



**£1,500 BARGAIN USED SUZUKI
GSX-R750 SRAD**

CRASH TEST DUMMIES
OUR CRASHED KIT ON SHOW



JULY 2013
ISSUE 276



**MAN OR
MACHINE?**
IT'S THAT
MAGNIFICENT
MCGUINNESS
AND HIS
FLYING
MACHINE...

The UK's
biggest selling
sportsbike
magazine!



TT
ISLE OF MAN
SPECIAL ISSUE

MOUNTAIN EXCITEMENT

THE MEN: JOHN MCGUINNESS AND CONOR CUMMINS
THE MACHINES: TT LEGENDS FIREBLADE AND WK650!
THE MECCA: 10 BEST SPECTATOR SPOTS, MANX LAW
GUIDE, THE BEST COMMUTE EVER!

PLUS:
STOCK OPTIONS:
WHY UPGRADE WHEN
EURO STOCKS ROCK?



APRILIA RSV4
BMW S 1000 RR
DUCATI PANIGALE 1199

WORDS: ALASTAIR 'A-FORCE' FAGAN
 PICS: JONNY 'TOO TALL' GAWLER

super stocks

I remember, as an acne-ridden teenager, flicking through these hallowed pages dreaming of owning a Ducati 916. Nearly 20 years later, it's Ducati's 1199 Panigale R that's getting me horny. At £26,550, the 1199R perches glamorously at the top of the extraneous motorcycle tree, destined for posers and players. It's the rich boys' toy.

As Rootsy mentioned last month, most of us can only dream of such exotica and frivolous spending, but that doesn't mean they're irrelevant. Sexy technology featured on bikes like the 1199R and BMW HP4 will soon be drip-fed down to the more affordable 'standard' models sooner than you think.

So what about these high-end Gucci

products? Pah. Since riding the bog-stock Panigale, we've declared it our favourite 1199 version anyway, saving you £10k in the process. If you've been reading about BJ's relationship with his 1199, you'll be aware of the sneaky backstage updates for 2013.

And its playmates? The 2013 Aprilia RSV4s (R and Factory) are an improvement – if you

AND YOUR TESTERS ARE



Alastair 'A-Force' Fagan

Alastair loves the Panigale so much. He wants one so badly, we found his first-born on eBay the other day, along with his house and missus! Priorities, eh?



Benjamin Kubas Cronin

Beej already has a Panigale for the rest of the year, which is lucky as he has neither children nor property to flog. Perhaps a razor first, eh Beej?



R, S, FACTORY, EVO, THE DADDY: CALL IT WHAT YOU LIKE. MARKETING SPIEL AND THE PRICE SAY THE TOP-SPEC MODELS ARE SUPERIOR. BUT ARE THEY REALLY WORTH THE EXTRA?

run a WSB team or happen to track-only the V4. The APRC electronics package has got a little racier and doesn't favour newbies or, in fact, anyone who isn't called Eugene Lavery. When you consider an equally capable 2012 'R' model can be prised from a dealer for around £11k, the multi-winning Fast Bikes' Sportsbike of the Year is an obvious choice.

While BMW's super-exclusive HP4 has grabbed the headlines in 2013, the undiluted S 1000 RR boasts many of the HP4's core genetics. BMW's pricing is more complicated than a mixed up Rubik's cube. There are various different packages available depending on required spec, like the cars, and we've opted for a complete stocker in this instance.

We're all about impartial advice and trying to save you unnecessary expenditure. Sometimes, Sachs is as good as Öhlins. Sometimes, fancy buttons that adjust your suspension are a pointless extra. Sometimes, the older electronics strategies are superior. There's only one way to find out – head to mid-Wales and shred some rubber... ►



**BJ'S
OPINION**

You can't go wrong with any of these three bikes really, and it's impossible not to love the utter stupidity of the BMW, and what it can deliver. It's madness on a totally different slant from the Ducati, and is so wonderfully powerful I piss my pants with laughter every time I ride one. The tyre issue is just luck of the draw really, depending what day it's come out of the factory. If only the Ducati wasn't so beautiful, and the Aprilia so dynamically perfect, and cheap, the BMW would walk this test. What a machine though, I'm astonished this is now the 'stock' model, how far we've come in just three years.

