

THE UK'S COOLEST MOTORCYCLE MAGAZINE (by some degree)

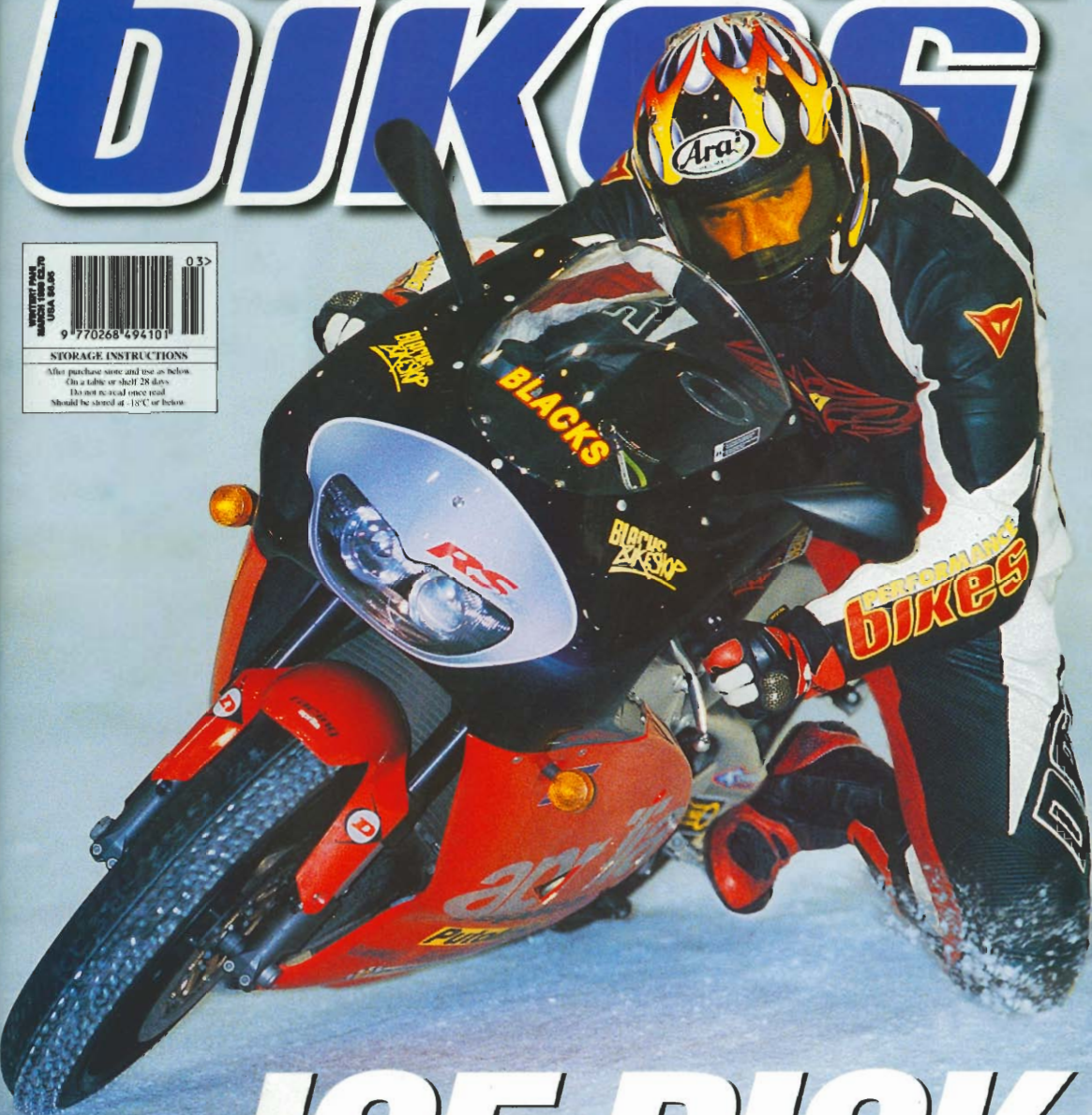
PS

PERFORMANCE BIKES



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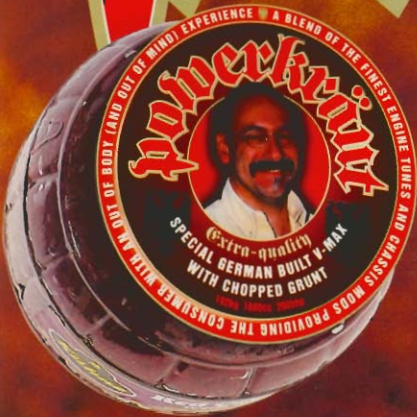


ICE PICK

CREAM OF '99 ON TEST — Priller RS250, RSV, Yam R1, R6, Fazer, Tri 955i and Honda VFR8

ROB MAC ❄️ 200bhp V-Max ❄️ V ROSSI ❄️ SV650 ❄️ HOW TO GO RACING ❄️ USED YZF

POWER



This is a **200bhp, 1680cc**,
tuned-to-hilt V-Max. And if that's not
enough, it's in a bad mood...
...and damn ugly with it

As I stand in the growing warmth of a Provençal sunrise under cloudless sapphire skies, surrounded on all sides by vertiginous limestone outcrops and the lush, pine-swept slopes of the Montagne Du Luberon national park, I poo my pants.

