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FULL TEST 1995 CBR600

WE RIDE

**BMW K1100LT
HUSKY 610
SUPER XR250
APRILIA RS250**



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STOP MEETING WORK

magnitude how can the brand do anything but succeed!

In contrast, the well-finished Kawasaki with its attractive Luminous Peacock Blue paintwork barely attracted a second glance. Just another Japanese bike perhaps? Styling is certainly fairly anonymous...

The Yamaha? Well the green paintwork's a hit with the general public and the finish is typically Japanese (ie efficient and consistent), but there's no escaping it's built to a price — and occasionally looks it...

CITY SLICKER

The beauty of these sports-tourers (and sports-tourers in general) is that they're pretty good at a lot of things. As part of the usual stay at *Motorcycle News* they seem to get subjected to most of them too.

The XJ's handling hiccup aside, the GPZ shines as the pick when it comes time for commuting. Once aboard the Kwaka it has a

ON SECOND THOUGHTS...

After having the good fortune to sample Triumph's lovely Speed Triple recently, it was with eager anticipation I paired up with the Trophy. After two false neutrals between Horror HQ and the first set of lights on the way home, the romance was fading slightly, and after our day in the hills I was looking for a divorce lawyer.

There's no shortage of grunt, it's just a paunch problem.

The Trophy seems to hold its weight around its throat. Point it at a long sweeper and it takes considerable body language to convince it to lean sufficiently and once that's achieved you better have got the line right — big adjustments are not on.

The Yamaha makes no false promises. It's a case of what you see is what you get. It does everything fairly well and resides in a market niche designed to beat the budget blues. After all, the GPZ is nearly \$1400 dearer and the Triumph is a whopping \$4750 more!

The GPZ took this one hands down for me — with its sweet donk, lively stance

and neutral handling, Kawasaki Motors Australia would be copping my cheque. *Greg Leech*

Being a sports-touring motorcycle must be a real drag. Think about it — while your fitter race-rep counterparts are poncing about on their favourite swerves, you're usually overloaded with everything but your master's kitchen sink. Forced to endure endless miles of all manner of highway drudgery, you're then expected to look like a million bucks first thing in the morning... And then they demand you be the life of the party when you finally do hit the fast-lane.

Well, by my reckoning the go-everywhere-do-everything-and-carry-luggage brigade now has another worthy member. CBR1000s and FJ1200s stand up and take note — Mr K's new sports-tourer does all of the above, as well as provide uncannily good low-speed manners, a seamlessly torquey yet highly user-friendly engine-room, and a damn reasonable price tag.

Its opposition in this case just isn't in the race: the over-priced Trophy does little to inspire, and Yamaha's well-priced jack-of-all-trades simply isn't in the same league.

Marlon Pettendy

Sellout Success

It says something about them that every time we need a bike to cart a lot of gear and/or people a K11 seems to get the nod. It's not that other bikes can't move a mountain of cameras et al, it's just that not many can do so and still arrive at the other end of our ride in the same time zone as the (often) quick equipment it's accompanying...

These days we don't even ask photographer Watts what he wants to use as his 'chase' bike.

The latest 1995-model K1100 LT SE accompanied our sports-touring trio on our recent day out of the office and, of course, it was business as usual in K-bike land.

Not only did a certain T. Watts cart his usual \$25K worth of Nikon camera gear, but he also managed to supply us with drinks and food on call and then

absorbed acres of clothing shed by the Horror boys as the temperatures increased and the humidity rose to tropical proportions.

Speaking of proportions, so is the luggage capacity of the big Beamer.

EVEN MORE GOODIES

For 1995, the LT and its LT-SE partner are essentially unchanged — but they get a few extra goodies.

The SE was launched in 1994 to celebrate 10 years of K-bike production and as such was a specially numbered — as well as equipped — machine. For 1995, the 'numbers' are gone but the extra equipment over and above the already loaded K1100LT basically remains.

What's changed for 1995 is the adoption of the LT-SE's 'saddle'-style seat and standard equipment pannier and topbox inner-bags across the entire LT and LT-SE range.

The actual equipment levels for the 1995 model year are just a little confusing, however. A brief run-down of some of the features on the 'standard' LT includes: ABS II anti-lock brakes, electric screen,

heated handgrips, panniers, topbox and a two-speaker AM/FM cassette.

To this the 1995 LT-SE adds a set of rear speakers and backrest to the topbox, unique instrument graphics, special Navarra Violet Metallic paintwork and a colour-matched seat. Got all that? I'll be asking questions later...

Mechanically, the SEs are the same as the 1994 models. We've tested the K1100LT (in standard and SE variants) a couple of times in the past so I won't go into too many details. Check out Vol 42 No 4 and Vol 44 No 1 for more details.

Nonetheless, a thumbnail sketch of the running gear sees the LT(SE) powered by the same 16-valve 1092cc 'laid-down' in-line four-cylinder we've grown to know and love. Producing a 'green' 100ps (at 7500rpm) delivered via a five-speed gearbox and Paralever shaft final drive, the engine's emphasis is on torque — the 10.0kg-m-plus peak of which occurs at a lazy 5500rpm.

Frame and running gear are fairly conventional too. Three-spoke alloy wheels wear premium Metzeler rubber and triple discs — with four-piston Brembo callipers up front — provide the stopping power.

