

New GSR750 snatches

► Suzuki's stunning new naked middleweight GSR750 beats the best in the biggest test yet (but only just)

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Suzuki's new GSR750 has defeated Triumph's Street Triple in MCN's shoot-out of the top four bikes in the sub-1000cc naked class. Pitched against the Yamaha FZ8, Kawasaki Z750 and Triumph Street Triple, the GSR proved to be the best, achieving top marks from MCN's test team, having the best all-round engine performance on road and dynamometer, and being a brilliant riding machine on open roads.

The Suzuki GSR is essentially a detuned GSX-R750 engine held in a similarly agile chassis to the Triumph's but with the added benefit of five years' development – the biggest update to the Street Triple since it appeared in 2007 is this year's

adoption of the new tear-like headlights from its big brother Speed Triple.

The sub-1000cc naked class is arguably the biggest growing segment in motorcycling today, and the fact the Street Triple has been knocked off the top spot is sure to be a major blow to Triumph. Kawasaki should also be worried with the shock result because its Z750 has been the top-selling naked machine in Europe for many years and the Suzuki betters it and the Yamaha FZ8 in every area. Read on to find out how.

THE TEST OF THE BEST

The one downside of naked bikes of any capacity isn't immediately obvious when setting off, snarled in traffic and making the most of dry, twisting back roads. But hitting the motorway immediately caps the adrenaline well and the pain of riding a bike with nothing in the way of wind protection becomes immediately obvious.

Prolonged high-speed riding is restricted to a neck-saving 85mph at most and 75mph for the rest of the time. "It needs a phone number for the Samaritans on the key fob," said Mr Neeves stepping off the FZ8. "It's so boring." This wasn't a direct and singular attack on the FZ8, but rather a generalisation of riding naked bikes 30 miles along the A1. A view immediately confirmed by Bruce with this gem: "I'd forgotten how crap bikes like this can be when covering distance on the motorway."

It has to be bad when the shortest man of the squad at 5ft 7in can't get out of the windblast. But he's right – there's not one bike here that offers even a shadow of wind protection. No upright mounted clocks, nothing. There are no winners here, only chiropractors.

Stability in a straight line you'd expect. But strangely the Yamaha is so stable it gets to the point where overtakes and sweeping lane changes make the front wheel feel like it's running through Evostik. It's a solid feel all right, but comforting, too. The Kawasaki gives a similar feel, and puts this across from the moment it's hauled off its sidestand and pushed out of the garage.

Kawasaki Heavy Industries is well and truly represented by the weight of the Z750. At 221kg fully gassed it's 15kg heavier than the FZ8, itself 1kg more than the GSR at 210kg. The Street Triple, meanwhile, at 189kg, is middleweight-like in comparison. This is obvious by the ease at which a sway of the hips will see it change lanes. Impressively, considering its weight, the GSR reacts to slight steering input in the same way and also wags its one-piece handlebar when it hits a cat's-eye. Agile steering geometry or a simple case of the bars being placed too forward for us shorter folk who grip the

WORLD FIRST GROUP TEST



Yamaha FZ8 £8128

► First appeared in 2010 and has essentially what is a sleeved-down 1000cc FZ1 engine. Built specifically for mainland European riders to grab sales from Kawasaki's Z750 – fortunate then the UK sub-1000cc class is booming.

Street Triple £6649

► First appeared in 2007 as a smaller, affordable version of the successful Speed Triple and just facelifted with its bigger brother's headlights. Punchy 675cc triple and lightweight, agile chassis kept it at the top of the naked class for five years.

Kawasaki Z750 £6779

► The Z750 has been in Kawasaki's line-up since 2004 and has the distinction of being Europe's best-selling naked motorcycle for the past five years. The original's funky bodywork broke the tradition of conservative Japanese design.

The testers

Trevor Franklin, 49, 5'8", MCN Chief Road Tester

Was the first to ride the Street Triple in the UK and, like most people, believed the Triumph couldn't be bettered. Has a neck like a bull elephant from years of naked (bike) abuse.



Michael Neeves, 41, 6'0", MCN Senior Road Tester

Michael has a history of naked indulgence with a long-term test Kawasaki Z1000 in 2010 and a Ducati Streetfighter in 2009, which he rode to Spain for a holiday.



