

# REVIEW - BUELL CITYX XB9SX

## REVIEW BY WILLIAM MORRIS

Thanks again to Matthew and Max from Harley-Davidson Durban who have offered up another Buell for review. The first was the multi-terrain, multi-capable Ulysses (see September edition); this now is the urban focused CityX (pronounced "city cross").

**FIRST IMPRESSION** - The extremely compact dimension of the Lightning blew me away! This bike looks like it will be easy to manhandle and ride aggressively because of its stature, and indeed it is easy, in fact the Lightning's behaviour elicits assertiveness. Unique to the rest of the motorcycle world is the eye-catching hero blue



translucid flyscreen and airbox cover (would be the petrol tank, but fuel is held in the frame to improve mass centralization) allowing you to see some of the inner workings of this truly naked bike. One useful accessory is the rubber X-guard on the airbox cover that, as well as looking the biz, protects the tank from scratches when carrying some extra gear in a tank bag.

**CONTROLS AND GADGETS** - Consistent with all Buells, the CityX is certainly a no-frills setup in the controls department. Forget the extras, the CityX strips itself bare of the nonessentials, and rightly so I believe, for it would seem out of place on a Buell to include them. This bike is about "focus on the road ahead", little else; although to be honest, an upgrade to more modern styled controls (lights, indicators, horn, etc.) wouldn't hurt its image.

**PERFORMANCE** - The revvy 984 cc air/oil/fan cooled, fuel-injected 45° V-Twin is a perky muscle block suited to dodging cars and darting through traffic with agility and might. 86Nm of torque give it the best torque-to-weight ratio in its class. This "muscle to the ground" power instigates the sort of aggressive in-town riding that requires a great deal of concentration to perform safely, but offers a great deal of satisfaction in return.

**SUSPENSION & HANDLING** - The CityX feels so small and reactive; it really is the ultimate play-bike for stunting and messing about. An ultra-short 1321mm wheelbase, 21-degree fork angle (rake) and 85mm of trail gives the Lightning razor-sharp reflexes. (FYI – Rake is the angle of the fork away from vertical toward the rider. Trail is the distance on the ground between a vertical line dropped straight down from the center of the wheel and a projection of the fork extended until it touches the ground. As the rake increases, the trail increases. The more rake, the more stable the handling – the less rake, the sharper the handling.) Feedback is super consistent through corners thanks to a couple things that work together: firstly the lightweight and extremely rigid aluminum frame and swingarm keeping wheel alignment rock solid, and secondly, the chunky 43mm inverted Showa front forks which, beyond offering exceptional handling, look extremely serious!

**COMFORT** - Grasping the wide supermotard-inspired handlebars promotes an aggressive squared off look to elbows and shoulders. Add to this a stress-free-on-the-wrists upright seating position and the rider is in a physical pose seething with menace and attitude. The pillion seat cuts the apparent bike dimensions short by removing the usual plastics around the seat. This furthers the look of extreme dimensions, making the seat appear almost ornamental, not likely offering a decent position. But appearances are deceiving: the pillion rider's opinion was that she found it surprisingly adequate, and the overall ride silky, due to smooth throttle response and lack of engine vibration.

**OVERALL RATING** - The XB9SX is competitively priced as an entry into the hotly contested open-class naked-bike market, but price is about the only thing comparable to its rivals. Handling and power response is vastly unlike other options out there. It is just something you have to experience for yourself to fathom.

## PRICE

R86500.00 including VAT & registration



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