BJ's verdict**9/10**

“ USING BT-016 TYRES IS LIKE PUTTING LIONEL MESSI IN CLOWN SHOES... ”

BMW S 1000 RR

If the A-Team took a CBR600RR into one of their mysterious shed-type buildings, with just a slightly blunted 6mm allen key and a shit load of badass, the net result would be the S 1000 RR – a dextrous, compact 600cc chassis (and riding position) mated with 200bhp-worth of bedlam. Ever since its launch in 2010, the S Thou' has been progressing without sacrificing any brutality. 2012 saw subtle, but needed, changes, and the Beemer is so far ahead of Japanese rivals we no longer place it in the 1000cc groupstest through pity. Raw speed, handling, control: the Beemer has it all.

At £13,655 for a 'Sport' model, the HP4 derivative is only £3k dearer. A titanium full system, lightweight wheels, refined electronics and semi-active suspension separate the HP Saucy from stock, equating to seismic performance gains, quicker lap-times and a magic carpet ride on the road.

BMW hasn't sold a single S Thou' in the UK without traction control. Thanks to a lively motor and a budget Sachs shock, mechanical grip from the rear isn't a strong point in the RR's arsenal and the Dynamic Traction Control is as much of a safety device as it is a performance enhancer. Experienced riders will get frustrated by the intrusive



For a stocker, the BMW is pretty bloody awesome!

BMW S 1000 RR **£13,655**



ENGINE

The big-bore, short-stroke 999cc motor doesn't get any internal treatment. Power increases come via electronic management, plus a 20 per cent larger cross section of the air intake in the steering head, a modified airbox and new bellmouth geometry. The Dynamic Traction Control is apparently based on the HP Race Power Kit. The throttle valve features a supporting spring to reduce actuating force.

CHASSIS

The 2012 bike got a modified frame and a new steering head. The steering angle is now 66-degrees instead of 66.1, and the wheelbase has been shortened by 9.3mm to 1422.7mm. Trail has been lengthened by 2.6mm to 98.5mm, and the fork offset is now 2.5mm shorter at 29.5mm. Suspension has been refined with mid-speed damping and BMW has fitted a mechanically adjusted steering damper.

Highlights

- ▷ Sachs suspension
- ▷ DTC/ABS
- ▷ Adjustable everything
- ▷ Brembo brakes
- ▷ 204kg (kerb)
- ▷ 182bhp

TRACK 9

Give it the HP4 leccy

FAST ROAD 10

Couldn't ask for more

HOOLIGAN 10

Stunts with the best

NEW RIDER 2

Rider aids not enough

DESIRABILITY 7

A bit forgotten in this company

functionality, causing much ball slapping on the tank, yet novices can rely on the tech to keep things inline.

Apart from appearing on the list of homologated tyres, we're really not sure how/why BMW shoved Bridgestone BT-016s on a weapon like the S Thou'. It's like putting Lionel Messi in clown shoes – he'll still be brilliant but seriously flawed. There's an air of bluntness at committed lean angles we've never experienced before, scuppering the Beemer's intrinsic confidence-exuding skills.

Shoe on some decent rubber, and all is well. The RR's Gixer K5 DNA allows forgiving flex in the chassis, and tolerates aggressive riding. You can get away with a lot more on the Beemer compared to the other two. The German/Japanese love child is bereft of race-derived techno gizmos, which makes it more supple and bump compliant.

Although the S Thou' doesn't have the HP4's enchanting semi-active suspension, the introduction of mid-speed valving takes the Sachs suspension from tatty shite to plushness personified. It's far more comfy on long journeys, too.

