

REVIEW: '09 Yamaha YZF-R1

REVIEW BY HEIN JONKER

Let me introduce you to the "Heart attack on 2 Wheels", yes you better come prepared, medical and physical, before you even think of swinging your leg over this bike.

From my past experiences on 2006, 2008 R1s I have never seen such a vast change in performance. Just to give you a taste of what Yamaha has done on the 2009 R1, keep on reading, as for the experience ... well, you will have to ride and feel it for yourself, if you're a man that is.

Yamaha says the new R1's chassis has been extensively revamped, and now offers even better high speed stability and handling. Valentino Rossi had this to say, "This is a great bike. It's very much like my M1 and it's exciting to see so many MotoGP qualities now appearing on a bike for the road. I think everyone who loves the R1 and Yamaha will be very excited about this new version. It's fantastic!"



Yamaha claim the 2009 R1 is the world's first production motorcycle with a crossplane crankshaft. According to a Yamaha press release, "Pioneered in MotoGP racing with the Yamaha M1, crossplane technology puts each crank pin 90 degrees from the next, with an uneven firing interval of 270-180-90-180 degrees. The result is incredibly smooth, roll-on power delivery, with outrageous amounts of torque. Not just new, the R1's new crossplane crank engine represents a complete paradigm shift."

Other useful technology bits are the adjustable power button which changes the engine map between three different settings. Yamaha's D-Mode variable throttle control function enables the rider to adjust performance characteristics to match various riding conditions. There's a standard mode mapped for optimum performance, 'A' mode for sportier response in low- to mid-speed range, and 'B' mode for when it's raining/snowing or when you're riding on greasy, slippery roads.

Also new is a magnesium sub-frame, new projector headlamps with integrated ram air ducts and a stubby new rear tail section housing the all new exhaust system, what an awesome noise. It sounds very much like a V-4 setup with a healthy growl and when you crank it up to the red-line you end up with a smile on your face too big for your helmet.

It will reach 182bhp at 12,500rpm and 115Nm of torque at 10,000rpm, and electronics include Yamaha Chip Control Intake (YCC-I), Yamaha Chip Control Throttle (YCC-T) and D-Mode.

Yip you won't experience the raw power until you flick that switch (not while you're riding) to "A" for "A hell what have I done!" My dear reader, this R1 becomes another bike when you do that, it feels complete if you are riding a 1300 in a 1000 body. Now I've ridden many bikes in the last few years but when I took this boy up the M7 to Pinetown and back to the N2, by the time I came to a stop I felt so exhilarated I wanted to throw-up. There is so much acceleration on the exit of the turns that "popping a wheelie" at lean-angle is inevitable. The obvious choice; switch back to Standard Mode before you kill yourself.

In closing, yes the price is scary, but if you look at all the contributing factors; the weak Rand and all the technology that went into this bike all adds up. There are many other bikes on the market with even bigger price tags, so look at the whole package, then make an educated decision and you'll see what Yamaha really has to offer.

PRICE: R165 000.00 - Incl. 14% VAT



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