AN OLD FRIEND

If you get the impression that we're fairly comfortable around the LT, then you're right. I guess, it's because we've had a fair bit to do with them over the last couple of years. The bike has some very strong points.

As mentioned above the powerplant is tuned to its intended use and provides fuss-free performance in all sorts of going.

It's an engine that in its K100 guise got a reputation as a buzzard and to a certain extent that feeling has carried over in the 1100cc version. It's never a problem comfort-wise — rubber-mounted footpegs and handlebars make short work of any remaining buzzing that may try to make it to the rider — but I do



smaller feel than the other two machines and even seems appreciably more compact than its ZZ-R stablemate.

Fit the optional panniers to any of the bikes however and you've got an instant interstate express. Magazine commitments precluded us from doing a long (800km-plus) run on these three machines, but after a full day in the saddle everybody seemed none the worse for wear.

On the subject of panniers, Kawasaki's units — made by Givi — offer reasonable capacity and thanks to the GPZ's fairly narrow hindquarters you don't end up with a bike that needs a full lane to itself.

Triumph and Yamaha also offer optional panniers. In the case of the former they are units similar to the Kwaka's while Yamaha sources its luggage (in two sizes: big and huge) from Krauser.

A NON-COMPARO COMPARO

If you get the impression that this non-comparo comparo is going the way of the Kawasaki then I guess you're right.

The initial impressions we gained at the bike's release had us comparing it to Honda's CBR1000F (\$13,900). That's probably still its closest competition, but riding it with the Triumph and Yamaha was well worthwhile.

So where does the GPZ end up in the sports-touring scheme of things? Well, for a start it's excellent value for money, undercutting the CBR, Suzuki's \$14,249 RF900R and many of the current sports-

find myself looking for a sixth gear on the K11s (both RS and LT) because of this business.

If there's any criticism of rider accommodations on the LTs, it's that the fairing is a little too good. On hot days, it can become fairly tropical behind that barndoar.

The electric screen is no gimmick — you can adjust from full coverage to low-profile fang modes with the touch of a finger. But, even in its lowest position airflow is limited to the cockpit.

On the other side of the coin, this coverage provides enough protection to keep you warm and dry despite the best Mother Nature can throw at you. I know, after riding through eight hours of near-constant torrential rain LT-mounted on one occasion last year, the good lady wife and I emerged amazingly and.

MORE OOMPH NEEDED

The LT(SE)'s conventional Marzocchi forks and Showa rear shock provide a boulevard-style ride which makes for magic carpet ride freeway manners — one or two-up. Downgrade the quality of the road however, and even lightly loaded the Beemer can bottom without too much provocation.

This was noticeable even on suburban streets where pot-holes can cause the LT to bottom hard enough to shut down the radio-cassette.

There's seven-position preload and infinitely adjustable rebound damping available at the rear, but without getting your hands dirty the forks are 'what you see is what you get.'

At around 22kg heavier than the RS (at 290kg unladen with a full tank, according to BMW) the LT's no sportbike (nor should it be) but to be honest I can't remember earlier K1100LTs being as soft. If you'll excuse the pun I firmly believe the bike would be an even better package Down Under with some more oomph in the underpinnings.

One aspect of this particular machine that was



touring favourites. For all the prestige associated with the reborn British marque it's pretty hard to justify the Triumph's \$16,750 pricetag when you ride it in company of GPZ.

Secondly, it offers a balance of performance and handling to satisfy all but the most committed powerhounds. As an overall package only ZZ-R11s and the big-bore sportsbikes are really going to show it up.

much improved though was its in-flight entertainment. When the lovely Miss Leonie and my good self took a 1994 SE to last year's Readies Rally, there were problems with the radio-cassette's speaker package, but no such dramas this time. Jim Maxwell's history of Australia vs West Indian cricket was as clear as a bell.

MULTI-PURPOSE TURNKEY

The LT(SE)'s a bike that has fared well in the AMCN Motorcycle of the Year awards, and for the last two years has taken off the top tourer gong.

The fact that you can remove the colour-matched BMW panniers and topbox, add to the versatility of the bike. Unlike the other full-dress turnkey tourers, Honda's GL1500 Gold Wing (\$25,500) and Harley

Is it better than the CBR1000F? Well, the short answer to the \$64,000 question is that I don't know. The Honda's got an extremely strong following Down Under — a reputation that's been well and truly earned with the sort of attributes the GPZ shows. Come to think of it, a GPZ-CBR comparo sounds like another excellent excuse for a day or two out of the office...

Mike Sinclair
Photos: Tony Watts

Electra Glide Ultra Classic (\$26,500), the K1100 is a bike that you could conceivably ride every day of the week.

Those extra days of use — be them in town or in the hills — mean that ultimately you're getting extra value from the machine.

At \$23,750 the 1995 LT-SE is an expensive motorcycle viewed in isolation. Nonetheless, as BMW's best-selling K-bike (it's actually only beaten in regos by the R1100RS), so there are obviously plenty of people eager to hand over the readies.

If you're quick your local BMW dealer may well be able to supply you a 1994 LT, but '94 SEs are definitely all gone. I guess that means you had better get in quick if you want a 1995 model...

Mike Sinclair

