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Road-going version of Colin Edwards' Honda SP-1

By Jon Urry

IF opening your wallet to splash out £500 on a new can makes you break out into a cold sweat, the £27,000 you'd need to create this SP-1 will probably leave you in a hospital bed.

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Most of us would need to rob a bank to fund such fantasies, but John Merrill didn't have to go quite that far. The boss of QB Carbon used all his experience and contacts - plus a large wedge of cash - to create what is possibly the world's tastiest road-legal (if you discount the noise) SP-1.

He reckons you could also add £25,000 to cover the cost of his time over the last seven months, which begs the question: Why? "Because I'm a bit of a nutter, and I love building exotic bikes," is his instant reply.

Almost every part of this Honda is from the factory's legendary racing arm, HRC, and that's mainly thanks to the Vimto British superbike squad, which helped Merrill gain access to the secretive department in Japan. He said: "I couldn't have done it without them." The team got him a factory swingarm, exhaust, shock and ride height adjuster, as well as a host of other items - at a cost. The exhausts alone set him back £7000, and that's without the end cans, which were built from HRC designs by Promotive - the company which makes cans for the Red Bull and GSE Ducati BSB teams.

The WSB-style bodywork is all carbon-fibre, as is the single seat unit, vented front mudguard and 4.6-gallon (21-litre) fuel tank. A large-capacity carbon factory airbox, specially adapted by QB to fit the road bike's smaller throttle bodies, is fed through carbon air-tubes.

These are also used to attach the standard clocks (one of the few unaltered parts) to the fairing, saving weight on brackets.

Using the larger air-tubes meant the original lights no longer fit. So smaller items from the RVF400 have been used, creating space for a repositioned ignition barrel. Suspension is taken care of by a WSB-spec Ohlins set-up. The forks cost £3500 while the rear shock was a bargain at £1000. Both, as you'd expect, are fully adjustable.

Lightweight PFM six-pot calipers biting twin, fully floating 320mm iron discs ensure the bike's stopping power is as good as its looks, while race-spec Marvic wheels keep unsprung weight down. In total, the whole thing weighs just 174kg (382lb), the same as the Vimto race bike and 26kg (57lb) less than stock.

The factory swingarm cost £4000, and it meant Merrill had to shell out even more cash on a factory-spec suspension linkage and ride height adjuster to make the rear shock fit.

The rider sits on a factory subframe, modified by QB to include the original wiring and battery holder, while adjustable Promach rearsets ensure the riding position is as racy as the WSB bike. After all these chassis modifications it would have been a pity to leave the engine alone, so Merrill sent the bike to **Germany to be tuned by V-**



■ Colin, you can keep your SP-1



■ Swingarm cost £4000



■ Suspension is all WSB-spec

twin guru Herbert Kainzinger.

He changed the camshafts, reworked the valves and cylinder head, balanced the crank, swapped the pistons for lighter items and re-mapped the fuel injection. The work cost £4000, but gives a genuine 140bhp at the rear wheel - up 16bhp on stock. The finishing touch was a Castrol paintscheme by Pro-art in Nottingham. Fortunately, this bike isn't quite as hard to get hold of as Colin Edwards' racer, and if you're an SP-1 owner whose six numbers come up on Saturday night, you can do the same. Merrill has struck deals across the globe to supply all the kit, including HRC gear, as long as you don't mind waiting. For details, call QB on: 0115-989-4468 or log on to: www.qbcarbon.com. If you can't be bothered to wait, you can buy this very bike. The price, if you consider the work that has gone into it, is a snip at just £25,000.

What it all costs

Carbon-fibre fairing: **£990**
Carbon single seat: **£208**
Carbon undertray, numberplate holder and indicators: **£155**
Carbon airbox: **£340**
Carbon air-tubes: **£300**
Vented carbon front mudguard: **£110**
Carbon fuel tank: **£575**
Factory subframe: **£275**
Factory swingarm: **£4000**
Factory exhaust: **£7000**
Promotive end cans: **£600**
Triple clamp yokes: **£510**
WSB-spec Ohlins forks: **£3500**
WSB-spec Ohlins shock: **£1000**
Promach rearsets: **£255**
Heelplate kit: **£42**
Marvic wheels: **£1050**
PFM brakes: **£850**
Clear screen: **£35**
Renthal chain/sprockets: **£180**
HRC handlebars: **£300**
Tuning work: **£4000**
Castrol paintscheme: **£700**
TOTAL: £26,975

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