

BIKE TEST

TWINS SHOOTOUT

OLD SKOOL

The Suzuki GSX-R750 returns to its true home, battling the 1000cc twins, including the brand new Aprilia RSV-R. It's the World Superbike glory days all over again

WORDS BY: STEVE 'CARE BEAR' CHIDLEY PICS BY: FLOW IMAGES



RULES.

If I'm honest, I'm delighted and a little surprised that we're still able to do a twins group test. This time last year Aprilia were whispering about four-cylinder engines, and did anyone really expect Honda to keep the SP-2 in their line-up for '06? That said, I thought Israel were about to give back Palestine and that England were gonna win the World Cup.

Ducati upped the stakes in '05 by giving the 999 significantly more power, and this year Aprilia responded with a heavily revised Mille. Honda painted the SP-2 black.

You'll also notice a fourth bike that's made its way into this title fight, one that might not fit so obviously. It is, of course, Suzuki's GSX-R750. For many years 750cc fours battled against twin-pot 1000s on the world's racetracks in Superbike championships, and in the absence of any other 750s this is the GSX-R's true group test.

Historically, the 750s didn't fare well in WSB. Ducati's 916 and successive variants made sure the twins won just about every race and kept the buying public hooked.

By 2000 the sportsbike market was focused on 1000cc fours, so the Japs kicked up a fuss and the rules changed to keep the grid looking like the bike parks on the other side of the fence. The fours are now well developed, and things are looking ominous for the twins. Only the factory Ducati team have the cash to make a 999 competitive, gone are the days of privateer Ducati wins. The twins may not have much to offer race teams anymore, but what can they offer the British public over and above the last of the 750s, if anything?





HONDA SP-2

We first saw Honda's SP-2 back in 2000, as the red-only SP-1. It was born out of frustration. Honda had clearly had enough of the pesky Italian twins making their four-cylinder bikes look a little ordinary, and decided to ditch a couple of cylinders themselves.

It worked a treat on the racetrack, with Colin Edwards winning the title in its debut season. However, the road going SP never quite lived up to the long since forgotten race bike's success.

I doubt this has anything to do with the way it looks. Despite its age, I still think the SP-2 is the most aesthetically pleasing of all

Honda's bikes. It's squat, muscular, and looks up for the fight. It's the same onboard. It feels short, your hands are as close to your knees as they are on the new R6 or Triumph 675. The seat is hard and slopes forward à la 916, and the view of the fully digital clocks through the alloy fairing brace is pure racer. As first impressions go, the SP-2 is storming ahead.

Thumb the starter, try to ignore the 1980s style choke by your left knee, and the 90° V-twin rewards you with a different tune to the Italian machines. It sounds smooth, and is accompanied by that electrical whine only Honda Vs make. It's a sweet sound despite the muffled road legal cans.

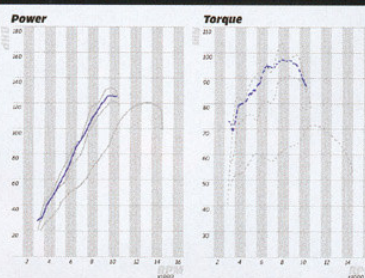
By this point you'll probably be quite liking the SP experience, which makes the first fault you

“IT PRODUCES A RESPECTABLE 127BHP AT PEAK, THOUGH THE GUTLESS MIDRANGE COULD DO WITH A RED BULL”

TECHNICAL HONDA SP-2



Power Graphs



Specification

ENGINE	
TYPE	999cc, liquid-cooled, 8v, 90° V-twin
BORE X STROKE	100 x 63.6mm
COMPRESSION	10.8:1
FUELLING	Electronic fuel injection
TESTED POWER	127bhp @ 9,850rpm
TESTED TORQUE	99Nm @ 7,850rpm
CHASSIS	
FRAME	Aluminium twin-spar
F SUSPENSION	43mm Showa fork, fully adjustable
R SUSPENSION	Monoshock, fully adjustable
FRONT BRAKES	Four-piston callipers, 320mm discs
REAR BRAKES	Two-piston caliper, 220mm disc

