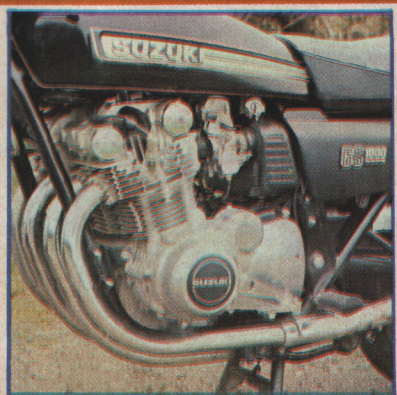
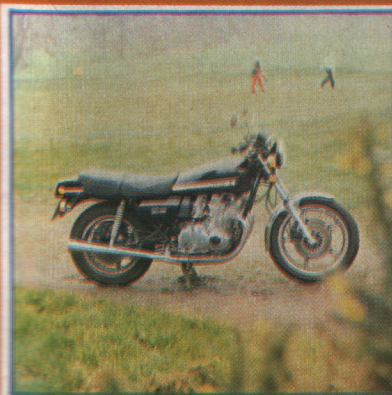
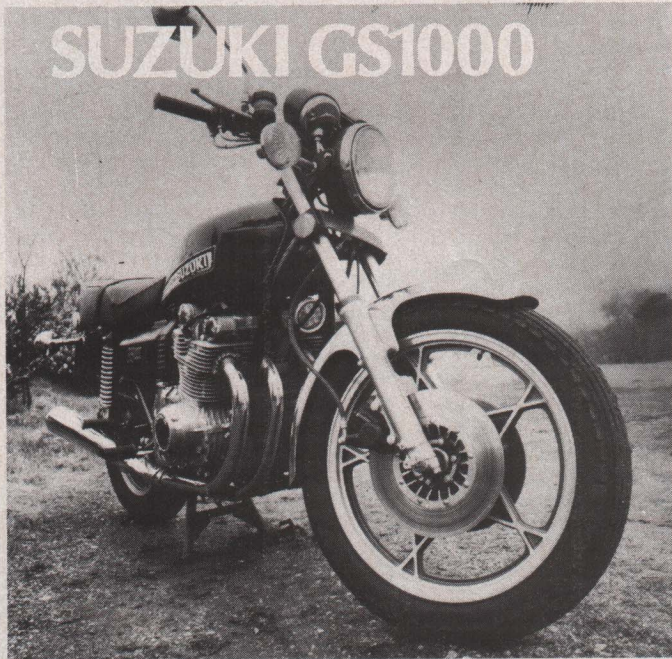


# SUZUKI GS1000

Road and track  
test



**We test Suzuki's giant four-stroke four at our test track in the Midlands, and on over 1000 miles of widely varying roads. We find it very hard to fault.**



THE race for supremacy in the superbike stakes goes on. Suzuki's answer is the GS1000, big brother to their GS750, GS550 and GS400. Two-strokes seem to have been forgotten as the GS range of machines establish themselves on our roads. They are becoming leaders in the smaller capacities, and it may not be very long before the GS1000 is the top selling 1-litre machine. With a price tag of only £1725 inc. VAT it is certainly the cheapest, by nearly £200; and our test proved it to be real value for money.

Before you actually sit on the GS1000 it looks massive, but once you're aboard it seems to shrink to a very manageable size. Switching on the ignition and pushing the starter button has the engine ticking over with an almost uncanny quietness. Open the throttle slightly and the rev counter needles fly round the dial although the engine stays quiet. Select first gear and you're away on the ride of a life-time.

Quiet, comfortable and safe. What more could you ask? Power, of course — and the power of the Suzuki GS1000 is beautiful! You can have as much as you want, or will ever need. And it's there right through the range, allowing fourth and fifth gears to be used at very

low speeds. The torque is quite remarkable.

On the open road, the motor would rev way beyond the 8500rpm red line, although gear changes were usually made at a maximum of 8000rpm. Keeping the engine on the boil produced some very exciting moments, especially when overtaking. The old safety motto of

'overtake as quickly as possible' must have been lying on the designer's desk when he put pencil to paper. No matter what the gear, or the speed, there was *always* enough power to allow very rapid passing of slower vehicles. On motorways it was only on the rarest of occasions that a gear other than top was used. With a motor as flexible as this, it was a waste of time changing gear!

Standing-start acceleration had the rider using all his strength to hold on to the bars. The back wheel spun, and sometimes the front wheel lifted in a display fit for Santa Pod Raceway. Low 12sec runs, with high terminal speeds, were normal, and trips into the 11sec bracket within its capabilities. The GS1000 could move slightly to the left on take-off, but this never got out of hand.

