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STREETLIFE

TRIUMPH'S NEW NAKED MIDDLEWEIGHT CONTENDER

FEATURE: VYRUS 985 C3 4V – A DAY IN THE LIFE – GOODWOOD

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Established 1962



TRIUMPH STREET TRIPLE 675

The Street Triple is based on the same platform as the Daytona 675, and that's no bad thing.

Not content with beating up the Japanese 600 fours in the Supersport category, with its 675 Daytona triple, Triumph is now aiming for total supremacy among middleweight sportbikes with the launch of the new Street Triple. MSL tried it out.

WORDS: ALAN CATHCART

PICS: GOLD & GOOSE

Based on the same platform as the Daytona 675, the Street Triple is not only well-priced compared to its Italian V-twin and four-cylinder Japanese competition, it's also worthy of Triumph's favourite adjective in describing its range of models. For the Street Triple is once again literally incomparable, as the chance to spend a day aboard it around the Dolomite Mountains north of Italy's scenic Lake Garda amply proved.

It's incomparable, as really there's nothing else in the marketplace quite like Triumph's new naked streetbike – well, except its more muscular but also bigger and heavier Speed Triple 1050 big brother,

on which the smaller-capacity entry-level streetrod is so clearly based.

"We knew from the very start of the Daytona 675 project that we'd follow the Supersport bike with a streetfighter project," says Triumph's Product Development boss Simon Warburton. "So the design team made sure the bike would look just as good with its kit off as it does fully dressed!" That's why all the tabs to mount the Daytona's bodywork are located on the inside of the twin-beam cast aluminium frame, for a clean look in Naked form.

It's essentially the same game plan with the dohc, 675cc, liquid-cooled, three-

The Street Triple follows in its sportbike sister's tyre tracks in reinventing the way we think about middleweight naked bikes.

SPECS> TRIUMPH STREET TRIPLE

ENGINE: 675cc, liquid-cooled, DOHC, in-line triple

MAXIMUM POWER: 107bhp @ 11,700rpm

MAXIMUM TORQUE: 51ft-lb @ 9100rpm

GEARBOX: Six-speed

FINAL DRIVE: Chain

FRAME: Aluminium beam twin spar

SUSPENSION: FRONT: Kayaba, 41mm upside down forks REAR: Braced, twin-sided, aluminium alloy swingarm, Kayaba, monoshock

BRAKES: FRONT: Twin 308mm floating discs. Nissin two piston calipers REAR: Single 220mm disc. Nissin single piston caliper

TYRES: FRONT: 120/70-17 REAR: 180/55-17

SEAT HEIGHT: 800mm

WHEELBASE: 1395mm

DRY WEIGHT: 167kg

FUEL CAPACITY: 17.4 litres

PRICE: TBC

CONTACT: 01455 251700 www.triumph.co.uk

FIRST GLANCE RATING>

LOOKS	★★★★★
PRACTICALITY	★★★★★
PERFORMANCE	★★★★★
VALUE	★★★★★
OVERALL	★★★★★

ALSO THIS MONTH> ITALJET GRIFON 650 VESPA GTV 250

cylinder engine. It has oil and water pumps packaged within the castings to remove unsightly pipe work and wiring. It seems a pity, however, that by painting the engine black, Triumph has reduced the visual impact of what is a handsome looking motor, here transplanted to streetfighter use in almost exactly the same mechanical guise as the Daytona. The only change is a revised Euro 3-compliant exhaust system with twin cans exiting under the seat, and a softer pair of camshafts, plus revised mapping for the closed-loop Keihin EFI.

Together, this results in a broader spread of power with fatter midrange and



low-rpm performance compared to its Supersport sister, with a commensurate drop in peak output from the Daytona's 123bhp to 108bhp at 11,700rpm. The revlimiter is also lowered to 12,650rpm in a bike scaling a claimed 167kg – 2kg heavier than the Daytona, but by some way the lightest in the middleweight streetfighter category.

That power output also places the new Triumph right at the top of the class in the performance stakes. Even ahead of the bigger-engined (but much heavier) Kawasaki Z750 – an edge confirmed by the way the Street Triple powered up the steep, tortuous, 17.3km public roads Trento-Bondone hillclimb north of Triumph's Riva del Garda base.

The 2007 edition of this historic race from the valley floor up to the summit of 1357m Monte Bondone, first run in 1925 with just 18 motorcycles and 11 cars, had been held just days before our ride. The way the new Triumph powered up the hill demonstrated its improbable punch for such a relatively small engine. It has an ultra-flat torque curve producing 51ft-lb of grunt, which means you can hold third gear for long stretches, occasionally dropping to second for drive out of the steeper turns, or switching into fourth for a faster section.

In Street Triple guise, what was already one of the great modern motorcycle engines of our time has been cleverly adapted to an even more practical yet no less invigorating everyday form. In spite of the mile-wide power band, it offers the constant temptation to work the smooth-action gearbox just a little more than really necessary, so as to revel in the glorious muted howl of the triple motor.