Testing Times

0-60: 3.67s 0-100: 7.27s 0-120: 10.09s

Standing 1/4 Mile: 11.67s @ 126.10mph Standing Miles: 30.27s @ 154.16mph

Statistics

Top Speed **156mph**
Max Power **127bhp**
Max Torque **99Nm**

Highlights

- Best looking Honda
- HRC swingarm
- Nissin brakes
- Showa suspension
- 194kg
- 127bhp

£9,399 (otr)

Don't be fooled by:

The new colours and painted frame. It's practically the same bike that was released in 2000

Engine

Honda's SP-2 is unchanged since 2002, when it was revised from the original SP-1. The motor still uses massive 62mm throttle bodies to fuel the 90° V-twin's combustion chambers, squirting through equally monstrous 12-jet injectors. It goes some way to explaining its legendary thirst, and possibly the wayward throttle response. The radiators are side-mounted to keep the frontal area small without compromising cooling efficiency. Each radiator gets its own fan.

The biggest change from the SP-1 to the SP-2 was the use of a race-derived exhaust port shape for improved gas acceleration. It gave 4bhp at peak, and a small midrange boost.

Chassis

The bumps are taken care of by Showa units at both ends. The fork is 43mm in diameter and fully adjustable, as is the rear monoshock. The swingarm is a 'works replica' item, and it's gorgeous. The build quality of the whole bike is as you'd expect from a Honda flagship. The Nissin four-piston callipers are the bike's strongest attribute. They squeeze the 320mm discs with plenty of bite and power, whilst remaining progressive with ample feel for phat rolling stoppies.

The one-piece LCD instrumentation is clearly race-inspired, and features the first digital rev counter. It's efficient, and looks cool, but can be hard to read in direct sunlight.

DIMENSIONS

WHEELBASE 1420mm
SEAT HEIGHT 820mm
DRY WEIGHT 194kg
FUEL CAPACITY 18 litres

PRICE

PRICE FROM £9,399 otr
Honda UK
(0845 200 8000)

Verdict

It had the ultimate success as a factory racebike, but the SP-2 can't live with its competition on the road

Styling, attitude, top-end power, reliability

Fuelling, suspension, midrange, age

Final Score
Score relates to other bikes in this test only

7/10



Just enough midrange to wheelie, which actually makes it handle better

TWINS SHOOTOUT

SECOND OPINION

WILL THE SP-2 WIPE THE SMILE OFF MR HAPPY'S FACE?

Honda SP-2 - 4th

I wouldn't ever have one, but I can understand why you might. It's still a great looking bike, especially in white. It even feels pretty decent to ride as long as you don't push too hard, so your VFR riding mates will be pleased they can keep up.

However, it has less midrange than a DT50 and a shocking throttle response, so the engine doesn't suit steadier riding. It's fast if you thrash it, but then the chassis can't even begin to cope. One for the poseurs only.

take a bit of stick. Sadly, it's under-damped. The forks dive and rebound far too quickly under heavy braking, and at anywhere approaching peg-down lean the front starts to feel more vague than the Labour party manifesto. As soon as the roads tighten or you go on track, you won't be seeing much of the others. You could wind the compression and rebound damping up a bit, but then you might as well just fit iron rods instead of springs.

I like so much of the SP-2, especially its attitude, and that makes it even more disappointing that it can't get the basics right. ➤

discover a bit of a heart breaker. You'll struggle not to let it bother you too, especially at low speed.

The transition from a closed to open throttle is about as smooth as Pete's favourite chat up line: 'Hey baby, I'm a Pole, do you wanna dance round me?' He's like a Polish Bond is our Pete. Anyway, the fuelling's pretty accurate once picked up, but it won't be long before that initial jerk gets on your tits. The delivery's smooth enough, there are no holes or spikes. It's so linear that it can feel a little flat compared to the Italians.

