

REVIEW: '09 Yamaha V-MAX

REVIEW BY HEIN JONKER

Fresh from the factory, just unpacked ... the all new Yamaha V-MAX Power Cruiser!!

Cutting straight to the point, I'm going to answer the question on the tip of everyone's lips. Yes. The VMAX is quicker than a Hayabusa, ZX-14, B-King, K 1200 S and everything else on the street. And yes the VMAX is even quicker than the GSX1620 monster built last year. Make no mistake, this is a wild machine that'll knock your boots off and strain your neck. This is the ultimate in acceleration-induced adrenaline. And stupid fun. Really stupid fun!

The concept of the 2009 VMAX is simple; maximum acceleration and feeling every 'G' of that acceleration. That latter part is important, as the entire project, has been designed tested and built around feeling that acceleration. But this new century V-Max also had to handle and at 310kg wet with 200hp, stopping was also high on the agenda.



Yamaha has achieved the task with flying colours, oops no, the VMAX only comes in black...

On paper the VMAX is intimidating and powerful. Talk of drag strip times has dominated forum discussions all over the world since Yamaha revealed the bike. Unfortunately, no drag strip testing was done or burnouts, so I have no 1/4-mile times.

Throwing a leg over the VMAX for the first time reveals the hefty weight of the machine. Although COG (Centre of Gravity) is kept low and forward, there's no way to hide 310kg, however a low seat helps.

The handlebars are fantastic – solid tapered alloy at a comfy height. Controls are light and fall to hand well and although a bit high the pegs are well placed for me at 185cm. My only initial gripe is that my knees well and truly sit either-side of the big air intakes, about 150mm above the knee cut-outs in the frame rail/seat upper area. Built for those of shorter status I suspect!

The VMAX throttle response is instant. And I mean instant like I've never felt before from a production machine.

The millisecond I snap the throttle open the VMAX slams my butt into the seat hump and hauls forward with huge pace. From 4000rpm the bike starts to pull hard but once the revs swings past 6500rpm the rest of the ride is a blur.

Powering the new VMAX is an all-new 1679cc liquid-cooled four-stroke DOHC 65 degree V4 engine power-plant developing 197hp @ 9000rpm, together with a huge torque output of 166.8Nm @ 6500rpm. OK, so this is no cornering sportsbike. Yes, it understeers off turns when pushed. Yes, it has limited ground clearance and of course it suffers from bump steer. But compare it to any other sports or power cruiser on the market and the VMAX handles like a sportsbike. The braking package is sensational and on par with any sportsbike, the pegs touch down smoothly and the bike is composed throughout cornering, only being upset by bumps mid-turn. Rear rebound is a little quick but the remote adjusters make life very easy.

I've run out of pace and I'm forcing myself to stop here but one last thing ... Apart from the price, this is no bike for "sissies" and as far as the fun factor is concerned, 10 out of 10!

PRICE

R229 000.00 - Incl. 14% VAT



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