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# Triumph Street Triple

£6649, 96bhp, 191kg



## Has three years with no updates made the Striple stale?

Some bikes are so good to start with that they make everything in the world feel good too. I picked the Street Triple up from Pure Triumph in Wellingborough late on a wet, gloomy afternoon. I'd just visited PB rider Kev Smith in hospital and been reminded of what happens when things go wrong. I was tired from a late night. I had planned to take the most direct route home, which was around 35 miles but I ended up travelling 80 miles instead. At each point of the trip where I had the choice of turning for home or adding another few miles to the journey, I chose the extra miles. The wet roads were my friends and even the original equipment Bridgestone 016s, not my favourite rubber wet or dry, couldn't spoil the party.

Compared to the GSR, it feels outrageously light and flickable and it makes the Kawasaki feel like a right porkster. The Triple feels fantastic in the wet, giving you confidence to try braking inputs, cornering

speeds and corner exit throttle timings and openings that you would not attempt on the other two bikes. It's even better in the dry of course.

Ready to ride with a full tank of fuel, it clocked up just 191.5 kilos on the PB scales. One less cylinder on the engine and an aluminium alloy frame (the other two are steel) are the main reasons that it weighs so much less than the Suzuki and the Kawasaki. The lighter weight also means that it can easily keep glued to the back of the GSR on the move, despite having six fewer horses.

Some people may get excited about the fact the Suzuki's top whack of 148mph is 6mph faster than the triple. The same folk will no doubt also get moist at the Suzuki's four tenths of a second advantage in the standing start quarter mile. I don't. On roadgoing motorcycles the measuring of microscopic differences is a waste of time as are the judgements based on those measurements.

On any twisty road I'd back the Triumph against the Suzuki because the superior brakes allow you to brake later, the superior suspension lets you flick it in harder and hold higher corner speeds. Punch out of the corners is better too. The hardware on the front of the bike,

# Kawasaki Z750R

£7149, 94bhp 225kg



## Can new suspension and better brakes make the Zed desirable?

About half way down the A1 to London during my first ride on the Z750R, it popped into my thoughts that I really like this bike. I'd been threading early traffic, following a well-ridden 2008 Aprilia Mille, when it all clicked into place. The seat, which at first felt like I'd had a plank nailed to my bum, turned out to be surprisingly comfortable. The bars, which felt oddly far back at the beginning of the journey (very like the Z1000SX), now added to the feeling of relaxation. And the predatory snout of the headlight cowling did a much better job of blocking the oncoming air than the same bit of kit on the Suzuki, with which I'd been slaughtering birds and insects with the day before (actually, the pigeon hit me). The covers around either side of the radiator also kept the wind off my legs. The smooth, restrained delivery of the engine made speed-changing in fourth gear a supple pleasure and even the weight felt good, sticking the bike solidly to the tarmac.

Hitting the clogged London traffic, the weight didn't feel quite so good as I struggled it through mirror-clashing gaps. But it was less tiring than doing the same thing on my GSX-R750.

Just over half way back from London that same day, I took my usual 30 mile B-road detour and my first thought was, 'Whoa, this is a bit of a handful'. The front end is not as good as the Suzuki's or the Triumph's. It does not inspire the same confidence when braking for corners either, even though the radial caliper brakes are the best here. "It feels like the front wheel is pushing along the road rather than digging into it," observed Jon Pearson. If your natural instinct is to move your body forward for corner entry, the relaxed position of the bars is now working against you. You need them to be further forward.

It is only a small degree of difference, however, and some of it could be easily sorted. Different bars would be a good starting point. Spending some time the suspension setup would be worthwhile to get it working for your weight and riding style, but that goes for any bike really.

The one thing you can't do a fat lot about though is the weight. The Z750R has been at the lard sarnies. Fully fuelled on the PB scales it

# Suzuki GSR750

£7125, 102bhp, 210kg



## Can there really be a GSX-R under there? Somewhere?

Designed by engineers, produced by accountants. Modern brakes, snip, aluminum alloy swingarm, snip, adjustable damping on forks, snip, adjustable damping on rear suspension, snip. Use cheapest possible alternatives, tick. It must have been a bloody good design to start with to survive that amount of compromise. Headline mods for next year: leather belt replaces roller chain as final drive method of choice?

The engine is a softened version of the current GSX-R750 lump. It puts out 102 horsepower at the back wheel and is an absolute delight to use, whether you're cruising down a motorway on your way to work or catapulting from bend to bend at the end of the day and having too much fun to be heading home just yet. Even with 29bhp lopped of the top, you can still feel the GSX-R heritage beneath you. The GSR is that bit more urgent than the Kawasaki in the way it delivers its power. It builds revs quicker. It punches strong and hard out of corners. And the

gearbox is as good as we have come to expect from Suzuki.

It tops out at a ridiculous 148mph. What a waste of gearing. Anything over 95mph for longer than a few minutes kills your neck. Hand me the sprockets charts. I feel a modification coming on. I guess that health and safety reasons keep the gearing on all these bikes to what it is. Harder acceleration and easier wheelies as standard would probably spawn lawsuits from idiots who know nothing about taking personal responsibility. Still the nice thing about the Lowest Common Denominator is that the only way is upwards; improvements are easy.

Moving on to the cheap stuff: none of us had a good word to say about the suspension, yet even so the Suzuki corners better than the Kawasaki and, with a bit of work, could be made to match the Triumph. As standard the action of the basic forks and the rear unit is way too harsh. Thumped at speed along heaving fenland roads, the Suzuki was the bounciest and felt close to the suspension's limits quite often.

You can adjust the preload front and rear, but that's all folks, nothing else. The rear unit even has a stepped cam adjustment mechanism (ask your dad), which I recall was considered state-of-the-art on eighteenth