

MOTOR CYCLE

INTERNATIONAL

USA \$3.25 CANADA \$2.75
ID 7146 No. 54

NOVEMBER 1989

£1.40

BOUNCING BACK

RIDING THE SUPER TENERE

FLY BOYS

AERIAL MOTORCYCLING

POWA PLAY

THE ULTIMATE
GREEN BIKE



TESTS: GUZZI 750 TARGA/YAMAHA DT125R/EGLI SUZUKI GSX-R1100

Super TENDERÉ



Float like a water buffalo, sting like a butterfly/Tom Isitt

Traditionally, roadtests of gargantuan trailbikes start off with tales of derring do as our brave hero (read 'lilly-livered tester') sustains horrendous injuries while completely destroying £4000-worth of machinery in deepest Wales/Scotland/Yorkshire. But not this test. Why? Because the nearest I got to riding the new Yamaha 750 Super Tenere off road was a jaunt up someone's gravel drive. I'm no midget, but even at 6' 1" and 185lb I find the XTZ an intimidating motorcycle and the thought of tackling anything trickier than a gravel drive on a machine the size of a large bus fills me with horror.

Besides, I subscribe to the theory that although it looks like a trailbike, it is really nothing of the sort. No one can tell me that something weighing 500lb, with a seat height of 34in, is designed to be ridden through the soft stuff by anyone other than a complete maniac/a Paris-Dakar rider (delete as applicable). No, the XTZ is a road bike with wide bars, long-travel suspension and knobby tyres.

Despite its obvious on-road intent, the

GARRY STUART



styling boys at Yamaha have gone the whole Paris-Dakar replica hog. It's a style that is still wowing them on the continent and looks set to continue doing so for some time yet. All the essential Paris-Dakar posing tackle is present and correct, from the twin-headlamp fairing to the integral sandwich box, from the low front mudguard and twin discs to the Deltabox swingarm. The only thing missing is a pair of hyper-trick upside-down forks, which is what all the Italian manufacturers are doing at the moment, but other than that the styling is spot-on for the market. Personally, I find the graphics just a little too OTT to be aesthetically pleasing – the red/orange/white Chesterfield-replica paint scheme is far nicer and makes the bike look less 'bitty'. That damn great silencer is also an aesthetic monstrosity, but doubtless the French will be marketing Devil pipes for them before too long.

A look at the specification chart of the new Tenere will confirm that it is really a road bike. After all, who would equip a trailbike with a liquid-cooled 750cc twin cylinder engine based very firmly on existing road bike engines? Well actually, Yamaha would . . . and did. Using their Genesis technology – five valves per cylinder, 45° inclined engine and downdraught carbs – Yamaha have created an engine which is as much suited to road use as trail use. Displacing 749cc via a bore and stroke of 87×63mm, the motor has double overhead cams, the five valves per cylinder have bucket and shim lash adjustment, and the camchain runs on the righthand end of the crankshaft. Lubrication is dry sump, and power is transmitted to the back wheel via a five-speed gearbox.

Yamaha claim a fairly impressive 70hp at 7500rpm and 49ftlb of torque at 6750rpm,



