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パフォーマンス・バイクス

Performance BIKES

GSX-R750LC



LIQUID REFRESHMENT

RAZOR HANDLING

HOW TO GET IT

52bhp TDRs

BLESSED
ARE
THE
FREAK



Contents

FEBRUARY 1992

Cover story: following our new policy of keeping all the interesting pics at the back of a dark cupboard, this will probably be a shot of a scooter beside a brick wall

Features

16. MONSTER 3 — the Burns bike hits 195mph, oh sorry, that's next month (see page 13 for conclusive confirmation). Meanwhile this month, Monster meets its motor. I alliterate, therefore I is.

22. SPOT ON — if winter comes can

spring be far behind? It can if you've got too much rebound damping.

38. BACK ISSUES — what you've missed. Forever in some cases, but there are still a few copies of some issues left.

40. CENTRES — it takes special talent to do this, for a start you need a road and a ditch and an adult to help you.

46. TDM BITS — sorting out the TDM's suspension, among other things.

58. READER OFFER — ever wondered why hotel bedrooms always have a copy of The Bible? It's because it has more sex, violence and rude bits

than any other book. Never take your wife or your mother to a hotel bedroom.

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Road tests

8. SUPER MOUTARDE — Gilera Nordwest. This will blow the socks off anything that has got socks on. *PS if anyone knows what Nordwest means, would they please tell Gilera?*

34. EH GRINGO — Wendy "bendy" Burch gives the GSF400 a good greasing. Er, are we allowed to say that? No? How about just thinking it, then?

50. FINS AIN'T WOT THEY USED TO BE — GSX-R-watercooled. No more sexist drivel, this is a real man's machine. Well it was until they lowered the seat height.

54. DANGEROUS BROTHERS — there's more than one way to tune a TDR. And we've got both of them.

Regulars

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4. NEWS — there is nothing subliminal here at all. It is perfectly safe to read this with the naked eye.

13. NEXT MONTH — it is perfectly safe to read this with the naked brain. After all, it was written with one.

14. RESPONSE — judging by the stains, most of this was written in the foetal position, except the one in green ink.

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78. READER'S SPECIAL — a very beautiful TZR250, underlined in green for emphasis.

BACK ISSUES

To get hold of a back issue just follow these simple steps:

1. Ring 0733 237111 ex 5725 to check which issue you want and whether an actual magazine, or only a photocopy of the specific feature is available.
2. The cost is £2.50 inc. p&p for each issue/photocopy, payable to Performance Bikes, Send to PB Back Issues, Bushfield House, Orton Centre, Peterborough PE2 5UW, with your name, address and the date of the issue/feature you want. We can only deal with orders via the post and sorry, we can't take credit card orders.

BINDERS

PB binders to hold 12 issues from: PB Binder Offer, PO Box 136, Peterborough PE2 OXW, £5.95 including p&p. Please allow 7 days' delivery. Access and Visa only for orders of £10.00 or more; telephone 0733 237111 and ask for ext. 5791.



Dangerous liaisons — Stan's tragic menage à trois with his beloved TDRs, except it wasn't — page 54.

ABC

73,716

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Eh, gringo

It's called Bandit but as far as we know it's still legal. We confiscated thrasher hooligan Wendy Burch's 1000RX for two weeks and gave her a Suzuki GSF400 Bandit to chew over.

I bet I can burn you off," taunted the owner of a much-travelled Kawasaki GT550 when he saw the Suzuki GSF400 Bandit in the car park at work. Perhaps the GT's comfy seat, bigger engine and easy 50bhp gave him a sense of security as we lined up for a 'let's pretend we're at Avon park' showdown. Whatever it was soon vanished to nothing as the GSF streaked into the distance leaving a line of smouldering rubber and my challenger totally and utterly for dead.