If you're after idiosyncrasies other than the screaming banshee effect, then look elsewhere. The Beemer has one inherent characteristic that sets it apart from its Italian stallions – the flat-four motor. The RR is still a mobile paroxysm and never, ever disappoints. Midrange and shorter gearing for the newer model mean a wide parameter of usable power, yet it still lives for the redline.

Dip a toe in the soft-action quickshifter and the RR responds crisply at any part of the rev-range. The cable-fed clutch, peachy throttle response and a warp-speed frenzy team up to bring unrivalled getaways. People spend thousands of pounds tuning their bikes for sprint racing – the BMW is part of an exclusive sub-three second 0-60mph club, and munches up a quarter mile in 10 seconds flat.

A fuelling module sees gains of 10bhp. With a full-system, a genuine 200bhp at the rear wheel is possible. ▶

Verdict 9/10

If you can afford £13k, you'll be able to afford the HP4... if you can find one. Still an epic bike...

- ★ SHOWA BPFs, GREAT NEW LOOKS, FANCY WHEELS
- NO ENGINE CHANGES, NO SLIPPER CLUTCH

DON'T BE FOOLED BY
Future technology running dry. Bosch is working on a system that will stop lowsides. Really, really!

Ducati 1199 Panigale

The titanium exhaust and engine internals debuted on the 1199R offer scant advantages over the stocker. In any trim, it's a seductive fiend. There isn't much in life that matches the thrill of pinning the Panigale's throttle in the first few gears; the metallic Desmodromic soundtrack and the manic delivery as the motor spins in an uncontrollably rampant fashion...

I'm going to start a conspiracy theory here. The shorter gearing cannot be solely responsible for the slightly friendlier delivery. Those who got the chance to sample the 'old' Panigale, probably had to unload their pants post ride. Nothing, nothing, nothing, it must be broken, nothing, 8,000rpm – then KERPOW! Ducati's recent Desmos haven't been laden with stereotypical v-twin grunt, but the Panigale, before the shorter gearing changes, was a two-stroke light switch on the hoof.

Said gearing now means the 1199 gobbles up cogs like a rally slag. Within a 100 yards, you're in fourth and entering Tardis levels of time travel. It's just a shame there aren't many roads (or tracks) in the UK that will allow you to nail the throttle to the stop for more than a few seconds...

DON'T BE FOOLED BY

The hype surrounding Sir Alex Ferguson. He hasn't died, he's just stopped working and having a rest...



The BMW has no problem whatsoever keeping up with the 1199 on the road

2013 DUCATI 1199 PANIGALE £15,750



ENGINE

Crankcases are die-cast using vacular technology to save weight. Liners are wet, and nikasil-coated, helping cooling. Several parts, including clutch casing, are made from magnesium. Crankcases use shell bearings to cope with the extra power, while the oil pump is a MotoGP derivative. The Superquadro engine is a big bore, ultra-short-stroke number, though Ducati persist with the 90-degree v-twin configuration.

CHASSIS

What chassis? The Panigale doesn't have one, per se, rather using the engine as its main stressed member and instead bolting small sub-frames to it, and attaching the rest in due course. And, boy, does it feel like that. There's no electronic suspension on the stock model, so you've got to do all the fiddling yourself. Marchesini wheels house Pirelli Supercorssas, with a massive 200-section on the rear.

Highlights

- ▷ Electronics showroom
- ▷ Sachs/Marzocchi
- ▷ Absolute riot
- ▷ Sexy dash
- ▷ 164kg (dry)
- ▷ 172bhp

TRACK

Feels fast, actually isn't

FAST ROAD

Bit of a workout

HOOLIGAN

RBW interferes

NEW RIDER

Jog on...

DESIRABILITY

Dictionary definition of...

