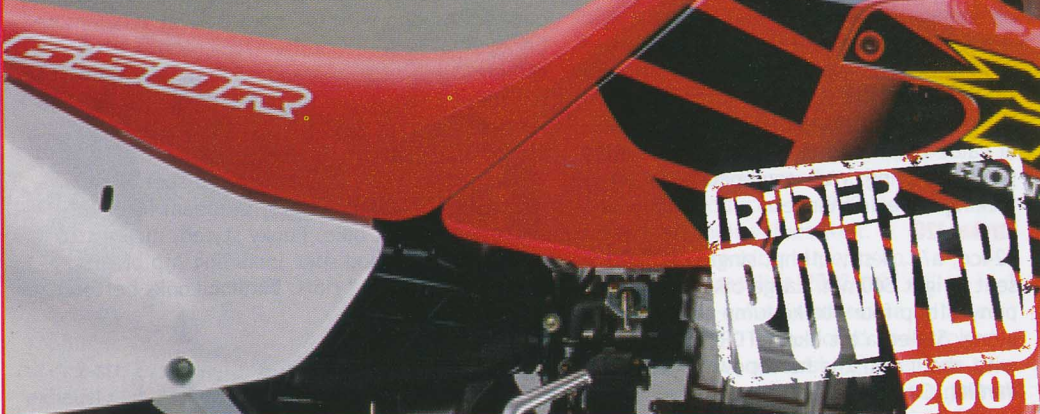
620/640 Supermoto

609/625cc, l/c, sohc, 4-valve, 4-str, e/s, single, counter-balancer, 5-speed, 137kg, seat height 935mm. Civilised version of the LC4 powered

XR650 SUPERMOTO

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Supermoto BIKE BUYERS GUIDE

Magazine

XF650 Freewind

644cc, o-a/c, 4-valve, e/s, single, 46bhp (claimed). Not so much a supermoto, more a rival for the Pegaso/Funduro. Not a bad bike really but fails to be exceptional in every department. Doesn't help that it's been hit by the ugly stick. Very few sold in the UK as a consequence. **Verdict:** A bike for ugly ducklings everywhere.

Suzuki Valenti tel 0039 039 2450 192

Italian Suzuki off-road importer who converts the DR-Z400 to Supermoto trim.

DR-Z400SM

398cc, l/c 4-str, dohc, 4-valve single, e/s only, 5-speed. Based on a stock DR-Z the Valenti boys offer a ready to ride, street legal SM. Fully kitted out with the usual 17" rims, big brake etc, the Italian converted machine will set you back around five grand. **Verdict:** Another bike that's cheaper to DIY.

Vertemati tel 0208 660 3728

The Vertemati brothers developed their high performance gear-driven sohc thumper motor together with superbike builders Bimota. Following a short link-up with VOR the brothers have gone their own way again to produce an even more exotic (not to mention expensive) development of the original. Superb attention to detail on these truly exotic supermoto thumpers, but price and availability makes them rare as a consequence.

SM 492/501/570/629

L/c, 4-str, 4-valve, gear driven sohc, 5-speed, 116kg, seat height 940mm. These exclusive and expensive Supermoto bikes are more suited to serious competition than casual street use. Weird non-primary kick-start is forward acting but works great once you get the hang of it.

VOR SUPERMOTARD



Needs to ridden hard to get the best from the excellent chassis and motor.

Verdict: The Ferrari F50 of the SM world.

VOR tel 01249 715523

Offshoot of the original Vertemati concern, aimed at serious thumper pilots who demand something a little different. 2002 range has had a total makeover including a re-vamped electric start/pressurised oil feed engine, new forks, shock and brakes and a new set of clothes. Curiously the factory-built supermoto retains the old model's bolt-together frame rather than the new perimeter chassis from the latest enduro models, but has inherited the newer engine.

