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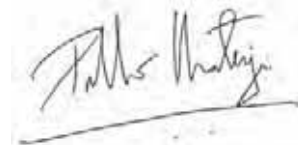
## There is no new normal any more

Well, this is definitely a first. As I write this, I'm sitting on an easy chair on a balcony in my family home in Goa, dressed in a T-shirt and shorts, with my feet up on the railing. Downstairs, I can see the bougainvilleas exploding with colour. Near them, the caretaker's dog — a good friend of mine — is wagging himself into paroxysms of delight because he's caught sight of me and expects me to immediately join him downstairs for a round of belly rubs. I tell him I'll be with him as soon as I finish writing; he looks at me doubtfully and then races away because he's seen a squirrel or something. I take a sip of my beer — because Goa — and get on with finishing this piece, thinking that I could get used to writing all my executive editor's letters like this.

Except, of course, that I couldn't. The idyll that I'm experiencing is purely because I'm marooned here, unable to head back to my home, partner and workplace in Mumbai for the foreseeable future. Every single method of transport — air, land and sea — has been shut down, and there is nothing to do but wait and hope for the best in the middle of the COVID crisis, the most extraordinary event of my lifetime; indeed, some who lived through the Second World War say that they haven't experienced anything like it. At least then, they knew who the enemy was; now, their own family

members could put them in hospital — or worse — merely by breathing too close to them. As someone said on Twitter recently, 'What a time to be dead.'

How did things come to this? I simply have no idea. It seems like several lifetimes ago that reports of a new and rather terrifying virus began trickling out of the hermetically sealed silo that is China. Even when the news emerged, human beings did what they do in order to hold on to their sanity — they said, 'Ah, whatever, it won't affect us.' Spoiler alert: it has, and in ways we're still trying to fathom. The automotive industry, already grievously wounded even before COVID, has literally had to shut itself down — but on the bright side, it has waded collectively into battle, helping to produce everything from surgical masks to ventilators for critically ill patients. I'm certain that when this is all over, the industry (and the world) will recover — but I don't think it will ever be quite the same; 'business as usual' doesn't seem like it's going to be a viable option. Maybe this is the wake-up call we all needed; maybe we'll emerge from this as more empathetic and sensible human beings. I certainly hope we do. Until then, stay safe, stay home and enjoy the issue.



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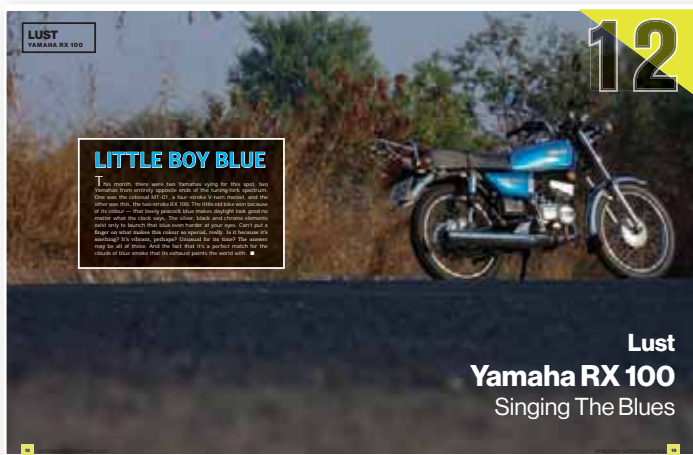
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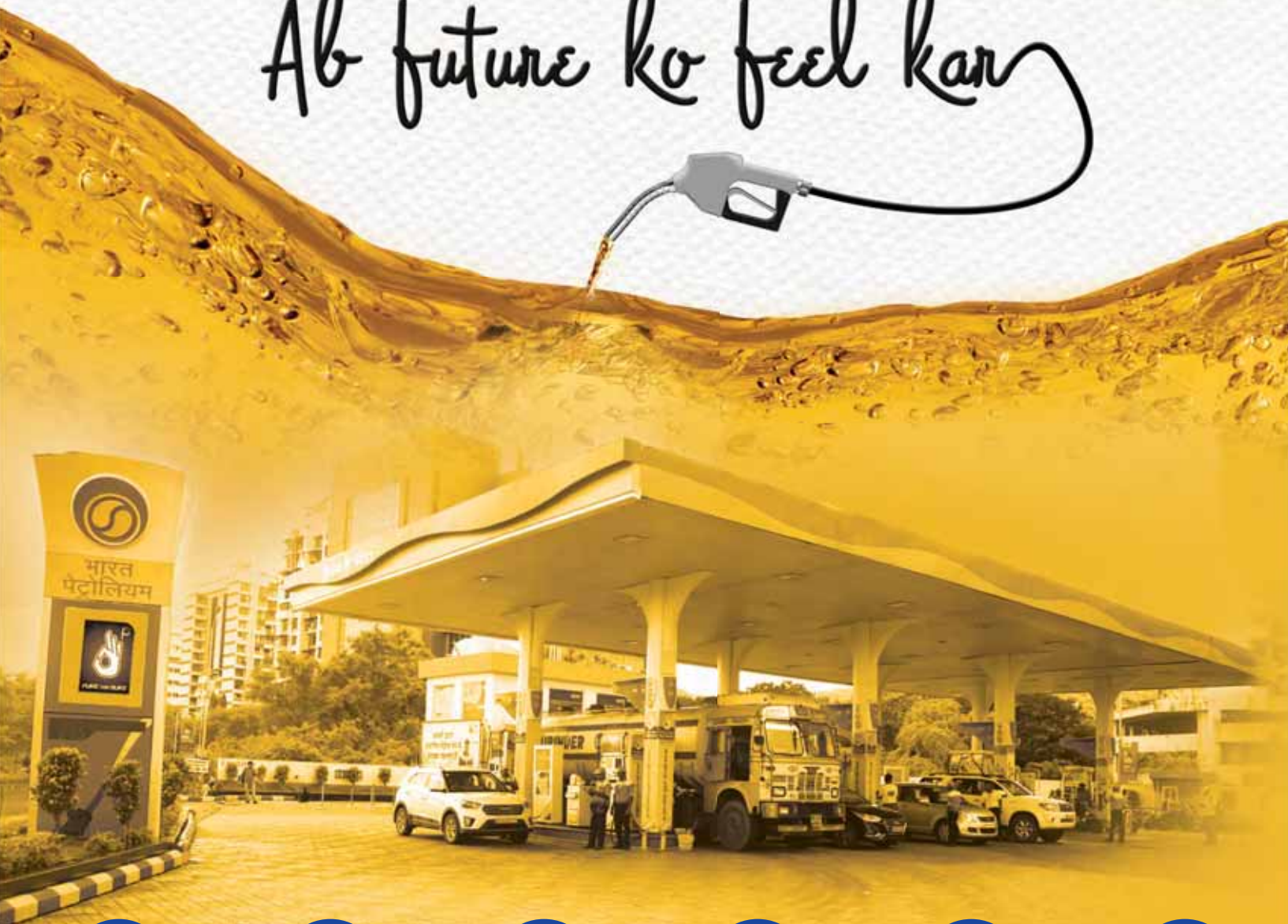
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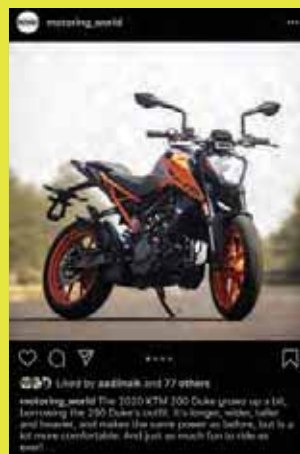
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# WRITE HAND DRIVE



Here's what our Instagram-enabled monkeys have been up to with their opposable thumbs...

## Trade Winds

I know it's not exactly good for the environment, but I hate seeing the diesel options disappear from our market. Like in the new Maruti Suzuki Vitara Brezza. It's funny, though — there was a time when you couldn't pay me to drive a diesel car on an everyday basis, but now I'm wishing there were more BS6 diesel options in the small car space. With the levels of refinement and fuel efficiency they offer, it's hard not to look at them for long commutes. At least Hyundai is still sticking to



its guns with diesel offerings in the small car segment.

**Rakesh Indulkar**

*It may be sad to see diesel engines disappear from model line-ups, but they are making way for peppier petrol engines. That's never a bad thing, right?*

## Shock And Awe

Just looking at pictures of the new Bajaj Chetak makes me wonder where they kept these designers locked up all these years. Everything

from the design to the fit and finish looks like Bajaj is really serious about the electric scooter game. Of course, they have to be if they think it's worth reviving the Chetak name for it. While I don't mind the range or the top speed of the scooter, I know that charging it at my house will be a bit of a pain, so for that alone, I hope Bajaj makes an internal-combustion version of this beautiful scooter.

**Suresh Venu**

*We believe the correct response in this context is, 'Hold your horses!'*



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## REWIND/PLAY

1957 FIAT 500/ 2020 FIAT 500

# CINQUE OR SWIM

Sixty years on, the Fiat 500 continues to turn heads

## FIAT 500

# 1957

THEN

- Like all the iconic people's cars, the Cinquecento was designed and built to get Italy back on wheels after the war.



- Designed by Dante Giacosa, the 500 was the perfect car for narrow city streets; it may well have been the first 'city car'.
- Initial models had suicide doors and were only two-seaters, but later models improved upon that by offering comfortable rear seats and such luxuries as wind-down windows.
- Unhappy with the performance of the 500, Karl Abarth produced his own variants called the 695 SS. With nearly double the power of the standard 500, the 695 SS managed to hit speeds of up to 140 kph.



- In its final days, the 500 dialled back some of the glamour and went back to its roots, offering fuss-free motor-ing for the masses.

## FIAT 500

# 2020

NOW



- The third-generation Fiat 500 is now all-electric.
- The looks may only be an evolutionary change over the previous generation, but it still does look very striking.
- The 500 claims a 320-km range with the ability to charge up to 80 per cent of its battery in as little as 35 minutes.
- 114 bhp from its electric motors may not sound like much, but the 500 is a very light vehicle so performance should be sprightly.
- We can't wait to see a high-performance Abarth version of this car. Wonder how they'll do it, though. ■



**LUST**

**YAMAHA RX 100**

## LITTLE BOY BLUE

This month, there were two Yamahas vying for this spot, two Yamahas from entirely opposite ends of the tuning-fork spectrum. One was the colossal MT-01, a four-stroke V-twin marvel, and the other was this, the two-stroke RX 100. The little old bike won because of its colour — that lovely peacock blue makes daylight look good no matter what the clock says. The silver, black and chrome elements exist only to launch that blue even harder at your eyes. Can't put a finger on what makes this colour so special, really. Is it because it's soothing? It's vibrant, perhaps? Unusual for its time? The answer may be all of those. And the fact that it's a perfect match for the clouds of blue smoke that its exhaust paints the world with. ■





**FAST**  
KOENIGSEGG  
JESKO ABSOLUT

# WARP DRIVE

The Jesko Absolut is the fastest car Koenigsegg will ever make

Confused? So were we, but read on and it will make sense. Koenigsegg has decided that after this attempt at absolute speed, it will not produce a faster series-production car again. Strong words, those, from the company that holds the current speed record for a production car. Last year, when the Jesko (pronounced Yesko) was first unveiled, only 125 units were available for order, all of which have sold out. Some of those customers will now have the option of choosing between the more track-focussed Jesko or the Absolut.

Externally, the Absolut does away with many of the vents and aerodynamic surfaces to reduce

drag. Winglets, louvres and vents make way for a smoother surface which allows the Absolut an absolutely insane Cd of 0.278. The massive rear wing which produces up to 1400 kg of downforce is gone, too, replaced by a couple of fins to aid high-speed stability. We don't know about that, but we love how the Jesko Absolut looks like a shark on the prowl.

Power comes from a 5.0-litre twin-turbo V8 engine that makes 1280 bhp on gasoline and up to 1600 bhp on E85. Apart from making ludicrous amounts of power, the engine also claims to have one of the lightest crankshafts ever, weighing in at a mere 12.5 kg. That's



*Does that even look real to you?!*

not all; the transmission, too, is cutting edge. A 9-speed multi-clutch (notice we didn't say dual clutch...) transmission, called the Light Speed Transmission, helps put all that power down to the tarmac.