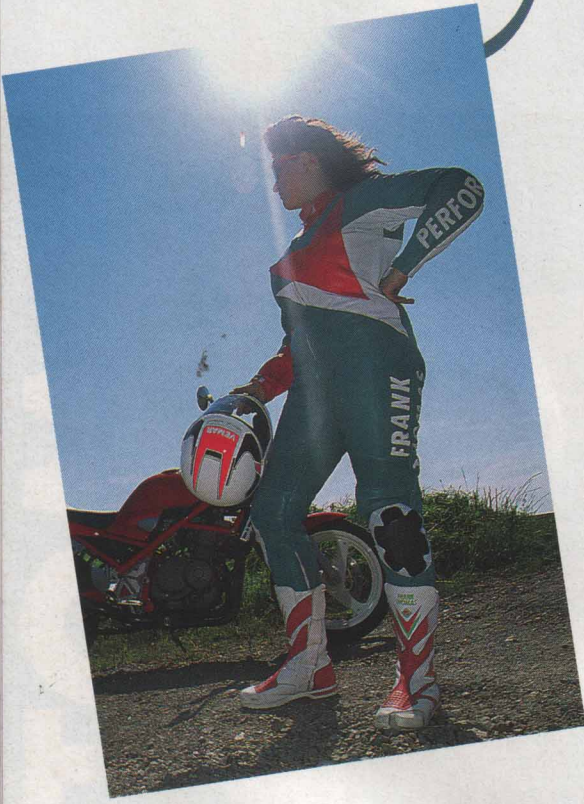
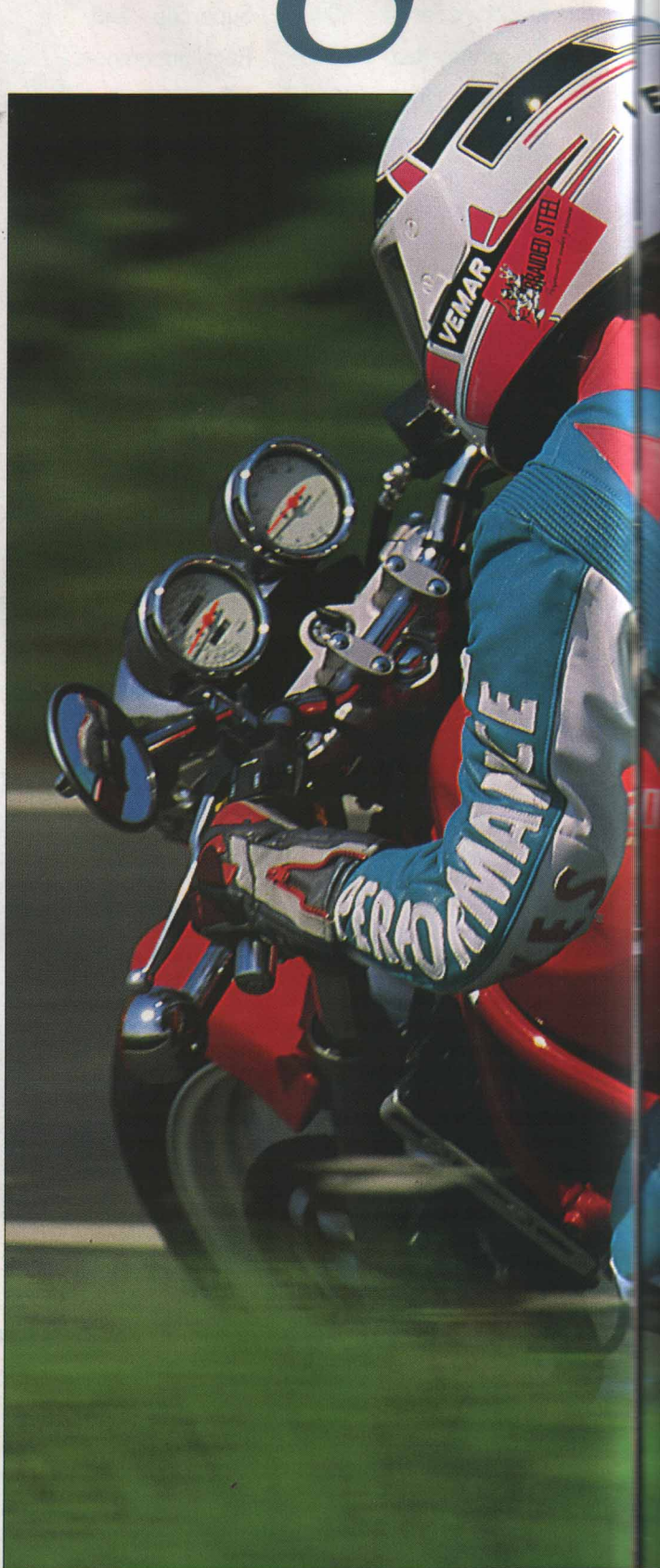
He eventually caught me up when I stopped at a pub. "Bloody hell," he said, a look of complete amazement on his face. "I thought I had you for the first few yards and then you just shot off — there was no way I could catch you!"