Supermotard 400/450/503/530

L/c, 4-valve, 4-str gear driven sohc, 5-speed. Powerful motors coupled to high quality running gear make the VOR an exotic alternative for the serious motard pilot. Fantastic attention to detail, but weird forward acting kick-start only on pre-2002 (E model) bikes. Pressurised lubrication system is a much better bet for prolonged street use. All VORs offer a stunning level of performance and exclusivity that few bikes can equal.

Verdict: Sexy SM.

TM MOTO tel 01249 715523

Small Italian concern with a long history of getting big horsepower out of small two-strokes have recently turned their attention to the expanding thumper market. Extremely well equipped bikes with quality chassis components as standard.

125/250SM

L/c, 2-str single. Usual awesomely powerful TM motors available in supermoto trim. Fitted with street-legal kit, blue 17" Excel rims and Braking wave discs these two-stroke flyers are more suited to race than road. **Verdict:** Awesome performance for the capacity.

400SM (2002-on)

L/c, dohc, 4-valve, 4-str, wet-sump, e/s, single, 5-speed. Fantastic specification for TM's first four-stroke supermoto. Ohlins shock, Paioli fork, Excel rims and Braking wave discs is the norm for TM and the rest of the bike is built to the same high spec. Although not cheap, the TM 400SM is well worth a serious look for those who demand something a little special. Watch out for difficult hot-starting though. **Verdict:** A visual treat with performance to match.

530 Motard (2002/3?)

Prospective 530cc version of the powerful TM thumper motor slotted into the trickiest rolling chassis known to man. Ducati type, cast alloy swinging arm, Mavic cast alloy wheels with a Braking rim mounted disc with 4-piston caliper on the front end. Ohlins usd fork and rear shock, Gianelli titanium pipe, Brembo radial pump master cylinder. The list of top notch goodies goes on and on. Maybe a question mark over the durability of cast alloy wheels, but what style?

Verdict: Only the Italians could make this - but when will we see a production version?

YAMAHA tel 01932 350030

Surprise, surprise another Japanese factory without a true supermoto machine in its current range. However the WR400/426 four-stroke enduro bikes make arguably the best DIY conversion for those who like their motos from the East. Not quite as popular as the more civilised offerings from Honda (XR) and Suzuki (DR-Z), nevertheless the WR thumpers in SM trim are both quicker

and more stable on the limit. Well recommended for the DIY enthusiast especially the more recent 426F version.

TDR125

124cc, l/c, 2-str, e/s, single, oil injection YPVS electronic power-valve, 6-speed, 128kg. Deltabox framed and swoopy TDM styled bodywork lend the TDR a true big bike image. Powered by an electric-start version of the venerable DTR125 motor the TDR offers style and bomb-proof reliability for the novice moto-head. Not as mad or bad as some of the Euro 125s, but much more sophisticated. **Verdict:** Big bike style and practicality, make this a decent (and affordable) secondhand buy.

TDR250

248cc, l/c, parallel twin, six-speed gearbox, YPVS, kick-start only. A TZR250 in trail/moto clothing. Great road bike with demon brakes and interesting handling thanks to dinner-plate sized front disc, and all or nothing power-band. Peaky motor makes it difficult to keep on the boil, but ideal for fast back lane action. Thoroughly uncivilised with an enormous thirst for fuel and oil but fantastic all the same. Beware seizures on the left cylinder and high speed weaves. Has a few dedicated followers and production finished in the early nineties so finding a good example is getting difficult.

Verdict: For petrolheads everywhere.

TDM850 (1991-on)

849cc, l/c, 4-str, 10-valve, dohc parallel twin. Street/moto styled version of the XTZ750 but with a much gruntier 850cc lump. Deltabox frame, neat bodywork and decent suspension allow the rider to make the most of the 135mph plus performance. Early versions had an appallingly clunky gearbox but revisions over the years have seen improvements. Major up-date in 1997 gave the big twin a fresh look and a new lease of life, updated again for 2002 with a new chassis and 950 motor. Too heavy for serious action, the TDM can however still put one over an unsuspecting sportsbike pilot.

Verdict: Sensible and stylish street-moto. Awesome moto-tourer for alpine passes.



