

# REVIEW: BMW R1200R

## REVIEW BY HEIN JONKER

We have known for some time that the old R1150R would be the next and last of the big Boxers to benefit from the new 1200 engine. What we did not know was that it would be the first BMW to feature some ground breaking roadbike technology; ASC, TPC, evolved ABS, ESA and EVO Paralever.

Only a small fly screen is available as an option for wind protection. But a full range of luggage accessories are still available if you should choose the R1200R for touring.

You may already understand that the integral ABS and the stability control are the main technological advances for BMW in 2007. First

of all, they (ABS & ASC) have been developed as a safety feature and not a MotoGP-ish track-day feature. In brief, the ASC only works when the integral ABS is fitted and it utilizes the same sensors to determine when the front and rear wheel are moving at different speeds. If the rear wheel starts spinning up, the sensors will pick up the information and cut the engine until traction is regained. BMW has had wet roads, slippery white lines and manhole covers, gravel on the road and winter riding on their mind when developing the system.

The bike itself might look quite similar to the old R1150R but there are many improvements. The bike now steers much better and more positively on the winding roads and when turning on a car park. Balance is almost perfect with the new EVO Paralever and balancing shaft fitted. At the front, a steering damper is fitted to the Telelever to stabilise the bike further when hard on the brakes or over uneven surfaces.

When I first sat on the 800mm tall standard seat it felt comfortable and suitable for a roadster. ESA (electronic suspension adjustment) is available as an extra and will allow you to adjust the suspension either softer or harder by the push of a button. Suspension felt fairly soft on the test bike, but as soon as the R1200R settled into a turn I could apply the throttle hard out of it without any stability concerns.

The new Continental Road Attacks developed specially for BMW are now for the first time fitted to a big Boxer model. The level of grip is very good even without the ASC fitted and when it is time to decelerate the newly developed integral ABS works impeccably. The new ABS system is a big improvement over the system available for the 1150. On the R1200R the ABS feels like conventional brakes when applied for normal use. For emergency stops you still get some feedback through the foot pedal or front brake lever, but particularly for slow speed stop-and-go the new ABS is much better than the old servo assisted system.

Another technological first is the TPC (Tyre pressure control) sensor that is still under development. We are simply talking about a sensor in the wheels that allows you to check tyre pressures on the move.

The engine is the same as in the big R1200RT tourer. Since the R1200R weighs considerably less than the RT it feels strong and powerful enough for all sorts of antics. The power output is 109bhp @7,500 rpm and 115Nm @6,000rpm.

Power delivery is instant and the midrange is very strong. At the same time the R1200R is as smooth as an air/oil cooled Boxer can be. Some vibration inherently makes its way to the handlebar, but as long as you keep both hands on the handlebar there is minimal distortion to the mirrors. The general feel is of a smooth and comfortable package though.

The gear ratios have also been altered slightly from the RT to suit the use of the big naked better when in town. The R1200R also features a new larger oil-cooler placed in front of the engine rather than on both sides of the petrol tank as on the 1150. I admit I wasn't expecting anything special from the new R1200R at all. I thought BMW would just upgrade to the 1200cc engine and move on from there with the same design. The design is not wildly different from the 1150, but still enough to distinguish it as a new BMW. With all the new technological features launched on the R1200R, it suddenly raises the expectations to a higher level. The new integral ABS is brilliant as it works just as well or better than the old servo assisted system, with the improved feel of a conventional set up. And what can I say about the traction control? Exciting news... After experiencing the new R1200R, I can assure you BMW's motto "advance through technology" is full of substance.

**PRICE:** R105,050 without ABS and Heated Grips  
or R113,450 with these options fitted (All incl. VAT)



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