Exactly how fast is the Jesko Absolut? Koenigsegg won't tell us the actual number, but taking the gearing, drag and engine speed into account, we think this will be the car to break that 500-kph barrier! ■





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## BEHIND THE SINS

### THIS IS HOW WE DO IT

## ROCKET SCIENCE



Go to Goa, they said. It's sunny there, they said. The beaches are wonderful, they said. You know what they didn't say? That pretty much as soon as I got there, the country would go into the biggest long-term lockdown the world has ever seen, and you wouldn't be able to take a train, plane, bus, car, bike, bicycle, bullock cart, horse, Segway or roller skates back home for the foreseeable future. What's a guy to do with all the newfound spare time, other than WFH? There's only so many rounds of indoor golf you can play, and cleaning up the apartment, doing the laundry, cooking semi-edible meals and

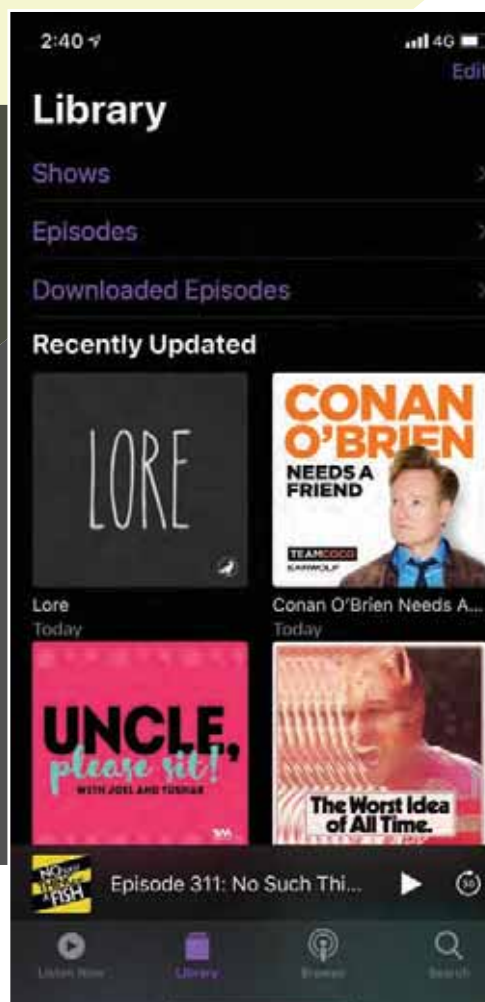
watching all of Netflix tend to become tiresome after about two days. Thankfully, I have one surefire method of letting off some steam — a pristine 2012 Volkswagen Polo 1.6 that belongs to my parents, who live here. Every now and again, when cabin fever starts setting in, I take it for a spin on the winding back roads near our house, and the little rocket immediately clears the cobwebs shrouding my mind — that punchy 100-bhp engine, slick gearbox and sharp chassis are just as enjoyable now as they were when the car was first launched.

Gallardo

## CASTING CALL

Recently, I've started listening to podcasts on my commute and it's had a few unexpected effects on my life. When I'm listening to a particularly funny episode of a comedy podcast, I tend to let out a maniacal laugh which makes other road users give me a wide berth, so I've been making good time on the way home. I've also become the repeater of random facts thanks to one of my favourite podcasts that revolves around obscure information. Reventon had a chance to experience this, too, on a recent commute, much to his chagrin. I could just listen to music, but then, who will bombard the office with useless trivia? If you guys have any suggestions for great podcasts, I'm all ears!

Estoque







## A DOGGED LIFE

Right in the middle of nowhere, he showed up, a big and brown example of his species. It wasn't even like he was curious; his demeanour implied that he knew exactly what we were doing and that he wanted to help. And he did, mostly by posing in the centre of whatever frame the photographer happened to be shooting. And with one DSLR and three smartphone cameras around, he was obligingly busy, too. Was he a professional model in his previous life, I asked him, his reply to which was a stuck-out tongue and a wagging tail. Come to think of it, that was his standard response to everything. I wondered how dogs come along, knowing what they have to do, who needs them, and whom they can trust. Indeed, this chap seemed like he knew us for years, and it made me think several warm and happy thoughts. Until the idiot started chasing me in the middle of a pan shot.

Reventón

## REWIND TIME

It is said that there can't be too many wheels in the garage. I can't agree enough, and that's how this blue Bajaj Priya made its way home. Yes, it's not in the best of shapes; it's got non-stock Chetak rear covers, an old Pulsar mirror, an LML tail-lamp, and trim that's missing at several places. However, the engine still putters smoothly with the sweet note and smell of a two-stroke. It had been the previous owner's daily runner since the day it rolled off the showroom floor a long time ago. The question now is either to restore it to its former glory or turn it into a rat-scoot with some grippy tyres to blat around the city on. Are you thinking what I'm thinking?

Bizzarrini



**COOL**  
**LEICA S3**

# WHAT DO YOU S3?

**Leica's new medium-format camera is finally here**

## **What is it?**

The Leica S3, the last word in digital medium-format photography.

## **Why is it cool?**

It's a 64-megapixel medium-format camera with the ability to record full-frame 4K videos at 24 fps. You can switch to full HD if you want faster frame rates for slow-motion videos. The Leica S3's sensor also allows for 15 stops of dynamic range

to get more detail in your high-contrast pictures. If you've managed to hang with us after those sentences, you'll realise just why the Leica S3 is cool!

It's a follow-up to the wildly popular Leica S2 which debuted 10 years ago, and brings a whole slew of improvements above it while still maintaining the DSLR form factor. There's now 2 GB of buffer on board, so

you can take longer burst sequences. The ability to use external recorders and microphones is also baked into the S3. The advantage of a DSLR form factor over its mirrorless counterparts is that you get a large optical viewfinder and the ability to pack in a battery good for over 1000 shots. You get all this and WiFi connectivity in a fully weatherproofed body. What's not to like?

## **Is it expensive?**

Nothing bearing the red dot has ever been inexpensive, and that holds true for the S3 as well. The Leica S3 comes in at a cool ₹ 14.5 lakh and that's not even including taxes and import duties. Systems like the Hasselblad X1D and Fujifilm GFX 100 are much, much cheaper, but you can't beat the sheer cool factor of the Leica! ■







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## THE GRAPEVINE IN THE NEWS



### MORE DZIRABLE

The Maruti Suzuki Dzire compact sedan was refreshed recently. The majority of changes happened under the hood of the car, with the BS6-compliant 1.2-litre DualJet engine from the Baleno now powering the Dzire. Both a 5-speed manual transmission as well as an AMT are available on the Dzire. The diesel engine, however, has been eliminated from the range. Other changes to the car include a new grille design up front and the addition of Maruti Suzuki's new SmartPlay Studio infotainment system. Prices for the updated Dzire start at ₹ 5.89 lakh and go up to ₹ 8.81 lakh (ex-showroom, Delhi).

### THE FINAL FRONTIER

After showcasing it at AutoExpo 2020, Volkswagen finally launched the 7-seat Tiguan AllSpace to replace the regular Tiguan in its model line-up. Like the T-Roc, the Tiguan AllSpace is also brought in as a CBU and comes in one variant only. The Tiguan AllSpace is priced at ₹ 33.12 lakh, ex-showroom, India. While it is priced about ₹ 5 lakh more than the outgoing model, you do get a lot more car for your money, too. You get full LED headlights, a panoramic sunroof, three-zone climate control, a fully digital instrument cluster and handsfree opening of the hatch among other things. Power for the Tiguan AllSpace comes from a 2.0-litre TSI engine making 188 bhp and 32.3 kgm of torque.



### T-ROC ON!

Continuing its barrage of SUV launches in India, Volkswagen launched the T-Roc SUV at a price of ₹ 19.99 lakh, ex-showroom, India. The T-Roc, available in one fully-loaded variant, is being brought in as a CBU. Power comes from a 1.5-litre TSI engine making 148 bhp and 25.4 kgm of torque. The engine is also equipped with cylinder-deactivation technology to boost fuel efficiency. The T-Roc represents a slight departure from typical Volkswagen design with its dazzling colour palette and injection of colour even into the interior of the car. Deliveries of the T-Roc will begin mid-April.





## COMPETITION CHECK

The much-awaited second-generation Hyundai Creta has been launched starting at a price of ₹ 9.99 lakh, ex-showroom, India, for the base diesel-manual

variant. Prices go up to ₹ 17.2 lakh, ex-showroom, India, for the 1.4-litre turbo-petrol variant with a DCT transmission. Even in its base models, the Creta comes loaded with safety and entertainment features, with the top spec SX(O) models getting a panoramic sunroof, connected car technology, and a digital instrument cluster among other features. You can read our full review of the new Creta later on this issue.



The BMW X1 was given the mid-cycle-refresh treatment recently and the engine options have been upgraded to be BS6 compliant. The X1 is available with a petrol and diesel engine option in two trim levels. Unfortunately, the X1 no longer offers all-wheel drive as

an option, so you'll have to make do with front-wheel drive only. Prices for the updated X1 start at ₹ 35.9 lakh, ex-showroom, India, for the base petrol model, while the range-topping diesel is available at ₹ 42.9 lakh, ex-showroom, India.

## COUPE DE GRACE



Mercedes has been on a roll lately with the launch of the AMG GT 63 S and the V-Class MarcoPolo at AutoExpo 2020, and it shows no signs of slowing down. The latest launch from the Mercedes-Benz stable is the facelifted GLC Coupe. The now-locally-assembled GLC coupe is available at a starting price of ₹ 62.7 lakh, ex-showroom, India, for the GLC300 petrol version, while the GLC300d is available at ₹ 63.7 lakh, ex-showroom, India. Changes over the outgoing model include the addition of full LED headlights and tail-lights, a redesigned front bumper and a new alloy wheel design. Inside, the car gets Mercedes's new MBUX infotainment system to round out the changes.

## SHORT BURST



### MINTY FRESH

As diesel engines disappear from VW's lineup, the Polo and Vento have been updated with a 1.0-litre TSI engine option. The Polo Highline with the TSI engine starts at ₹ 5.82 lakh, while the Vento is available starting at ₹ 8.86 lakh. All prices are ex-showroom, India.



### MAKE HASTE

The Skoda Rapid also gets the 1.0-litre TSI treatment like its cousin, the VW Vento. Similarly, the diesel engines have been dropped from the Rapid range as well. You can put down a ₹ 50,000 booking amount and claim your Rapid 1.0 today. Deliveries and a full price announcement to follow.

### BASELINE

The 3 Series gets a new base model with the 330i Sport in India. Priced at ₹ 41.7 lakh, ex-showroom, India, it slots in under the 330i MSport model. The base diesel variant of the 3 Series has now been discontinued, so the only way to get a diesel engine in the 3 Series is with the 320d Luxury Line.



# THE SHOW MUST GO ON

The Geneva International Motor Show may have been cancelled this year, but that didn't stop manufacturers from showing off their machines. Here are some of the highlights from the show that wasn't!

## THE LONG AND SHORT OF IT

How do you make the extremely fast 720S even faster? You put it on a diet and inject some more power, of course. The new McLaren 765 LT is essentially the track-spec

variant of the 720S and is fast enough to give the P1 and the Senna a run for their money. Thanks to the help of carbon-fibre body panels and lighter glass, the 765 LT sheds 80 kg,

all while improving track performance. Power still comes from the 4.0-litre twin-turbo V8 now cranking out 754 bhp — 0-100 kph is dispatched in a mere 2.8 seconds! Want to get your hands on one? You better hurry because only 765 of these will be made.



## SHOCKING

At a time when every automaker is adding electric vehicles to their portfolio, the latest iteration of the Skoda Octavia vRS also features hybrid power. The iV variant of the vRS is powered by a 1.4-litre TSI engine augmented by an electric motor. The total system power output of 245 bhp matches that of the VW GTI and the outgoing Octavia vRS, but we expect better acceleration from this new machine thanks to its electric motors!

## EMERGENCY! CALL 911!



The Porsche 911 Turbo S and McLaren 765 LT are very different cars, as different as 600+ bhp cars can be. The Porsche is a four-seater with a usable trunk, while the McLaren is a track special that makes no considerations for passengers, let alone their luggage. But guess which of these is quicker to 100 kph? That's right. With a 0-100 kph time of 2.7 seconds, you can take the 911 Turbo S grocery shopping and embarrass the McLaren on the way there. What's more, you can do all that in air-conditioned comfort, listening to music through the Bose speaker system. Wonder what the folks at Woking think of that.

## AN EYE FOR AN I

The long-awaited follow up to the quirky BMW i3 and i8 is finally here, in concept car form. The BMW i4, shaped like a more traditional sedan, actually looks sharper than anything else in the current BMW range and seems to have the performance chops to back it up, too. Its power comes from an 80 kW battery pack and a single rear motor capable of delivering up to 530 bhp. BMW claims performance will be on-par with its V8 offerings. The production i4 will come out early next year and will be built alongside the 3 Series and upcoming 4 Series, with a lot of component sharing among the three cars.







## A FRIEND IN NEED

We don't know where to begin with this quirky city runabout. Among supercars whose power figures resemble phone numbers, the tiny Citroën Ami One still manages to grab attention. In a bid to use as few panels as possible, the Ami One is completely symmetrical front to back, with one door opening traditionally and the other one like a suicide door. The roof takes inspiration from the legendary 2CV, with a canvas piece that can be opened manually. The real kicker is that the Ami One isn't a car at all — it's a quadricycle, so one can drive it in most European cities without a license!

## PUR AND PIOUS

The Bugatti name has been associated with the pursuit of absolute speed for some time now, so it was a surprise when it unveiled the new Chiron Pur Sport, a car that gives up some of its speed for the ability to carve corners. Revised aero, a new, massive

fixed wing and redesigned suspension means the Pur Sport can now only hit 350 kph, but because of revised gearing, it will get there quicker. A Koenigsegg chasing top-speed records and a Bugatti that isn't? What's going on here?!

## FORE!



We knew, as soon as the eighth-generation Volkswagen Golf was unveiled, that the high-performance GTI was going to follow. There's nothing shockingly different about the new GTI — it still comes with a 2.0-litre TSI engine making 242 bhp of power, and drive is sent to the front wheels via either a manual gearbox or a DSG. It may not be very different from the outgoing model, but it's this same formula that has kept enthusiasts engaged since the original hot hatch entered the scene way back in 1976. If the previous GTI was anything to go by, sign us up for one in red, Volkswagen!