It produces a very respectable 127bhp at peak, but the midrange could do with a Red Bull. It doesn't exactly rev that high either. Just when it really seems to be getting into its stride the rev limiter calls time at 10,000rpm. Despite the decent peak bhp, the result is a standing quarter nearly a second behind the Duke and over 10mph slower. Out on the open road where you're constantly relying on pulses of torque, this is a very noticable weakness, and it ruins corner exit speed on track too.

The bike's natural balance is something to lift your spirits back up again. The steering, although not that quick by modern standards is typically neutral and precise. Down fast flowing A-roads the SP feels right at home. The motor can be kept singing and you don't need to lean it over too far, which is definitely a good thing.

The suspension is pretty firm, giving you the impression it'll

THE FB TEST TEAM

PRACTICE SAFE SUN WITH YOUR USUAL SUSPECTS. THEY ARE... (FROM LEFT)

BJ Kubas Cronin - Staff Writer

Despite it being 35° in the shade, Ben wore a thick T-shirt, a neck-warmer, and never removed his leathers all day. Suspected hidden third nipple

Steve 'Care Bear' Childley - Freelance Road Tester

A correction to the Summer issue - Steve's real golf handicap is actually four not six. Tattoos are a disguise. Suspected posh nobby

Jay Wilkins - Dep Ed

Even tan and chiselled physique (wake up Jay! - Ed) product of clinical levels of vanity. Suspected Men's Fitness subscriber

Pollsh Pete - Road Tester

B-cup Pete used to have a six-pack. Now it's more of an economy-sized pack, but he's still kicking it in his Calvins. Midnight cookie-jar theft suspect



www.fastbikesmag.com Fast Bikes October '06 33

**SECOND
OPINION**

JAY'S TRUE Hardcore, AND
THE RSV-R MAKES HIM GRIN

Aprilia RSV-R - 2nd

The Ducati versus Aprilia battle has always been incredibly close, but I've always gravitated towards the aggressive, arse-kicking, track-focused Aprilia over the more fancy Ducati.

The RSV-R is the less accomplished road bike, but it loves trackdays, stunts, and thrashes through the country, whereas the 999 doesn't feel as robust.

The purchase and running costs seal it, and you can spend the difference on sticky tyres, noisy pipes, and trackdays. A bit of set-up should help a lot on the road too.

On a perfectly smooth surface the Mille feels brilliant. Good luck finding one

**APRILIA
RSV-R**

Given up in MotoGP, given up in World Superbikes. Aprilia is one of the raciest manufacturers and yet they're not competing with four-strokes at the highest level.

You can understand their absence in MotoGP. Even getting a prototype to the first test session costs more than keeping Wilko in new leathers, but not racing in WSB seems a little odd when their road bikes are so track focused.

As I mentioned at the start, Aprilia are known to have a four-pot Mille on the way. Until then, we'll just have to do with this new bike. I say new, tweaked would be a fairer description.

It's difficult to tell, but the bike you see before you is the base model R version. It's £1,300 cheaper than the Factory, and as a result you don't get the superlight OZ wheels, Öhlins rear shock or steering damper, nor the lashings of carbon fibre. The only real difference to the spec sheet is the 4kg more weight, so at £9,000 on the nose it offers great value for money. Let's be honest, few nine grand bikes look so trick.

If you're familiar with the old bike, then you'll be familiar with this one. It is exactly the same to sit on. It's tall, there's a little stretch to the bars, and there are lots of hard edges everywhere. The only real changes to the view are the shiny tops to the Öhlins forks that you now get on the R.

The motor has been reworked

from last year's model, as much to get it through the Euro 3 emission laws as anything else.