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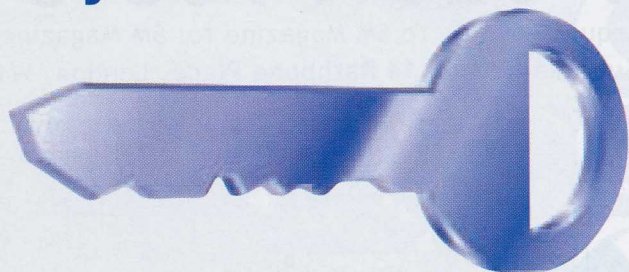


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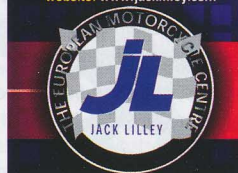
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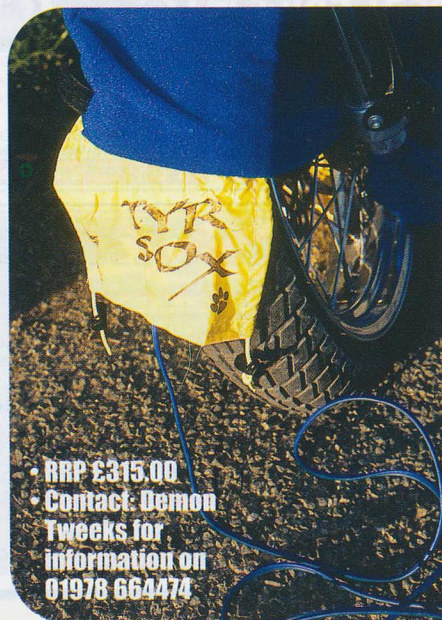
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Tyre Sox

These days more and more SM riders and racers are using tyre warmers and the advantages are obvious. Either for track days or racing it's vital to get some heat into the rubber before pushing too hard. So it goes without saying that pre-heated rubberware is not only the fast ticket to quick lap times but it also aids safety in the opening stages.

These aptly named Tyre Sox are widely used in the US racing scene. Their lightweight construction makes them a doddle to fit and once in place and plugged in, the fleece covers help to retain heat. Running off a standard 240 volts, the Tyre Sox come with electrical leads and full instructions, all in a neat (lidded) plastic stowage bin. Verdict: A bit of a fiddle to get the fleece covers in place, but once on and plugged in they work a treat.



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Joe Rocket Speedway

Recently introduced into the UK is the Canadian-designed Joe Rocket range of quality leathers. Joe Rocket may not mean much to the average British motard rider but over the pond, top US and Canadian superbike riders have been relying on Joe Rocket leathers for a number of years. Made from 1.4mm cowhide, the ladies Speedway jacket features CE-approved, dual density soft armour in the elbows and shoulders, a novel zip-able vent system incorporated into the upper arms (similar to an off-road rallye jacket), and a removable insulated vest liner. An extra safety feature is the stylish reflective ('chrome') trim running from shoulder to cuff. The Speedway jacket is cut for the more feminine form and thanks to an adjustable waistband and a zip attachment for matching pants, your bum need never look big in this! With celebs and wannabe 'It' girls getting into the bike jacket thang, the once humble leather jacket is now a 'must have' fashion item for the in-crowd. Colours available: blue, red, green, yellow and black all with chrome/black contrasting trim. Verdict: A well made and stylish jacket that offers both protection and sexy good looks.



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For serious SM road and race action most riders tend to use full leather racing gloves for protecting their pinkies. However for those of us bred into dirtbikes, these bulky and awkward gloves are often shunned in favour of a set of pukka lightweight MX gloves, which offers better feel at the controls and are that much cooler when the pace hots up. But up until recently MX gloves have lacked outright protection in the highly likely event of a trip down the tarmac.

Acerbis have come up with the perfect compromise for SM pilots. The Carbon G glove is a lightweight MX-style glove with a difference - thanks to the use of Kevlar and carbon-fibre the Carbon Gs offer far more protection than a conventional dirtbike glove, whilst still being light and comfortable.