## FAMILY FRIENDLY



Trust the mad men at Koenigsegg to think up this 1700-bhp family car. That the Gemera seats four people isn't even the weirdest part about the car — its heart is a 2.0-litre 600-bhp three-cylinder engine, called the Tiny Friendly Giant, which

runs on renewable alcohol fuel. Before you have a chance to come to terms with that power figure, there are three electric motors placed around that engine. A pair of 500-bhp motors powering each of the two rear wheels and a 400-bhp motor sending

power to the front axle (this is Koenigsegg's first all-wheel-drive car). Koenigsegg claims a 0-100 kph time of 1.9 seconds and a range of 1000 km before you have to recharge the batteries or refuel the car. How's that for a road trip machine?

PROMOTION

# #BeTheBetterGuy





# Wait your turn!

**R**emember as kids when sitting in the driver's seat of a parked car and pretending to drive was all the rage? We admit, it's a really fun game to play, but please hold off on actually driving a car until you're of legal age. You may have all the motor skills required to drive a car, but the ability to make those split-second driving decisions only comes with age and maturity.

If you're a parent or guardian, it may be tempting to let your child sit on your lap and steer for you, or take the car for a spin in your neighbourhood, but please refrain from doing that for your safety and the safety of the other road users. A lot can go wrong when you place the reins of a two-tonne metal and glass projectile in inexperienced hands.

For all the youngsters out there aching to get behind the wheel of a car, wait till you get your learner's permit before you drive. Don't worry, the experience will be just as rewarding with none of the guilt associated with breaking the law. We, the other road users, are counting on you to keep the roads safe.



# MATTER OF CONVENIENCE

**With more power and an automatic transmission, does the Tata Harrier finally have the right stuff?**

*By Aditya Upadhyaula Photographs Kaizad Adil Darukhanawala*



When we drove the Tata Harrier last year, our chief complaint was that it was lacking in power. That, and the absence of an automatic transmission in the line-up dampened the experience of one of the most competent cars in Tata's range. Now, with the updated Harrier, Tata has addressed those issues and then some. To give you a quick recap, the Harrier is one of the first Tata models to borrow from the Land Rover side of the company. The OMEGARC architecture is based on Land Rover's D8 architecture and even shares front suspension design with it, while the rear suspension

was fettled by Lotus engineering. All of this may sound like marketing-speak, but even a short drive will tell you that the Harrier has some of the best on-road manners in its class.

The main changes to the Harrier, however, happen under the hood. With the Fiat-sourced 2.0-litre engine now making 168 bhp, it's a healthy 30-bhp bump over the earlier car. Thanks to improved sound insulation and recalibration of the fuel injectors, engine noise in the cabin is a thing of the past, too. Then there is the new automatic transmission — a 6-speed torque-converter automatic sourced from

Hyundai — which makes for a surprisingly good pairing. In traffic, where the clutch on the manual variant used to get tiring, the Harrier now makes effortless progress. Well, effortless until you have to steer, that is.

The hydraulic power steering is a little heavy at low speeds, but it improves significantly as speeds increase. The transmission metes out smooth shifts regardless of whether you're cruising around or hurrying the Harrier on the highway. There is a manual mode if you want more control over the transmission, and it doesn't shift up until you





New wheels are striking



The auto 'box' is a boon in traffic



The Kryotec engine now makes a healthy 168 bhp

hit the redline, but I recommend just leaving it in Drive. The torque converter also helps smooth out the power delivery of the turbo-diesel by letting it stay on boost for longer. This combo is a definite win in my books!

Inside, you'll be greeted by a bright and airy cabin, thanks to one of the largest panoramic sunroofs in the segment. The driver's seat is now power adjustable, too, allowing you to get to the perfect seating position without much effort. If there's one thing I'd love to have changed about the interior, though, it would be to get rid of the fiddly handbrake lever.

If not an electronic parking brake, at least a more traditional lever would do wonders for the ergonomics. Apple CarPlay is available now on the infotainment system, but the full width of the display isn't used, so you can't take full advantage of the beautiful high-resolution screen. I'm really just nitpicking at this point, though. The fact is, the power bump was enough to make me like the Harrier. It already had many things going for it; its stunning design, roomy cabin and ability to flatten even the roughest stretches of road. The new powertrain combination just seals the deal. ■

## AUTODATA

### TATA HARRIER

<b>POWERTRAIN</b>	
Displacement	1956cc, I-4, diesel
Max power	169 bhp@3750 rpm
Max torque	35.69 kgm@1750-2500 rpm
Transmission	6 speed, automatic
<b>TYRES</b>	
F/R	235/65 R17
<b>DIMENSIONS</b>	
L/W/H (mm)	4598/1894/1706
Wheelbase	2741 mm
Fuel tank capacity	50 litres
<b>PRICE</b>	~ 13.69 - ~ 19.99 LAKH (ex-showroom, Mumbai)



**SHORT SHIFT**  
BMW X5 M COMPETITION

# M AND THE BIG HOON

(WITH DUE APOLOGIES TO JERRY PINTO)

The 2020 BMW X5 M Competition is sharp looking, has *lots* of power and is an enjoyable lout of an SUV

*By Muralidhar Swaminathan Photographs BMW*



There is truly no country which is as SUV-obsessed as the US of A. This is a place where people island themselves off to large degrees, and yet need vehicles that are bigger than their egos. Just look at how often they are in the news for driving their GMCs and Ford F350s with a mannequin in the passenger seat, just to stay in the carpool lane!

This is, after all, the 'land of milk and honey', where trucks and sports utes are big enough to double up as nuclear shelters (or, in today's context, as quarantine facilities).

Last month, I found myself living the Yankee dream, munching on crinkled chips and downing bourbon after spending the better part of the day behind the wheel of an SUV which, even in that land of excess, was a bit much.

BMW's third-gen X5 M Competition was my ride of the day, and I was enjoying it in white-knuckled fashion, at least on

some sections of tarmac. With 625 horses on offer (50 more than the previous generation), the new X5 M was busy blurring the scenery that I was passing through, the cacti and rattlesnake-infested arrow-straight highways on the outskirts of Phoenix, Arizona. The X5 M and its shapelier twin, the X6 M, were always meant to be high-performance luxury SUVs from the German brand, and they compete with the likes of the Porsche Cayenne Turbo. With this third-gen model, it can look to take on bullies further up on the ladder, for sure. BMW's M performance division, the ones that stock up on the company's V8s, have worked with every previous generation of the X5. The second-gen X5 M was quick and had a vaguely wicked demeanour about it. With this new one, BMW has gone the whole nine yards, making it blisteringly fast and giving it devilish good looks to boot.

At the heart of the new X5 M is a 4.4-litre V8 petrol engine with BMW's proprietary TwinPower turbo tech. The engine generates 600 bhp of power and in the Competition model that I was driving, it is an even higher 625 bhp, with 76.5 kgm of torque. This behemoth, weighing in at about 2.4 tonnes, can sprint to 100 kph in 3.8 seconds flat. I'm sure BMW engineers would have reeled off a list of light-weighting measures that this model has gotten, but the only ones that I and the other occupant in the car could perceive was our empty stomachs. This thing is built like a tank, yet it is incredibly quick and sticks to tarmac as though its tyres have been lined by Velcro.

The V8's output is fed to the wheels via an 8-speed M Steptronic transmission, and the M xDrive all-wheel-drive system. BMW engineers say that super-stiff engine mounts ensure direct transmission of power



# “In fact, the 2020 X5 M Competition would’ve been perfect on a race track”

exhaust note (which is electronically enhanced inside the cabin) serving up the right soundtrack for the driver. The servotronic steering, an ultra-stiff chassis and adaptive suspension with electronically controlled dampers gives it extremely precise control even while cornering hard. With overgrown cacti and loose sand spilling onto the road, there was no run-off or extra space for errors, but the X5 M still inspired a lot of confidence because of its finely tuned dynamics.

A lot of individualisation is possible for getting the right mix, including transmission characteristics using the Drivelogic button on the selector lever. I chose sport settings and left the suspension in comfort, for handling the slightly broken back road. A setup button on the centre console allows changes to be made for the engine, dampers, steering, xDrive and brakes. Two customised presets can also be stored and chosen at any time, by clicking one of the

to the drivetrain. The AWD system works in tandem with an active differential at the rear axle, which is already tuned for a rear bias in default four-wheel-drive mode. If you want to defy physics some more, selecting AWD sport mode will enable an even higher amount of torque being directed to the rear wheels. On the road, if the numbers during the pre-drive presentation didn't convey the message, a few taps on the throttle did. Acceleration is visceral, and you don't really feel the speed while behind the wheel. It was a shame that much of the organised drive route out of Phoenix was on public highways, forcing me

to ease back on my right foot, what with all those speed-limit warnings enroute. Thankfully, though, one wrong turn led me down a winding single carriageway back road, where the car's potential could be experienced.

SUVs have evolved over the last two decades, and they are today one of the most sought after body styles. Yet, hulking upright SUVs like the X5 M test the boundaries of logic, with top speeds of 250 kph and the kind of road-holding that we are used to experiencing in low-slung supercars. In fact, the 2020 X5 M Competition would've been perfect on a race track, with its roaring







Nothing unusual here, except for those red 'M' buttons peeking from behind the steering wheel



Sticky 21-inch rubber certainly helps the handling



The badge means to back off!

red buttons on the steering wheel. It is also possible to individualise the information thrown up on the instrument cluster and head-up display. With the rigid suspension and low-profile tyres, the ride quality will be stiff and quite harsh on Indian roads, especially at the back. But then again, if you are looking for back-seat comfort, you shouldn't consider the X5 M in the first place.

The model I was driving gets all the versatility and practicality of the regular X5, but has a strong visual identity. It gets larger air intakes on the front fender, pixie-eared door mirrors that are a M speciality and kidney grilles that are proportionately sized (whoever designed them missed the office memo mandating doubling their size). Other defining design elements are the M gills on the front panels. There are a lot of aero-optimising design bits, including for the underbody. At the rear, a roof spoiler and a rear apron with a diffuser give the X5 M Competition a strong, squat appearance. Two pairs of exhaust pipes sticking out of the rear fender give you a hint of what this hulk is capable of. The

Competition model is also offered with two different rim sizes — 21 inches for the front and 22 inches for the rear. The specially designed M light alloys are a great complement to the vehicle's overall design.

This is a luxury high-performance vehicle, so a lot of attention has been lavished on the X5 M's cabin, too. It doesn't look like a flagship-slayer, but has just that right mix of double-stitched quilted leather, brushed metal and carbon-fibre trim. The seats are massive, with tall side bolsters, and are perfect for long drives and, possibly, a session at the track. The quality of materials used, and fit and finish, is fantastic. The displays, controls and even the engine start button get typical M division treatment.

The X5 M is supposed to be rolled out internationally starting this month (and no updates from Munich yet about whether there will be any Coronavirus-related delays); it is expected to make it to Indian showrooms by the middle of the year. Unlike its predecessor, the 2020 model feels much more special, and the equipment under the bonnet makes it quicker than ever before.

I expect the X5 M to be priced just below ₹ 2 crore; the X6 M is unlikely to make it here. At that price, it will take on the likes of the Porsche Cayenne Turbo and its Mercedes-AMG counterparts, and I think this M-division SUV will be able to hold its own. ■

## AUTODATA

### BMW X5 M COMPETITION

<b>POWERTRAIN</b>	
Displacement	4395cc, V-8, petrol
Max power	625 bhp@6000 rpm
Max torque	76.5 kgm@1800-5600 rpm
Transmission	8 speed, automatic
<b>TYRES</b>	
F/R	295/35 ZR21 / 315/35 ZR21
<b>DIMENSIONS</b>	
L/W/H (mm)	4938/2015/1748
Wheelbase	2972 mm
Ground clearance	212 mm
Kerb weight	2310 kg
Fuel capacity	83 litres
<b>PRICE</b>	TBA

**COVER STORY**  
HYUNDAI CRETA

# REPEAT PERFORMANCE

**Can the second-generation Hyundai Creta reclaim the mid-size SUV throne?**

*Text and Photographs Aditya Upadhyaula*





When the Renault Duster came out in 2012, it kickstarted a segment the Indian market didn't even know it needed. It set the tone for what was to come from all other manufacturers. Today, we have the excellent Venue, but back then Hyundai brought out the Creta. It followed the formula of jacking up a hatchback and calling it an SUV, even though it's more complicated than I made it sound. Like every Hyundai, it came loaded to the gills with features, and build quality was top notch. It was no surprise, then, that the Creta set the sales charts on fire like a flamethrower. Now, with the second generation of the Creta, Hyundai hopes to recreate that magic and take the top spot in its segment once again.

Before you read another word, dear reader, I urge you to spend

a good few minutes taking in the remodelled sight that is the new Creta. Go ahead, I'll wait while you try to make sense of its droopy rear end, and come to terms with its split-headlight look up front. If you look at it long enough, as I have been for some days now, you'll get used to it, too. Fussy styling aside, the Creta is actually really well designed. Take the side profile, for example; the squared fender flares enveloping the 17-inch wheels, joined by a tasteful crease, look great when the light hits them. The proportion of the body to the glass area is near perfect, too. The dual-tone paint job on the test car I had was eye-catching as well.

Could Hyundai have taken a safer approach to the Creta's styling? Absolutely. But that car would have been lost in the sea of other SUVs

pretty quickly. To beat cars like the Kia Seltos, risks must definitely be taken. And love it or hate it, it's hard to deny that the new Creta has road presence. It gathered a significant crowd wherever I parked it. Once we all step out of our houses after this lockdown, you'll see exactly what I mean, when those 10,000 pre-booked Cretas start to hit the roads.