For those with a penchant for noise, Triumph also offers a pair of optional Arrow exhausts as part of its extensive dedicated aftermarket catalogue for the Street Triple, one Euro 3-compliant but the

other just for track day use. The catalogue also includes a wide range of bolt-on goodies, including a passenger grab-rail, gel seat, magnetic tank bag, bellypan, instrument cowl, deflector screen, assorted clothing, etc. Really, what Triumph has done here is to pitch a low entry price in terms of the new model's performance and allure, to get people on a bike which they can then personalise via the aftermarket, just as Yamaha did with its TRX850 sportbike twin a decade ago.

However, don't get the idea – as I'll soon up to thinking before I rode the Street Triple – that what Triumph has done here is to produce a stripped-out budgetbike requiring money spent on it to bring it up to scratch. I mean, the same 308mm twin Sunstar front discs as the sportbike are just gripped by conventional twin-piston Nissin brake calipers, not the Daytona's radial four-pot stoppers – right? And the 41mm Kayaba upside-down forks are completely non-adjustable, plus the rear shock from the same company is adjustable only for preload and nothing else. All a bit low rent, what?

Above: Made to be nude; tabs to mount the Daytona's bodywork are located on the inside of the twin-beam cast aluminium frame, for a clean look in naked form.

Below: Braced, twin-sided, aluminium alloy swingarm and Kayaba monoshock offer fantastic ride quality and control.



**CLOSEST RIVAL >
KAWASAKI Z650**


Keeping the 750 class alive is this new offering from Kawasaki. Ultra aggressive, up-to-the-minute looks sit in stark contrast to the Kwak's user-friendly motor, handling and comfort.

It's a marked improvement over the first generation factory street fighter and offers a comfortable, practical way to get around. In-line four motor puts out 105bhp, and is tuned to be forgiving and have plenty of grunt low-down.

Handling and suspension is a huge improvement over the predecessor and the brakes are well set up for real road conditions. Everything else just works really.

A good package at a reasonable price too – £5445.

**Above right:
On the
twisties, the
Triple is hard
to fault,
thanks to a
superb
suspension
and chassis
set-up.**

In truth, the Street Triple's suspension settings were hard to fault, even for riders of widely differing weights. Even under heavy downhill braking the forks didn't bottom out, in spite of the extreme weight transfer delivered. Same thing at the other side of the turn, where you could crack the light-action throttle hard open while still cranked well over, while riding smoothly over ripples in the road surface.

The nimble handling and responsive steering of the Street Triple impressed not only on the Trento-Bondone European Mountain Championship race course, but also everywhere else on our ride through the Dolomites back to Lake Garda.

The riding position is fantastic – this is a bike you can sling a leg over for a short run to the shops or a longer one cross-country, and you immediately feel at home, again irrespective of your height. The flat, pulled-back one-piece handlebar fulfils in spades the old cliché about the controls 'falling to hand', with a four-way adjustable brake lever but not for the cable clutch. This does, however, have a very light action, combining with the flawless engine mapping and ideal low-rpm response to make this a very easy bike to ride in town.

The 17.4-litre fuel tank (same as the Daytona's) delivered a hard-riden 130

mile range, and is monitored by the compact dash that's also a transplant from the sportbike. It comes complete with analogue tacho and digital speedometer with so-useful gear selected monitor, which can be scrolled through to display a multitude of readings such as a 99-lap timer, maximum speed, engine temp, fuel consumption, average speed etc etc. It also has seven shifter lights which are adjustable in setting mounted on the right of the tacho. Lots to keep you occupied.

My only slight criticism of the rider packaging is that this time around, with the lower 800mm seat height, I couldn't put my toes on the quite high, rearset footrests (again, same as the Daytona's) for turns, plus towards the end of the day my knees started to stiffen up through being too cramped. I think Triumph should offer a point of sale higher seat option for taller Street Triple rider, restoring the same 825mm-high stance as the Daytona 675.

As it is, the Street Triple seems incredibly low slung and manoeuvrable, with great steering lock for city streets; totally chuckable, yet with completely predictable fast-steering. This is a bike that'll give novice riders confidence, and make more expert ones feel king (or queen) of the road. This is a fast, friendly but forgiving motorcycle.

One that with a slightly taller seat, I'd have been prepared to head for Austria and points north on, and keep on riding rather than return to Triumph's lakeside base at the end of a thoroughly diverting day.

In spite of the minimalist styling and wider, taller handlebar, the 140mph Street Triple is a perfectly capable mileeater, happy to sit at 100mph for long stretches with the engine just two-thirds of the way to redline and without feeling too blown about – the optional wind deflector does cut down the windblast. Quite apart from the sharper looks it offers, I'd say that should be top of the list for any ST customer simply as a dynamic aid – it does work. With that fitted, the new naked Triumph would be a practicable weekend touring bike – just make sure there are some twisties along the way or at the end of your route to allow the ST to let its hair down.

The Street Triple follows in its sportbike sister's tyre tracks in reinventing the way we think about middleweight naked bikes. It sets a new benchmark for the category – and I'm certain this will be born out in direct comparison testing with the competition... and that's not just the Union Jack on my helmet waving – it's a fact.

Final word on the Street, then?

Incomparable. Again.

MSL





PETERBOROUGH

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Sex Appeal.



New Street Triple. Let's get naked.

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