Aprilia claim they've managed to squeeze 10bhp more from it, as well as cleaning it up. Only half of that made it to the dyno though. Peak power is up from 118bhp last year to 123bhp for 2006. So we've got slightly more power, but as I mentioned in the August issue the new bike doesn't feel that fast. That's because what Aprilia didn't tell us is that it's lost 10Nm and peak torque is 1,000rpm later. On the plus side the delivery is smoother and the initial pick up isn't so tyre squirmingly aggressive. It would have been nice if we could have kept the same grunt though.

One of the biggest problems we had with the old bike was with



'Ooh, yeah. You like that, don't you bitch? Ooh, my nipples are hard.'

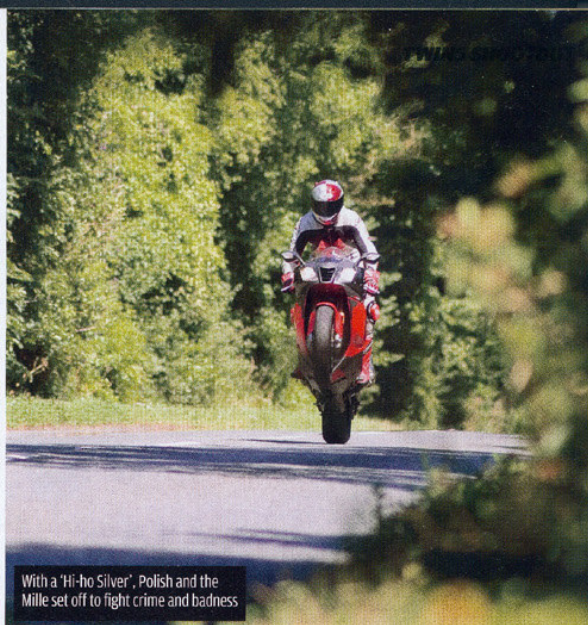
the less than fluid steering and a lack of mechanical grip in shite conditions. The steering does seem more neutral, although the Factory version I rode two months ago definitely steered quicker with its lighter wheels.

The Sachs rear shock and Öhlins fork are still very firm though. If it wasn't for the 34° heat causing the Dunlop D208RRs to stick like burning phosphorous to a child's leg, grip would definitely have been an issue when pushing hard on the Mille. That said, on a decent strip of road or a track the Mille can carry huge corner speed thanks to its impressive

ground clearance.

The biggest problem we had with the Aprilia was with stability. Not fitting a steering damper to what is essentially a track bike once again proves to be an oversight. We admit that not everyone who buys one of these is going to ride it like it was their last day on Earth, but even at fairly comfortable speeds the R would shake its head over a rippled surface and exiting corners. Of course, you can retro-fit one, it just seems weird to leave a damper off when Aprilia obviously thinks the geometrically identical Factory needs one.

As with the Honda there's a lot about the Mille I like, but I could never choose a bike that I knew wasn't even close to being the best in its class.



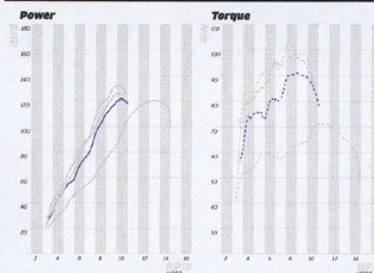
With a 'Hi-ho Silver', Polish and the Mille set off to fight crime and badness

“WERE IT NOT FOR THE HEAT MAKING THE TYRES STICK, GRIP WOULD HAVE BEEN AN ISSUE ON THE STIFF SET-UP”