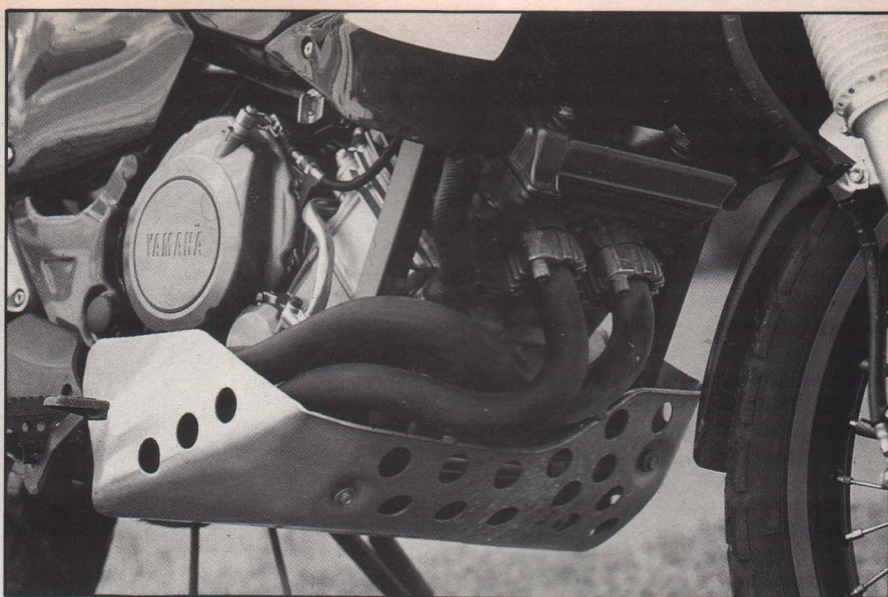
Determined cornering will deck footrests and sump guard, but handling is confidence-inspiring

Aesthetically over-the-top, the Tenere's styling is loud, brash and desperately trendy



but as we were unable to dyno the XTZ we can't give you real life figures (around 60hp at the back wheel would seem about right). In use the engine betrays its road bike heritage by lacking the sort of serious low-down grunt we've come to expect from big trailbikes. Most other trailies over 500cc will easily lift the front wheel on the throttle and will pull very hard from 2000 revs, but not the XTZ. Sure, it will trickle around with 1500rpm showing then pull without a glitch to its 8000rpm red line, but it doesn't have the same arm-wrenching low-down pull of some of its competitors.

It has an acceptable amount of torque in the low and mid-range, but the real power is to be found the other side of 5000rpm. Below five grand the engine feels silky smooth and relaxed, at five grand it vibes slightly before smoothing out and beginning to work hard. Acceleration is very brisk if you keep the revs between 5000 and 7500rpm, and XTZ owners can look



The ten-valve parallel twin motor lacks low-down grunt, but makes up for it at higher revs



From the sublime to the ridiculous, but they say size isn't important

forward to surprising a few people on 'faster' road bikes. One of the nastier aspects of keeping the engine spinning fast is that you have to use the gearbox more often than you'd like, especially in view of the fact that it's notchy and nasty (so that's what they did with all those first-generation FZR1000 gearboxes they had left over).

I suppose the XTZ's engine came as a bit of a disappointment really, because I was expecting something with the low-down stomp of a JCB and the top-speed of a hot middleweight. But while some of the stomp is lacking, the top speed at least is present. The engine's strong top end, coupled to an effective fairing, gives the XTZ an indicated top speed of just under 125mph, although it has some trouble pulling the red line in top gear. A real-life 120mph is pretty good when you consider that the XTZ has the aerodynamics of a house brick, and steady cruising at 90mph+ is possible for hours on end.

But even though the engine was a bit disappointing, the handling, steering and suspension are excellent. As you'd expect, the XTZ has ultra long-travel suspension with a beefy pair of 43mm forks at the front giving 9.5in of travel and a rising-rate Monocross monoshock at the back which gives 8.5in of travel. Adjustment of the

SECOND OPINION

Immodest it may be, but I predict bikes like the Super Tenere and Harley Davidsons are going to be the bikes of the next decade. Of the former, the appeal is clear. It stands out like nothing else – yes, even compared to race-replicas – and denotes in its styling, its image and exotic name, a whole lifestyle of adventure. Fiction of course, but this matters little; and it matters little too that the Yamaha is not all it could be. It is the best Japanese big-trailie but the phenomenon is more established on the continent hence the Europeans make better, and bigger, trail bikes. I borrowed an R100GS earlier this year (lucky old me) to visit Spain on and that, not the Tenere, encompasses the real virtues of big trail bikes: exceptional ground clearance, lacking on the Yam especially two up; low down grunt, where the Tenere shows its road bike origins; and a more than superficial feeling of ruggedness and passable off-road ability. But with a grand or so difference in price the Super Tenere is worth every penny as a versatile, good looking bike. **David Lancaster**



The silencer is really hideous, but the Deltabox swingarm ensures a good ride at the back

suspension is limited to preload on the rear shock, and that is infinitely adjustable. Riding the XTZ round London's appallingly potholed roads brings out the best in it. The suspension soaks up the bumps beautifully, with the suspension damping rates feeling spot-on, and the high, wide handlebars make slow-speed manoeuvring a doddle. Without having taken it off-road I can't tell you how it handles on the dirt, but there seems to be enough suspension travel available to deal with most obstacles.