With the exception of aesthetics, there's nothing fluid about the 1199. Opening the throttle, gargantuan 67mm throttle bodies feed the bang. The fuelling is decent enough and the gasser is never snatchy, yet holding a constant throttle at 40mph induces a surging sensation and makes life a little tricky. The 1199 ain't hard to ride, it's just damn hard to ride fast.

Its excitement contributes to its shortfall on the circuits, unless you hire an ex-WSB champion and get Ducati to set-up the bike for a specific track. You'll swear you're setting the new lap record, lap after lap, rear end squirming, tankslapping your ass into oblivion, only to come in and see you're two seconds slower than a 2008 ZX-10R. At least you burn more calories trying to hold on...

It's a belligerent bastard that can feel brilliant in some environments and shady in others. You never know quite what the front-end is playing at, unless the surface is baby-bum smooth. The monocoque chassis will take some acclimatising, and a 30-minute demo ride won't suffice. Think scaffold pole clapping an engine, with wheels at either end, and that gives you some idea of the chassis' flex; er, zero.

While the 'S' model brags

electronics suspension adjusters on its Öhlins, the stocker sits on a Marzocchi fork and Sachs shock, which do an exemplary job of supporting either end, somehow boosting road holding over the S's Ducati Electronic Suspension – it's just a complicated, over-hyped, rich boy's accessory.

Other minor changes include heat shielding. Ducatis have always been synonymous with hot bottys, hence the 2013 changes borne from owners complaining. Heat shielding around the rear cylinder and the exhaust have eased summer riding.

As savage as the Panigale is, we can't fault its dynamism. It's still the only (road-legal) bike that ingrains a perpetual grin on my face. After you've caned an 1199, anything else is simply lacklustre.

Then again, it's worth pointing out that, despite our praise, the secondhand market is steaming with 1199s, rendered useless by petrified previous owners scouring for their old RSV4s. Men only need apply!

Verdict

9/10

Riding and owning one has to be at the top of your list. Exclusive in function and fashion, but bloody hard work!

✦ NOISE, ANGER, SPEED, LOOKS

✦ GOT TO PLAY BY ITS RULES, BLOODY THIRSTY

BJ'S OPINION



This bike is a right piece of work, an angry, rollicking, trolloping sauce bottle of a beast. It is also mine, and FB's, favourite 1199 by some margin. That it's the cheapest is such a result – don't be drawn in by the electronic Öhlins, the Tricolore colour scheme, or the R's Gucci stance, if you ride mostly on the road this is the one you want. Sure, if you're loaded, go nuts on the others, but this one is in reach of mere mortals via Ducati's excellent PCP scheme – how else have they sold so bloody many of them? Yeah, to ride one super quick you need to be Troy Bayliss, but with that face, who the hell cares? Not me!

BJ's verdict

9/10





🔥 NOTHING, NOTHING,
IT MUST BE BROKEN,
8,000RPM – KERPOW! 🔥

DON'T BE FOOLED BY

All the changes for 2013. It's an homologation move and, other than ABS, won't benefit me and you...



**BJ'S
OPINION**



Because I've been riding an 1199 for two months solid, my first few miles on the RSV4 were a struggle. I can tell you that sucked donkey balls, I was almost in tears. Then I suddenly realised that, actually, it's doing everything right and, this is how it should be. From that moment on I was enraptured once more, as if the noise alone isn't enough. This bike is dynamically perfect in about every department, with electronics that work with you as a rider, like none other on the market. Aprilia proves you don't need MotoGP to develop the best superbike on the planet, and that it's the cheapest here is amazing!

BJ's verdict

10/10

2012 Aprilia RSV4 R

Much like the 1199R's insignificant (for us mere mortals) updates over the standard bike, the 2013 tweaks for the RSV4 aren't worth hankering for – especially when you can prise a brand-new 2012 model for around £11k, or a low-mileage minter for even cheaper...