Bruce Dunn, 45, 5'7", MCN Road Tester

Bruce's naked biking history includes original 1980s behemoths like the Suzuki GSX1100 and Honda CB900 through to today's weapons like the Jinlun 125 and Ducati Streetfighter.



Liam Marsden, 21, 6'1", MCN Website Producer

The baby of the tester panel. Rising insurance costs and lower cost price make Liam the ideal target for this group of bikes. Which bike will appeal to the youth of today?



bars more tightly than necessary? The answer is both, and this comes with the back roads section of our ride.

Twisting roads are the perfect battleground for these bikes and prove that nobody needs to be riding at 1000mph to feel good. Being able to make use of 100bhp engines is enough to ensure maximum smiles per mile. Constant throttle action and gearshifts to stay in the upper bracket of revs is fun, rewarding and safe. If you've 150bhp between your legs it's difficult not to use



Being able to make use of 100bhp engines is enough to ensure maximum smiles per mile

MCN'S TREVOR FRANKLIN

it, which is OK in the first three gears but after this, danger is only seconds and yards away.

Two bikes immediately shine during our B-roads boogie: the Street Triple and the Suzuki GSR. The Triumph's svelte, nimble chassis is legendary. There isn't anybody, male or female, who won't be amazed by the way the Street Triple can be grabbed by the scruff of the neck and be flung around without limits. The steering is light and precise. Last nano-second changes of direction are



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Street Triple's crown



GSX-R750-derived engine is the most powerful in the class



Most expensive bike on test but the FZ8 was rated last



Street Triple has lost its crown to the sexy new Suzuki



The Z750's motor needs to be revved to provide thrills

Suzuki GSR750 £7128

► New for 2011. Based on great reviews from MCN's initial tests, Suzuki's design team looks to have developed a serious threat to the Street Triple. Engine is courtesy of the famed GSX-R750 and tuned for road rather than track use. And it looks great.

literally that and it refuses to get upset with cack-handed or sports-like riding styles.

But then the GSR is like that, too – except it is all front end. Everything forward of the headstock is light and smooth and the rest of the bike follows whereas the Triumph's agility is felt through the length of the chassis almost like there's a mountain bike underneath rather than a raucous powerhouse.

Where the GSR edges the Triumph is in the way it delivers a greater feeling of

The GSR delivers a greater feeling of solidity than the Triumph – no matter what the abuse

MCN'S TREVOR FRANKLIN

solidity for the same amount of abuse. Long sweepers and tight second gear left-right-left turns are all taken with the same confidence-inspiring stability that begs you to push more and more. We all praised the Suzuki's front end but also added it could be better with slight preload adjustment.

Liam: "The GSR can get a little upset

TURN OVER: Performance and dyno test results

IAN JUBB

News Middleweight group test

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by a bump mid-corner, but quickly recovers. On a smooth road it's stable with a lot of feedback."

Bruce: "Overall the Suzuki's chassis is better than the FZ8 and Z750 and is as good as the Street Triple. I'd like to make changes to the front pre-load to reduce the dive under braking, but as it comes it will do for most owners."

Michael: "The GSR has a nice ride quality and gives confidence-inspiring handling. Although it has the same tyres as the Triumph, the Suzuki's grip is better - maybe the extra weight helps?"

This is not to say the Z750 and FZ8 are on a different planet. The FZ8 is just as stable on country roads as it is on the motorway. But that slow, heavy steering is a downer because the rider needs to be more physical in order to make the same moves as the GSR and Street Triple.

Kawasaki's Z750, meanwhile, is tall and very neutral steering, which also means rolling up your leathers' sleeves to get jiggy. But then the pace is hard and furious. At a more leisurely pace any of these bikes will deliver a pleasing ride, but the GSR and Street Triple take things up another level by being able to accommodate any of us with sporting urges to be exorcised.

Suspension-wise, the Kawasaki is set on the firm side, which is great for feel. Until, that is, a series of ripples or bumps are hit and the shock's rebound gets overwhelmed to leave it pogo-ing with a shortage of rebound damping. This led to Liam stating the rear shock was rubbish by not dealing well with bumps at all. Bruce also had an opinion about the rear shock: "The Kwak gets a bit flighty under acceleration. Maybe it's a bit under-sprung for the bike's weight."

The FZ8's suspension was commented on but nothing untoward was reported,

but then nothing outstanding was said either.