TECHNICAL APRILIA RSV-R



Power Graphs



Specification

ENGINE	
TYPE	997cc, liquid-cooled, 8v, 60° V-twin
BORE X STROKE	97 x 67.5mm
COMPRESSION	11.8:1
FUELLING	Electronic fuel injection
TESTED POWER	123bhp @ 10,200rpm
TESTED TORQUE	91Nm @ 9,500rpm
CHASSIS	
FRAME	Aluminium twin-spar
F SUSPENSION	Öhlins 43mm fork, fully adjustable
R SUSPENSION	Sachs monoshock, fully adjustable
FRONT BRAKES	Four-piston calipers, 320mm discs
REAR BRAKES	Two-piston caliper, 220mm disc
DIMENSIONS	
WHEELBASE	1418mm
SEAT HEIGHT	810mm
DRY WEIGHT	185kg
FUEL CAPACITY	18 litres
PRICE	
PRICE	£8,999 otr
FROM	Aprilia UK (0161 475 1800)

Testing Times

0-60: 3.15s 0-100: 6.40s 0-120: 8.75s

Standing 1/4 Mile: 10.93s @ 133.71mph

Standing Mile: 28.36s @ 165.52mph

Statistics

Top Speed **167mph**
Max Power **123bhp**
Max Torque **91Nm**

Highlights

- Öhlins forks
- Brembo brakes
- Trick forged wheels
- Total bargain
- 189kg
- 123bhp

£8,999 (otr)

Don't be fooled by:

Aprilia's absence from WSB racing. The RSV-R is far better on track than the race hero SP-2 and 999

Engine

The RSV-R uses exactly the same engine as the Factory. Aprilia claim a 10bhp boost for the new model, which translated to a 6bhp gain on the dyno. A lot of other work went into making sure that the ageing Rotax-designed engine could pass Euro3 emissions regulations. The 60° V-twin big-bang motor has only been revised, rather than replaced, since Aprilia first showed the Mille in 1998.

The bike's track aspirations are even more apparent when you look at the official options list: Akrapovic titanium full system, Ergal reverse shifter for a race pattern gearbox, smaller front sprocket for track gearing. The pipe should take output to around 130bhp.

Chassis

Despite being referred to as a 'new' bike, the chassis spec is much the same as ever. This base 'R' model gets a few extra goodies, including the same Öhlins forks and radially-mounted Brembo brakes as the Factory. The rear shock is a Sachs unit, instead of the Factory's Öhlins, and you don't get a steering damper at all. We would have appreciated at least a cheap, non-adjustable item in place of the Öhlins job on the Factory.

The wheels are forged alloy Oz-a-likes, though not as light. Disappointingly, they're shod in Dunlop D208 rubber, whereas the Factory gets far stickier Pirelli Supercorsas. You don't get any of the carbon fibre either.

Verdict

Small changes for '06 only give small gains, unsurprisingly. Don't all sell your '05 Mille just yet

Value, bling appeal, improved fuelling

Reduced grunt, stability, road manners

Final Score
Score relates to other bikes in this test only

8/10

**SUZUKI
GSX-R750**

750cc fours and 1000cc twins have battled each other on road and track for a long time. Over the last fifteen years it's the twins that have had the superior pace in racing. With no kills to their name, the 750s fell foul of natural selection, and their makers either stopped racing, or built twins.

Slowly the roadbikes all but disappeared. The only surviving member, which was also the forefather of the modern superbike, is Suzuki's GSX-R750.

Being the Hamamatsu firm's favourite son, Suzuki were never going to drop it from their line-up. Especially when they could run development alongside the 600 for

relatively little cost.

The '04 model had found such a sweet balance between power and weight, that it struck a real chord with us thrashers. The fact that the thou's had become so ridiculously fast may have also been a reason why it found favour with more people than it had in a while. For whatever reason you liked it one thing was clear, the 750 was back and as relevant as ever. Who knows, with MotoGP soon moving to 800cc, the 750 might get a new playmate from one of the other Japanese firms.

If one of them does decide to join the fray, they'd better not cut any corners, this bike sets the benchmark very high.

The first thing you notice when jumping aboard the GSX-R is just

how natural it feels compared to the twins. It puts you in the perfect position for going bananas, but at no expense to your concentration levels because of little comfort issues. Plus as a serious added bonus, the fact that Suzuki wanted to keep the centre of gravity low means there's no underseat exhaust to render you temporarily infertile on hot days. The gear position indicator is a useful addition as well.