He wasn't aware of the ace up my sleeve: the GSF may have an elastic powerband but it makes 50bhp as well. Better luck next time, Jamie!

I guess it's easy to become complacent testing the latest yahoo, hot-potato machinery as not everyone rides a rocket or even wants to. But whupping bigger machinery in fine style just shows how much a smaller bike like this has to offer. The Bandit certainly wasn't boring.

It's the sort of bike that has to be caned mercilessly if you want to get anywhere quickly. Below 4,000 doesn't exist — you might as well be going backwards. Things pick up between 4 and 8,000 as you prepare to hang on for the real fun to start at 10,000rpm. At a screaming 12,000 it's party time and

Here's Wendy giving it some serious hammer before deciding that the Bandit handles more or less OK. Wendy's day job involves extracting sunbeams out of cucumbers and putting them into hermetically-sealed phials. They are then let out to warm the air in raw, inclement winters. As you can see from the pics, it works.

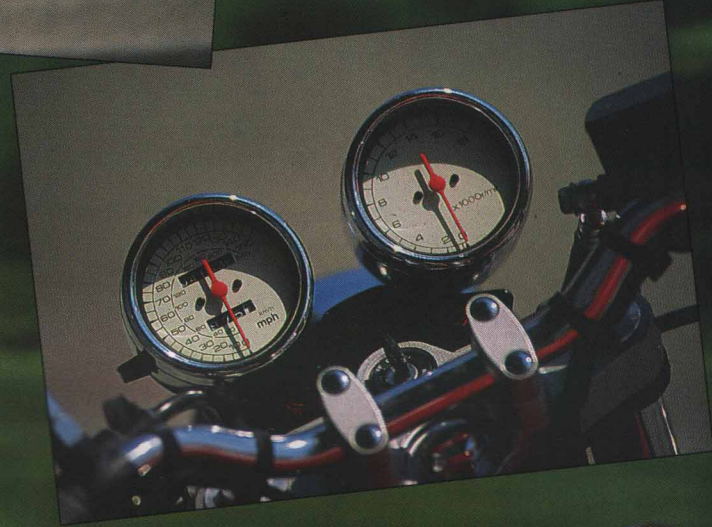




you'd be forgiven for thinking the motor's about to self-destruct, but no, there's still another 2,000 revs to go.

On the dyno, the Bandit produced maximum power at maximum revs (14,000). On the road, though, I made the majority of gearchanges before that. Visions of bent exhaust valves and melted pistons aside, the constant hanging-on was uncomfortable. A fairing makes such a difference to wind deflection that it takes a while to acclimatize to an unfaired bike. During the 14 days and 1,025 miles I did on the Bandit I felt as if my arms and neck were assuming Schwarzenegger proportions, but I was gradually able to ride at higher speeds....

The riding position is a combination of race-rep and sit-up-and-beg. The



Eh, gringo

from sitting so long in one position.

Being considerably smaller and lighter than my 1000RX the Bandit is ideally suited to twisty B roads. I had loads of fun pushing it through bends with virtually no effort and changing direction with ease. The high footrests gave good ground clearance and try as I might I never actually managed to scrape them. I gave up trying when the front wheel jumped two or three inches outwards in response to being pushed vehemently through a roundabout. I decided the cause of this was poor weight distribution which left the front end too light.