Moving on to the interior of the car, the all-black interior of the turbo variant is peppered with red accents. Contrary to the exterior, the overall design of the interior is more on the subdued side of things, which is great when you want to focus on the driving experience. And focus, you will, because the Creta's dash features a very driver-oriented design. The main 26.03-cm infotainment screen is tilted towards the driver, and all the controls, too,





The infotainment screen and controls are tilted towards the driver



Digital gauge cluster is easy to read



Bose audio system just like the Seltos



Air purifier is built right into the centre armrest

**Fussy styling aside,  
the Creta is actually  
really well designed**







are placed within easy reach. New for this generation is a digital display in the instrument cluster flanked by the rev-counter and fuel gauge — and a voice-controlled panoramic sunroof!

From cooled seats up front to an air purifier built into the front armrest, the Creta comes builds on Hyundai's feature-prowess. Sadly, though, for everything it offers, soft-touch plastics are nowhere to be seen on the Creta's dash, which is unfortunate for a car in this price range. For the times when you want

to be driven, the rear seat offers plenty of comfort, too. Leg-room is improved over the previous-generation model thanks to a longer wheelbase. Couple that with the built-in window blinds and central armrest, and you're looking at a very comfortable scenario indeed.

Everything about the 1.4-litre turbo-petrol variant of the Creta screams performance, from its dual-tipped exhaust, drive modes (sport, eco and comfort) to the paddle shifters for its 7-speed dual-clutch

transmission. So does it have the go to match its show? Yes, it does! Plant your foot on the accelerator and the Creta takes off with a little bit of wheelspin for good measure, before traction control takes over and helps put the power down. The engine provides a smooth wave of torque and the transmission seamlessly shifts gears to keep the power going. When you put the transmission in sport mode, it holds onto gears until the redline and is quick to downshift, making the





Creta an eager performer. Segment-first paddle shifters are available and they are very responsive, but leaving the transmission in D or S is just as effective when you're hustling it along.

Is it sporty, though? Well, it's complicated. If you put the Creta in sport mode, the steering does tighten up noticeably, and you get the confidence to take it around corners at higher speeds. However, the suspension is tuned pretty softly, so any road undulations tend to unsettle it. Mind you, you do have a whole suite of electronic nannies to keep you safe so you're never in any danger, but overall, it's more a straight-line rocket than a corner carver. There's nothing wrong with

that, of course; in Indian conditions, the ability to take on bad roads is far more important than the need to navigate extremely high-speed corners. That said, I do wish it had struck a better balance between ride and handling. Those who want fun might well be pushed towards the Seltos.

To answer the question of whether the Creta can reclaim its throne, I think Hyundai has a winning combination on its hands. The Creta's got every feature you could ask for and then some. A choice of three engine options and a total five powertrain combinations mean that there's something for everyone. And when did anyone ever go wrong with a Creta? ■

## AUTODATA

### HYUNDAI CRETA

<b>POWERTRAIN</b>	
Displacement	1353cc, I-4, petrol
Max power	138 bhp@6000 rpm
Max torque	24.7 kgm@1500-3200 rpm
Transmission	7 speed DCT
<b>TYRES</b>	
F/R	215/60 R17
<b>DIMENSIONS</b>	
L/W/H (mm)	4300/1790/1635
Wheelbase	2610 mm
Fuel tank capacity	50 litres
<b>PRICE</b>	
	~ 17.2 LAKH (ex-showroom, India)

## ISSUE SPECIAL

YAMAHA RX 100 VS  
MARUTI SUZUKI ESTEEM



# TRUE BLUES

The '90s come calling with evergreen fun machines

*Text & Photographs Kartik Ware*

Maybe, just this once, a car has a chance,' I thought, between attempts to kick the throttle through the floor. What had followed each time was a bellow of rapid forward motion that casually waved off the almost-uncomfortable driving position and a dashboard so old-fashioned, Cro-Magnons would've scoffed at it. The Maruti Suzuki Esteem, old as it

was, still had plenty of fight left in it. On a dark and early morning, it was headed straight for its nemesis for the day, the inspiring Yamaha RX 100.

I glanced at the Esteem's speedometer needle sweep past the 100-kph mark, and my sleepy eyes widened right up; the headlights could probably brag to a couple of skeptical candles, but not much else.

A second glance at the dashboard caught the cassette player embedded in it like an old wound, and a sudden and pertinent question came to mind — 'Does this thing have ABS?' The answer was, 'Of course not.' But why was an old car on its way to meet an old bike? The answer, in one most exciting word, is motorsport. You see, few machines





have dominated Indian race tracks and rally stages like the Esteem and the RX 100. In their respective classes, of course.

In 2009, I experienced a race-prepped Esteem and an RX that no one (who'd owned stock versions of either) would believe. I was either laughed at and/or accused of being a liar, and in return I considered them unfortunate for never getting their hands on a race-spec Esteem or RX. The RX's racing career ended some time ago after two-stroke ban, but the Esteem is still out on race tracks teaching its newer rivals a thing or two. Meeting these stock examples for this story was, in a way, an attempt to refresh 11-year-old memories. I may have stopped telling those stories, but I never stopped believing in them, though

I may have needed this as a bit of a refresher course. And refreshing, it certainly was — in a decidedly old-charming way. But first, since these are old machines with long lives, a little history.

The Esteem has lived more lives than the average cat. Its original Japanese name was the Suzuki Cultus, and the version we got in India was the second-generation one from 1988. It was known as the Suzuki Swift and Chevrolet Geo Metro in North America, Pontiac Firefly in Canada, Chevrolet Swift in Colombia, Subaru Justy in Europe, Changan Suzuki Lingyang in China, and Holden Barina in Australia. As you can see, the car really got around. In our case, at first Indians knew it as the underpowered Maruti 1000, but eventually we came to love

it as the Esteem with its 1.3-litre 16-valve fuel-injected DOHC four-cylinder motor, its 85 bhp propelling a package that weighed 875 kg. With a power-to-weight ratio of 97 bhp per tonne, the Esteem was always going to the races.

However, motorcycles win all power-to-weight gold medals. And few wear theirs better than the RX 100 with its 110 bhp per tonne, thanks to its 97-kg weight and 11 bhp from its 98cc two-stroke motor; trust a two-stroke to produce a three-digit number from two-digit ones. To put this into current perspective, our favourite, the 8.3-bhp 112-kg 110cc TVS Radeon, offers 74 bhp per tonne. If we had race-prepped examples, the RX would leave only a trail of blue smoke for the Esteem to chase.



“It stood there on its side stand saying, ‘Paint all your French girls like me.’”

However, since these are production machines that belong to others, no races were run. Indeed, there wasn't even a contest, just a meeting among early-morning joggers.

The Esteem reached the spot first, and as the sun came up, it revealed the several chinks and scratches on the Esteem's blue armour, especially on its bumpers. This particular car was an ongoing project and some way from completion; it had all manner of braces under the hood in addition to a booming aftermarket air-filter and header setup. A JDM sticker on the rear windshield made the car's intentions clear. However, I wondered how it made sense; JDM stands for Japanese domestic market and I suppose we should call them IDMs instead. These pointless musings were interrupted by a bright

and cheerful dot approaching us. The RX had arrived.

The early-morning sunshine was all the RX needed to out-blue the sky. It stood there on its side stand saying, 'Paint all your French girls like me.' Our three-strong group's dropped jaws could only nod in agreement. This particular bike had been restored to perfection by YC Design of Mumbai. Apart from a few minor dents, it may as well have left the factory floor a couple of hours ago. As with most old-ish machines, both were running less than ideally, too; the RX's carb was flooding and required a knack to start, while the Esteem had to be coaxed into cranking to life. But when they ran, they behaved like the absolutely reckless teenagers they are.

I wouldn't let anyone tell me





otherwise — the Esteem was still fast. That 1.3-litre motor still had a lot to say and show to early-morning traffic. It could still catch me off-guard with unprovoked wheelspin. The light weight and low stance made for fast and precise steering, even if the suspension was at the end of its life. The low seating position made me wonder how many drivers it had kept fit by providing daily exercise. More than anything else, though, the Esteem still hadn't become a typical old car. It was stuck somewhere between the 'gentle' performance of the generations before it and the emissions-sanctioned emasculated efficiency of today.

From the outside, the Esteem still sported that perfect sedan stance, especially from the front



*RX features lots of round details, where the Esteem is all smooth and flat lines*



*Entire generations of tuners have worked on this*



*And many more generations on this one, too!*



*Aftermarket wheel. And a deity as navigator, too*



*Old-school meter still looks cool, right?*



*Makes one wonder, are we rapidly growing far too used to LEDs?*









## “Like the Esteem, it wore many polite masks on its sneering face”

three-quarters. And it still made one want to bolt on a tasteful spoiler, grilled bumpers with huge foglamps, and wild alloys housed in low-profile rubber... maybe there's still merit in the JDM term. Also, remember that toothy grille from one of the Esteem avatars? That's actually from the car's other life as the Subaru Justy; trust me, the grille makes perfect sense when you see a Subaru badge in it. I, however, preferred the very first face the Esteem showed us, clean and simple, just waiting for an oscillating red light from KITT of Knight Rider fame. The RX, of course, was nothing like it.

The Yamaha was a Japanese miniaturisation of classic British-bike styling, and as such is timeless. Everything about it was light; its weight, its handling, the kick required to start it, and the front wheel once you got going. From the first tiny cloud of fragrant smoke that issued from its exhaust, the RX made its intentions clear. In its own Lilliputian manner, it was out to take no prisoners, an attitude amplified several times via heavy-duty tuning when it went racing. Even beneath the restored veneer of this particular RX, that spirit of bite-sized rowdiness still lived on.

And nothing made a sound like an RX 100, not even its similar-looking 135cc siblings. The RX 100's exhaust was a musical instrument, not a mere device to expel the byproducts of internal combustion. It was ringing a hundred smoking bells wherever it went, the frequency dependent on the throttle. In corners, it felt like a bicycle on the mildest of steroids. In traffic, it buzzed through gaps like a most distinguished mosquito. It could putter around in the hands of a

dutiful father, and raise hell in the hands of the good-for-nothing son. And the RX always knew what it'd rather do. Like the Esteem, it wore many polite masks on its sneering face.

It is remarkable to note how much sense these machines make even today. The Esteem is still cheap to buy and run, as far as cars go. The RX, for some reason, is an expensive affair these days. I'd be careful to go after either, honestly, because I've learnt that it's rather easy to get carried away with seemingly harmless projects. However, both machines made me wonder if progress is really absolutely required in some cases. I can easily imagine a JDM couple with two JDM kids happily growling around on late-night city streets. And an RX wouldn't look out of place in that picture, too. Every time I ride an RX, it makes me want one... which is a bit worrying because I already have two. But the RX is like a playful kitten — and you can never have too many of those.

These two machines ask the question, 'Why do modern cars and bikes have all the personality of tube lights?' The answer may well be focus. Very few machines, then and now, have one clear direction in which they want to take their users. Which is also probably why the Esteem and the RX both ended up racing others. These two have had long and distinguished motorsport careers with thousands of stories between them. The sound of their exhausts still lingers at race tracks and on rally stages throughout the country. And with that image, it was time to call it day. A day spent listening to a smoking pipe and looking at a cassette player. ■



## ISSUE SPECIAL

**BMW R 1250 GS VS MERCEDES-  
BENZ G-CLASS G350D**





# GELÄNDE LORDS

## The Germans are here! What do we do now?

By Kartik Ware *Photographs* Kaizad Adil Darukhanawala



As far as big deals go, few get bigger than this. How does 81 years of combined history sound? If the BMW R 1250 GS and the Mercedes-Benz G-Class decided to rewind their consolidated lifetimes, we'd be back in 1939 which was not such a good time for Germany (their home country) and the rest of the world. The G was born in 1979 and the GS followed in 1980, and since then they have worked hard to enlist dedicated followers, they're a pair that's an army on its own, and could easily conquer the planet if they wanted... hang on, this is getting a bit uncomfortable.

Nonetheless, even if German domination is still an awkward topic, that's exactly what these two achieve. The G began as the Geländewagen, though it's now called the G-Class to toe the M-B party line, while the GS still sticks to its original title, Gelände/Straße, German for off-road/road, though without the slash that appeared in the first R 80 G/S. Both the G and



*Masters of all they survey. Hard to think of a more forbidding pair, isn't it?*



the GS prefer function over form, though their forms are now so recognisable and loved, we wouldn't have it any other way. A garage containing these two would be a formidable sight indeed, along with a Doberman or four to complete the effect.

And while India at least got the Tempo Trax in 1988 to fulfill any G-Wagen ambitions, the closest we've come to a GS was in 1996, with the BMW F 650 Funduro that went on to sire the international line



*Tough on the outside, high-tech sophistication inside*







**“... the GS and the G are two of the most characterful machines anyone will ever come across”**



*Does exactly what it says on the label*

of single-cylinder GS models. Today, we even have a 310cc one made by TVS in Hosur. How times change. And as we saw at the latest Auto Expo, the Gurkha gets even more G-ish design cues, making it all the more attractive. Why am I saying this? Because the G and the GS may well have been born as workhorses, but today they are unicorns for those who wear diamonds as spurs. With starting prices of Rs 16.85 lakh and Rs 1.5 crore, they're machines that few Indians can afford. Pity.

