

REVIEW: '09 BMW K1300 R and S



REVIEW BY HEIN JONKER

Life's choices ... Oh how painful!!

The 2008 saw the release of BMW's K1200 successors. The K1300S and R models are even more powerful than before with more power and a reasonable weight.

Now pushing 129kw (175hp) and weighing in at 254kgs, wet, the K1300S is a genuinely sporty(ish) touring bike. According to BMW this incarnation features "Sporting and Dynamic performance with superior comfort" and... if you can believe they use this description "playful and easy handling along with absolute riding stability" at a quarter of a ton it should be pretty stable.

The "R" is the craziest looking of the 2 and is the most powerful naked ever built by BMW. The K1300R puts out 127kw (173Hp) and weighs in at 243kg wet. Basically it is an even more crazy version of the K1200 with more power, more torque, better suspension and braking along with some trickery to remove some of the vibration from the handle bars and more refining of the electronics to improve emissions and safety. The most obvious thing about the "R" is the styling; it is in your face and aggressive, I like it...

The R and S share the same engine, electrics, transmission, final drive and chassis platforms, with only a few variations in their respective specs panels. Of course, the major point of difference remains the fairing on the S, and it also claims a power figure of 175hp, 2hp more than the R. Both produce the same whopping torque of 140Nm at 8250rpm from their liquid-cooled four-cylinder four-stroke engines, which is a 10Nm increase on the 1200.

In the past, I've felt that BMW brakes lacked a bit of initial grunt with ABS, but the company appears to have found an antidote to that one. I guess it's just another level of refinement, a process that BMW is a master at. Both bikes have a new system of switches and manual controls, and there is no longer a separation of the right and left-hand blinker switches. It's all been consolidated into one "international standard" button, while the ASC, ABS and ESA functions are all controlled from one switch, which makes for less dashboard clutter.

Even on the S, the seating position is quite upright, so I couldn't really separate the S or the R for levels of gratification - both offer great feedback and balance. There is also plenty of ground clearance, and the weight feels like it's carried quite low. There's also plenty of legroom, and the seat is quite firm, although not enough to leave your buttocks squealing for mercy.

The K1300s have won me over. Precision engineering, style, performance and looks combine for a winning recipe. Large capacity sport and naked bikes do have an X factor about them, and the R and the S are supreme cases-in-point.

PRICES:

K1300 R @ R153 900.00 - Incl. 14% VAT

K1300 S @ R163 140.00 - Incl. 14% VAT



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