This lightness also showed up in fast (90mph+) bends when the bike started to feel skittery and wobble slightly. Bumps and pot-holes at lower speeds also caused the bike to quiver, but in neither case did anything approaching a tankslapper appear. If anything it make the ride more interesting.

The huge (for a 400cc machine) 150 rear Japlop is totally dependable for road use, adhering itself admirably to the tarmac at all angles. I can't comment on the tyres' wet weather performance because, amazingly, it didn't rain during the test.

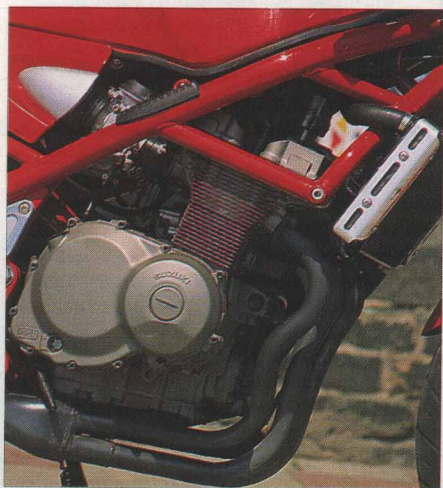
The bike isn't so good for boring, high speed motorways — anything much above 80mph for any length of time is hard work. Well, who wants a speeding ticket? It's also affected slightly by crosswinds but not to the extent of becoming unnerving.

Round town the little Suzuki is OK: low seat height and lightness make for easy manoeuvrability and parking's a doddle. For security reasons I put my bikes in the back yard at night — up the kerb, through two doorways, down a passage and a careful negotiation round the neighbour's flowerpots. All this is so much easier on an unfaired bike, so it's true; every cloud does have a silver lining. The Bandit's also quite good for hanging your washing on when it's in the back yard. Hm, say no more....

Switchgear is clear and simple, with everything in its obvious place and the idiot lights discreetly nestled between the two cute chrome clocks. The headlight is a major problem though; it didn't quite achieve Italian proportions of dimness, but it was still crap. I used dip most of the time since the inverted horseshoe of light called main beam was more suited to the pursuit of owls than illuminating cats' eyes. A more powerful bulb and better lens design is a must.

Only a single disc brake on the front, but plenty of stopping power. The rear brake is adequate but rather vague; I found its best use was to avoid being nutted whilst carrying a pillion. (Comments from 6ft 3 pillion: "Quite comfortable initially, but seat became hard after a few miles. I could see right over your head (shorty) — interesting, but not desirable at speed".) As I mentioned earlier the Bandit's front end is light; with a pillion... well, it's just as well I only did 20 miles with one.

Without exception, everyone who commented on the Bandit thought it to be



The crankcases that launched a thousand Cetem polishing kits. Note the engine has fins, but no scales or gills. It is not a fish.

fairly high, set-back footrests and lowish handlebars lean your torso forward slightly, giving good comfort. I covered just over 300 miles in one day with very little complaint beyond the expected backache

TEST SPECIFICATION

Suzuki GSF400 Bandit

Price.....£3,599
 Colour options.....red or red
 Warranty.....12 months, unlimited mileage
 Importer.....Heron Suzuki (GB) Ltd., 46-62 Gatwick Road, Crawley, West Sussex RH10 2XF (0293 518000)

Engine

Type.....watercooled dohc 16-valve inline four, TSCC
 Bore x stroke.....56.0 x 40.4mm
 Displacement.....398cc
 Compression ratio.....11.8
 Fuel system.....4 x Mikuni BST33SS
 Ignition.....fully transistorised