Pity, for the GS and the G are two of the most characterful machines anyone will ever come across. I mean, who'd look at the GS and think, 'Yeah, yeah, that looks totally manageable, come what may'? No one. And yet, that is exactly what it is. With a sense of balance bred over 40 years, riding the GS is as easy as the alphabet. And BMW has done

it with its front Telelever and rear Paralever suspension, too, giving conventional suspension a solid one-two punch combination. Whether it's gelände or straÙe, the GS always feels like a 249-kg ballerina. Poise is key to a motorcycle and the GS owns it. No such thing with the G, though.

The G-Class is hilariously brutish in its approach to things. Its three-pointed stare looks happiest when it's pounding things into submission, roaring things like, 'I could've gone to Mars! Why did they send that puny machine?!' The G does look right at home surrounded by clouds of dust kicked up by its capable wheels. It only believes in living on the gelände, even if there's enough body roll on every imaginable axis, sometimes even all at once. It's all part of the experience, though, as are the 286



**“Parachutes  
would  
applaud their  
ability to  
resist the air...  
both will still  
steamroll past  
200 kph...”**

horses that pull the G along. Quite a bit more than the GS's 134 bhp, but rest assured the motorcycle will quite comfortably rooster-tail away from the SUV. And yet, as different as they are, these Germans do display some similarity.

Both reduce the planetary surface's disturbances to gentle thuds lost in their respective suspension travels. Parachutes would applaud their ability to resist the air — and both will still steamroll past 200 kph, although I'm in no hurry to attempt any such thing. Even if both also come with enough electronics to last for the next few moon missions. In any case, if I were to go off-road, I'd

do so rather gingerly with the GS. They might call it an 'adventure motorcycle', but if it were to fall over, I'd have to prefix a 'mis' before that term. That's the advantage of an SUV off the road; no need to check the stand multiple times, only for it to move and cause a heart attack anyway.

The GS now comes with BMW's new ShiftCam tech, fancy speak for variable valve timing. Now, the GS makes more power and torque than before, but it also makes it a bit more aggressive everywhere. In every respect, the R 1200 GS was already so accomplished a motorcycle, I believed it couldn't be improved upon. With the 1250, the GS's







much-loved ever-mellow-yet-strong nature is somewhat diminished, and so, in some ways, the R 1250 GS's progress is a bit lost on me. Also, I can recognise a GS, sure, but don't ask me which model it is. I haven't looked at one long enough to remember, like any other 'adventure' motorcycle. But it hardly matters. The GS is still the destroyer of mid-life crises everywhere.

The GS and the G-Class comes from the stoutest of German rivals, BMW and Mercedes-Benz, the star and the propeller, ever at odds. But

that's the beauty of stories like this one. Even if there's a winner, the loser can go home content that it was never a fair fight. The G was, is and will be a legend of a machine, and it's destined to be remembered by generations, much like the motorcycle accompanying it. The GS is the Asterix to the G's Obelix, only this time both fell into the cauldron of magic potion as babies. The motorcycle is one of the best ever made, not only in its category, but in the world. Even the G-Class can't help but agree on that one. ■

## AUTODATA

### MERCEDES-BENZ G-CLASS (G 350D)

<b>POWERTRAIN</b>	
Displacement	2925cc, inline-six
Max power	286 bhp@3400-4600 rpm
Max torque	61 kgm@1200-3200 rpm
Transmission	9AT
<b>TYRES</b>	
F/R	275/50 R20
<b>DIMENSIONS</b>	
L/W/H (mm)	4817/1931/1969
Wheelbase	2980 mm
Ground clearance	241 mm
Kerb weight	2453 kg
Fuel tank capacity	100 litres
<b>PRICE</b>	
	~ 1.5 CRORE (ex-showroom)

## MOTODATA

### BMW R 1250 GS

<b>POWERTRAIN</b>	
Displacement	1254cc, flat-twin
Max power	134 bhp@7750 rpm
Max torque	14.58 kgm@6250 rpm
Transmission	6-speed
<b>CHASSIS</b>	
Type	Tubular frame
<b>BRAKES</b>	
F/R	305-mm twin discs/ 276-mm disc
<b>TYRES</b>	
F/R	120/70 R19 / 170/60 R17
<b>DIMENSIONS</b>	
L/W/H (mm)	2207/952/1430
Wheelbase	1514 mm
Ground clearance	NA
Seat height	850 mm
Kerb weight	249 kg
Fuel capacity	20 litres
<b>PRICE</b>	
	~ 16.85 LAKH onwards (ex-showroom)



## ISSUE SPECIAL

**MERCEDES-AMG GT 63 S 4-DOOR  
VS DUCATI DIAVEL 1260**







# NONSENSE AND SENSIBILITY

These two machines make the perfect garage

By Aditya Upadhyaula Photographs Kaizad Adil Darukhanawala

I don't like it when people ask me what my favourite car or bike is. There is no way I'm choosing only one from the many machines I lust after over the course of a single day. But maybe there is a point — choosing a favourite means your time isn't divided between many vehicles, leaving you to put all your

attention and resources on your one true love. Having a rolling list of favourites doesn't do justice to any one of the vehicles, I admit. So I've thought long and hard, and have come up with my favourite car and bike — the Mercedes-AMG GT 63 S 4MATIC+ 4-door coupé (say that three times fast!) and the Ducati

Diavel 1260. Not so fast! I can't just come up with a favourite, can I? For the sake of science, I will need to put these machines through the wringer to see if they deserve it. Just know that I'm doing this so you don't have to!

First up is the car. I have some pretty simple criteria for what a





car needs to do to be part of my garage. It needs to be fun, fast and practical. Any number of cars satisfy those first two items on the list, but when it comes to practicality, there's no beating the Mercedes-AMG GT 63 S 4-door. For starters, it's a hatchback, so it's got all the room in the back to fit your weekly shopping. Oh, and it has '4-door' in its name — the rear seats even come with isofix mounts in case you wanted to mount a child seat — so that's a check on practicality. And to speed this process along, let's just say it satisfies the fun and fast bits as well. After all, how many cars will let you say, 'Come on, kids. Let's do some hot laps of the Nürburgring,' and mean it?

A 4.0-litre twin-turbo V8 is shoehorned under the hood, making 630 bhp and an absolutely insane 91.9 kgm of torque. Couple this

with a 9-speed transmission and an all-wheel-drive system, and you'll be passing the 100-kph mark in 3.2 seconds. The car continues to accelerate like a scud missile set loose to an electronically-limited 315 kph. However, it's when you're presented with a corner that you really see what makes the AMG so special. Rear-wheel steering and active suspension helps the sticky 20-inch rubber dig into the road surface with the tenacity of a mountain goat and slingshot you to the other side of the corner. I found myself taking the same corner over and over just to get over the sheer disbelief at the handling abilities of this machine. It can do this all day, mind you.

Now onto the bike. The Ducati Diavel 1260 is called a power-cruiser, but really, it is more of a sports machine than a cruiser. Its

handling around corners is smooth and precise, and not once do you feel that you are muscling around a 244-kg monster. The most striking aspect is certainly the bike's design — visually, there is nothing like the Diavel today. It's a machine that, regardless of what taste you have in bikes, will make you feel tingly inside like no other bike.

The 1262 Testastretta V-twin engine in the Diavel is staggering to say the least and power delivery is mental. Acceleration from 120-200 kph is gut-wrenching. But at the same time, it is composed and gives you the feeling of being in control. It's the same feeling as when aircraft jets kick in for takeoff and you get pushed into your seat. But on the Diavel you're hanging on with a wide grin under the helmet. Although it's capable of clocking over 270 kph, the real thrill

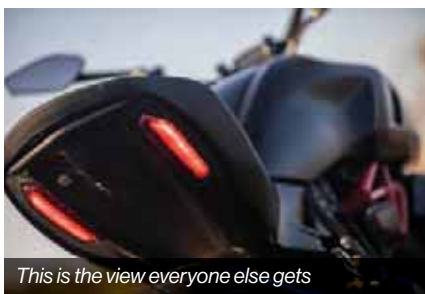




“It’s the same feeling as when aircraft jets kick in and you get pushed into your seat”



*So compact, but so much fun*



*This is the view everyone else gets*



*The suede seat is plenty grippy*



*The Diavel looks like nothing else on the road*





*Not a bad view from the driver's seat*



*Take a look at those TFT buttons*



*It doesn't have a screen, but it gets the job done*





“They both make enough power to instantly turn their tyres into smoke”

on the Diavel is in short and hard bursts of acceleration. No wonder it features in the top five fastest-accelerating production motorcycles ever. It *is* a lifestyle product, but it hasn't forgotten the ethos of simple motorcycling fun. Whether it's a run to the cafe or a highway ride to the twisties, the Diavel will charm its pilot like no other.

So we've established that, individually, they're both very impressive machines, but it's only when you bring them together that you see how well they complement each other. They're both powered by engines in V configurations, they both make enough power to

instantly turn their tyres into smoke. Think about it — with the amount of electronic aids these vehicles have, it's not a farfetched idea to take them for a quick school run or a grocery trip, but turn all those dials up to 11 and you have machines that really can lay waste to any track you put them on. True all-rounders, these!

The idea of owning only one car and bike is still an uncomfortable one for me, but at least I know that when I'm ready for a life of monogamy, these two machines are waiting. Oh, and as long as we're keeping this fantasy going, in this scenario, I own a tyre factory as well. ■

## AUTODATA

### MERCEDES-AMG GT 63 S 4-DOOR

<b>POWERTRAIN</b>	
Displacement	3982, Twin-Turbo V8, Petrol
Max power	630 bhp@5500-6500 rpm
Max torque	91.8 kgm@2500-4500 rpm
Transmission	9-speed, automatic
<b>TYRES</b>	
F/R	265/40 R20 / 295/35 R20
<b>DIMENSIONS</b>	
L/W/H (mm)	5054/1871/1447
Wheelbase	2951 mm
Kerb weight	2045 kg
Fuel tank capacity	80 litres
<b>PRICE</b>	~ <b>2.42 CRORE</b> (ex-showroom, Delhi)

## MOTODATA

### DUCATI DIAVEL 1260

<b>POWERTRAIN</b>	
Displacement	1262cc, V-Twin
Max power	157 bhp@9500 rpm
Max torque	13.1 kgm@7500 rpm
Transmission	6-speed
<b>CHASSIS</b>	
Type	Steel Tube Trellis
<b>SUSPENSION</b>	
F/R	Upside-down telescopic fork Single-sided swingarm (R)
<b>BRAKES</b>	
F/R	Twin 320mm discs / 265mm disc
<b>TYRES</b>	
F/R	120/70 ZR17 / 240/45 ZR17
<b>DIMENSIONS</b>	
Wheelbase	1600 mm
Seat height	780 mm
Dry weight	244 kg
Fuel capacity	17 litres
<b>PRICE</b>	~ <b>17.70 LAKH</b> (ex-showroom, Delhi)







# BIRTH OF AN ICON

This is what it takes to build the ultimate SUV



**S**oon after its unveil, the All New Hyundai Creta has already received well over 10,000 bookings. We took a trip to Hyundai's manufacturing facility in Chennai, Tamil Nadu, to see how the All New Creta is built.

Before production of a new model even begins at the plant, every model goes through four stages of trials. While it is usually a time-consuming process, the time taken for these trials has been reduced significantly thanks to new technology such as digital pre-assembly. Everything in terms of parts and processes is loaded on to computers to figure out how the process and its efficiency can be improved. Therefore, before a car is even put on the physical line, everyone involved in making the car is already aware of what to expect and what to do thanks to the virtual checking of it. Another technology that sees a lot of use is 3D printing. Samples and moulds of different variations are made rapidly to evaluate the best possible option. Finally and most importantly, prototyping on the line itself is done. Physical prototypes are run on certain sections in the line to see how it works, and to check if any improvements are to be made to the line. When a new model finally arrives, Hyundai is fully prepared to immediately integrate it.

The journey of the All New Creta begins at the press shop where huge coils of sheet metal are unravelled and fed into one of the most awe-inspiring machines in the shop, the 5400-tonne modular press. This press converts flat panels of steel into the



The turbo pack comes with an all-black interior with red accents

## The 5400-tonne press makes quick work of a batch of Creta side panels as we look on

requisite body panels for the new Creta. It starts at one end as a sheet, before being cut into shape at one workstation. It then moves on to the next one where it gets pressed using a mould. The excess is then again snipped off at the next station before it finally exits the press on a conveyor belt. This entire process is automated, of course, but there is one technician keeping a keen eye on the readouts of the machine to make sure everything runs smoothly. The 5400-tonne press makes quick work of the batch of Creta side panels as we look on. Once this process is complete, the finished panels are loaded onto trays and stacked in colour-coded racks at the other end of the press shop. Every batch is inspected for defects to ensure quality control; 17 panels for the Creta are stamped out at the press shop.



Soon, engines will join the body shells of the Creta







All cars are placed on a rolling road for inspection



Engines are also manufactured in-house

From here, the panels move on to the next step in the manufacturing process, the body shop. This is where the car begins to develop its final shape. The basic structure is put together here, with the doors, hood and boot being attached, too. Most of it is heavily automated and robotic arms carry out precision-based processes such as welding with great accuracy and efficiency. Technicians use machines to rivet in a few parts such as the hood and boot, and at the end what remains is a complete shell of the Creta. Of course, it is missing all internals, but the external shape is complete. At this point, the Creta models equipped with the panoramic sunroof are sent for further processing. The panoramic sunroof in the Creta is unique in that it is fixed to the car from inside the car. This process allows for better tolerances on the sunroof and increases its serviceability.

