

# REVIEW: Triumph Speed Triple 1050

## REVIEW BY HEIN JONKER

The thing is an absolute hooligan, a social misfit that defied definition. It could leave anything this side of a sport bike for dead at the lights, and few bikes could hang in the twisties.

I am happy to say the latest evolution of the popular naked standard Triumph developing more torque, more peak horsepower, upgraded suspension and better brakes, while undergoing a styling face lift and weight loss program, the new Triumph Speed Triple is ready to rock your world.

As with the previous generations, the heart of soul of the Speed Triple is an inline, double overhead camshaft, water-cooled three-cylinder engine. Producing a claimed 131bhp at 9,250rpm, and a healthy 105Nm of torque at 7,550rpm, the new engine is stronger than last year's model. Gaining this power increase in the time-honoured fashion of bigger displacement, the new 1,050cc engine, up from 955cc, gave me possibly the biggest surprise during my test.

Expecting it to feel a tad lazier, due to the extra displacement, cracking open the throttle had the pistons spinning up so much quicker, dropping the clutch and putting a bunch of horsepower through the gummy 180-section rear tyre, quickly dispatched this notion, as the bike launched at the horizon with an urgency the old model could never hope to match. There is a pleasing guttural rumble when you twist the throttle hard at 3,000 rpm and immediate forward progress; the fuel injected triple pulling like a train all the way to red line. Out on the highway cruising in top gear, 120km/h comes up at just a tad over 4,000 rpm so no need to down shift for most overtaking manoeuvres, as the engine is ready to roll.

The increase in popularity for naked standard class has certainly not been missed by Triumph this speaks volumes about their commitment to this class, as all the previous generation models have used softer-tuned engines sourced from Triumph's Daytona sport bike line.

The new motor has undergone a thorough re-design to achieve the increase in displacement and horsepower. The gearbox also received some attention. This now features a backlash eliminator gear and is responsible for the sweetest shifting Triumph to date. Requiring minimal travel to select the next gear, and giving slick clutch less up shifts, it performed faultlessly throughout out the test, at any rpm, in any gear, with one or two wheels on the ground.

Should you need to, this action is performed with a light two-finger pull on the multi-adjustable brake lever. Sending brake fluid to a pair of four-piston radial callipers biting down on 320mm floating discs, the system is unquestionably the best to be found on a Triumph motorcycle yet.

The five-spoke alloy wheels are new this year, and greatly add to the bikes stunning looks. These are greatly enhanced by the trick looking under tail exhausts that replace the old three-into-one system. Tucked up under the squared off back end, there is a removable license plate bracket for those that want to further clean up the rear of the bike. The signature twin-headlights are retained up front, but the old twin analogue gauges are history: a new high-tech compact display, which features colour coded shift lights replacing it. Going from green to red as the rpm head toward red line they are programmable for the shift point of your choice. The tachometer is still an analogue unit and much easier to read than the small digital numbers on the speedometer display. Perched above the headlights, it is purely minimalist in its design and does nothing to fend off the oncoming breeze.

This is not a problem on the Speed Triple, as the wide, tubular bars sit you straight up in the wind and you take the blast square in the chest and helmet area with little buffeting. For those of you looking for a little more wind protection Triumph has got you covered with a smart looking fly screen available. They also produce a nice assortment of extras, including a rear seat cowl, radiator shroud, belly pan and tank protector. And, if you are interested in a little more aural stimulation and a wee bit of extra power, there are some wonderful sounding mufflers, like this aftermarket ZARD, available as well.

Able to scrub speed and dive into the tightest bends with the greatest of ease, there are going to be some very nervous sport bike riders seeing twin headlights in their mirrors this year. Also able to roll along at a relaxed and law abiding pace in comfort, thanks to the broad seat and upright bars, you could add some soft luggage and quite easily spend all day touring if needed.



**PRICE**  
R98 500.00 Incl. VAT  
(FREE Arai Chaser Helmet)

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