

REVIEW: Yamaha YZF-R1



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 and 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 2011 R1, keep on reading, as for the experience ... well, you will have to ride and feel it for yourself, if you dear.

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 2011 R1 is the world's first production motorcycle with a crossplane crankshaft. The result? Incredibly smooth power delivery and outrageous torque for a rush like you've never experienced.

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."

For 2011, the side fairing is smooth for a sleek appearance. And, instead of the usual four-bulb headlight design, the R1 has only two projector-type bulbs mounted closer to the nose of the bike. This positions ram air ducts closer in for a more compact, smooth look. In addition, the rounded lenses are unique to the supersport industry.

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.

With the new 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.

Suspension includes SOQI front forks which use one of the tricks developed for our winning MotoGP® bikes: independent damping. The left fork handles compression damping and the right side handles the rebound damping. And the rear shock adopts bottom linkage for optimum suspension characteristics.

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. I just had to do it again. There is so much acceleration on the exit of the turns that bringing the front wheel up at lean-angle is inevitable. The obvious choice; switch back to Standard Mode before you kill yourself.

In closing, no the price is not a typing error, it is merely Yamaha making every effort to get more riders on their most prized machine. There should be nothing stopping you now from adding this to your fleet.

There are many other brands on the market with even greater price tags, make an educated choice and you'll see what Yamaha really has to offer.

Priced at R120 000.00 - Incl. 14% VAT

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