

REVIEW - KTM SUPERDUKE 990

REVIEW BY WILLIAM MORRIS

Alfie Cox is the real deal; he is a legend in the off-road racing world, two wheels and four; so he knows his stuff. He's completely approachable and one of the coolest guys around, a good example for fans and competitors alike. So thanks Alfie – for your time and for the opportunity to test-ride the astounding Superduke.

FIRST IMPRESSION

Riders of the 990 will certainly turn heads; its dramatic looks demand it! The orange color scheme is oh so KTM, and although this model comes in black and titanium as well, the pumpkin-orange theme is present on all three.

The 1438mm wheelbase appears short, almost Buell-like in its aggressive stance. Even resting on the kickstand the “don't mess with me” warning is loud and clear. The splendid little scoop-fairing for the pipes adds to the aggressiveness and finishes things off nicely, however it does limit ground clearance so take it easy when ramping curbs. Radiator shrouds are designed to force more air through the radiator and engine keeping things cool, but beyond the practical – they assist in making the look exciting and different. Mirrors suit the overall package just right with their innovative design. The twin under-seat brushed stainless-steel silencers look mean, their shining chrome covers adding that extra touch of class.

CONTROLS AND GADGETS

The clutch and front brake levers can be adjusted closer to or further away from the handlebars, to suit varying riding styles. The practical colour coordinated clocks look neat and tell all the necessary info.

PERFORMANCE

This is KTM's first real attempt into the fiercely contended world of open-class naked street bikes. To say they came out gun's blazing may be an understatement; the KTM 990 packs one heck of a punch! This is quite possibly the most aggressive thing on two wheels! Acceleration ranges from phenomenal to outright frightening, and is so brutal I actually had to come off the power many times because I literally couldn't hold on any longer. This beast is either on or off. Give a little throttle and surge forward, tap off and, “Who put on the airbrakes?” There just doesn't seem to be an in-between.

SUSPENSION, BRAKES & HANDLING

Brakes are top class Brembo's, front and back, but up-front is where it gets interesting. The 320mm double discs are clamped by 4-piston fixed-calipers with 4 individual pads per disc, all pads easily checked and changed without having to remove the front rim, what a treat!

COMFORT

Tall 855mm seat height and comfortably low front pegs will suit the taller rider. The pillion position is not quite so roomy. I found myself perched there for a couple minutes and it was an identical feel to most superbikes; not sure if I was seated on the cushion or the taillight, and let's not discuss the rear peg elevation – the Superduke is definitely suited for the soloist. Dirt specialists will feel at home as soon as hands find rest on the motocross style Renthal handlebars. For us on-roaders, the tapered aluminum bars feel a little awkward at first, especially at low speeds, but after an hour or so they begin to really fit in with the 990's personality.

OVERALL RATING

Looking for something a little more exclusive that will stand out from the rest? If you've got a decent bit of biking know-how and are in search of more excitement and thrills than the average man can handle, this KTM will surely keep you on your toes!

PRICE

R99,000.00 incl. VAT



Tel: (031) 702 2034, Cell: (072) 297 3638

Unit A, 5 Myrtle Road, Pinetown

www.alfiecox.co.za