The percentage of high strength steel

and advanced high strength steel in the All New Hyundai Creta has been increased to 74.3 per cent to improve structural rigidity and to keep weight down as well. As a result, the shell of the new Creta weighs a little under 300 kg while still maintaining superb rigidity and strength. The body in white of the Creta is then taken to the testing area where, with the help of 3D scanning robots, all the panels and welds are inspected to ensure they meet the specified tolerances.

The body moves on to the state-of-the-art paint shop after all the fittings are installed. This is another step in the manufacturing process that requires little to no human involvement. The All New Hyundai Creta is available in 10 colours including two dual-tone colours on the Turbo Pack.

After the paint shop, the body finally reaches the assembly line. This is the



The body shell is ready for the powertrain and interior to be installed



The panoramic sunroof is fitted to the body with immense precision





Both the MPI petrol and U2 CRDi diesel engines are manufactured here



Colour-coordinated racks for each model keep the press shop organised



Every inch of the factory floor is put to use in the manufacturing of the Creta



most critical part of the manufacturing process as it is where the entire car is finally put together and given life. Initially, the doors are removed to make it easier to access the inside and the interiors are first installed by hand using machines for lifting the heavy parts. Seats are installed next along with the electricals. All the parts and fittings required to assemble the specific model and trim are readily available on carts placed parallel to the assembly line. Once the interior of the car is put together, it's time to move on to one of the most important steps in the manufacture of a vehicle — the marriage between the powertrain and the body.

The All New Hyundai Creta comes with five powertrain options including a 1.5-litre diesel mated to both a 6-speed manual as well as a 6-speed automatic, a 1.4-litre turbo-petrol engine mated to a 7-speed DCT and a 1.5-litre petrol engine mated to a 6-speed manual and an intelligently variable





## **“The body arrives on a separate line above, while the powertrain is on a line below and they meet in perfect harmony”**

transmission. The pair of 1.5-litre engines are manufactured on-site at the engine shop. The engines and transmission assemblies are then sent to the assembly shop where they will meet the body of the Creta.

The body arrives on a separate line above, while the powertrain is on a line below and they meet in perfect harmony. Technicians expertly bolt them together, along with the suspension and brakes before finally fixing the wheels to the Creta. This is the final stage, before fluids are put into the completed car and it is cranked for the very first time. Of course,

the new car starts effortlessly. It is finally alive!

The newborn Creta is then driven to the rolling road where the engine and transmission are tested in a controlled environment. There is also a leak-test area where the entire car is subjected to extreme wet-weather testing to ensure that the car is properly weather sealed. Finally, it's off to the test track next door where all cars are put through their paces, post which they are lined up once again for a final inspection. Every inch of the car is carefully looked over — even the paint job is inspected for uniformity. Only

when it passes all inspections does it move the final stop in the manufacturing facility — the transport bay. Here row upon row of trailers wait in line to be loaded up with cars. Once packed, they head straight to dealers and distributors, who give it one last pre-delivery inspection. Eager customers finally get their hands on their prized possessions. It takes a lot to convert sheet metal into the All New Hyundai Creta, and while the final product is already poised to take the market by storm, it is all possible because of the symphony of technicians and machines working like clockwork!

**EXPERIENCE**

**MAHINDRA DESERT SURVIVOR**

# JUST DESERT

**Mahindra Adventure's Desert Survivor gives us the ins and outs of dune bashing**

*By Aditya Upadhyaula Photographs Mahindra*







I'm not much of an off-road person, I prefer to get my thrills on solid tarmac, but even I know not to decline an invitation that offers to take me to Jaisalmer and teach me how to drive on sand dunes. Especially when it happens to be the instructors at Mahindra Adventure's Desert Survivor training academy set up on the Sam dunes outside Jaisalmer. Mahindra Adventure has an amazing, vast facility in Igatpuri where most of their training events take place, but the Desert Survivor and Snow Survivor are two courses that take place off-site, because it's easier to take the academy to the snow and dunes than the other way around.

The Desert Survivor course started off easily enough, with an opportunity to get used to the Mahindra Scorpio 4x4 on the arrow-straight roads of Rajasthan as we drove from Jodhpur to Jaisalmer. We reached the hotel just as the sun was setting and were greeted by the sight of eight more Scorpios and one grey Thar standing outside the hotel. After a quick break, everyone paired up and got into their

assigned cars, and I found my car being used as the lead car. Now, I'm not experienced enough to lead this group through the parking lot, let alone the dunes. So I hopped into the only empty car, which happened to be the Thar which was originally supposed to be the lead and recovery car. But because it is so much more capable than the Scorpios, the instructors decided to use a Scorpio to lead instead, to make sure all the cars could clear the obstacles. Oh well, the Thar would have to do. Hehehe.

We headed into the desert in complete darkness with 4L engaged, and the instructors first let us have a go at the dunes on our own, just to see what we'd end up doing. So naturally, just about every car ended up getting stuck, even me in the supremely capable Thar. This brought us to our first lesson — know when to stop! If you think you won't be able to make forward progress, stop and reverse out. Continuing to spin your wheels will only end up beaching you, but if you back up you can take a different path the next time.

**We headed into the desert in complete darkness with 4L engaged**







*When in doubt, reverse!*



Lesson number two for driving in the sand is to let momentum carry you forward. It's not about absolute speed out on the sand, but about constant speed. So I took to the same dune again with my newfound knowledge; I backed up a fair distance and kept my revs high, and the Thar climbed it like it was nothing. Once I got the hang of it, I spent the rest of the night helping recover stuck cars with the winch. In the right hands, the Thar is absolutely unstoppable, even with the 'wrong' tyres for the terrain.

Knobby tyres are great for rock-crawling, but on sand, a wider tyre with a bigger contact patch is needed. Regardless, the Thar was driving literal circles around the Scorpios to get in position to use the winch. Where the Scorpio drivers had to worry about scraping the

plastic bumper, the Thar had no such concern. The metal bumpers were mounted high, giving it excellent approach and departure angles. Although we only tackled easier obstacles at night, the fear of getting completely lost in the darkness added an additional layer of thrill to the expedition.

The next day, we set off for the dunes again, and in broad daylight I realised just how vast the dunes were. This time, we were going to tackle the taller dunes and we learnt another important lesson. The trick to not toppling when attempting a steep climb is to use gravity to your advantage. When climbing a steep dune, if you think you're losing momentum on the way up, slowly steer the car down the slope in a wide arc and use gravity to bring you down. Steering against gravity is





*With the right tyres, the Thar can breeze through these dunes*



*It's scarier from the driver's seat, where it looks like the ground drops away*

## Because I was driving the Thar, I helped out with recovery duties

a recipe for a disaster as the weight shift might topple already tall SUVs.

I thought driving on the sand at night was pretty exciting, but it gets so much better when you can actually see where you're going. With constant guidance from the instructors over the radio, we set off taking on even taller sand hills. It seemed like we were facing dunes that were impossible to climb, but before we knew it, we were on top of them, scouting for the next big

climb. Funnily enough, getting up seemed like the easy part, it was cresting the hill and coming down that had the tendency to make your stomach drop a bit. Especially when you're carrying a significant amount of speed as you crest a hill and you don't know what's waiting on the other side. Having a spotter here helped immensely and we all made it through without any mishaps.

Again, because I was driving the Thar, I helped out with recovery







*Low visibility and unfamiliar terrain? Sign me up!*



*The instructors were happy to bid goodbye to us after two days*

duties. You don't realise how powerful a winch is until you see it pull a two-tonne vehicle out of deep sand, uphill, without breaking a sweat. You also realise how much tension and force are going through the cable when it's fully taut. All the more reason to stay away from it while the winch is doing its thing.

Now I have to come clean, I did manage to beach the Thar once. On the way to recovering another car, I was a little too throttle-happy and

did exactly what the instructors told me not to and spun up the wheels. So, I managed to beach the most capable car there, but not to worry, that winch was going to pull me out, right? Nope! Apparently, I was stuck so deep that the only way out was to start digging. We did just that and in a few minutes, the Thar was ready to go again.

At the end of the second day, I came back with a lot more respect for the desert and a whole lot of

love for the Thar. I know there is a lot more to learn and that I've barely scratched the surface of what the Thar is really capable of. I think everyone should take the Mahindra Desert Survivor course, not because driving on our roads after the monsoons makes you long for the smooth sand of the desert, but because it teaches you invaluable car-control skills in a controlled environment. And the most important thing — it's fun! ■





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# MOTOFOCUS

HALF THE WHEELS. TWO MUCH FUN!

## YAMAHA MT-01

CHONKY LONG BEFORE  
THE WORD WAS INVENTED.  
BEFORE ABS ON BIKES, TOO



TVS IQUBE | RE SLIDE SCHOOL | GO FAST, DON'T DIE |  
APRILIA TUONO 1100 RSV FACTORY PIKES PEAK RACER

# MIXED BAG

**We bring you an assortment of items that include the safety of your motorcycle, and entertainment on the go. Have a look!**

## What is it?

Cardo JBL 45-mm speaker kit.

## Is it any good?

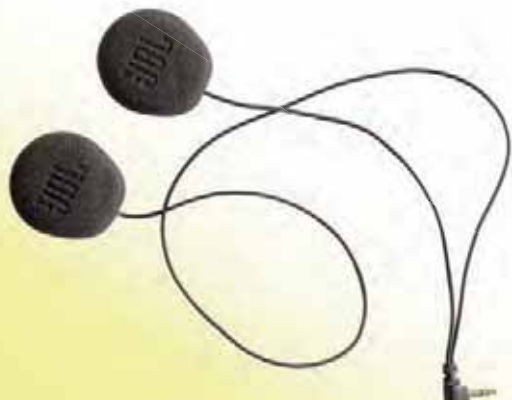
Are you unsatisfied with the performance of your helmet's intercom speakers? If the answer is yes, then you're in for a treat. Intercom brand Cardo has tied up with JBL to come up with a new set of 45-mm speakers that feature a standard 3.5-mm jack making it a direct fit to any communicator in the market, regardless of the brand. Moreover, these speakers pack the punch only a large-diameter driver can provide despite its narrow 42-mm base which makes it a direct fit in almost every modern helmet. The units have been designed keeping in mind the frequencies generated by the wind, road, engine, and also the type of helmet. Sweet stuff, we'd say!

## How much?

£ 6652 (excluding duty)

## Where?

[www.cardosystems.com](http://www.cardosystems.com)



## What is it?

Mammoth security shackle lock with square chain.

## Is it any good?

If you are in search of no-nonsense security, the Mammoth Thatcham motorcycle square chain and shackle lock is the ultimate guard dog for your motorcycle. It features reinforced plates to resist drilling and picking of the lock along with a sturdy 11-mm-thick chrome-moly hardened-steel chain to maximise security. The square chain comes with a protective fabric sleeve to prevent any damage to the wheels. The heavy-duty lock is plastic coated with a cover that keeps muck out from getting inside the mechanism.

## How much?

£ 8607 (excluding duties)

## Where?

[www.moto-performance.co.uk](http://www.moto-performance.co.uk)

## What is it?

Oxford Protex Stretch outdoor cover.

## Is it any good?

Don't we all love the snug fit of leathers especially when all falls into place? Well, it's the same case with the Oxford Protex Stretch outdoor cover for your motorcycle. It comes with a three-layer top material for protection against the weather and a soft lining on the inside to avoid scratches. The seams are water-resistant, there's ventilation to reduce condensation, reflective logos for better visibility, elastic bottom and lock pouches to keep the padlock off the ground. Depending on the size of your motorcycle, there are four sizes to choose from.



## How much?

£ 9077 (excluding duties)

## Where?

[www.oxfordproducts.com](http://www.oxfordproducts.com)



# NO-USE POLICY

How to store your bike for a long duration

All thanks to a virus, the entire country, along with the rest of the world, has been shut down in order to contain its spread. The government-sanctioned lockdown ensures that our bikes won't be in action for a while and here is how you can make sure that your bike is fighting fit and ready to hit the roads whenever this pandemic is over and the good times return.

- Fill the fuel tank completely. This prevents wastage of fuel due to evaporation and prevents moisture from accumulating in the tank.
- Make sure that your bike is parked on firm ground. If fitted, the motorcycle must be parked on its main stand. Preferably, park the bike in shade and away from sunlight. Always keep

the bike covered to prevent bird droppings and dust from harming the paint.

- The chain, and other lubrication points as mentioned by the motorcycle manufacturer, must be adequately lubricated.
- Start the bike once every week and let it idle for five minutes. Do not rev the engine when it is cold. While the engine is idling, gently pump the front and rear brakes, and engage/disengage the clutch a few times. This keeps everything moving and prevents the clutch plates from sticking to each other. Switch the lights on and off, and press the horn once. This prevents the internals of the switches from sticking.



## SMELLS LIKE TEEN SPIRIT

Hi,

I own a Hero Maestro and I have been extremely happy with it. The other day, I found a strong smell of fuel emanating from the scooter. I noticed that the smell is observed only when the scooter is started, but does not appear to be there when the scooter has been parked for some time, despite having a full tank of fuel. What could be the source of the leak?