Again it was a tie between GSR and Street Triple as to which is best. Triumph's Street Triple got the thumbs up simply because its non-adjustable forks were fine for most scenarios and the Suzuki's would need its front pre-load winding up to lessen the dive from urgent late braking. Although mass-produced and to a price, both bikes' rear shocks did exactly what was asked of them for 250 miles without any problem.

The Kawasaki's engine was tagged as 'peaky' and 'involving'. In simple terms, it needs to be revved to get pure drive that excites. But excite it does in a smooth, vibe-free way. Despite this the Z750 can be considered a lot more tractable than the Yamaha's sleeved-down 1000cc FZ1 lump.



Blimey, a new champion has been found and its name is Suzuki GSR750

MCN'S TREVOR FRANKLIN

If you hadn't ridden any other large capacity bike since passing the bike test you'd think the FZ8 engine was wonderfully smooth with a forgiving throttle especially in the low to mid rev range. A bike perfectly suited to ride through congestion, in fact. But experienced hands will say the FZ8's lump is reminiscent of supersport engines of the late '90s where, below 7000rpm, the engine is breathless and only comes alive after this point on the tacho.

When you have to toe down three gears to make a clean overtake at 60mph on an A-road it gets frustrating - never mind point-and-squirt country B-roads. Even short-shifting into top gear at 7500rpm equates to a heady 90mph. If Yamaha plans to update the FZ8 it could learn something about bottom-end drive from Triumph and Suzuki.

Even though the Street Triple on this test delivered the lowest rear wheel torque figure it acts very much like a rampant bull when the throttle cable is pulled. From controlled throttle response to raging, bellowing beast with the front wheel in the air in the first two gears, the three-pot lump delivers. We know it's been said countless times before but the Street Triple's lump is fabulous. And then there's the Suzuki GSR...

Any engine that can match the Triumph's triple-cylinder bottom end shunt and top end drive has to be awarded a medal. Two medals if it's a four-cylinder mill. Three medals if it can actually better it. Step forward Mr Suzuki, with your chest pumped, for your GSR engine is a piece worthy of inclusion in the museum of 'sorted things'.

Picture this: all four bikes are rolling along, line abreast at 30mph in second gear. Who gets the drop? Surprise, surprise it's the Suzuki. Once more the same test, only this time 60mph in top gear. The Triumph grabs two metres and is then wee-ed upon by the GSR. We were impressed. Even more impressed when the Suzuki ran onto a magical top speed of 148.91mph.

With the performance testing completed it was time to go home. Dyno testing was on the breakfast menu. Even though it was hard to accept, we knew then the Suzuki had the better engine in every conceivable arena. Blimey, a new champion has been found and its name is Suzuki GSR750.

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PERFORMANCE TEST

| | Kawasaki Z750 | Yamaha FZ8 | Suzuki GSR750 | Triumph Street Triple |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Top speed: | 145.84mph in 40.61secs, 2179.12metres | 145.65mph in 35.94secs, 1884.34metres | 148.91mph in 41.02secs, 2272.67metres | 142.28mph in 31.92secs, 1618.99metres |
| Braking 70-0mph: | 3.27secs, 50.08metres | 3.17secs, 47.90metres | 3.37secs, 51.25metres | 3.38secs, 52.08metres |
| Standing start ¼ mile: | 12.17secs @ 118.93mph | 11.72secs @ 121.02mph | 11.29secs @ 121.03mph | 11.69secs @ 120.93mph |
| Second gear roll-on, | 30-80mph: 4.29secs, 105.60metres | 30-80mph: 4.30secs, 105.91metres | 30-70mph: 3.89secs, 95.98metres | 30-80mph: 4.03secs, 100.42metres |
| Sixth gear roll-on, | 40-120mph: 17.06secs, 643.91metres | 40-120mph: 17.22secs, 651.41metres | 40-120mph: 15.90secs, 590.51metres | 40-120mph: 14.38secs, 541.35metres |