Anyone can go fast in a straight line, but variables get trickier during cornering. Thankfully, the RSV4 R holds your hand, tickles your gusset, and generally takes care of anything handling related. Years of building GP bikes and bossing recent WSB skirmishes means Aprilia knows how to build a chassis.

It feels short, stumpy, compact and taut, exactly how you'd stereotype a GP-derived racer, yet there's plenty of room for BJ and his six-foot frame. There isn't a more natural cornering assassin, seamlessly joining the dots and offering 110 per cent fluidity. Racy steering is never edgy, and the RSV is perfectly neutral.

You'll find yourself automatically chewing up corners with more vigour onboard the Aprilia. Corner entry is faster, as the RSV rolls instinctively into a bend with supreme stability. For 2013, Aprilia has joined the ABS shindig, but you're rarely left wanting more with the older bike.



APRILIA RSV4 R **£11,499**



ENGINE

Ballistic 65-degree V4 with double overhead cams get a light tinkering from the old model, with improved lubrication and closer spaced gears. The new, lighter exhaust features an advanced butterfly valve management system to suit the ride-by-wire mapping for improved breathing efficiency throughout the RPM range. The engine itself is just 225mm wide, and 175mm narrower than an inline-four.

CHASSIS

Using GP technology, the chassis can be adjusted many ways, with the head angle, swingarm pivot and engine position all up for change at a trackday. The complete frame is very light and weighs just 10kg, while the swingarm is only 5kg. The fuel tank is partially located under the seat to assist mass-centralisation and improve airbox space. The wheels are forged-aluminium and come with VIP bespoke Pirelli Supercorsas.

Highlights

- ▷ Best noise ever!
- ▷ Amazing V4 motor
- ▷ Best TC on market
- ▷ 250GP handling
- ▷ 160bhp (tested)
- ▷ 179kg

TRACK 10
The very best

FAST ROAD 10
As good as the rest

HOOLIGAN 7
Too busy going fast

NEW RIDER 6
Electronics will hold your hand

DESIRABILITY 10
Not so much for looks, as talent

It's the balance and poise of the chassis that sets the RSV4 R apart from the rest. The ability to load the front, off the throttle and ask unfathomable, piss-taking questions of the front tyre deep into a turn, the RSV4 responds with grip galore and makes you feel invincible. There are no boundaries with the Aprilia, no sacrifices made in any area – like Elton John once sang.

One per cent of riders will pick faults in the Sachs suspension springing the R. Granted, the stroke isn't as progressive and plush as its Öhlins blingery, but we're not going to fuss over a few tenths. The RSV's chassis talent will always shine through and is never obtrusive on the highways, with exquisite weight transfer skills. It's not as pliable as the BMW, but far more adept.

Whereas the Ducati relies on seduction via aesthetics, the RSV4 lures customers, initially, through the soundtrack. It begs the question as to why other manufacturers haven't jumped on the V4 bandwagon – the RSV4's lump is right up there on the FB engine listing.

True, jumping off the other two maniacs and onto the Aprilia makes the V4 engine feel a little lethargic, but it's deceptively rapid. Here is the

proof you don't need 200,000bhp to chase a Beemer down as the roads open up. It'll tear through the analogue dash as long as you're not too lazy with your gear choice.

The APRC electronics package really is ground-breaking, adding kudos to Aprilia's race-to-road mantra. The Noale-based factory team are the only WSB outfit to use their own in-house electronics. The 2013 APRC updates benefit racers, with the traction control allowing more slip. The 2012 RSV boasts more than enough in its box of tricks. A juicy 200-section rear Pirelli exudes heroic amounts of grip, backed up by the traction control. I wouldn't like to thrash the RSV without traction control, as the V4's delivery is a little unpredictable at times. But the APRC really seduces the throttle.

You just have to look at what the CRT bikes are doing in GPs – essentially an RSV4 sticking it to million dollar prototypes. That's basically a tricked up road bike in race trim, and in the right hands can

Verdict 10/10

Simply the best sportsbike available for under £15k. Best chassis, best engine, best electronics.