We've been using a set of these excellent gloves over the last season and can vouch for their ruggedness. Sliding down the track at Rockingham on my hands and knees I suffered no abrasion injuries whatsoever. The gloves did tear at the Kevlar-Spandex seam but by then they'd done the job of saving my hairy palms for future abuse. Verdict: Good value at the price - I've just purchased my third pair for the coming season...



• RRP £117.80 (RSR1) front, £148 (RSR2) rear
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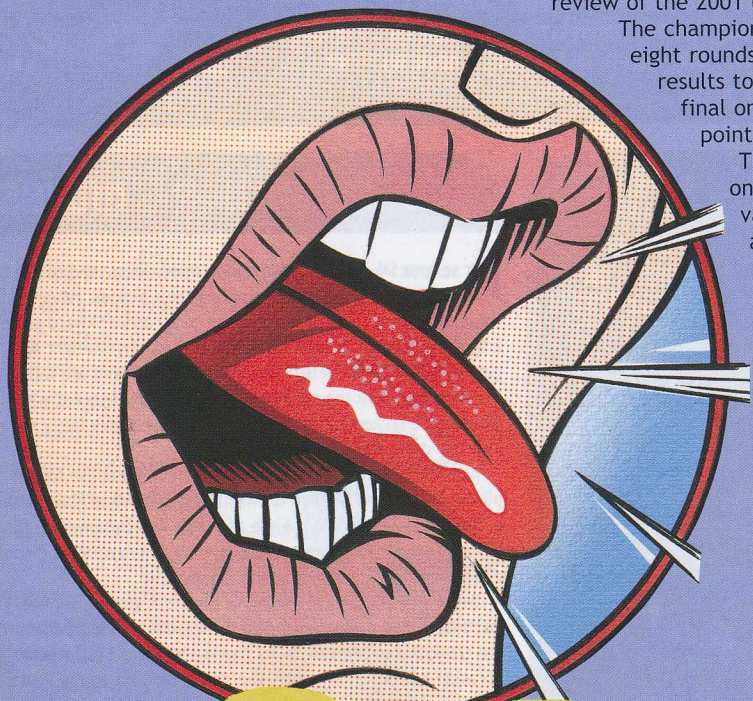
Metzeler Metz Rain

Race wets offer your supermoto the ultimate levels of grip in the rain. So much so that some riders choose to ride on them all year round (particularly the fronts). The disadvantage? They wear out quickly (especially the rears) on a drying track. We tried a set of Metzeler Metz Rain race-wets at a damp and drizzly Cadwell Park. Fitted to our KTM 620 Supercomp these tyres offered an amazing level of grip in the difficult conditions.

With standing water on half the track (and damp for most of the rest), they performed incredibly well, however as the track dried they rapidly began to overheat. Normally at this point you'd come in and change them, but we wanted to see what happened if you didn't. After several fraught laps the chunky rear tread shred its blocks of rubber and we ended up with a super sticky slick! This worked a treat in the dry conditions.

Obviously these super soft compound tyres are not for highway use and are recommended for wet race use only. But we were mightily impressed with the level of grip they offered not only in the wet, but on the rapidly drying track as well.

Verdict: Great in the wet (and on the dirt), and if it dries, they still get the job done, but at a price.



Get Lippy

Supermoto guru Dave Lippett has been involved in SM racing since the very beginning...

WNI Welcome to the Get Lippy Race Column, Over the next few pages (and during the coming months) I'll introduce you to some of the characters and places that make the UK SM race scene tick. And I thought I'd begin the column with a

review of the 2001 UK SM race season. The championship was held over eight rounds with the best seven results to count, with the final one being a double-points scoring round.

This year's championship was held at various venues up and down the country, but mostly with a northern geographical bias. It's in the water up there y'see. Makes 'em 'ard.

Actually the first NORA race of the year took place in February at one of the UK's most southerly race-tracks, Lydden Hill in Kent. This was a shared event with the British Rallycross (cars) championship. Due to sharing the circuit with the cars, the entries were restricted (and hence it was non-championship), but the results laid some season-long foundations for the ensuing points scoring rounds. Or did they?