Our maximum speeds were achieved with the rider wearing one-piece racing leathers, flat on the tank. We got over 130mph. But — a normally-seated rider can expect a usable maximum of about 125mph, in both fourth and top gears — more than adequate for high speed touring in any country! This bike would cruise all day at anything up to 110mph, and only above this does it feel as though the engine is really working. Oh, and at these high speeds it's nice to have

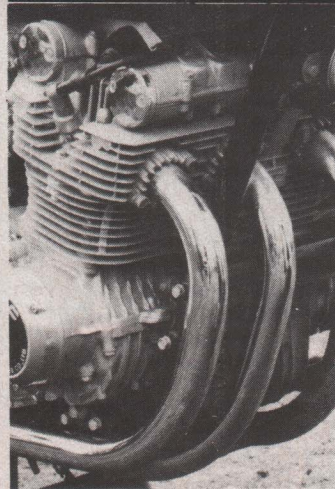
a throttle that doesn't require two grabs of the twistgrip.

One snag though — you can't believe the speed. The one fitted to our test machine was totally illegal at all speeds. Mind you the speedo, with its very pessimistic in-built fuel gauge, was the only real fault we could find with the bike. Just for the record, when the fuel gauge was showing empty we could only squeeze two gallons into the 4.2gal tank.

Throughout the thousand miles of our test, the GS1000 returned an average fuel consumption of between 40 and 42mpg. That's not bad for a 997cc bike that was ridden hard on all kinds of roads — including motorways, country lanes, and the MIRA Proving Ground. It should be possible for a careful rider on a long run to achieve over 50mpg. And we liked the idea of the fuel filler cap being recessed into the top of the tank, so that it could be locked, unlocked, removed and replaced with one hand, even when wearing lined gloves and waxed-cotton overmitts.

Stopping Suzuki's giant are some of the best brakes we have ever tested. From 70mph (true speed) we achieved a braking distance of only 136 feet. So, don't believe people who tell you that even racing bikes don't achieve that sort of deceleration. Maybe static test rigs don't go fast

## Technically Speaking



### ENGINE

Virtually vibration-free throughout its engine rev range. Only at over 8500rpm (the red line) was a small

tingle felt through the handlebars. The 977cc engine produced smooth, quiet, almost limitless power. Suzuki claim 87hp at 8000rpm, but it felt like more.

Oil consumption on our test bike proved to be negligible over a distance in excess of 1000 miles. The level in the sump is easily checked through the sight glass on the side of the engine casings.

*Type: Four-stroke, four cylinder, air cooled, in-line across the frame.*

*Bore: 70mm x 64.8mm stroke.*

*Capacity: 997cc.*

*Compression ratio: 9.2:1.*

*Tapet Clearances: 0.03-0.08mm.*

*Carburation: Four Mikuni VM26SS 49010.*

*Float height: 24mm.*

*Air screw: 1 turn out.*

*Sump capacity: 3400cc 20W/50.*

*Torque: 8.5Kg.m @ 6500rpm.*

### TRANSMISSION

The five-speed constant mesh gearbox gave a perfect performance throughout the test period. It was quick and positive with well spaced ratios.

The clutch stood up well to our demanding tests, although it did require one minor cable adjustment after a dozen vicious standing starts.

*Gear ratios: 1st — 12.43:1; 2nd — 8.83:1; 3rd — 6.86:1; 4th — 5.59:1; 5th — 4.78:1.*

*Final reduction ratio: 2.8:1 (42/15).*

*Drive chain: DID 630YL (Daido) 96 link.*

*Wet multi-plate clutch.*

enough!!

The front brake is very powerful indeed, and should be treated with respect. It does have a fair amount of feel, but it is all too easy to forget and lock the front wheel. The rear brake was also powerful, but did have a little more feel and was therefore easier to control.

It would be wrong to say that Suzuki have cured all wet-braking problems, but the GS1000 did not seem to suffer badly from wet-lag. Our riders always had the confidence of knowing they could stop.

The bike's handling was quite superb — and there are now some roads throughout the country that have bits of our boots stuck to them to prove it! The bike could be thrown through left and righthand bends, put through incredible changes of line, and leaned to fantastic angles almost at will. Mind you, it all depended on how the rear suspension units were set. They are five-way adjustable at the spring, and four-way adjustable at the damper, giving twenty different combinations to choose from. It takes a little time to sort through them all, and try them all out, but it is worth it in the end. We found the ideal settings for a twelve stone rider to be the centre spring position, combined with damper setting number three.

The GS1000 is as con-

trollable in traffic as it is on the open road. It couldn't slip through some of the smaller gaps that presented themselves, because of its sheer size, but otherwise it could be ridden with the ease of a 250. It seemed to help the rider turn a sharp corner, rather than having him fighting to manoeuvre.

