



2403 MILES

THE GLOVES ARE OFF

With the first service done, James is getting to grips with the Ninja 650

KAWASAKI NINJA 650

Price £6549
Fuel 15 litres @ 49mpg = 163 mile range
Weight 193kg Seat 790mm
Power 67bhp Torque 49ftlb



JAMES ARCHIBALD
Big miles rider who enjoys being on a bike whatever the weather
Height 5ft 11in
Weight 80kg

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After a week of gentle riding, the Ninja 650 reached its first service interval, and with the bike checked over and the oil and filter changed, it was time for some proper fun.

The 650 is proving to be a great machine. And, while it won't give you the performance or specification of a full-on sportsbike, I'm finding it more than enough for everyday riding with plenty left in reserve for some decent thrills on the backroads.

I decided to take a blast over to Donington via the excellent A6006 for the opening MCE British Superbike races. The weather was glorious and the roads empty enough to encourage a heavy-handed approach to the throttle. Perfect.

I found the suspension a little wallowy, especially when pressing on. The lack of adjustment on the forks and the simple-but-awkward-to-get-to, preload-adjustable rear shock highlight the Kawasaki's budget attitude.

It's to be expected and certainly doesn't detract from what is a very capable bike. For city riding and my commute, it's perfectly adequate and doesn't feel like a bike that costs just £6.5k. It still feels better than the suspension on some more expensive machines.

One area that highlights the cost saving most though is the Dunlop Sportmax D214 rubber that come as standard on the Ninja. The tyres really don't suit the machine very well at all, giving poor feedback on dry days and even less when riding in the wet.

To see if I could improve matters, I've replaced them with a set of Metzeler Roadtec 01s (£261.75) and

'The Ninja 650 is delivering plenty of reasons to get out and just ride'

they've completely transformed the handling. The Kawasaki is more agile and responsive, and there's so much more feedback in the wet too. It's definitely something I'd recommend, especially if the bike is used for commuting every day through all sorts of weather conditions.

The Ninja 650 is delivering plenty of reasons to get out and just ride, and it's made me properly excited for the summer and MCN's #ride5000miles target.

NEXT STEPS

Get on the dyno
I want to see if there are any power gains to be had on the Ninja, I'll start with a baseline figure and work from there
Do a trackday
They're raced in Mini Twins, but will the 650 cope in stock trim?
Fit some luggage
For those summer camping trips



First service done and ready to rock

Loud & proud

MCN's Project Harley edges closer to becoming a flat-track racer with stunning GFMoto system

2016 HARLEY-DAVIDSON STREET 750

Price £5995 Weight 223kg
Seat 710mm Power 52bhp
Torque 43ftlb

MCN PROJECT BIKE

With less than a month to the Carole Nash MCN Festival of Motorcycling (May 13-14, www.mcnfestival.com), our project Harley Street 750 is

transforming from budget cruiser to flat-track Hooligan. Now stripped of all non-essential parts like front brake, lights and bodywork, and also heavy and lean-limiting stuff like the exhaust, it was time to give it some pukka race-inspired componentry in the form of a custom high-level system courtesy of performance pipe supremos, GFMoto.

Based in the UK's 'Motorsport Valley' in Buckinghamshire, GFMoto (www.gfmoto.com) are a subsidiary of GoodFabs Ltd, a company

who made a name for themselves creating bespoke exhausts for F1 and NASCAR teams in glorious metals such as Inconel. Now, after 35 years in the business they've decided to expand into motorcycle exhausts, by producing stunning headers for BMW's S1000RR and the Honda Africa Twin, with plans to branch out to more models. But not before they've taken on their biggest challenge yet: a bespoke system for our Harley. Here's how they did it...

UPDATE TWO

'With non-essential parts gone it was time for pukka race components'

HOW IT'S DONE



Step 1 Starting with a pair of GFMoto S1000RR end cans, fabricator Geoff Rayner works out where to put the collector – the part that takes converts the two pipes into one, then back into the two end cans.



Step 2 Geoff then expertly tig welds the collector unit then works out how much pipe he needs to reach the cylinders. As weight is not as much of a consideration, he's working in T304 stainless steel.



Step 3 Reaching the front cylinder is straight forward, so Geoff bends the first primary so it runs under the air filter whilst also allowing access to the oil filler cap, and keeping in mind the need for ground clearance.



Step 4 We have smaller air filter coming but we don't know the size yet so Geoff used his 21 years of experience to create this stunning looped design from the collector to the rear cylinder.



Step 5 A Harley owner himself, Geoff and the entire team at GFMoto – which includes another seven bikers – are pleased with the finished system, which is the first of its kind to feature the firm's new end cans.



If it's precision welding you want, Geoff's your man

CIRCUIT BREAKER

The electric Eva's straight line performance claims are put to the test at Bruntingthorpe

ENERGICA EVA

Price £27,999
Fuel n/a Weight 296kg
Seat 795mm Power 75kW/95bhp
Torque 125ftlb



EMMA FRANKLIN
125GP racer with a love of sports and performance
Height 5ft 7in
Weight 60kg

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Before we get stuck into a summer of commuting and touring on our electric streetfighter, we decided it would be a good idea to test the outright performance of the Energica Eva against what its Italian manufacturers claim.

The 11kW produced by the Eva's Permanent Magnet oil-cooled AC motor equates to around 95bhp, which puts it into a similar horsepower category as a naked middleweight like a Honda CB650F. However, with 125ftlb of torque the Eva has the engine pick-up of bikes like Ducati's Panigale and Triumph's Rocket III. So, what do these figures mean for its straight-line performance? We took it to our Bruntingthorpe test track to find out.

The Eva has four riding modes – Sport, Eco, Urban and Rain – and the most power and performance is released in the Sport, at the cost of battery range. Although, in our excitement to get going, we forgot to change the Eva's mode from Eco, so we were a little disappointed when we found we were limited to a top speed of just 52mph.

Realising the error of our ways, we used the left-hand trigger switch on the handlebars to scroll through the options and selected Sport, to unleash the Eva's full potential. Then MCN speed tester Bruce Dunn lined up the electric machine at the start of Bruntingthorpe's two-mile runway and let it rip. The Eva whirred away down into the distance, sounding very much like a weird futuristic fighter jet.

Downloading the data we found that the Eva reached a GPS-verified speed of 120mph – so that's 11mph shy of the Honda CB650F's top speed, which will be down to the fact that the Eva's giving away an extra 88kg over the Honda. The two bikes' quarter-mile times are similar too, with the Eva posting a respectable 12.99-second standing quarter mile, just 0.7s slower than the CB650F.

In terms of braking, the

'The Eva whirred down the runway like a futuristic jet fighter'

heavyweight Eva does a decent job considering its mass. The ABS-assisted Brembos haul the bike up from 70mph to zero in 3.6 seconds in a distance of 54 metres – astonishingly that's better than the brand new 92kg lighter Suzuki GSX-R1000R.



'Keep scrolling, that's it, Sport!'

679 MILES



No petrol was burned during the making of this speed test