Lydden also saw the UK race debut of the factory CCM Supermoto team featuring Warren Steele as their number one rider. Warren took the

overall honours at Lydden in front of Dean Hemmings on his exotic 610 ex-factory Husqvarna, and Craig Taylor on a big 660 KTM.

One rider notably missing from the results was Scunthorpe's Leighton Haigh. Last year's second placed man had seized

his CR500 hybrid in the freezing cold practice session. So cold in fact that the overnight snow still lay on the circuit during practice. Brrrrrr!

After the pre-season taster at Lydden, NORA moved on to stage the first championship round in April at Blyton in Lincolnshire. Blyton race circuit is based around an old airfield (last used in the '50s), which is being gradually developed by the Rallycross guys into a full-blown hybrid dirt/tarmac circuit. At the moment the facilities are... ahem, basic and the tarmac is riddled with potholes, and liberally dusted with gravel. Just the sort of place to let a bunch of nutters loose on motards then.

There was a surprise for last season's regulars when former British enduro champ Ady Smith showed up with his KTM UK sponsored machine. Ady hadn't ridden Supermoto for a number of years, but it didn't take him long to re-adapt. Also gracing the event with his presence was top Northern Irish motard racer Paul McMinn on his 610 Husky. Leighton Haigh had put the disappointment of his Lydden privateer bike seizure firmly behind him, and was now mounted on a Bracken sponsored KTM520. Steele however was destined to smoke the field, taking four wins out of four on the factory 640 CCM. Haigh, McMinn, Smith and veteran Lawrence Palmer (1999 ACU British SM champion), on his trusty KX500, rounded out the top five.

Three weeks later the NORA circus travelled to the north-east, and more specifically Warden Law kart circuit just outside Sunderland. It was the first time NORA had used the pristine, tight and twisty circuit, but the circuit owner had agreed the use of his manicured grass infield to form the off-road sections. He'd also agreed to let a bunch of racers out in a kart race the previous evening. One look at the slavering, drooling, gaggle of bar banging motard speed addicts queuing to sign up for his rental karts had him rapidly having a change of heart, and we ended up with a fastest lap shootout instead. Can't think why.

Later, as the paddock settled down to sleep, the patter of rain on van roofs was a portent of things to come.

Once more the regulars were joined by a rapid visitor from the Emerald Isle, this time in the form of Davey Tougher, the 2000 Irish P&O supermoto champion. The conditions were wet and blustery and the formerly pristine circuit was soon reduced to a mud encrusted skating rink: proper British supermoto conditions. At the end of a frenetic four way dice for victory, Haigh and Tougher shared the honours on equal points and race wins, with Steele and Smith in close attendance in third and fourth. Yours Truly pulled off a season's best result with fifth overall.

Round three and the battle moved back to Blyton. On his home circuit Leighton was the dominant rider taking three out of four victories with Steele in second and Dean Hemmings taking up his pre-season form with a fine third overall. Southern MX racer Alan Smith revved his little YZF into fourth place around the high speed swoops of Blyton, just in front of last year's NORA champion Keith Jackson in fifth on his privateer CCM. Ady languished in a lowly (for him!) eighth place overall after a DNF.

Next stop on the calendar, Manby, also in Lincolnshire. Manby is the one venue on the schedule that boasts a larger proportion of dirt than tarmac. A situation which clearly favours the dirt specialists with lighter machines. A number of off-road aces had signed up for this event including the redoubtable Perry Leask (Yamaha 426 mounted), and enduro ace Mark Jackson on a KTM. Ady had opted to use a 300cc KTM two-stroke over his faster, but heavier 640. Nobody seemed to have told Warren Steele that he needed a smaller bike for the venue though, and he hustled the big 640 factory machine to an impressive first race win and contested the next two fiercely with Ady. Warren's day was spoilt by a derailed chain in the final race, which spat him unceremoniously over the bars in a monster crash. Ady pressed home his advantage and left the event just four points shy of a maximum. Leighton slammed every berm on his way to second overall, Rob Simpson motored his 660 Katoom into third place and Andy Mitchell completed a KTM rout of the top four on his 520SX.

