

ANY QUESTION

ANSWERED ✓

If we don't know the answer, we'll find the person who does

OWNING & RIDING

Q How can I step up without being left high and dry?

I currently ride a lowered Kawasaki Ninja 250, as I'm 5ft tall and weigh less than 54kg. I've owned it for about seven years but I'm tired of the constant revving, and my wrists ache on a long ride. I want some more midrange so I can keep up with my husband and still be OK to park it when I'm on my own without looking like a hopeless female! The Honda CBR500R or Triumph Street Twin have caught my eye, but I'm too small to test ride them in standard trim. **Debbie Robinson, email**

Answered by Michael Neeves, MCN I think the CBR500R will be perfect for you. It's really easy to ride and won't feel like too big a jump from the Ninja 250, as they're pretty similar in style. The Triumph Street Triple is a good bike, but it's a bit heavier and quirkier at low speed. The Honda has a nice spread of power, light handling, progressive brakes and is built well. We tested one recently and got an easy 77mpg too, so it's cheap to run.



Big bike looks in an easy-to-handle package, the CBR500R is the perfect step up from a small bike

Q Which lightweight cruiser gloves will protect my palms?

I'm after some summer cruiser-type gloves that are lightweight, protective and stylish. What do you suggest? **Oliver Fooks, London**

Answered by Tony Hoare, MCN Classic cruiser-style gloves tend to be brown in colour (a hangover from aviation clothing, I believe) and models in this style include the Spada Forty4 Drivers, which are well vented and have subtle, hard knuckle armour built in. ARMR Moto have the

very similar SHL 435s, while a pair of RST Cruz gloves are a tanner less, but you don't get the hard knuckles. The Dainese Blackjacks have some soft knuckle protection and are very stylish, as you'd expect from the prestigious Italian brand. However, if you're on a budget I know at least one person who swears by Dickies unlined goatskin leather gloves, which only cost £10.99. At least if they don't work out on the bike they'll be good for doing the weeding...



EXUP valve boosts R1's low-down power

Q How should I grease up my EXUP valve?

What would be the best lubricant for the EXUP valve mechanism and bushes in the exhaust system for my 2007 Yamaha YZF-R1? **Ian Lewis, email**

Answered by Charles Marvell, Flitwick Motorcycles You need a high-temperature graphite grease like Forch Ceramic Extreme Anti Seize Spray, which can cope with temperatures up to 1400°C. But the secret of servicing the EXUP valve is to make sure it is set up, in engineering terms, fairly sloppy. A simple check before you connect up the cables is to lift the quadrant and check that it falls back down under its own weight.



Prevent EXUP seizure with good set-up

Q Why has my ABS warning light come on?

The ABS light has started glowing on my girlfriend's 52-plate BMW F650GS and the speedo reading has gone off. What could the problem be? **Paul Mooney, email**

Answered by Jody Wood, Bahnstormer The loom can occasionally chafe on the instrument-holding bracket behind the clocks. Other than that the ABS is very reliable, so if there's no damage there then it's best to see a dealer because ABS is a safety system.



Chafed wiring can cause ABS light fault

Q Which treaded tyres can I put on my enduro?

My Honda XR650R has knobblies on now, but I want to fit tubed tyres for mostly road use and the occasional green lane? **Stuart Norwood, email**

Answered by Bryn Phillips, Cambrian Tyres Like all proper enduro bikes the XR650R has an 18in rear wheel, but most road-biased trail bikes have 17in wheels and that's where the biggest choice is. After checking every manufacturer's fitment recommendations we have just two choices. The first is Bridgestone Trailwing TW301 front and TW302. Although often viewed as more of a road tyre, the TW301/302 is quite capable on hard and stony terrain. Just bear in mind that the tread design will clog up when the ground gets muddy. Then there's the Continental TKC80 Twinduro. Definitely better off-road than the Bridgestones but consequently not quite as good on-road. If your trail riding is on a variety of terrain, including muddy stuff, the TKC80 should be your choice. Although not listed by Dunlop as approved on the XR650R, their new-to-Europe tyre for 2016, the D606 in 90/90-21 and 130/90-18 would fit the bike with no issues – after all, it is approved on the XR650L version of the bike. However, Dunlop markets the tyre as being "road legal, but with an emphasis on aggressive off-road riding" so it may be too off-road orientated for your needs. As it's so new to Europe we have no experience with this tyre yet so can't say how it performs on various terrains.

TRAVEL & TOURING

Q Where are the best riding roads in France?

By Simon Weir, Ride magazine's travel expert The best riding France has to offer is on Corsica, the country's largest island. The roads of the interior are blissfully quiet – and as two-thirds of the island is mountains, it means those roads are super-twisty too. From the west coast,

climbing back across the spine of Corsica on the N193 – a kind of high-altitude, souped-up Route Napoleon, you'll find staggering roads. It's like another world, with giant red-rock spires rising beside the road and the sapphire sea sparkling far below. The route around Cap Corse in the north of

the island will be one of the best roads you will ever ride. Hugging the cliffs, rising and falling from sea level to soaring seagull level, corners coming thick and fast – the D80 is epic. True, one or two sections have a terrible surface, but the views are simply breathtaking.



Never mind France, Corsica has some of the best riding in Europe

TECH WATCH

Q How does ram-air work?

Answered by Niki Spreng, On Yer Bike The basic idea is to provide more air for the engine without the added weight and complexity of a forced-induction system like a turbo or supercharger. As the bike moves forward at speed it pushes a wedge of pressurised air before it, some of which is channelled into fairing-mounted ducts. Although the phrase ram-air makes you think it's an intake system with ducts out in the airflow that simply shovel more air into the inlet tracts, it's a little more subtle than that. Once past the intakes the cross-sectional area of the ducting increases as it is routed into the airbox or plenum chamber. This reduces the air velocity and as the air slows down its dynamic pressure drops, but the static pressure, and therefore its density, increases and boosts the engine's volumetric efficiency. To use this increased gas charge, fuel injection systems run different fuelling maps in higher gears at high engine rpm with air pressure sensors in the intake that adjust fuel injector duration to suit. In terms of out-and-out performance, a ram-air system only

really comes into its own at speeds above 120mph, where as much as 10-15bhp extra can be produced on a modern superbike armed with a huge central-mounted ram-air scoop like a Kawasaki ZX-10R or BMW S1000RR.

ZX-10R's air scoop is worth 10-15bhp at high speed

MCN LAW

Your legal questions

Q How do I make sure I get a proper lawyer?

How I would go about ensuring I get a decent bike lawyer if I needed one? What choice would I have with my insurance company and is this something I should take into account when renewing my policy? I would also like to know how I can be sure to get a good bike lawyer if, for example, I were hospitalised and unconscious? **Jeff Reece, email**

Most insurance companies have commercial agreements in place with specific law firms to send all accident claims involving their policy-holders to them. Very few of these firms specialise in motorcycle accidents and the majority employ unqualified staff (typical titles include 'paralegal' or 'litigation executive') to handle the bulk of claims and keep costs down. Regardless of any agreement your insurer has with a law firm, you will always be entitled to your own choice of solicitors. I would therefore

'A partner or close family member could act as your litigation friend'

recommend carrying out your own research in order to find the best solicitors to represent you, in your case this would be a firm that has experience in motorcycle accident claims. Have a look at the cases the firm has dealt with recently to satisfy yourself they know what they are doing. In the unfortunate event that you were ever seriously injured as described, your partner or a close family member could instruct solicitors on your behalf and act as your 'litigation friend' until you regained consciousness. Although an unpleasant thought it may be worth letting your loved ones know who you would like to represent you if the worst were ever to happen.

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