

REVIEW: Yamaha XT660Z Tenere



REVIEW BY HEIN JONKER

Time to chill, time to take in some of our country's best scenery right on our doorstep of KZN, and what better way to do it than on a Dual Purpose bike such as the Yamaha XT660Z Tenere. This bike breaks every rule of "you can only go where the road takes you"; nonsense I tell you, make your own way, no limits.

Well fine, everything has its limits, but it just didn't feel like that with this bike. There is no end to the amount of fun you can have on a bike such as this; road or off-road truly satisfying; let's ride!

The first thing I liked about the Tenere, when I picked it up from Perry Yamaha, was that I could look over normal traffic and see what's coming. Yes, I'm all for a bike that has presence on the road and this certainly plays that part

no doubt. After a while I got fed up with traffic and couldn't wait to get to Eston and Mid-Illovo and ride this bike for what it has been built for ... dirt roads, yeah! Yes I know, I never thought I'd say that, I'm a road bike rider by heart, but this is life. Let me share some of the key features with you.

The Yamaha XT660Z Tenere's engine is used in a number of other bikes such as the Aprilia Pagaso, MT-03 as well as the XT660 X and R models. The engine accelerates cleanly from a closed throttle and pulls well for a single cylinder. Fitted with a 660cc liquid-cooled 4-stroke single-cylinder SOHC motor, it promises to deliver a strong low to mid-range curve enough to get you in and out of any situation. The smooth-shifting 5-speed transmission is equipped with carefully chosen gear ratios that are designed to optimise the bike's strong low to mid-range torque output.

Underlining the machine's serious long-distance potential is a large-capacity 22-litre fuel tank which blends seamlessly with the beautifully sculpted front cowl. To help reduce rider fatigue on long journeys this rugged new all-rounder is equipped with a stylish front cowl and tall screen which deflect wind away from the upper body.

Overall handling is good and despite the relatively heavy weight and tall seat height the Yamaha XT660Z Tenere's wide bars and good balance really responds well to slow speed riding. Like most motorcycles with off road abilities the forks dive harshly under braking and the rear squats under acceleration leading the bike wide out of turns. Riding off road the chassis copes well with most conditions but I'm sure, as said earlier, even this must have limitations.

Durable 'rally raid' panels are fixed to vulnerable areas on the Yamaha XT660Z Tenere's fuel tank and engine and are designed to prevent excessive damage in a fall. Small fairing is surprisingly effective even without the optional taller screen. Genuine, but expensive, Yamaha accessories such as metal panniers are available. The Yamaha XT660Z Tenere's engine is used across a wide range of machines which proves to be a solid and dependable motor. Yamaha have obviously spent time on the detail of the Tenere and tried to make the bike as user repairable as the Euro 3 rules allow.

The Yamaha XT660Z Tenere has an impressive blend of on and off road ability with some neat and well thought out design touches which makes it excellent value for money. If you steer clear of Yamaha's expensive option list and source aftermarket parts it's possible to have a genuine alternative to some of the other dual-purpose bikes on the market.

What's my final verdict? I can only add this; once you start riding the Tenere you just can not stop, I want to ride this every day for as much as I can, done!

PRICE: R89 500.00 - Incl. 14% VAT



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