Get Lippy

Warren's last race DNF left him as first non-KTM rider, in fifth place with Mike Wright's

super-trick YZF rounding out the top six.

The championship was developing into a three-way scrap between Leighton, Ady, and Warren; with just the points for one race win separating them at the halfway stage of the season after four closely fought rounds.

The second half of the season kicked off with our third visit to the delights of Blyton - just opposite the maggot farm! Steele kicked in the afterburners again and took the victory in the day's first A-race. It was by no means an easy victory though with local man Haigh exploiting his circuit knowledge, and Ady just being Ady and absolutely riding the wheels off his Katoom in an effort to get past Warren. It all came to a head in the second race when Smith and Steele clattered together in one of the circuit's fast chicanes. They both went down hard enough for the race to be red flagged. The race had gone past two thirds distance so a result was declared from the previous lap. It was to prove to be one of the defining moments of the season though, with Warren heading off to hospital leaving Leighton and Ady to share the day's spoils. Another local man, David Harrison put in his best ride of the season to take third overall, trailed by Andy Mitchell and a resurgent Dave Bayliss having his first motard race of the 2001 season on his ex-CAS 500 Honda. Dean Hemmings completed the top six on the day with his consistent finishes putting him in fourth in the season's standings.

Onwards and upwards - well, westward and upwards actually, to the Wigan circuit of Three Sisters in Lancashire. Three Sisters was a different proposition to all of the other motard tracks in the calendar in that it was a pure tarmac road race venue, albeit tight twisty and ideally suited to motards.

This round saw some of the top Irish

lads make the trek across from the Emerald Isle again, although sadly due to delays caused by multiple crashes they missed the final heats of the day in order to make the boat home. Warren also suffered his share of crashes as he struggled with the injuries sustained at Blyton. Also enjoying a welcome one-off outing was Husaberg mounted (former '99 NORA SM champion) Kenny Belfield. Kenny has been racing at Three Sisters for more than 19 years and was determined to enjoy a day upsetting the regulars.

A week prior to the race I'd been to the circuit to test along with Ady. The marshals on that practice day had expressed their absolute gob-smacked astonishment at the way Ady was lapping the circuit. No mean feat when you consider that they were more used to watching multiple WSB champ Carl Fogarty circulate on his own tricked up CCM.

The marshals were right to be amazed by Ady's antics - four wins on the day with Kenny tucked in behind him gradually eased down the championship points gap on Leighton, and with CCM mounted Warren suffering with his injuries, the title race was beginning to look increasingly like a two horse race. Mike Wright and Dean Hemmings rounded out the top five on the day.

Right, time for the trek back to Sunderland for the penultimate round at Warden Law. In contrast to the previous race at the circuit, we were blessed with bright sunshine, it was however offset by a biting wind that kept the temperature low and meant that slicks cooled off rather quickly in the staging area. From the outset, Leighton Haigh made his intentions clear. Balls out for the win! No different to the way he always rides then.

Ady was using yet another different KTM and had chosen the 380 two-stroke to demonstrate his prowess. I think he was just trying to emulate Aussie enduro ace Shane Watts by proving that he could win on any bike in the KTM range.

Whatever his reasoning it paid dividends, and the spectators were treated to a fantastic spectacle with Leighton and Ady rarely more than two bike lengths apart throughout the day.

Unfortunately Haigh dropped the bike on the dirt on the last lap of the third race (whilst leading). The time it took him to get re-started cost him dearly, and gave Ady just the opportunity he needed to close up the championship points gap to virtually nothing. Steele was still struggling with his injuries but was an easy third in each race.

Realising that he couldn't catch the KTM mounted pair he had a big enough lead over the fourth man to entertain the crowds performing huge rolling stoppies and stand on the seat wheelies throughout the races!