Kapil Arora

Hi Kapil,

With the Maestro, and several other twist-and-go scooters, a pipe runs from the inlet manifold to the fuel tank where it is connected to the fuel cock, the outlet of which is connected by another pipe to the carburettor. The fuel cock is regulated by a diaphragm that opens by the vacuum at the intake manifold when the engine is cranked. Please check the ends of the second pipe that connects the carburettor to the fuel cock. As it ages, the pipe hardens and cracks at the end which is fitted onto the carburettor. If there's enough length, cut off the hardened/cracked portion and fit the pipe back. If not, you need a new pipe.

- Once the engine comes up to temperature, on a carburetted bike fitted with a fuel tap, switch off the fuel and let the bike idle till it dies. Then, switch off the ignition. This is done to burn the fuel contained within the carburettor float bowls to prevent it from sitting in there and gumming up.
- After the bike has cooled down enough to touch the silencers, cover the bike up and return home. Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water before you touch anything at home which your family members may come in contact with. ■

## THE GRAPEVINE

### DOMINO EFFECT

Following a strategy used by many, Bajaj has introduced the smaller version of its Dominar 400 flagship in the form of the Dominar 250. While it looks almost identical to its big brother, it comes in two new colour options, Canyon Red and Wine Black. It gets the same suspension and braking units, complete with dual-channel ABS. The only mechanical difference is the motor which is sourced from the 250 Duke, a 248.77cc liquid-cooled unit that churns out 26.6 bhp and 2.39 kgm. As for the price, Bajaj has pegged the Dominar 250 at ₹ 1.6 lakh (ex-showroom, Delhi). Quite an attractive price tag, if you ask us.



### TWIN BEING

If you're already a fan of the modern Africa Twin, get ready to fall in love with it all over again. That's because Honda has launched the 2020 model of its adventure tourer now called Africa Twin CRF1100L Adventure Sports. New bits include a larger fuel tank, a taller windscreen, a wider bash plate and a new 6-inch TFT display for the console. The higher-spec Adventure Sports gets tubeless tyres with spoked wheels. The larger 1084cc mill produces 102 bhp and 10.7 kgm which now comes with the choice of a 6-speed manual or a DCT. While the former has been priced at ₹ 15.35 lakh, the latter is yours for ₹ 16.10 lakh (ex-showroom).



### LOW RIDEN'

If you like having fun with Harleys, the American bike maker has launched the 2020 Low Rider in India, priced at ₹ 13.75 lakh (ex-showroom). It retains most of its styling from its predecessor, including the tank-mounted gauges, headlamp visor and the attractive '70s graphics. As for livery, you can get the bike in four colour options — Vivid Black, Billiard Blue, Billiard Red and Stone Washed Pearl White. Powering this sweet Softail is a 1745 Milwaukee-Eight 107 V-twin that belts out 11.6 kgm of peak torque at 3000 rpm. Meanwhile, Harley-Davidson has also launched the 2020 editions of the Iron 883, Fat Boy and Forty-Eight Special.





## MOPED DREAMS

In the two-wheeler world of simplicity, TVS has launched the BS6 model of its highest-selling product, the XL 100. The moped is available in three variants depending on purpose, with prices ranging from ₹ 43,889 to ₹ 45,129 (ex-showroom). Now with fuel

injection, the small yet efficient 100cc mill makes the same power figures as the BS4 model which stand at 4.4 bhp and 0.66 kgm. Interestingly, TVS claims the engine is now more fuel efficient by a good 15 per cent. Good thing, we say!

## ONE UP



Chennai-based bike manufacturer Royal Enfield has launched Classic 350 BS6 equipped with single-channel ABS. Priced at ₹ 1.57 lakh (ex-showroom, Delhi), it's the most affordable Royal Enfield in the company's portfolio. RE is offering the motorcycle with the choice of five colour options. The bike continues to be powered by the same 346cc unit but with fuel-injection. What's more, the company has also launched the BS6 versions of its flagship motorcycles, the Interceptor 650 and the Continental GT 650.

## FUTURE TRIBUTE

Good old days are back but in a modern way as Honda has revealed the CB-F, a modern-classic naked street bike concept based on the CB750F and CB900F from the early 1980s. The concept captures the essence of the naked bikes along with smooth and clean lines hinting at the future. It sports a circular headlamp and a boxy fuel tank complete with a sleek tail section. The concept features a 998cc inline-four borrowed from the modern



CB1000R. While Honda hasn't mentioned anything about production yet, we hope it gets the green light ASAP.

# SHORT BURST

## END TRAILS



After completing a year since their launch, Royal Enfield has pulled the plug on the Bullet Trials models. The move seems to have been called for due to the poor sales as the Trials 350 and 500 failed to grab the attention of buyers despite their lovely scrambler styling. Let's hope the folks at RE are working out what went wrong and soon bring a scrambler based on the 650 twin.



## COMING THROUGH

Suzuki Motorcycle India has updated its portfolio by launching the BS6 edition of its quirky-looking Intruder 150. Now priced at ₹ 1.2 lakh (ex-showroom), it demands a hefty premium of Rs 10,000 over the BS4 model. Except for the inclusion of fuel-injection and other bits for BS6 compliance the motorcycle remains the same.

## MADE-FOR-JAPAN



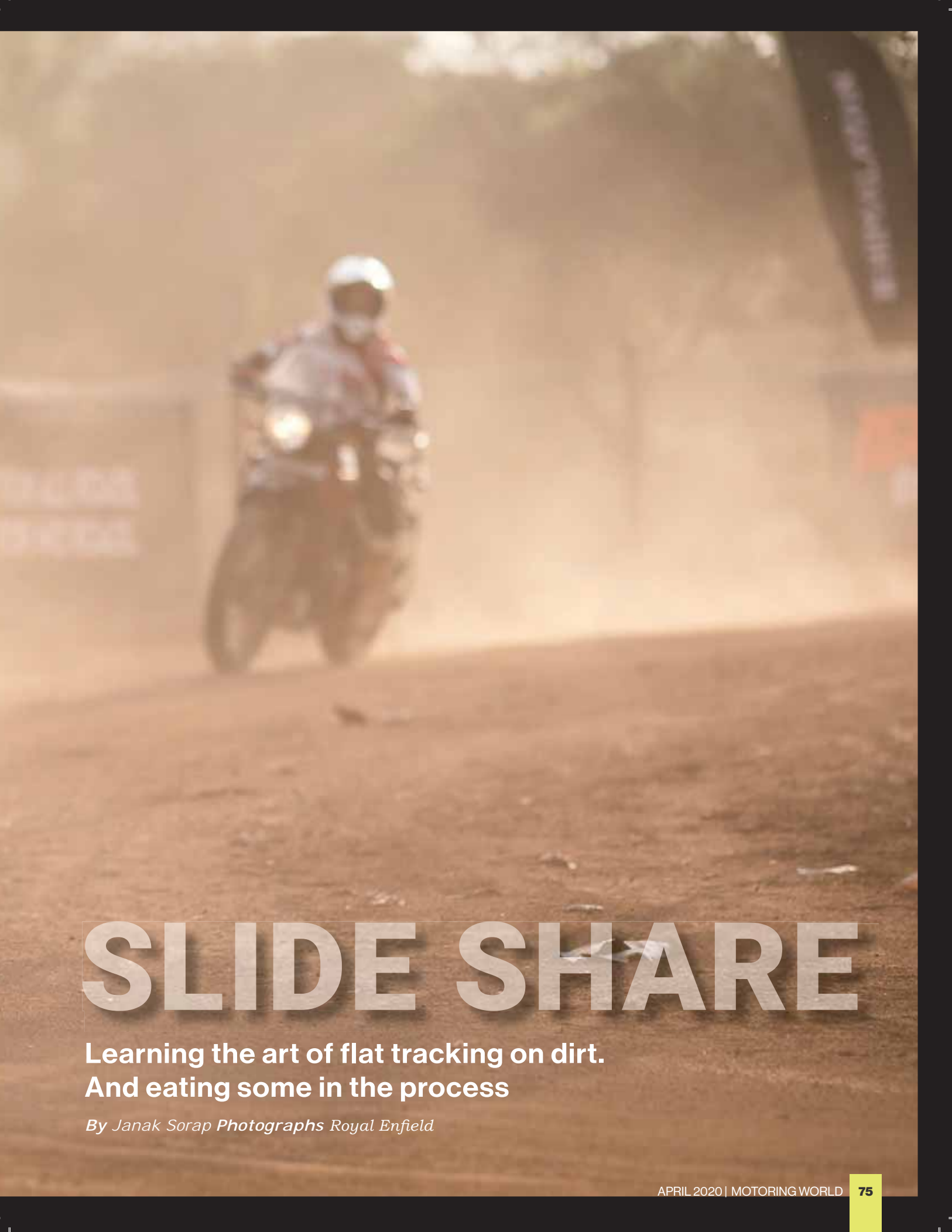
Suzuki Japan has launched the made-in-India Gixxer 250 and Gixxer SF250 models in the Japanese market. Both motorcycles remain identical to the versions sold here in terms of features and mechanicals. The power output from the 249cc unit, too, remains the same at 25.4 bhp and 2.24 kgm mated to a 6-speed gearbox.

# EXPERIENCE

ROYAL ENFIELD SLIDE SCHOOL







# SLIDE SHARE

**Learning the art of flat tracking on dirt.  
And eating some in the process**

*By Janak Sorap Photographs Royal Enfield*

As motorcyclists, grip is one element that's easily the most important. What you do on a motorcycle depends solely on the amount of grip that's present between the tyres and the ground. It's like a gauge which tells you how much you can open the throttle, lean the bike, or brake, without upsetting the balance of the machine.

But, then again, we've seen MotoGP and supermoto races where riders deliberately overpower grip to slide their motorcycles. This tactic, when seen closely, actually allows them to get around corners faster and also safer. Quite hard

to believe in the beginning, but it actually works. Which brings up the question, where did this tactic of sliding come from? Two words — flat track.

If you're new to this term, flat-track racing dates back to as early as the 1900s, originating on American soil. In fact, it's where all forms of motorcycle racing can be traced to. Famous MotoGP riders like Kenny Roberts, Casey Stoner, the late Nicky Hayden and Marc Marquez, all are excellent examples of how flat tracking gave them an edge over other riders on their grids.

I, like most people, have been riding motorcycles mostly on paved

roads; dirt is not an environment I am familiar with. Just my luck, Royal Enfield invited us to Big Rock Dirt Park, located in the outskirts of Bengaluru, for the first edition of the Slide School. Our chief instructor for the day was Johnny Lewis, whom RE had managed to get down from the USA. Lewis is a professional flat track and supermoto racer. He's the founder of a flat-track training facility in Florida that goes by the name of Moto Anatomy. It is popular amongst several flat-track racing professionals not only for the facility itself, but also for Lewis's perseverance to teach along with his arsenal of flat-track techniques.





Now, the general form of riding a motorcycle involves the rider leaning into the corner with the required steering input. Be it the street or the track, the theory remains the same. But over here, Lewis wanted us to do the exact opposite. When flat tracking, the bike needs to lean into the corner — but the rider leans to the outside of the corner. To make it simpler, the outer edge of the seat has to be wedged where the sun don't shine. And while doing that, the inner arm needs to be stretched out and the outer arm bent, which allows the bike to slide through the corner. If all that wasn't enough, the left leg is to be dragged through



Lewis talking us through the track walk

“... the outer edge of the seat has to be wedged where the sun don't shine”



Hey, RE! How about a school for this?











## “... there was a lot of tarmac unlearning and dirt learning happening at the same time”

the dirt for the entire length of the corner as an outrigger and to kick the bike back up should you lose the front.

The next thing to deal with was the motorcycle itself. Why? Well, it had no front brake because that's how flat track bikes are. The in-house custom team at Royal Enfield in collaboration with S&S Cycles had designed and developed the FT 411 that is based on the Himalayan. While the frame and suspension had undergone very few modifications, the tail and seat had been designed to suit flat-track racing. The S&S exhaust was mounted high, and all road-use parts had been removed, the headlight replaced by a number plate up front. Furthermore, the 21-inch/19-inch wheel sizes of the stock bike were replaced with 18-inch spoked wheels shod with block-tread rubber.

After a thorough classroom session on the dos and don'ts of flat track, it was time to put the Slide School crash course into action. Lewis took us around the course for a track walk to understand the ideal line and the reference points to brake, downshift, steer and throttle. Each batch had some riders going around the oval track, while the others watched them closely to pick up the good and bad bits of their riding so as to discuss at the end of the drill. This allows guiding your buddy while having a visual reference of what was taught earlier.

The first session was about rolling off the gas, braking and steering the bike to get accustomed to the surface while keeping to the body position as mentioned earlier. Numerous laps involved either

entering the corner hot, followed by running wide or braking too early resulting in too less speed to initiate the slide. However, I slowly started to get the hang of it as there was a lot of tarmac unlearning and dirt learning happening at the same time. The second part of the drill involved carrying more speed, downshifting to first to break the traction at the rear, as one entered the corner. The idea was to carry that slide till the apex and then opening the gas gradually to drift out of the corner. After more laps of practising this sequence, I had started to gain confidence but unfortunately, it was short-lived.

During the last few laps of the final session, I felt it was time to show off a bit with more speed and more slide. Little did I know the fellow ahead of me was going to enter the corner hot followed by jabbing the rear brake causing the bike to fish-tail. The outcome involved my target-fixated self and a bike in my path. The next thing I knew, I was down on the track with my left leg caught underneath the bike. And that was the end of my day-long introduction to flat track.