Suzuki's sexy, angular looks are distinctive rather than aggressive



If you're short of arm you'll find the handlebars too far forward



Inline four is a detuned motor from Suzuki's superb GSX-R750



Twin 310mm discs at the front with two-piston calipers

Crash victim's landmark victory in road debris case
Go to page 29

Eight pages of action from Le Mans GP
Starts on page 96

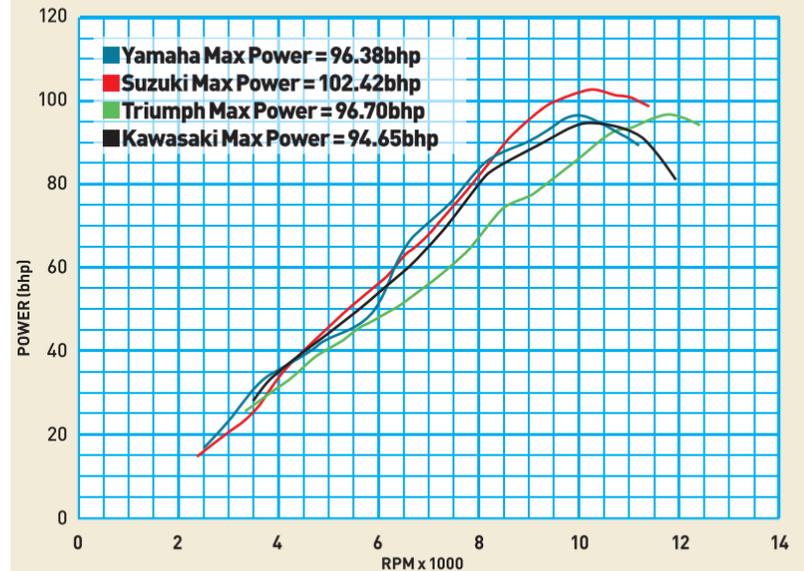


Tractable, fun and frugal, the GSR750 is the new king of the middleweights

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The Suzuki had the better engine in every conceivable arena

MCN'S TREVOR FRANKLIN

GSR wins dyno battle



MCN uses a Dynojet 250i rolling road dynamometer to measure each bike's engine performance. This performance is measured in foot-pound (ftlb) torque to show how much the work the engine does to turn the crankshaft. Brake horse power (bhp) is a by-product of torque and is the amount of force the engine produces in a given time to drive the rear wheel. Rear wheel performance figures are easier to reproduce than claimed factory crankshaft figures and is a standard among engine tuners.

From the torque and bhp graphs, it's clear to see Suzuki has spent a lot of development time to ensure a near-perfect power curve to give crisp throttle response at any point in the bike's rev range, something Triumph mastered with its three-cylinder bikes a long time ago – the same reason why Triumphs have always had excellent mid-range punch. It's also pleasing to note the GSR doesn't suffer with a bottom-end dip in engine performance to appease noise emissions regulations – although it's no noisier than any of its competitors. Clever people those Suzuki engineers.

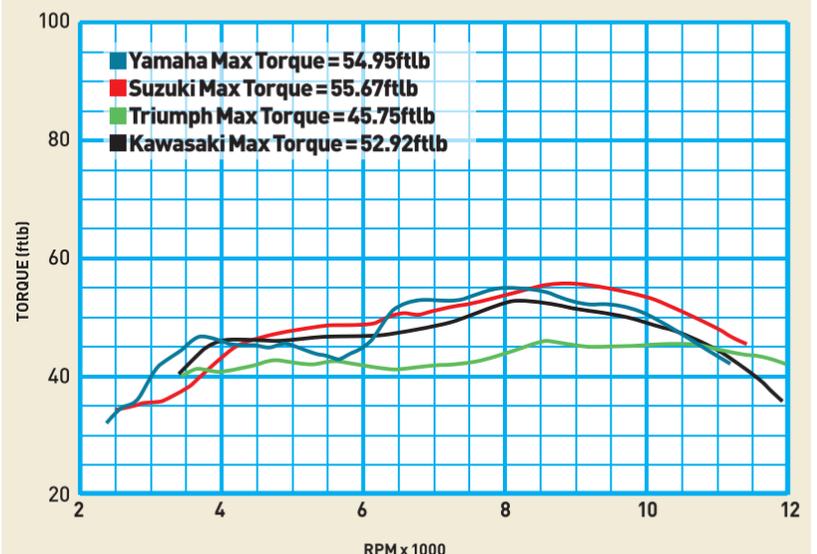
"I like the fact the 750cc class is making a return in one form or another because they are usable, practical and safe," he says. "People can make the most of this capacity by easily achieving a speed that isn't going to kill them. If a 750 can hit, let's say, 120-130mph a second or so less quickly than a 1000cc bike and then struggle to hit 140mph, it's got to be safer than a 1000cc bike that will run on to 170mph at the twist of a wrist."