The last race was an absolute barn-stormer and one of the season's best. At the green light Haigh flew away from the pack and Steele slotted into second place. Smith was all over the back of him like a flea on a dog! Eventually Ady's determination paid off and he was in full flight to chase down Leighton. Within two laps he was on Haigh's rear mudguard, and the two of them went wheel-to-wheel, bar-to-bar in a scrap that had the crowd gasping and on their toes for the last six laps. At the flag Leighton took the victory by a wheel. Ady sportingly congratulated him as they both took the plaudits from the cold, but wildly enthusiastic crowd.

Dean Hemmings' fourth place on the day meant that he was tied with Steele for third in the championship heading into the final round back at Blyton.

Nigel Windys re-discovered his Supermoto 'mojo' in fifth place and two motard-mental Yorkshiremen Jason Chipchase and Mark Oxley disputed sixth and seventh place to make it five KTMs in the top seven. Hemmings' lone Husky SMR and Steele's CCM640 being the only two non-orange bikes.

Smith's professionalism and sheer dogged persistence meant that after the points were tallied up he went to the final round a scant four points behind Haigh with 400 points up for grabs at the final (double-points) round.

Onto the last NORA race of the year at Blyton then and a shock in store for the title leader. Haigh had received an unfortunate blow at a Dutch SM race the week prior to Blyton. Colliding with a metal

trackside barrier, he hit it hard enough to warrant external fixators on his broken left arm. Game over.

Steele had decided that following his earlier injuries his championship priorities lay elsewhere and he made the trek across to Ireland to compete in the first round of the P&O winter series.

It meant that all Smith had to do was simply finish in the top 15 in the first race to guarantee his first crown as National Supermoto champion. Ady simply isn't built that way though, and he led the first race from the green light to the chequers with no serious challengers in sight. He took the second in similar fashion, but in the third race someone woke Dave Bayliss up and he kept Ady honest, sitting on his rear wheel but not quite fast enough to get past.

In the final A-race of the season Ady decided a little bit of sport was in order. He sat on the start line until the last rider had entered the first corner at the end of the long start straight. Then he set off on a mission.

At the front Dean Hemmings and Dave Bayliss were engaged in battle royal until Dave overcooked it and high-sided it exiting a dirt encrusted turn. Dean was away at the front, but with two laps left Ady had incredibly fought through the field into second place and looked increasingly likely to pick off Dean. Exiting the final straight, it looked as if he might just make it, but Dean hung on and took the final race of the season by the width of a front tyre. A stunning virtuoso performance by Ady, and an excellent way to cap off his season as 2001 national Supermoto champion.

Whew! I've only briefly(!) touched on the A-group races, but the NORA championship was contested by over 140 different riders throughout the season with regular entries of 100 solos. (There's a maniacal quad class too!). There are four classes of solos, 'A' through to 'D', with all abilities of riders catered for. All you need do is join the club, pay 40 quid entry fee, tape up your lights and away you go - it's that simple.

For further details of NORA events try: www.supermoto.freeserve.co.uk, better still, read issue two of Supermoto Mag...