The Dunlop Gold Seal tyres gave roadholding to match the handling. In the dry they were almost faultless: in the wet, were very good. In fact, it's not the tyres you have to watch in the wet, it's the power. Turn it on too much and the back-end will step out. Come to that, the Editor, no less, had the GS1000 joyously broadsiding with some enthusiastic throttle-work!

One further tyre point — we found it very hard to find a garage with an air-line that would fit the valve. It needs a flexible connection, or a right-angled adaptor, to get in between the discs and the rim.

The suspension, large thick seat, well-positioned straight bars and footrests, together with the bike's overall size, all combine perfectly for maximum comfort. Trips from Poole to the Midlands — over 170 miles — could be made with only one fuel stop, and left a desire to turn around and ride straight back.

Gear changing was quick and very positive through the

usual sweet-acting Suzuki five-speed box, with ratios almost perfectly spaced for every kind of riding. Clutchless changes, both up and down, could be made silently to order. When needed, the clutch was tough enough to handle the power, yet light enough to avoid an aching left hand. It did have a slight tendency to judder if slipped for a long time in traffic, but this was not noticeable when making a normal start from a standstill.

Suzuki have done away completely with a kickstart — there isn't even one under the seat for emergencies. Starting is all up to the electrics, and was always 'first time' on our test bike. Gone, too, is the digital gear position indicator — which would have been very useful with such a flexible engine. It was all too easy to forget which gear was selected . . .

The remaining electrics are up to Suzuki's usual high standard. The headlamp

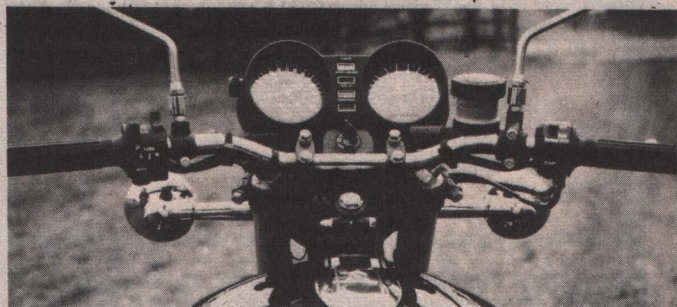
gives a good spread of light on both dipped and main beams, allowing speeds of up to 80 or 90mph to be maintained on unlit country roads. With the lights on, the instruments are lit with the same soft red glow as all the other bikes in the GS range.

The indicators have an audible warning, but one that is fairly soft and quiet. It can be heard by the rider, but it doesn't turn heads thank heaven.

The Suzuki GS1000 looks every inch a superbike. The cast alloy wheels, shod with hefty tyres, help to make it look powerful and sporty, while the overall size gives it the appearance of a long-distance tourer.

There aren't many bikes around that offer everything in one package. The GS1000 does. Even without its very low price tag the Suzuki GS1000 would still be one of the best value-for-money superbikes on our roads today. A true winner.

**Geoff Carless**



## SUZUKI GS1000

### FRAME & FORKS

With twenty different suspension settings possible it is a trial and error job to get them just right, but it is worth it. They *can* be set to give almost perfect handling, combined with maximum comfort.

The front forks are of the air/oil type and work very well. The legs will take a maximum air pressure of 35lb/sq. in, but they are factory set at 14.22psi (1 Kg/cm).

One welding expert friend of ours commented that the welded joints of the frame were of a very high standard of finish. Even from a non-expert point of view they look neat and clean.

*Double cradle, welded frame.*

*Telescopic front forks with air/oil damping.*

*Swinging arm rear suspension with five-way adjustable springs and four-way adjustable dampers.*

### WHEELS & BRAKES

The cast alloy wheels are shod with Dunlop Gold Seal tyres that are V rated (speeds in excess of 130mph). Roadholding proved good in both wet and dry conditions. Rear tyre wear is expected to be excessive if the bike's full performance is used.

The hydraulically-operated disc brakes are very powerful, and should be treated with respect. Both front and rear can be locked very easily in the dry. In the wet, we

found only a minimal delay in operation.

*Front: Twin discs of 10in. diameter.*

*Rear: Single 11in. disc.*

*Front tyre: 3.50 x 19 4PR V rated.*

*Rear tyre: 4.50 x 17 4PR V rated.*

### ELECTRICS

All the electrics worked well on the test machine. Nothing let us down.

One point against them was the fact that the air-filter box had to be removed to top up the battery, or check the terminals. It is located in the middle of the frame and is not easy to get at.

*Battery/coil ignition.*

*A.C. generator.*

*Battery: 12V 14AH.*

*Spark plugs: NGK B8ES or Champion N3-N3G.*

*Headlamp: 55/60W.*

*Tail/brake lamp: 5/21W.*

*Indicator lamp: 21W.*

### DIMENSIONS

Everything about the GS1000 is big and comfortable. One or two smaller riders found reaching the ground a bit of a stretch, there being a full 30.25ins. between the seat and tarmac.