✦ EVERYTHING

✦ NOT FREE, LIFE'S SO UNFAIR!

GROUP TEST

TECH DATA



ENGINE

	BMW S 1000 RR	Ducati 1199 Panigale	2012 Aprilia RSV4 R
Type	999cc, liquid-cooled, inline four	1,198cc, liquid-cooled, L-twin	999cc, liquid-cooled, 16v v-four
Bore x Stroke	80mm x 49.7mm	112mm x 60.8mm	78mm x 52.3mm
Compression	13:1	12.5:1	13:1
Fuelling	Electronic fuel injection	Digital fuel injection	EFI, 48mm throttle bodies
Tested Power	182bhp @ 13,000rpm	172bhp @ 10,750rpm	160bhp @ 12,250
Tested Torque	106Nm @ 10,750	119Nm @ 8,400rpm	103Nm @ 10,000rpm

CHASSIS

Frame	Aluminium twin-spar	Monocoque aluminium	Aluminium twin-spar
F Suspension	46mm Sachs inverted fork, fully adj	43mm Marzocchi inverted fork, fully adj	43mm Sachs fork, fully adj
R Suspension	Sachs monoshock, fully adj	Sachs monoshock, fully adj	Sachs monoshock, fully adj
Front Brakes	Four piston Brembo calipers, 320mm discs	Four-piston Brembo calipers, 330mm discs	Four piston Brembo calipers, 320mm discs
Rear Brakes	Single-piston caliper, 220mm disc	Two-piston caliper, 245mm disc	Two-piston caliper, 220mm disc

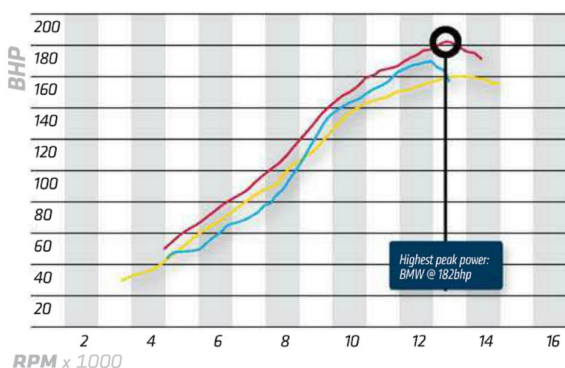
DIMENSIONS

Wheelbase	1,422mm	1,437mm	1,420mm
Seat Height	820mm	825mm	845mm
Dry Weight	204kg (kerb)	164kg	179kg
Fuel Capacity	17.5L	17L	17L

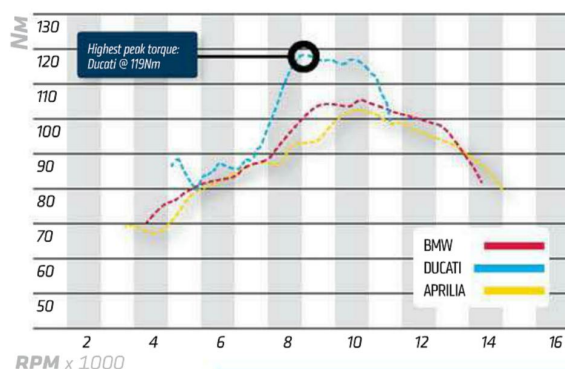
PRICE

Price	£13,665	£15,750	£11,499
From	BMW UK 0800 777 155 www.BMW-motorrad.co.uk	Ducati UK 08451 222 996 www.ducatiuk.com	Aprilia UK 0208 290 8800 www.aprilia.com