Transmission

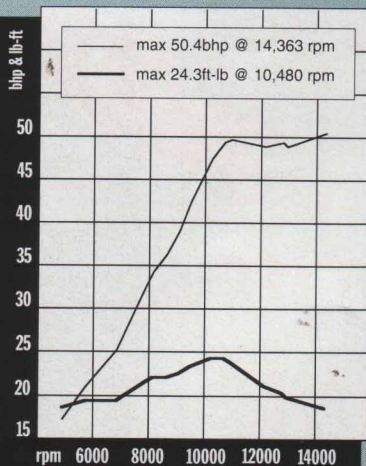
Primary drive, ratio.....gear, 1.954
 Final drive, ratio.....o ring chain, 47/14
 Gear ratios.....3.363, 2.307, 1.750, 1.437, 1.250, 1.150

Chassis

Front tyre.....Dunlop K505 110/70-1754H
 Rear tyre.....Dunlop K505 150/70-1769H
 Rim sizes.....3.00 x 17, 4.00 x 17
 Tyre options.....Pirelli Demon, Metzeler ME22/55
 Front brake.....single disc, 2-pot sliding caliper
 Rear brake.....single disc, 2-pot caliper
 Front suspension.....tele fork, 120mm travel
 Rear suspension.....New-link, variable preload, 120mm travel
 Castor/trail.....64.5°/100mm (3.9in)

Performance

Maximum speed
 rider prone.....119.0mph
 rider upright.....112.5mph
 SS¼ mile.....13.10s @ 98.5mph
 Fuel consumption
 best.....n/a
 worst.....n/a
 average.....45mpg
 rpm @ 70mph in top.....7,140



Power measured at the rear wheel on LEDAR's dynamometer using DID chain.

50 horse from a 400 is going some; this is the highest-revving roadbike engine we have ever dynoed.

Dimensions

Wheelbase.....1430mm (56.3in)
 Seat height.....790mm (31.1in)
 Dry weight.....168kg (370lb)
 Fuel capacity.....14.5lit (3.2gal)

Spares prices

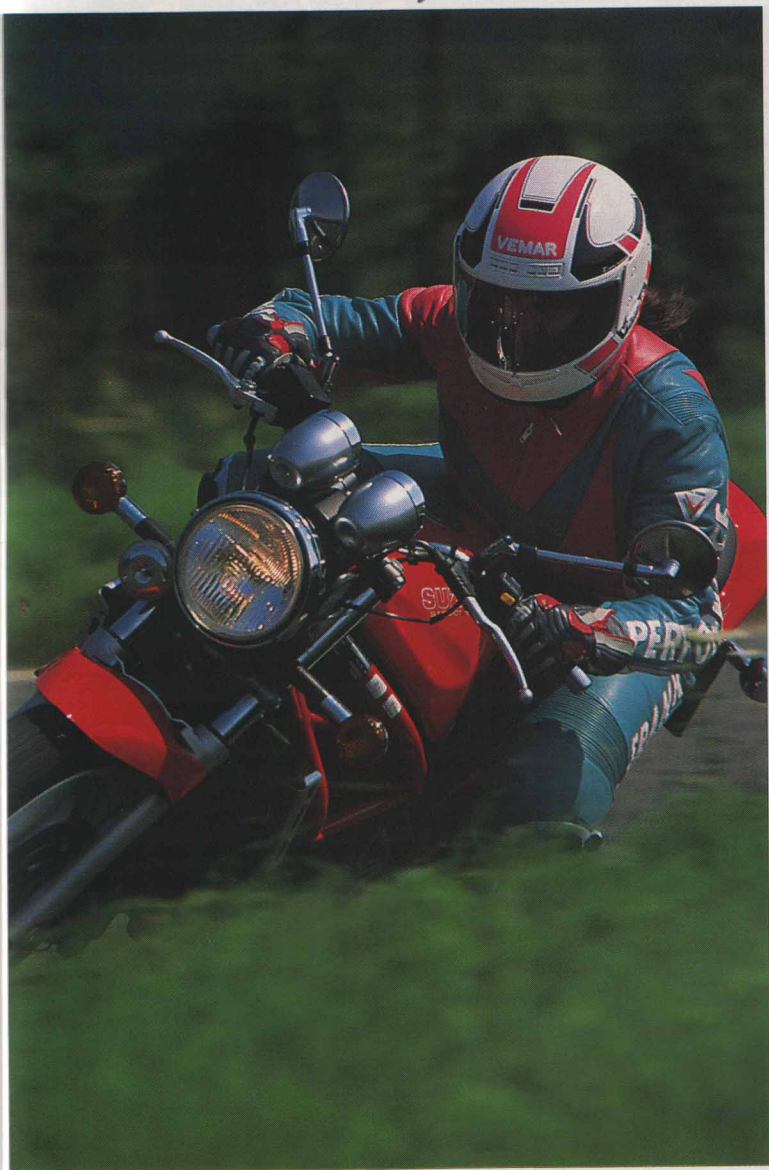
Fork stanchion.....£119.18
 Front wheel.....£185
 Mirror.....£48.25
 Fuel tank.....£181.22
 Oil filter.....£2.54

