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MV AGUSTA
THE BATS HAVE LEFT THE BELLTOWER

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75

WAITE

FOR THE RIDER WHO FREQUENTS THE HIGHWAY

高性能二輪車

WITH RESPECT AND COMMITMENT

Performance BIKES

SUZUKA GP

PAGE COLOUR PIG-OUT

50 SUPER MOTO

CUSE ME, YOU JUST RAN OVER MY NECK



FREE POSTER - WHITHAM AT DAYTONA

PROMOTIONAL DEVICE

Cover story: Yamaha spent several grand flying three UK bike journos to Egypt and entertaining them with everything from dancing girls to syrup of figs in the hope that said journos would say something nice about the 750 Super Ténéré. Pic: Kel Edge.

Performance BIKES

A B C

JULY — DEC 1989

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In tests, eight out of ten budgies who expressed a preference defecated on it.

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MAY ISSUE ON SALE APRIL 10

MAY, 1989



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Pete thinks that the new CBR600 looks like a thermos flask — p24.



Pics: Kel Edge

“Look. Is scarab. Is alabaster. No moneys to look. I find in tomb.”

“I don’t believe you.”
“I am man, not boy. No tell lie. Look, scarab. You like? Fifty Egyptian pound.”

“I have three scarabs already.”

“Twenty five pound.”
“I don’t want it. Take it away. I’m going. Goodbye.”

“How much? Twenty pound?”

“No thank you. No

shokram.”

“I give to you like present.

Fifteen pound.”

“No scarab. Not interested.”

“Ten pound.”

“No.”

“Five pound.”

“No.”

“Three pound.”

“Goodbye.”

“One pound?”

“You are a crazy man.

Malesh. Goodbye.”

Yes folks, this is Egypt: launch pad of Yamaha’s XTZ750 Super Ténéré and the

place where, for two days, we were fully at liberty to blast across 100 miles of desert to the Red Sea, negotiate village streets that needed all eight inches of suspension travel, scratch up the twisty road to the Valley of Kings, bundle onto the Nile ferry, dodge night time Egyptian drivers (wrong side of the road and no lights), pose next to the Avenue of Sphinxes, purr past 3,000 year old temples, face hordes of yelling children, charm sellers, earth throwers, shoe shiners,

taxi drivers, donkeys, water buffaloes, goats, dogs, cats, birds, lizards, beetles and generally come into contact with such a diversity and richness of humanity as to beat the BMF Rally into a fairly convincing second place.

Where was I? The bike. Believe me, it was brilliant. I was so comprehensively gobsmacked by three days in Egypt, I could hardly say anything else. Any bike would be brilliant. Any bike, that is, with trail suspension, a 100mph

B l u e N i

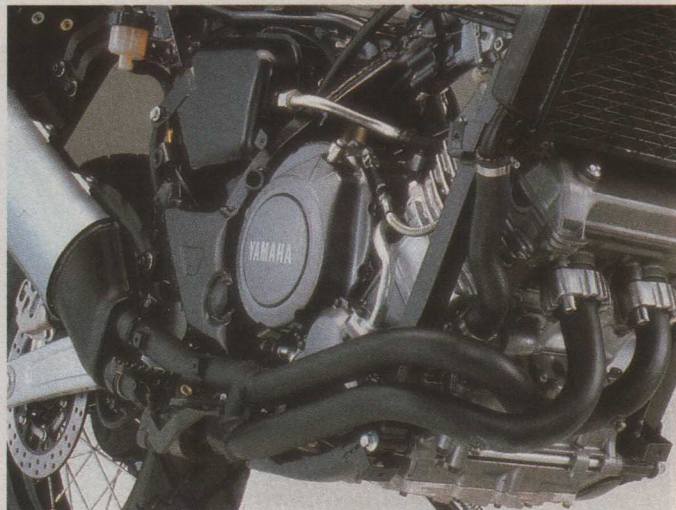
Yamaha are so proud of their new XTZ750 Super Ténéré that they flew 60 journalists to Egypt for the launch. Rupert Paul made sure he was one of them.

blistering, desiccated heat of the African Sahel.

We rode nine miles down an old mining track — an evil mixture of dust and gravel which for much of the time was more treacherous than the surrounding desert. Once there journalists disappeared in all directions riding up dry river beds, over boulders, or further still to the mine itself. The only time anyone dropped one of the 30 bikes was pushing them around to take static pics. There were a hell of a lot of punctures — hardly surprising considering the razor sharp rocks — but no buckled wheels, broken chains or damaged suspension.