POWER



TORQUE



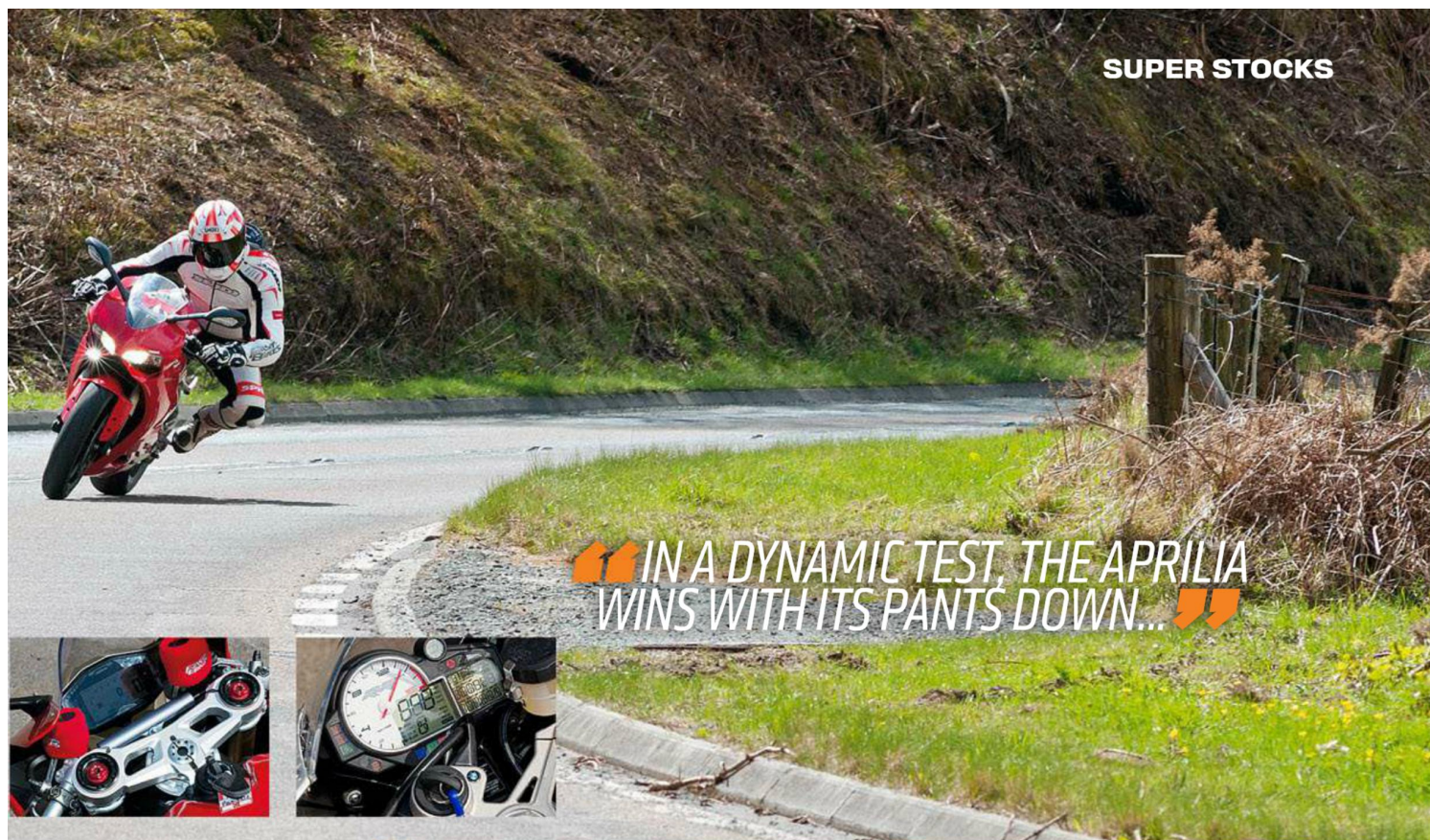
	BMW S 1000 RR	Ducati 1199 Panigale	2012 Aprilia RSV4
0-60	2.69s	3.12s	3.13s
0-100	5.13s	5.95s	5.87s
0-120	7.22s	7.12s	7.81s
Stg 1/4 Mile	10.02s @ 158.13mph	10.89s @ 142.49mph	10.85s @ 141.64mph
Standing Mile	24.98s @ 185.78mph	27.08s @ 176.07mph	27.02s @ 180.53mph
Top Speed	187.20mph	178.40mph	182.20mph

DATA BY AXIS DATA LOGGING
FLEXION.CO.UK



You want involvement?
Get a Panigale...