Tester's verdict

Good points.....comfort, looks, excellent 'passed-test' bike
 Bad points.....light front end
 Performance.....buzzy top end, lousy low down
 Comfort.....good to excellent
 Braking.....adequate
 Handling.....perfectly adequate
 Value.....good value

Quick comparison

bike	top spd	SS¼	av mpg	price	issue
GSX400	119.0	13.1/98.5	55	3599	zaktaz
XJ600S	123.5	13.2/-	47	3549	January '92
KLE500	109.0	13.8/97	45	3470	August '91
XT600	102.0	15.1/80	56	3479	August '90



a tidy, good-looking machine. Even a couple of friends, one who owns a wacky Harris, the other an even more wacky Spondon, made comments to this effect. The beige engine with its sandcast finish was to me the least attractive feature and would benefit, I felt, from a Cetem polishing kit and a can of silver paint.

To the uninitiated the Suzuki could pass for a larger bike as there are no numbers to declare engine capacity. Certainly it would have been a very hot favourite when, at 17, I was choosing my next bike after passing my test on a Z250 Scorpion. I actually looked at the 400s available at the time but nine years ago they were much slower than the road rockets they've evolved into today. I actually ended up with an XJ550 Yamaha which I thrashed to bits and loved every minute of. The GSF400 would lose out to an XJ on bottom-end grunt but the poky motor and modern flickability would walk all over the decade-old Yam. The Bandit's insurance is in a lower bracket than a 550 and despite the most appalling thrashing it manages a very respectable 45mpg, or 120 miles on a tankful.

Holidaying in North Devon I actually spotted someone riding a GSF400, so I legged it across the car park to ask his opinion. Beaming from ear to ear he informed me that it was, "very fast," with his mate on the back nodding in agreement and adding, "But there's nothing to hold onto except him!"

As a 17-year-old full licence holder the guy was obviously dead chuffed with his purchase. The main drawbacks for him were the £850 fully comp insurance (**this was written before December 1991 - Ed**) and the way it chomped through rear tyres every 2,000 miles. Apart from that he couldn't speak highly enough of it.

For me the Bandit was a great laugh but not the bike to wean me back off 100bhp. But for someone moving up from a smaller bike, or who wants to spend more time at legal speeds, it certainly looks attractive.

Wendy Burch

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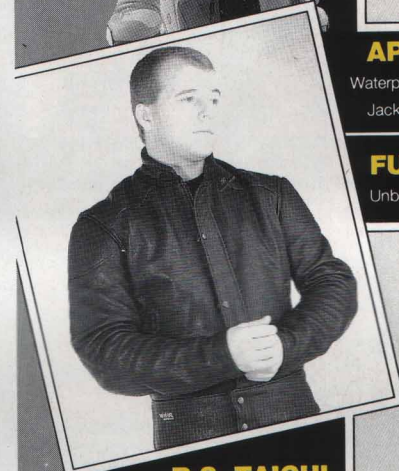


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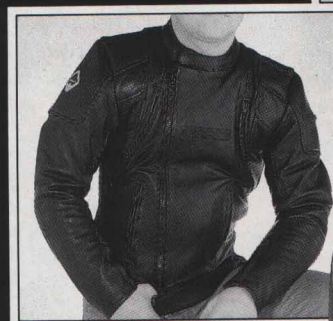


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