The heart and soul of the 750, its motor, is probably the least improved part of the package on paper. Power and torque figures are very similar to last year's model, with only a 2bhp claimed increase. Most of the work done was in an effort to make the unit lighter and more compact. We also now know

**SECOND
OPINION**

WANT TO SEE JAY SMILE? GIVE HIM A GSX-R TO THRASH

Suzuki GSX-R750 - 1st
The Italians still make their bikes look sexier. Everywhere else the 750 romped it, doing everything better. It's simply more fun to ride. That it's both loads cheaper and faster on track seals it. You'll love riding this bike.



Easy on both, but far more controllable on the GSX-R750



for sure that the exhaust system saps power in favour of compact packaging. Only the closer gearing and slightly higher rev-ceiling make the bike quicker than its predecessor.

As you would expect from Suzuki the fuelling is spot on, and a second balancer shaft has given the delivery a creamy quality. Despite not making as much outright power as the 999, and obviously less torque, the GSX-R is by far the quickest bike on test thanks to its weight and spread of power. Obviously you'll have to rape the 750 to stay ahead, try matching the twins from the same rpm and you'll be going backwards. You'll love thrashing it though when you hear it sing. For a standard bike the racket it makes at 14,000rpm is something else.

Talk about evocative.

The changes to the motor are based mainly around mass centralisation and that's what makes itself felt the most. The bike now steers better than anything on the market. It's far quicker to change direction than any of the twins. It's completely effortless and predictable. Once over, the 750's incredible balance between suppleness and control keep you on the chosen line with the minimum of fuss, no matter what the surface. It doesn't matter where you take these four bikes, track, motorway, or bumpy B-road, the GSX-R will always come out on top. The once accepted fact that V-twins drive harder from an apex and carry more corner speed no longer applies, the 750 has set the standard for all bikes to follow. ➤



TWINS SHOOTOUT

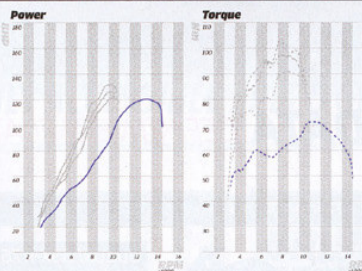
Gixer takes 100mph sweepers without breaking stride

“ OBVIOUSLY YOU’LL HAVE TO THRASH IT, BUT YOU’LL LOVE DOING IT. THE 750 SETS THE STANDARD FOR ALL BIKES TO FOLLOW ”

TECHNICAL SUZUKI GSX-R750



Power Graphs



Specification

ENGINE	
TYPE	750cc, liquid-cooled, 16v inline four
BORE x STROKE	70 x 48.7mm
COMPRESSION	12.5:1
FUELLING	Electronic fuel injection
TESTED POWER	122bhp @ 13,100rpm
TESTED TORQUE	74Nm @ 10,750rpm
CHASSIS	
FRAME	Aluminium twin-spar
F SUSPENSION	41mm fork, fully adjustable
R SUSPENSION	Monoshock, fully adjustable, twin-speed
FRONT BRAKES	Four-piston callipers, 310mm discs
REAR BRAKES	One-piston caliper, 220mm disc
DIMENSIONS	
WHEELBASE	1400mm
SEAT HEIGHT	810mm
DRY WEIGHT	163kg
FUEL CAPACITY	16.5 litres
PRICE	
PRICE FROM	£7,799 otr Suzuki GB (01892 707001)

Testing Times

0-60: 3.16s	0-100: 5.94s	0-120: 8.11s
Standing 1/4 Mile: 10.75s @ 135.94mph		Standing Mile: 28.00s @ 166.58mph

Statistics

Top Speed	169mph
Max Power	122bhp
Max Torque	74Nm

Highlights

- Coolest capacity ever
- New frame and motor
- Belly-mount exhaust
- Twin-speed shock