Out on the open road the standard suspension settings are a little on the soft side for hard riding, but even so the Super Tenere acquits itself very well. Run it hard into a corner trailing the brakes and you'll find it getting a bit bouncy, but slow it down a fraction and the XTZ will sweep round bends in fine style. The Trailwing tyres add to the Tenere's secure on-road feel and allow you to crank the bike over until the rear brake pedal touches down (followed soon after by the footrests and then the bellypan/sump guard). It's not really that far over when you start dragging the undercarriage, it just feels like it because of the extreme height of the seat from the ground. On twisty back roads the XTZ is just the job because its upright riding position and wide bars, coupled with fairly light steering and capable suspension, make it supremely easy to flick from side to side, and the midrange power enables you to blast it out of corners without always having to be in the correct gear.

Another disappointment I found with the XTZ however was its braking abilities. Equipped with three 245mm disc brakes gripped by dual opposed piston calipers, they should have eye-watering power and a good amount of feel, but that's not the case. Not only do the front stoppers lack the power necessary to stop the XTZ quickly, but they are also very squidgy and the lever will come all the way back to the handlebar. At the back wheel you can't feel anything happening until it locks up. What should



Integral sandwich box is de rigueur on bikes such as this. Unfortunately you're restricted to very small sarnies

have been a really good set of brakes seems to have turned out all wrong – a shame, because with all that weight you need some strong anchors.

An area where the Super Tenere does score very well is in practicality. Yamaha have a 'concept' for the XTZ which is 'Adventure Sport Touring'. That's basically a rip-off of Honda's 'Rally Sport' concept for their Transalp, but while the Honda doesn't quite cut it, the XTZ does. Yamaha have basically got it right because the XTZ is a very practical vehicle. There's enough room to carry two people comfortably (although the pillion footrests are rather too high up for those long in the leg), the 5.7 gallon petrol tank has enough range to get you well over 200 miles on one tank full, and the fairing works much better than you'd think at first glance. Sitting bolt upright the little screen deflects the air/rain/flies over the top of your helmet and the rest

of the fairing keeps all the tops of your shoulders out of the breeze. Knuckle guards protect your hands, so when it rains the bits of you that get wet are your elbows and shoulders, and your legs and feet.

After a long day in the saddle (and 350 miles under the wheels) I was surprised to find how few aches and pains I was suffering. The riding position means you don't put undue strain on your back, and the seat is soft but supportive – far more so than other big trailbikes which can inflict some dreadful pains after a few hours. The rough spot in the engine at 5000rpm comes through the seat a bit, the rubber-mounted handlebars mean you don't suffer the white finger syndrome and you get the feeling that 3000 miles in a week wouldn't be beyond the Super Tenere.

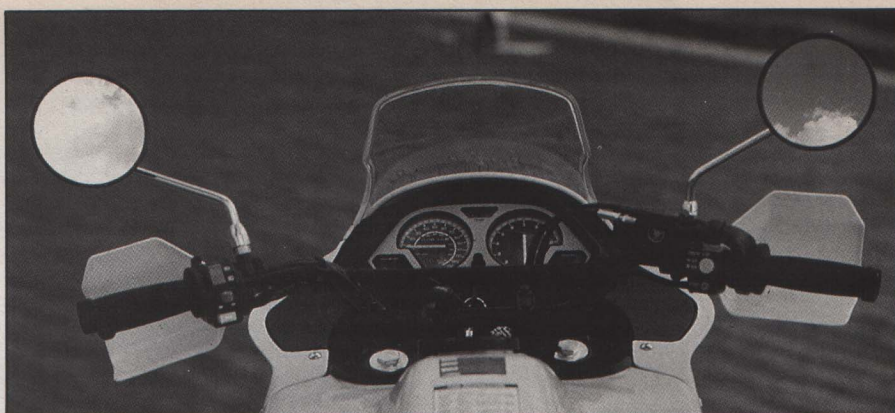
Other practical touches include a funny little sandwich/tool box underneath the carrying rack, bungee hooks, a superb pair