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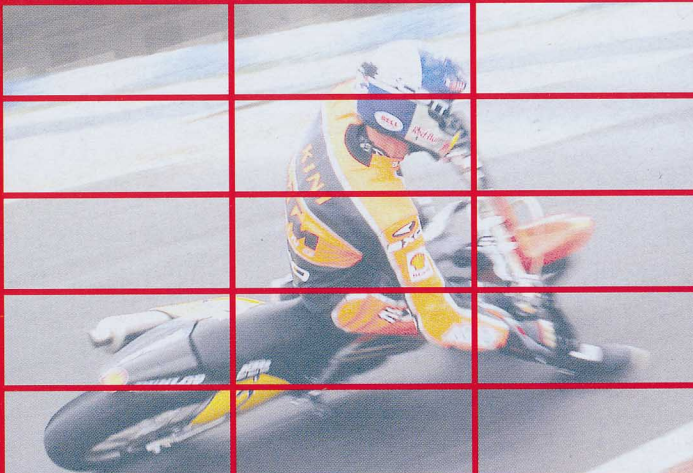
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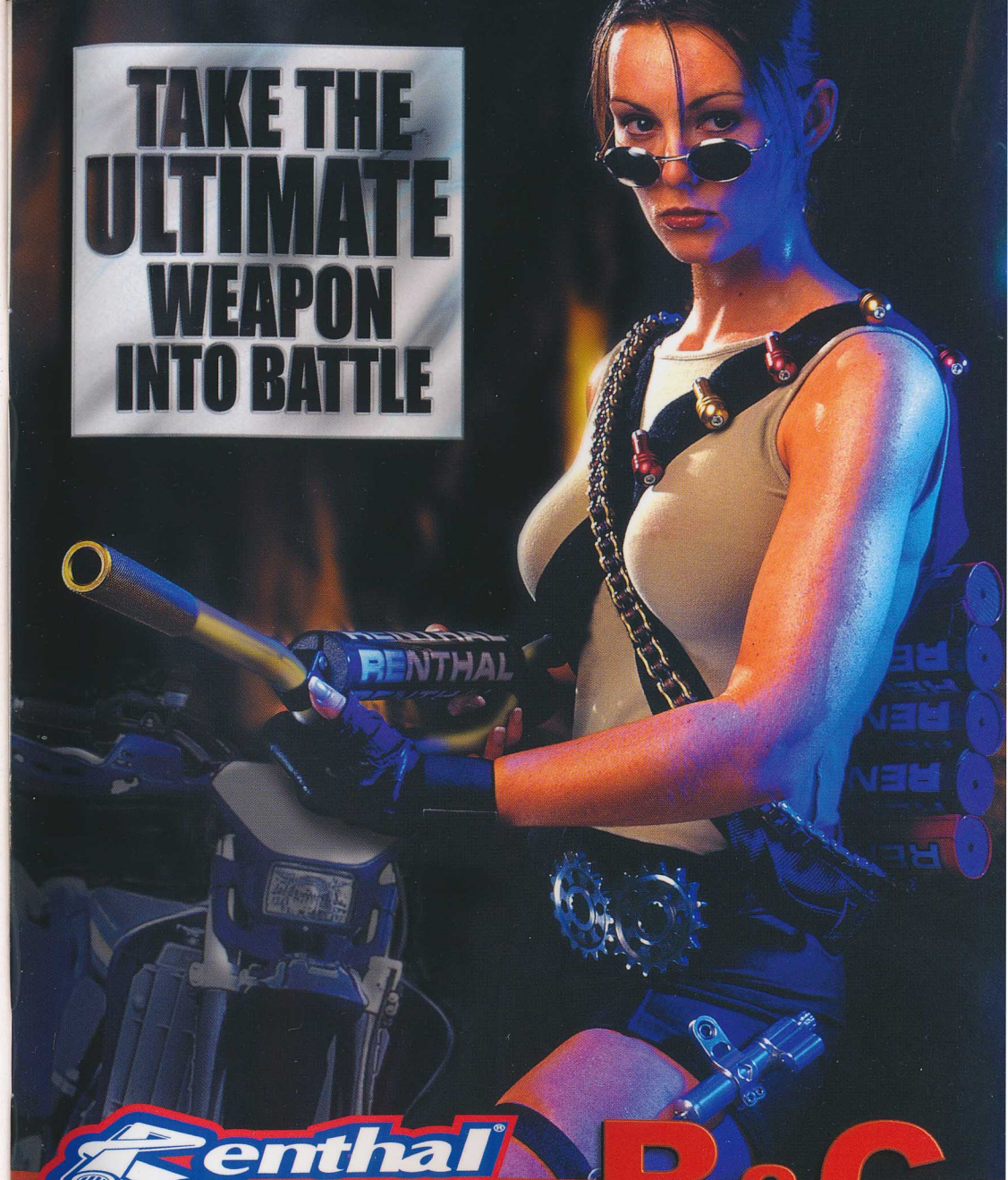
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