How was this possible for a bike with the same dry weight as an '87 GSX-R750? In the case of your own correspondent, it was all done by fast learning. If you don't lean back, get out of first gear and get on the power for the soft bits the front wheel will dig in, fishtail hideously from side to side and crash, taking the rest of the chassis, and the rider, with it. It is quite amazing how hopelessly out of control you can be and still stay on with a hard burst of throttle. I did the return journey back to the main road in third gear at around 50mph, the Ténéré ploughing over ruts with submarine stability.

The next day Yamaha rider Franco Picco, second in this



year's Paris Dakar, demonstrated how far you could go with this riding technique. We watched from a clifftop while he tore across a desert trail at 80 or 90mph — sideways, wheelying, the clatter from the chain, toolkit and bottoming suspension audible half a mile away. I was amazed the bike was still in one piece afterwards.

Don't get the wrong idea. The Super Ténéré will still make a fairly useless trail bike. The engine's plenty willing to plod along slowly but all that weight is too much for mere mortals to control at low speed. This bike is designed for fast charging over potholed, gravelly tracks.

The ten valve twin is compact, light and pretty wide at footrest level thanks to side-routed pipes. Copious amounts of grunt were noted.

It's therefore not surprising that the XTZ feels like limousine on tarmac. In our case this was an endless ribbon of black asphalt which had been gently cooking in the sun since 9 am. To the north was desert all the way to the Suez coast. To the south was more desert, through Sudan and Ethiopia and almost to equatorial East Africa. Such vast expanses of wasteland do not take kindly to roads, and ours was already buckling under the heat. As few bends were outside the 80-110mph bracket, the XTZ

cruising speed, a 190 mile tank range, and a riding position as comfortable as the day is long. Which leaves, er . . . Super Ténérés.

It's not often a manufacturer lets you completely loose at a launch. Kawasaki did it in 1986 with their GTR, and Yamaha certainly did it in Egypt with their Super Ténéré. We covered about 500 miles in two days, the first 100 of which involved plunging into the Eastern desert and turning right, straight into the



Ie

HUMANISED BIKE CONCEPT



Yamaha decided not to go ahead with colours like this so for now it's just red or blue.

What is a super Ténéré? According to Yamaha, it's a cross between two of their most popular models — the FJ1200 and the XT600 Ténéré, and on the road that's very much how the bike feels. It was conceived as a response to customers' wishes; when people started putting big tanks on the XT500 the factory produced the XT600 Ténéré; when Ténéré customers got even more road-oriented Yamaha added an electric start and fairing; and now that holidaying in exotic places

is becoming commonplace they say the market is ready for a high speed, go-anywhere commuter/desert blaster/backroad scratcher/autobahn chomper. Hence XTZ750. The idea was to build a bike which fits the rider rather than, say, an FZR, where technology dominates and the rider is forced to fit it. "We call it 'Humanised Bike Concept'" said product planning boss Mr T Mabuchi. "The emphasis is on rider enjoyment rather than impressive technical

specification." Why, then, did Yamaha paint the bike such a boring colour? Hadn't they seen the Tengai's blue and purple, or Aprilia's crazy pastel shades? "We have certain constraints on colour. We can only supply two colour schemes for Europe and the biggest markets are France and Italy. We chose the safe option, with colours reflecting Sonauto Yamaha in France and team Belgarda in Italy. Maybe after 20 or 30,000 units we can challenge popular styles."

swayed around gently over the bumps, occasionally taking off altogether.

If anyone takes this as poor

handling, it ain't. The bike never gets out of shape — the bars try hard to tankslap, and fail — and the luxury ride you get at lower speeds is a rare treat. It's highly likely to be

good in the wet too, but it doesn't rain much in Egypt, effendi.

With a redline at 8,000, useable power from below 2,000rpm in the lower gears and I guess 60-65bhp the Super Ténéré motor gives similar performance to early 1,000cc fours — lots of torque, lots of top end. You can have 100mph at 6,700rpm, 122mph sat up at the redline, and symmetrical perfection at an indicated 75 where the speedo and tacho needles point towards each other. Yamaha must have engineered it this way — smoothness, wind protection

and aesthetic appearance of the console coming together at a 200-miles-per-tank cruising speed.