IN A DYNAMIC TEST, THE APRILIA WINS WITH ITS PANTS DOWN...



All racers love the Panigale in all its forms. Until they're asked to race one, that is!

THE VERDICT

So, the run-of-the-mill Japanese litre clan aren't doing it for you? You've got a bit of spare cash floating about? It's time to take it to another level of sportsbike hedonism. But splitting this trio in conformist Fast Bikes fashion is an almost impossible task. All three are massively capable and offer distinctive buying pluses, negatives and funky USPs. They weren't the top three bikes of 2012 for nuffink and it's a travesty that one of them has to finish last.

If we're rolling with our usual dynamic test conclusion, then the Aprilia wins with its pants down. If we're edging towards specific comparisons between manufacturers' models and price differentiation, then the Aprilia also takes the honours, with pants around the knees. When you dissect the categories, it's simply the best in every segment bar outright panty soiling tactics.

The natural progression is a BMW S 1000 RR, with its inline-four howitzer engine and Japanese heredity. Nothing strikes you, or kicks you in the bollocks, during initial impressions, a la Panigale. Your eyesight just gets a little blurry. £13k will get you an S Thou', but £16k will get you an HP4. Then again, £16k will get you an S Thou' and the missus a new kitchen, but the performance gap between the two models are much greater than the

Italians. If you're thinking of buying the original RR, don't. It's unfinished, unfancied, and agricultural, and the performance gains match that of the HP4's superiority over the 2012 updates. Then again, that doesn't explain why the Beemer has vanished from superstock grids all over the world. Kawasaki on the other hand...

If you Google 'hot Italian' you'll probably be presented with a browser full of lovely ladies, not a Ducati. There's an unexplainable emotional attachment that comes gratis with owning/riding a Panigale, very much like an Italian girlfriend bursting with attitude. It makes you feel special, in a good way, not in a Timmy sense, ►





There was a welcome in the hillside for this little lot...



and every ride is guaranteed to be hugely intense and rewarding.

Every ride is also different. Nothing is conventional with the 1199. From the chassis, to the riding sensation, the Panigale is an extraordinary beast that has to be sampled. Most sportsbikes ride like they've got two wheels and an engine – the Panigale is a whole new experience.

The Ducati is also über expensive and you'll have to factor in such trivialities like fuel consumption. 70 miles to a '17' litre tank isn't recession-conquering material, but you're getting the biggest bang for your buck. The Panigale, even in its watered-down standard spec, has enough electronic adjustment to make every riding style happy. Most of the time...

You don't have to be a financial wizard to do the math here. The Aprilia is the cheapest and other than some adjustable frame bits and bobs, there's no tangible reward for going full Factory. Build quality and final finish on the RSV4 R isn't exactly impeccable, and many are fazed by

the fact they couldn't tell you where their nearest Aprilia dealer is. But if it's pure speed and ability on your shortlist, there isn't another option. The 2013 Sportsbike of the Year is poised to be an all-time battle royal, with the HP4 having its first sortie against rivals. Add in a revamped MV Agusta F4 and Kawasaki's

THERE'S MORE THAN A FAIR CHANCE THE OLD BIKE WOULD BE ON TOP, TOO

always brilliant ZX-10R, and we have a rumble approaching even Rocky wouldn't want to miss. Let's hope the Japanese can bring something new to the game in 2014, as this European supremacy is raging, and reasons for buying Japanese kit are thin on the ground, bar reliability. How exciting...