163kg
122bhp

£7,799 (otr)

Don't be fooled by:

The size of the engine. The way it lets you use it will keep you in touch with anything on the open road

Engine

The new 750 engine was designed primarily to be smaller and easier to package in a more compact, mass-centralised bike. A secondary balancer shaft has been added for smoothness. Claimed power increase is 2bhp only. The exhaust certainly absorbs some power, being far from an ideal shape and length for performance as a result of mass-centralising being top priority. The SRAD ram air ducts are 16mm closer together for better effect at speed, and the 750 uses the new closer ratio 'box found in the 600, but with higher final drive. The torque-boosting crankcase ventilation holes have grown from 35mm to 39mm to suit higher revs.

Chassis

Mass-centralisation is king here, and Suzuki seem to have done more than most to the weight lower too. The new exhaust plays a big part, though it adds weight. The wheels make it up though. The shock has twin-speed compression damping adjustment, so you don't have to compromise to get handling and bump absorption dialled in. The new fork legs have a carbon-titanium coating and are 2mm narrower, both helping to reduce stiction for a smoother action. The tubes have thicker walls to maintain strength. The 750 gets the 1000's 23.8° head angle, 310mm brake discs, and improved aerodynamics thanks to a 4% smaller frontal area.

Verdict

The undisputed King. Suzuki's latest 750 does everything so well it's really going to take some beating

Everything

Nothing

Final Score
Score relates to other bikes in this test only

10/10



SPEED TEST DATA DEFINITELY FLAT OUT

Speed Test Notes

Light weight, a good spread of power, and a not-quite-too-tall first gear make the 750 incredibly quick for its capacity. Easy and predictable to launch.

The 999 is long, heavy, and low, with great clutch feel, so you can give it loads off the line. It has a long first gear though, which hinders it initially.

The RSV-R is the most aggressive, with a short first gear and a hard-hitting midrange. It's very wheelie-prone, but effective when you get it right.

The SP-2 lacks midrange, so you use lots of revs to launch it at the risk of wheelies. It's the slowest in almost every sector, and well down on top speed.

Speed Test Results



SUZUKI GSX-R750

Top Speed **169** mph Power **122** hp

0-60: 3.16s	0-100: 5.94s	0-120: 8.11s
Standing 1/4 Mile: 10.75s @ 135.94mph	Standing Mile: 28.00s @ 166.58mph	



Ducati 999

Top Speed **173** mph Power **133** hp

0-60: 3.42s	0-100: 7.34s	0-120: 8.55s
Standing 1/4 Mile: 10.84s @ 137.63mph	Standing Mile: 30.05s @ 155.95mph	



Aprilia RSV-R

Top Speed **167** mph Power **123** hp

0-60: 3.15s	0-100: 6.40s	0-120: 8.75s
Standing 1/4 Mile: 10.93s @ 133.71mph	Standing Mile: 28.36s @ 165.52mph	



Honda SP-2

Top Speed **156** mph Power **127** hp

0-60: 3.67s	0-100: 7.26s	0-120: 10.09s
Standing 1/4 Mile: 11.55s @ 127.55mph	Standing Mile: 30.27s @ 154.16mph	

ALL-NEW DUCATI COMING

999 REPLACEMENT VERY SOON

Extra-big twin on way

WSB rules are almost certain to change again. In the '90s the 1000cc twins and 750cc fours raced on the same tuning rules, and the twins were so dominant that by 2001 the fours had pretty much disappeared.

The rules then changed to allow 1000cc for any engine configuration, but with tighter tuning regs for the fours. Ducati have now got the hump because it's costing so much to run their super-tuned twins. They're calling for a new 1200cc capacity for twins, using the cheaper tuning regs. A new bike is reported to be near ready, probably around the 1170cc mark. It will be more track-focused than the current 999 and its styling will be more along the lines of the stunning 916. It should let them compete more evenly and back more privateers, though hopefully not return WSB to being a Ducati Cup.