"I've always rated Triumph's 675 engine because of its linear power delivery – it's so easy to make use of that power. A bike becomes tractable in the lower revs but also revs out later to keep everyone happy in terms of speed and power."

"Suzuki has wisely chosen the GSX-R750 engine to power the GSR750. It's a known reliable quantity. And with the reduced power output it's enabled them to tune it so it has become a very user-friendly unit, much like Triumph's Street Triple and, to a certain extent Kawasaki's Z750. You can forget about the FZ8 – I really don't know what Yamaha was thinking with this engine being only 219cc less than the 1000cc and having a similar manic power delivery to boot. Road riders, certainly naked bike owners don't want thrash-happy bikes anymore. It's all about usability – that's why Suzuki's latest GSX-R600 is so good."

THE DYNO MAN SAYS...

Mark Brewin is MCN's dyno operator and has dyno tested countless bikes road and race bikes. He is also a specialist in GSX-R engines, so has a particular interest in the GSR.



Street Triple's comprehensive digital and analogue clocks



Yamaha's clear clocks are neatly tucked away behind front cowl



Kawasaki's angular design is seen in every component on the bike



Light chassis and sliding calipers give Triumph stopping power



Yamaha's four-piston calipers return best braking performance



Z750's petal discs add some style to its effective front stoppers

News Middleweight group test

MCN testers' points score

Each bike was judged by the four MCN testers in four categories – chassis, engine, rider appeal and details. Each of these categories was split as follows:
CHASSIS – a maximum of 10 possible points each for suspension, stability, agility, braking.
ENGINE – a maximum of 10 possible

points each for throttle response, vibration, gearbox and appeal.
RIDER APPEAL – a maximum of 10 possible points each for styling, confidence, comfort, toys.
DETAILS – a maximum of 10 possible points each for toolkit, pillion, component finish.

| Suzuki GSR750 | Chassis/40 | Engine/40 | Rider appeal/40 | Details/30 |
|---------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|---------------|
| Liam | 27 | 34 | 31 | 18 |
| Michael | 30 | 33 | 31 | 17 |
| Trevor | 25 | 33 | 31 | 17 |
| Bruce | 31 | 35 | 31 | 17 |
| TOTAL | 113/160 | 135/160 | 124/160 | 69/120 |

1ST TOTAL 441/600

| Triumph Street triple | Chassis/40 | Engine/40 | Rider appeal/40 | Details/30 |
|-----------------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|---------------|
| Liam | 28 | 33 | 25 | 18 |
| Michael | 32 | 33 | 27 | 17 |
| Trevor | 25 | 31 | 29 | 17 |
| Bruce | 32 | 33 | 29 | 18 |
| TOTAL | 117/160 | 130/160 | 110/160 | 70/120 |

2ND TOTAL 427/600

| Kawasaki Z750 | Chassis/40 | Engine/40 | Rider appeal/40 | Details/30 |
|---------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|---------------|
| Liam | 22 | 21 | 21 | 11 |
| Michael | 30 | 32 | 30 | 17 |
| Trevor | 27 | 30 | 28 | 18 |
| Bruce | 28 | 32 | 28 | 15 |
| TOTAL | 107/160 | 115/160 | 107/160 | 61/120 |

3RD TOTAL 391/600

| Yamaha FZ8 | Chassis/40 | Engine/40 | Rider appeal/40 | Details/30 |
|--------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|---------------|
| Liam | 23 | 20 | 26 | 16 |
| Michael | 30 | 32 | 30 | 17 |
| Trevor | 25 | 25 | 27 | 16 |
| Bruce | 29 | 26 | 25 | 15 |
| TOTAL | 107/160 | 103/160 | 108/160 | 64/120 |

4TH TOTAL 382/600

THANKS TO

www.motorcyclesdirect.co.uk (01923 221125) for loan of Kawasaki Z750.



GSR750 is £479 more than its nearest rival

Looked at from any angle the Suzuki is seriously modern and good looking

MCN'S TREVOR FRANKLIN



Street Triple is tasty but dated



Angular looks get Suzy noticed

VERDICT



Riding is believing – GSR wins

Suzuki GSR750 beats veteran Triumph Street Triple? Takes some believing, I know. But facts are facts, and they are plain for all to see over the previous four pages. Is the GSR750 that good, though? Yes and no, depending on which bit you are sitting on, looking at, touching and how much money you possess.