A few more basic facts: the 43mm forks walk very gently under maximum braking but you can lock the front wheel at 75mph a) without crashing and b) without bottoming the suspension. One donkey car owner told me his name was Ahmed Abtradi Ahma Ahrmat. The mirrors work. Don't go to Egypt if you work for a donkey sanctuary. Vibrations are pretty much absent though the fairing resonates if you hold the motor at 4,000rpm and a couple of bikes' motors felt slightly harsh under hard acceleration. It is not uncommon for taxis to have the handbrake assembly dangling beneath the car. The bike's balance and riding position make sliding the back round 90 degree, first gear bends quite easy on tarmac. In Egypt, the sun takes two minutes to set. Some people might prefer the footrests slightly further back for high speed and off road antics, but even as they were I only got saddle sore after 300 miles in a day. On the way back to the airport our taxi broke down and an eight year old boy immediately bumpstarted it in reverse complete with eight journalists, a driver and the luggage.

Unlike so many modern bikes, the Super Ténéré isn't a work of art. There are no



Great wind protection, great mirrors, bizzo headlights, though the Egyptians didn't appreciate us using them.



Night riding requires special attention, although our test will not include much night riding (if any at all) you should be aware that Egyptians drive with their lights off at night. Generally, they flash their lights at oncoming traffic to warn them or to see if the drivers are awake. Drivers flash their lights almost constantly.

There is no right of way system at intersections in Egypt. The first person at an intersection usually goes through it first, but don't count on this. Large trucks sometimes try to claim the right of way from smaller vehicles. Always be careful at intersections.

contracting malaria, but do not put your feet in water including of catching 'Bilharzia', a parasitic worm that is difficult to

Aprilia-esque alloy castings or bite-size master cylinders. There's not even a headlamp flasher. There's relatively little

weight saving on the chassis to complement the 'lightest ever big twin' engine and the side-exit header pipes offset the

rear brake pedal and both footrests.

On the other hand the bike is bloody solid. Two or three

people dropped their Super Ténérés at a standstill whilst taking pics and the worst damage was a slight ding in one exhaust. The clutch and brake levers are slightly shorter than usual and they seem to escape the usual banana effect when the thing topples over. Even a bike which went under a bus at a junction (honest!) got off with a mere scraped fairing. I've seen so much shattered Japanese bodywork in the past it seemed like a miracle (and in true Egyptian style, the driver just said 'Malesh' to the journo in question and drove off).

Many bike launches are more noted for the journos having a good time at the bar than on the bikes. This isn't one of them. Two Germans complained that the riding was too far and too dangerous and the rest of us found this pretty hilarious, rode till we were knackered and had absolutely no problem falling asleep afterwards. We were totally overwhelmed by the friendliness, good humour and sheer romance of Egypt, and under such conditions it's hard to be objective, so I won't.

Basically I'm going to save up, catch a ferry and go somewhere like Egypt. For preference I'd take a Super Ténéré with me, but pretty much anything would do as a second choice because a motorcycle is the best way there is to have an adventure.



A surplus of power, rather than rear-heavy weight distribution, was responsible for this.



SPEC

ENGINE

749cc ten valve inclined parallel twin, liquid cooled, 360 degree crank with gear driven balance shafts, right hand chain cam drive, dry sump, shim valve adjustment, digital ignition. Bore x stroke 87 x 63mm, compression 9.5:1, 38mm Mikuni downdraught flat slides, electric start, five speed gearbox.

CLAIMED POWER

69bhp @ 7,500rpm.

CLAIMED TORQUE

49lb-ft @ 6,750rpm.

CHASSIS

Steel frame, non-adjustable 43mm forks, Monocross rear suspension with adjustable preload, front travel 235mm, rear travel 215mm, Castor/trail 26.5 degrees/101mm, twin 245mm front discs, single 245mm rear disc, tyres Bridgestone Trail Wing 90/90-21 and 140/80-17. Wheelbase 1505mm (59.3in), seat height 865mm (34in), dry weight 195kg (430lb), fuel capacity 26 litres (5.72gal), ground clearance 240mm (9.4in).

PRICE

£3,799.

AVAILABILITY

Mid April.

the Nile, there is the risk
As in all hot countries
Egyptians drive differently than Europeans. They always sound their horn for no reason, large trucks often pass when oncoming traffic approaches, especially motorcycles. It is common to have two or three cars abreast on the road. It is quite possible that you will be forced to take evasive measures, be prepared for this and ride accordingly.

One of the most important words in Arabic is 'Malesh', simply it means: Ces't la Vie, That's Life, Dat is het Leven, Das ist das Leben or e Vita. The best way of dealing with problems in Egypt is to say 'Malesh' and be patient.

Cairo is noted as having the most polluted air in the world.