CONCLUSION

I said it last year and I was wrong, but surely this must be the last time we see all three of these twins together. With the costs involved in racing and owning them, I wouldn't be surprised if the V-twin format was all but extinct by next year. No SP-2, a four-cylinder Mille, and a big Ducati; it isn't hard to imagine. We were saying that about the 750s not long ago though, so maybe we'll keep the best of the twins for a while longer.

That won't include the SP-2. When ridden back to back with the Gixer it feels a lot more than six years-old. It's slow, doesn't handle, and has a jerky throttle response that will drive you mad. If this isn't the last year for the Honda then it'll go down alongside Houdini as one of the greatest escape artists of all time. Last place.

Next up is the Mille. Some will try and argue that because of all the shiny bits it offers better value for money than the Ducati. That's all well and good if all you're going to do is park it outside your house as a giant cock extension, but if you actually want to go places, then the only twin you should consider is the 999. It's faster than the Mille, steers better, has more mechanical

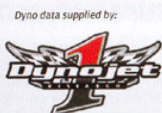
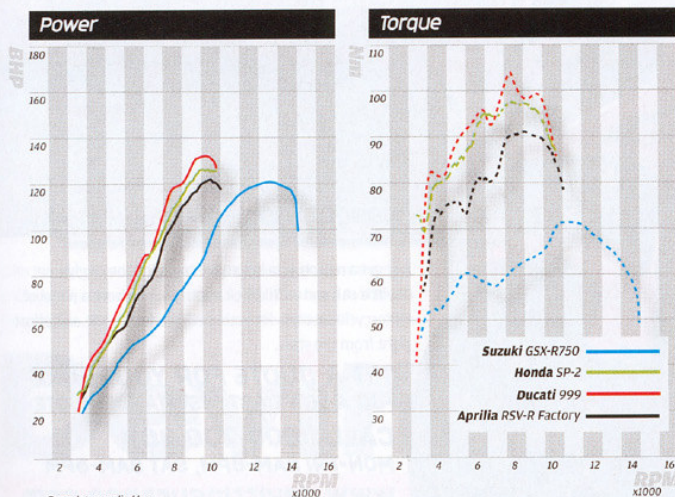
grip, a better brake set-up, and is generally a lot easier to live with. If you really must have the Mille though get in quick, Aprilia won't be able to get that ageing motor through emission laws for much longer, and I'll be amazed if they develop a new one. It's a good track bike, but for road riding the 999 is so much better that it has to take second spot.

Of course, if you're thinking about buying any new bike this year, for Christ's sake go and test ride the GSX-R750 first. Some bikes can almost match it in some areas, but none can get anywhere near its all-round ability. It was even crowned FB's Sportsbike of the Year for 2006, the first bike outside the 1000cc class ever to hold that coveted title. You may think you want a 'grunty', 'easy to ride', 'fast on track' (insert cliché here) V-twin, but in fact for truly accessible performance you want a GSX-R750, you just don't know it yet.

Polish searches for his own conclusion



FORGET ALL THE CLICHÉS ABOUT V-TWINS BEING EASIER TO RIDE OR FASTER ON TRACK, FOR TRULY ACCESSIBLE SPEED GET A GSX-R750



CONTACTS

JHS Racing: 0117 986 8844 www.jhsracing.co.uk
Dyno Jet UK: 01995 600500 www.dynojet.co.uk

Speed Test Location

BRUNTINGTHORPE TEST FACILITY

SOME CALL IT A TEST TRACK, OR 'TT' FOR SHORT. ACTUALLY IT'S JUST A SODDING GREAT RUNWAY.



It's a 2-mile runway and a return road with a couple of modest bends. We use 'Brunters' to extensively performance test every bike

we ride. It's a great place for speed testing, but it's not a long, ultra-twisty test course as some mags would have you believe...

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