Despite the intense, still beauty of the countryside, I'm so wracked with nerves I feel sick, my insides are a fist-tight knot of angst and my hands tremble uncontrollably as I spark up my tenth Marlboro in as many minutes...

Before me, rising out of the road like a prehistoric monolith, stands the nemesis of my sorely abused M&S boxers. This Gothic chunk of engineering is so menacingly black, light seems to slide off it and fall into the pools of shadow at its wheels. I half expect to see a band of hooded druids slaughtering a naked virgin in ritual sacrifice on its seat.

I examine my fear. Maybe it has something to do with the worth of the bike – the owner, a man called Herbert Kainzinger (of whom more later), has spent two years building it, sunk countless thousands of Deutschmarks (for it and he are German) into it and has only just finished rebuilding the thing after it viciously disembowelled a careless Italian journalist at Misano.

The 'it' in question is a one-off, handbuilt, titanium and carbon-infested 200bhp, 1680cc V-Max in a seriously modified frame with WP forks, Techno Flex twin shocks and PVM wheels and brakes which – it's rumoured – snacks on babies' heads and entrails. ▶



Krönit



As with most German-made products, the end result is a solid and reliable thing with a full-on, hinged bottom lip 'tache



Two hunnered horsepower? That's a lot. That's more than an R1; more even than a 500cc Grand Prix bike. And, as for torque, at 6500rpm the Yamaha makes twice that of an R1. And the Max is no lardy-arse biffa – the prolific use of carbon fibre, titanium and junior hacksaw means fully fuelled it weighs the same as a Fireblade.

So not only is this probably the most valuable bike I've ever ridden, it's also the most powerful. Bit of an awesome prospect and enough to send brown shivers running down my leg.

Herbert warms the bike by gently blipping its throttle. The Max bawls loudly – a bank of four, 41mm Keihin flatlides sucks air like a half-drowned man, mixes it with fuel from no less than three accelerator pumps, dumps it on top of big-bore 90mm Cosworth pistons (stock V-Max is 76mm), explodes it, then punches it out of twin Acrapovic pipes as smoke rings, shooting some 30ft through the air. The strange, off-beat V4 pulses do little to calm my nerves. There's no escaping – the time has come to ride this thing.

First impressions are not good. Seat height is tall even for my long limbs because, having provided the Yamaha with top-class suspension and chassis dimensions, ground clearance became a major issue. The only way round it was to tack the bike ten feet into the air, which makes manoeuvres at walking pace a waking

nightmare. The exquisite PVM rearsets don't fold back, so they dig relentlessly into my shins. Steering lock is unhelpfully restricted and the Hyperpro steering damper across the headstock completes the job. Oh, and there's the small matter of more than 60ft-lb of torque delivered just off tickover... this is not a machine you'd enjoy paddling round a slippery car park.

The suspension feels hard and isn't helped by utterly-no-seat-padding-at-all. So far so readers' special... but then since 200bhp home-brewed monster motorbikes aren't an everyday occurrence, maybe I'm just going to have to get used to it.

Feed out the surprisingly light clutch and off we wobble. Herbert is an ex-250cc German National Champ, so he knows how to ride and also knows when someone can't. I'd love to impress him with a monstrous wheelie as I pull off, but I can't do two things at once. Besides,

his words of warning still ring in my ears:

'Last time I let someone ride the V-Force, I told him to be careful about the torque spinning the rear wheel but he didn't listen. He took a corner in second gear when I said he should be in third and the torque sent the bike sideways. He crashed.'

So it's steady away, as the mountainous rumbling beneath me coughs and splutters into action. Christ, this thing tugs like a rutting bull rhino on tickover alone. Come the first bit of straight road and open the taps gingerly...

Er... so where exactly did this corner in front of me come from? I peel my flattened skull off the digital Stack tachometer and look over my shoulder in disbelief at the half-mile straight the Max has just devoured. It doesn't compute. I hardly touched the throttle, I didn't see the scenery rushing past – have I just blacked out? Did I miss something?

I turn the bike round and try again, just to check. Same result. One second I'm sat, ready to



powerkrant



V-FORCE

ENGINE

1680cc V-Max, 90mm Cosworth pistons, Pankl titanium rods, aluminium liners with nickel/ceramic Apticote 2000, lightened & balanced crank, 13.5:1 compression ratio, modified cylinder heads with beryllium copper valve seats (32.5mm inlet, 27mm outlet), new valve guides, one-off modified camchain adjusters, titanium valve spring retainers, reprofiled cams, undercut gears, stock clutch with ally plates, lightened flywheel, chain drive conversion, Keihin 41mm flatlides with three accelerator pumps, one-off carbon fibre airbox with ram-air effect, heavily modified oil system with upgraded oil pump and spray oil-cooling for piston undersides, modified ignition system. One-off stainless 4-2-1 exhaust with 40mm tubes and titanium Akrapovic cans, one-off radiator, modified cooling system.

