

REVIEW: **Kawasaki Ninja 250R**



REVIEW BY HEIN JONKER

A complete frenzy started among beginning riders when Kawasaki decided to redesign the Ninja 250R. Not a minute to soon and it turned into Kawa's best selling sport bike; the Ninja 250R carries on through 2009 and into 2010 with virtually nothing changed.

Pretty long, low and sleek, the Ninja 250R is built for speed and yet accommodates the rider in a fairly relaxed riding position, although not as relaxed as on the previous generation model. The handlebars are mounted higher than on regular sports models and the seat positioned just enough for prepping up the quarter-liter bike for riders who are just starting out.

You get the same aggressive nose and headlight, the same six-spoke wheels and exhaust. It would have been nice to see

that silencer mounted under the engine both for a lower centre of gravity and a more compact look, but, apparently, they go for the classic, shiny sport bike exhaust most likely because the full fairing didn't allowed that.

First thing first, the 249cc, four-stroke, liquid-cooled, DOHC, parallel twin is built to rev high, sound powerful and, most important, last for decades. All this fed through carburettors and assisted by a six-speed gearbox sounds as the solution for remaining a strong player on the market, but smaller and smaller engines start to get fuel injection and that's also a thing likely to happen in the case of this Kawa.

The chassis remains the same and it will most likely do so on future model years too. Although made out of steel, the frame isn't that heavy and offers proper resistance so it meets the conditions to remain the structure of the Kawasaki Ninja 250R. The suspensions have been inspired by 250R's bigger siblings so we're dealing with a 37mm inverted fork.

With petal-style disc brakes (a single 290mm front and a single 220mm rear one, both working with twin piston callipers), the 2009 Kawasaki Ninja 250R is as well and complete overall equipped as the name says. But another advantage that doesn't come with the name is the standard riding position ensuring that both beginners and experienced riders will easily find their place on the bike and stay there for a pretty long time.

Lately, the entry-level sport bike market is being populated by more than just user-friendly motorcycles, but by motorcycles that blink an eye to their riders long after experience has been gained and that's where the Ninja 250R proved best. Kawasaki proves to have the right recipe and the bike is happily showing it each time it reaches the top speed of 155 km/h (with me on it) relying only on 25 hp and that six-speed gearbox.

Finally, the small Ninja had conformed to the modern requirements of the class and the only prize that Kawa was able to give it was a plant in Thailand.

Still, it didn't lose any of its fans simply because it was related to a consecrated name and reflected that each time a rider would have looked at it. For 2009, things haven't changed so riders get the same sharp looking Ninja with colour schemes to match the aggressive design and line the bike up to bigger models such as the ZX-10R and ZX-6R. Available in colours to match, it sure won't pass unnoticed wherever you ride.

In our humble opinion, the Kawasaki Ninja 250R has followed a natural evolution and it will continue doing so years from now as long as there are enough riders willing to buy it.

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