Anyone of a short stature will find the Suzuki handlebars positioned too far forward and this pulls the rider over his bottom pivot point (for want of a better description) to perch the rider on the upper part of his legs than the fleshy part of his buttocks. It's not a big deal because the bars can be tipped back in their clamps a shade. The alternative is to

The GSR750 is more appealing than the Street Triple's dated factory streetfighter look

MCN'S TREVOR FRANKLIN

fit different bars. At first the Suzuki's front brake took an awful lot of finger effort to get the bike hauled up. It got marginally better after a severe hammering from two days' use but it could be stronger. Change of pad make and material wouldn't hurt, it all depends if your riding style demands braking like a racer.

Some people might take an instant dislike to the Suzuki's modern angular clothes. None of MCN's testers would agree because no matter what point of the bike you look at it is seriously modern and good looking with it. Let's put it like this: it's new and therefore more appealing than the Street Triple's arguably dated 'factory streetfighter' look – new headlights or not. If Triumph produced a similarly modern-styled 675 (Sweet Triple, anyone?) we're pretty sure a new flock of Triumph fans will land on Hinckley turf.

Price is harder to ignore with these bikes. Compared to the increasing number of £10,000+ machines, the £6649 Street Triple seems like amazing value. And the new and very capable Kawasaki Z750 is only £129 more. Alternatively, for an extra £479 you get Suzuki's GSR750. Which one to buy? The limp answer is: which ever you fancy – all three are excellent bikes at reasonable prices.

Specifications



Suzuki GSR750, £7128



Triumph Street Triple, £6649



Kawasaki Z750, £6778



Yamaha FZ8, £8128

| ENGINE | | | | |
|------------------------------|---|---|---|--|
| Type: | Liquid-cooled, 749cc (72x46mm), DOHC, 4v, four-stroke, inline four, six gears, fuel-injected, chain final drive | Liquid-cooled 675cc (74x52.3mm), DOHC, 4v, four-stroke, inline triple, six gears fuel-injected, chain final drive | Liquid-cooled, 749cc (68.4x50.9mm), DOHC, 4v, four-stroke, inline four, six gears, fuel-injected, chain final drive | Liquid-cooled 779cc (68x53.6mm), DOHC, 4v four-stroke inline four, six gears, fuel-injected, chain final drive |
| Power (claimed): | 105bhp | 105bhp | 105bhp | 105bhp |
| Torque (claimed): | 59ftlb | 50ftlb | 57ftlb | 60ftlb |
| CHASSIS | | | | |
| Frame & swingarm: | Steel twin-spar, steel swingarm | Tubular aluminium, twin-spar, cast alloy swingarm | Tubular steel spine, alloy swingarm | Aluminium twin-spar frame, alloy swingarm |
| Suspension: | 1mm inverted forks preload adjustment only. Single rear shock with preload adjustment only | 41mm inverted forks no adjust. Single rear shock with preload adjustment | 41mm inverted forks preload and rebound adjustment. Single rear shock with preload adjustment only | 43mm inverted forks no adjustment. Single rear shock with preload adjustment only |
| Rake/trail: | 25°/104mm | 23.9°/92.4mm | 24.5°/103mm | 25°/109mm |
| Wheelbase: | 1450mm | 1410mm | 1440mm | 1460mm |
| Weight: | 210kg | 189kg | 226kg | 211kg |
| BRAKES & TYRES | | | | |
| Front brake: | 310mm discs with twin-piston calipers | 308mm discs with twin-piston calipers | 300mm petal discs with twin-piston calipers | 310mm discs with four-piston calipers |
| Rear brake: | 240mm single-piston caliper | 220mm single-piston caliper | 250mm petal disc with single-piston caliper | 267mm disc, single-piston caliper |
| Front tyre: | 120/70x17 | 120/70x17 | 120/70x17 | 120/70x17 |
| Rear tyre: | 180/55x17 | 180/55x17 | 180/55x17 | 180/55x17 |
| LIVING WITH | | | | |
| Fuel capacity | 17.5 litres | 17.4 litres | 18.5 litres | 17 litres |
| Seat height: | 815mm | 805mm | 825mm | 815mm |
| Measured mpg: | 44.9 | 39.8 | 37.5 | 38.9 |
| Contact: | www.suzuki-gb.co.uk/onroad | www.triumphmotorcycles.co.uk | www.kawasaki.co.uk | www.yamaha.uk/onroad |