CHASSIS

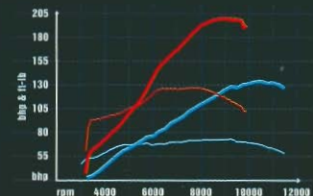
V-max frame stiffened all over with new steering head (500GP-style exchangeable inserts, 23-25° rake, 90-102mm trail) CNC billet yokes, one-off ally swingarm, ally subframe. Fully adjustable 45mm WP usd forks with modded internals, fully adjustable one-off Technoflex twin shocks with separate high/low speed damping adjustment, PVM mag wheels front & rear, PVM brakes (front: 6-pot calipers, 320mm discs. Rear: 4-pot, 220mm). Dry weight: 192kg. Wheelbase: 1420mm.

GITS

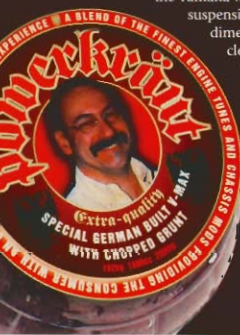
STACK ST800 tachometer with LCD speed, coolant temp, oil temp & pressure, and neutral light. Quickshift electric gearchange, one-off carbon fibre fairing and bodywork including gas tank cover. All axes, bolts & fasteners made from titanium.

Power & Torque

- V-Force 200.7bhp @ 9000rpm
- V-Force 127.2ft-lb @ 7700rpm
- R1 134.1bhp @ 10,500rpm
- R1 73.0ft-lb @ 6250rpm



Not much we can add that would soothe your aching head *from taking in the enormity of these dramatic figures...* so we won't. Goodnight



It's all very well getting a massively potent engine to work in a massively potent chassis, but after that you need a massively potent rider. Massive is easy - eat loads of pies. But potent? Hmm...

accelerate, the next I'm at the place I was looking at with no memory of how I got there. I've ridden bikes which've gone fast before, but never one which travelled through space and time.

I wobble back to where Herbert is waiting and tell him I can't test his bike because the bastard thing keeps teleporting around the place instead of moving there. He laughs in my face and tells me that things will get better after a while.

And they do. Words can't convey the sheer, blinding, brain-rotting acceleration 200bhp provides. It's not simply staggering, it's not even alarming - it's just... unreal. Later in the day I find a mile-long straight: the Max wheelies off a bump at over 150mph before clipping an indicated 180mph about halfway along it. It's like bolting a pair of handlebars to the side of an anti-missile missile and being fired into the heart of battle.

But straightline speed isn't the only major consideration - if it was, Herbert could've simply built a 200bhp motor and left it in the stock V-Max chassis. Instead, he changed everything. Why? 'I am a racer and an engineer.'

As well as winning German Nationals, Herbert has managed a Grand Prix team or two and now runs his own business tuning bikes for road and track, a German equivalent of our Tony Scott, or TTS. 'I've spent my life riding and working with bikes which are light, handle, make good power and, most importantly, deliver their power in a useable way. Normally I wouldn't look at bikes like the V-Max - they're horrible, with no thought given to making them go round corners.

'But a friend of mine kept pestering me to ride his V-Max, so I did. And I was surprised. Here, I thought, was potential. So I set about building the bike the way I actually wanted it to be.'

Which was a massive 200bhp monster?

'No, it's not unusable. It's not a monster. I like to ride it on track days - the guys in the pits on their race bikes look at it and laugh. But they don't laugh so much when it comes underneath them on the track. Not on the straights - in the corners. That's where it's important to have a good chassis as well as the power to go with it.'

It's also important to have a good chassis on frozen, salted French mountain roads. The abundance of torque means the Max will muscle forward in any gear ('I only need two, as a rule - first and top,' says Herbert), but the PVM brakes also mean it squeals its Pirelli Dragon Corsa to a halt at a flick of the lever. Meanwhile, the stiff suspension (the way Herbert likes it on a dry, hot track with slicks on) is made worse by barely enough air temperature to lift the damping oil's viscosity above treacle. I lost count of the number of times I lost traction - mostly at the interface between my arse and the seat, but occasionally, and more critically, between rear wheel and tarmac.

If spinning the rear coming out of corners isn't worrying enough, looping the Max is an ever-present concern. Too much power to hoist a monster sounds odd, but it's true. First gear is a definite no-no, but second and third are as bad because the Max is rapidly approaching 120mph, with more than enough poke left to flip itself.

Bottom line: it takes time to come to terms with this much power. When you've just got off a 600 and have a go on an R1, you're looking at 40bhp more to play with. Now get off the R1 and onto the Max and you're talking about another 60bhp again... given a bit of space, you could have some serious fun. Given a day, the fun goes out the window and you're left with just plain serious.

Simon Hargreaves