Whether back-road scratching or motorway cruising, the XTZ is supremely comfortable – even two-up

of headlights up front which turn night into day and some funky new switchgear which, as ever, falls easily to hand. The mirrors do actually work, and fortunately the height of them and the handlebars mean that they will both clear most other road users' mirrors when you're trickling through traffic in town.

All in all the Super Tenere is a very capable all-rounder. It will tackle dirt tracks without too many problems, it will commute easily, it will take two people and luggage on holiday, it can be hustled along at a pretty impressive clip, it is comfortable, practical and fun. My three main criticisms of it are the lack of mega-stomp low down the rev range, the lack of serious braking ability despite its high-tech brakes, and the price. At £3800 the Super Tenere is the most expensive non-European trailbike (I say non-European because the BMW R80GS, R100GS, and Cagiva's 750 Elefant cost an awful lot more), but is it worth £400 more than a Transalp, or £600 more than a Tengai? Yes, it is. The XTZ750 is the smoothest, most powerful and most comfortable trailbike there is, but then it's not really a trailbike at all - it's a road bike with long-travel suspension, wide handlebars and knobby tyres.



Instrumentation is clear, switchgear good and the mirrors actually work at speed



The rear brake is quite powerful, but it lacks feel and locks up easily



The front brakes should be excellent, but they lack power and feel very squidgy

TECH-SPEAK



YAMAHA XTZ 750

Price	£3799
Motor	Water-cooled DOHC 10-valve parallel twin
Displacement	749cc
Bore & stroke	87x63mm
Compression ratio	9.5:1
Maximum power @ rpm	49ftlb (6.8kgm) @ 6750
Maximum torque @ rpm	70hp @ 7500rpm
Carburettors	2x38mm Mikuni CV
Transmission	Gear primary, five-speed box, chain final
Frame	Steel double cradle
Rake	26°30'
Trail	101mm
Front fork	43mm telescopic
Rear suspension	Rising-rate Monocross with adjustable preload
Brakes front	2x245mm discs
rear	245mm disc
Tyres front	Bridgestone Trailwing 90/90x21
rear	140/80x17
Wheelbase	59.2in (1505mm)
Seat height	34in (865mm)
Width	30in (815mm)
Weight	430lbs (dry)
Fuel capacity	5.7 gal (2.6 litres)
Fuel consumption	44mpg
Range	250 miles
Mean top speed	118mph

RATINGS

ENGINE

	Poor	Indifferent	Average	Good	Excellent
Responsiveness				●	
Vibration					●
Bottom end power		●			
Mid range power				●	
Top end power					●
Fuel economy				●	
Starting				●	
Ease of maintenance				●	
Quietness				●	

TRANSMISSION

Clutch operation				●	
Gearbox operation		●			

HANDLING

Steering					●
Cornering clearance			●		
High speed cornering				●	
Medium speed cornering					●
Bumpy bends				●	
Flickability					●
Manoeuvrability		●			
Top speed stability					●

SUSPENSION

Front				●	
Rear				●	
Front/rear match					●

BRAKES

Stopping power		●			
Braking stability				●	
Feel at controls			●		

GENERAL

Quality of finish					●
Fairing efficiency					●
Seat comfort					●
Riding position				●	
Pillion comfort				●	
Touring range					●
Headlight					●
Stands					●
Mirrors					●
Horn		●			

VALUE FOR MONEY

					●
--	--	--	--	--	---