It's nice to see a bike with a fuel tank befitting the size of the machine. The GS has a capacity of 19 litres (4.17gals).

*Overall length: 2196mm (86.4ins.).*

*Overall width: 850mm (33.5ins.).*

*Overall height: 1175mm (46.3ins.).*



**MAXIMUM & MINIMUM SPEEDS**

GEAR	Solo max.	Prone max.	Min.
1	50.99	60.01	7.48
2	71.98	73.13	11.22
3	98.79	98.94	14.06
4	125.29	129.19	17.62
5	124.30	131.54	19.04
6	—	—	—

**SPEEDO CORRECTIONS**

Indicated mph	30	40	50	60	70
Actual mph	26.15	35.48	43.30	53.14	60.75

**ACCELERATION FROM REST (secs)**

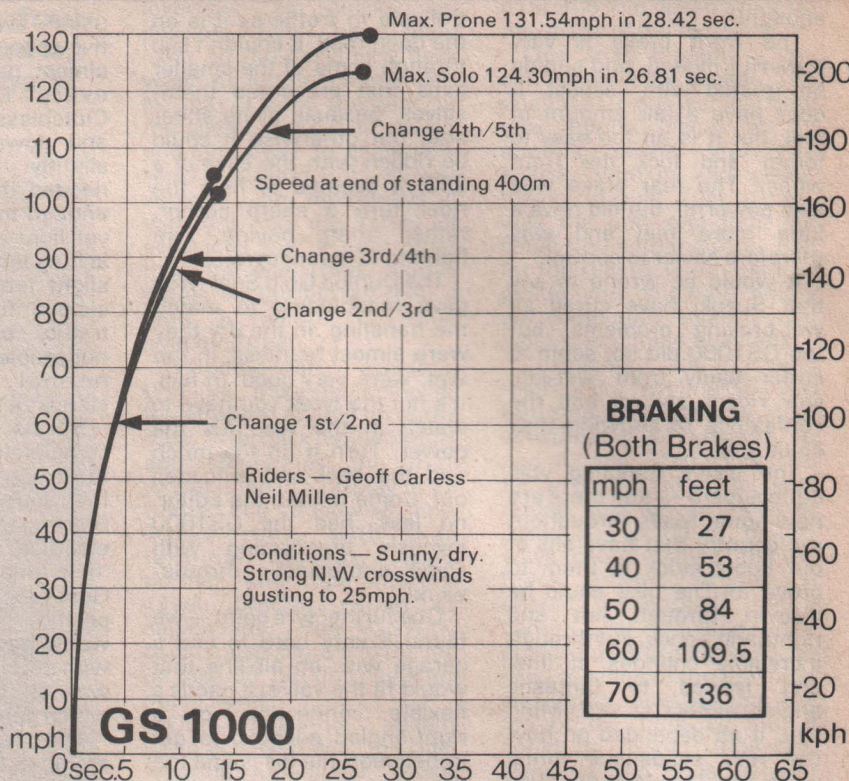
0mph to	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	110	120	Max.	400m
Solo	0.89	1.58	2.11	2.91	3.82	5.31	6.99	9.18	12.67	15.92	19.31	26.81	12.72
Prone	0.89	1.57	2.09	2.89	3.80	5.27	6.88	8.40	11.23	14.87	17.77	28.42	12.44

**FLEXIBILITY, Top Gear**

mph	20-40	40-60	60-80	30-50	50-70
Solo	7.08	5.48	5.35	5.96	5.43
Prone	7.07	4.89	5.17	5.94	5.32

**FUEL CONSUMPTION**

mph	30	40	50	60	70	80
mpg	83	77	65	54	40	—
Overall consumption						42 mpg



**Technically Speaking**

**SUZUKI GS1000**

Dry weight: 234Kg (5161 lbs).

**EQUIPMENT**

Centre and prop stands. Steering lock operated with ignition switch. Locking fuel cap. Twin mirrors. Flashing indicators with audible warning.

**TEST DATA**

Test figures obtained at Motor Industries Research Association track at Lindley, Warwick.

Timing by fully-automatic Hird-Brown photo-electric equipment controlling Heuer 1/100 second stop watches.

Terminal speed readouts by fully automatic electronic speed-sensing equipment accurate to 1/100mph.

Test riders, Geoff Carless — holds Police Class One Certificate and Institute of Advanced Motorists Certificate; and Neil Millen.

Weather conditions — Dry and sunny with strong NW crosswinds gusting to 25mph.

**GENERAL**

Price: £1725 inc. VAT. Test machine supplied by: Heron Suzuki GB Ltd., 87 Beddington Lane, Croydon, Surrey. Tel: 01-689 8111.