Thanks to the protective gear, I limped my way off the track with just a sprained ankle and knee. In hindsight, it was mainly overconfidence and target fixation due to which I ended up cooking that corner. However, one thing is for certain, I am definitely game to go back and do it all over again. Except for the fall, of course. After all, it's about learning to ride fearlessly with a slide. And going sideways on a bike doesn't get cooler than this. ■

# LONG TIME NO SEE

YAMAHA MT-01





# 01 OF A KIND

## Revisiting a mental monster of a motorcycle

By Kartik Ware *Photographs* Kaizad Adil Darukhanawala

Why did Yamaha make this motorcycle? I thought, as MT-01 idled on its side stand, shaking the ground under my feet. It's not like any Yamaha before or since, even despite the V4 V-Max and VMax. Was the MT-01 supposed to be a VMin? Not likely, since its two cylinders displace an insignificant 9cc less than the VMax's 1679cc. Was it a one-off flagship? Was Yamaha testing the waters for a future V-twin line of motorcycles? Was it ahead of its time? Was it supposed to be a Japanese Buell? Was it supposed to finally open the eyes of the Harley-Davidson bunch to Japanese reliability? I suppose the answer is yes to all those questions, but we'll never really know. Yamaha stopped making it in 2012 after a seven-year run.

When the MT-01 concept was unveiled at the 1999 Tokyo Motor Show, a poster of it went up on my wall faster than anyone could say,

'Wow!' And it made it to showroom floors more or less intact, too, at least as far as major design elements were concerned. Even in 2020, the MT-01 overwhelms anyone with the gift of eyesight. Despite that all-black scheme of this motorcycle, it's as anonymous as a Japanese gorilla beating its massive V-twin chest. The tank is disconcertingly tall, well above the waist of my six-foot frame. And one look at those high-level exhaust pipes may well make someone duck out of self-preservation instinct.

To call it a brute may be an understatement, but the MT-01 is not without sophistication. Every surface is finished to the highest standard, and even after all these years this bike looks like new. That may also be because the odometer reads just above 1600 km, but I doubt it'd be any different if ridden more and looked after well. That giant V-twin, a typical cruiser

component, does not look out of place in the mix of sporty parts that include the USD front fork with radially-mounted callipers. And those golden headers sprouting from each cylinder highlight the already monumental V-twin even more.

The headlight is a bit off, I think, but there's so much more on the MT-01, I forget to complain about it. People call it a muscle bike, and it does look like it ate everyone at the gym, proceeded to work out, and then ate the equipment, too. No book on motorcycle design will be complete without the MT-01, that much is certain, though they might not all agree on what to say. The overall effect is made up of two thoughts: 'Man, that is a motorcycle and a half' and 'I want to drink what its designers had before coming up with this motorcycle.'

The numbers contained in that formidable sight are no less awesome. That's a 1670cc

**“... all the clichés about torque live inside that V-twin. And they came out in bold capital letters each time I opened the throttle”**







*Tach a mere formality because of the engine note*



*Few motors look/feel as awesome as this one!*



*Where the house of MT motorcycles began*



*Note missing ABS sensor ring. Eek!*

motor that produces a less-than-bragworthy 89 bhp. However, this motor is an example of big V-twin magic; peak power is produced at 4750 rpm and, most importantly, you get 15.32 kgm at 3750 rpm. That means all the clichés about torque live inside that V-twin. And they came out in bold capital letters each time I opened the throttle. In bold. What may be a sobering effect is to realise that the MT-01 has no electronic riding aids whatsoever.

The full import of that fact was knocked into my head as I slowed for a corner on cold tyres and the rear locked up for several metres, my startled brain observing, 'Does that even happen anymore?' That's not something I seek on a 265-kg

motorcycle. The tyres did take some time to warm up, but once they did there was enough grip to ride the MT-01 with reasonable enthusiasm. And as I pushed the bike in ever-harder increments, the weight simply evaporated into the cold morning. The MT-01 displayed only a slight initial hesitation to turn, but once it did, it stuck to its line like a hand to a livewire. I should've known — Yamaha can't make a bad-handling motorcycle.

That's not to say you can go chasing an R1 with the MT-01, just that it's far easier and more enjoyable than its imposing stance might suggest. Braking, with the lack of ABS, was always going to be a most careful exercise for me. That

said, on the occasions that I pushed the bike hard, it never threatened to become unwieldy. I was always aware of the weight, but it didn't really bother me. It was so easy, Harley riders wouldn't know what to do with the handling. But they'd be right at home with the motor.

Seriously, that V-twin felt like any Milwaukee motor I've ever ridden. Big-twin vibes were ever-present, but they caused happiness rather than grief. The MT-01 is yet another example of why V-twins put a smile on their riders' faces. Only a breath of throttle and it picked up speed in an exponential manner. At low speeds, it rumbled along, but only a hint of throttle and it roared away into the distance. The lazy rpms





**“This wasn’t a bike made  
to satisfy cheap thrills”**





hid actual speeds rather well, so frequent glances at the speedometer were called for. There was no such thing as bogging down because that small rev band could hardly stop all that torque from bursting out.

There was no need to redline it, neither did I miss a sixth gear. This wasn't a bike made to satisfy cheap thrills. Rather, it was made to ride smooth and fast, feeling like a surfer on top of that famous Japanese tsunami painting, Under A Wave Off Kanagawa. It's not outright sporty, neither is it cumbersome. In fact, the more I rode it, the more I realised just how real-world a motorcycle the MT-01 is. Riding all that torque controlled by top-quality parts is a special feeling, one that will grow on anyone who likes fun on motorcycles. And it's got its quirks, too.

Of course, the mirrors are useless unless the bike is switched off. And the distance between the

pillion seat and footpegs dictates that any co-passenger must be a three-foot gymnast. And there's an underseat fan that cools something, presumably the exhaust, even after the bike's turned off. Before it added to battery-discharge worries, it also fooled me into looking for a puncture on that big rear tyre, wondering how on earth I was going to push it to a repair shop. That's enough character, I'd say. A one-of-a-kind motorcycle must have it, even if it makes one question why it was made at all. And the answer was right there, lit up by the soft light of an early sun, pointing its twin howitzers at my head — 'Why the hell not?' ■

*A big thanks to Adil Jal Darukhanawala for giving us his MT-01. Or maybe he doesn't know yet and Kaizad had sneaked it out. Well, thanks are due to a Darukhanawala, in any case!*

# MOTODATA

## YAMAHA MT-01

<b>POWERTRAIN</b>	
Displacement	1670cc, V-twin
Max power	89 bhp@4750 rpm
Max torque	15.32 kgm@3750 rpm
Transmission	5-speed
<b>CHASSIS</b>	
Type	Aluminium die-cast frame
<b>BRAKES</b>	
F/R	310-mm twin discs/ 267-mm disc
<b>TYRES</b>	
F/R	120/70 ZR18 / 190/50 ZR17
<b>DIMENSIONS</b>	
L/W/H (mm)	2185/790/1105
Wheelbase	1525 mm
Ground clearance	140 mm
Seat height	825 mm
Kerb weight	265 kg
Fuel capacity	15 litres
<b>PRICE</b>	NA



# SHORT SHIFT

TVS iQUBE





# EASY ON THE i

## TVS's new-age electric scooter makes a noiseless entry

By Kartik Ware Photographs Kaizad Adil Darukhanawala

The prefix 'i' is used to evoke the Internet or the digital age, as an allusion to the cutting edge of technology. It's been that way for a good 20 years or so, and remains a fine way to attract the attention of Apple's lawyers. And given the way the new TVS iQube looks, Apple might indeed wonder if it had designed a scooter in the early 2000s and lost the plans which then resurfaced in Hosur, India. In any case, TVS's return to electric scooters (yes, return. The first was the Scooty Teenz Electric of 2008) is an excellent example of the apple falling far from the tree. In the best possible manner, of course.

The iQube is the second electric scooter from a trusted manufacturer of internal-combustion two-wheelers and that adds another layer of significance to its story, as with the reincarnated Bajaj Chetak. Over the years, TVS has earned its reputation as a maker of good-quality scooters, so expectations from its new-age electric scooter were high enough to severely affect the acrophobic. Now, I've ridden the Ather 450, the

Chetak and now the iQube, and I have to say that if the three came together, the latest TVS would toss a rather unconcerned glance at its fellow planetary saviours. It can hold its own quite comfortably, and I quite look forward to that scuffle of silence.

In the meantime, a look at the iQube is as black and white as chess, thought not as boring. It looks like EVE from Wall-E became a scooter and got lights from a '90s car, albeit with modern LEDs in them. It glows a robotic LED-DRL smile at you from its handlebar cowl under which it wears a black bib. There's what looks like the Blackberry logo on its side panels (to throw off the Apple lawyers, no doubt), and the overall proportions radiate a sense of stubby cuteness. The iQube also reminded me of Honda's Asimo who I once watched kick a football around and run out of charge. The point is, the iQube arouses digital feelings rather well, even if I think the digital age might do well to accept that there are other colours in nature.

There's also a cool blue-backlit logo on the motor that lights up at closed throttle. Why can't it stay on all the time? Apparently, it's required by law, though I can't imagine what the law has to say about tiny backlit logos a few inches off the ground. Inane regulations aside, the iQube is a really sorted scooter, and it only took a handful of minutes at the TVS test track in Hosur to confirm this. The rest of the time, I reserved for learning just how TVS has adopted and adapted to the use of a motor and a battery, and all the things that accompany these agents of change.

The iQube makes enough power to reach a 78-kph hustle in Power mode. Eco mode restricts speed to 45 kph, but acceleration remains the same. Twisting the motor regulator produces brisk-enough acceleration, though I noticed just a hint of lag from the completely-off position. This could be irritating at times, especially while making a moving U-turn, causing the need for performance of motocross techniques on an electric scooter.

# The iQube is the most silent two-wheeler I've ever ridden

Everywhere else, though, the iQube rolled along just fine.

Of particular note was the regenerative-braking system which was superbly dialled in. There was a distinct-yet-gradual increase in motor-braking between 80-60 kph, 60-40 kph, and 40-20 kph. Once a rider gets used to it, they will be able to extract the maximum range from the iQube; TVS claims 55-75 km per charge, depending on the riding mode and conditions. On each of the three 20-minute riding sessions at the test track, I managed to use up roughly 30 per cent of charge. However, a regulator maxxed out for 20 minutes straight is hardly the everyday scenario. Long story short, the iQube has just enough

performance to keep its rider satisfied, no more, no less. What's remarkable, though, is the silence.

The iQube is the most silent two-wheeler I've ever ridden, other electric two-wheelers included. I'm sure even a bicycle makes more noise than the iQube. It's so silent, ninja warriors will cry tears of defeat. Dogs will chase it wondering if they've gone deaf. And as astonishing as its silence is, I can't decide if it's a good thing or a bad thing. I like the peace and quiet, sure. But I also want to be heard coming down the road, you know. In any case, I wish I had this when I was teenager sneaking out at night. And I'd head straight to the 'circuit' I'd designed on city streets.

As expected, the iQube handles really well. Suspension is handled by a telescopic fork at the front and by twin shock absorbers at the rear that are just as surprised to find themselves at that location on a scooter as anyone else. Apparently, the use of an electric motor frees up space for the twin-shock setup, and it's easy to see how it pays off. The iQube is stable in a straight line as well as in fast, sweeping turns. The TVS test track doesn't have any tight twists, but I think the iQube will handle those just fine as well. Even under hard braking, carried out by the CBS-equipped front disc and rear drum, the iQube tracks straight. Real-world ride quality, though, is not to be found in the



One more screen to add to your life!



Key doesn't suit the iQube. Wish it had keyless access



Charging port located in a convenient spot





See the blue-lit 'electric' logo? Cool touch!







“Even under hard braking,  
the iQube tracks straight”

environs of a test track, and that information will have to wait for a later date.

These days, people have an inordinate amount of interest in reverse modes on electric scooters, probably because they don't realise that said modes are only worth a handful of kph. So, while the iQube does have a reverse mode, rest assured you won't be able to ride backwards to office. It also has a screen that provides an avalanche of information in conjunction with a phone-installed app, and more 'connected' features than the average satellite. Then again, the TVS e-brochure lists 'pleasant horn tone' as a feature, too, so you might want to read the list more carefully

than I did. Nonetheless, the iQube's screen/phone-app combo does give you a flood of information, one that'll doubtless offset a charging wait or two.

I was quite eager to ride the iQube, more so than the Ather or the Chetak, honestly; the Ather is still an unknown to me, while the Chetak is Bajaj's first scooter after a long time, certainly the first in my professional life. The iQube, then, was my first chance to understand if it's possible to carry a manufacturer's DNA forward into the electric era. And it is. Despite the total silence, it actually is. Second first attempts should have some leeway, but the iQube doesn't seem to need any. Quite an achievement, iSay. ■

## MOTODATA

### TVS IQUBE

<b>POWERTRAIN</b>	
Motor	BLDC, hub-mounted
Battery	2.25 kWh lithium-ion pack, 52 V
Peak power	4.4 kW (5.90 bhp)
Rated power	3 kW (4.02 bhp)
Peak torque	14.27 kgm
Rated torque	3.36 kgm
<b>CHASSIS</b>	
Type	Tubular frame
<b>BRAKES</b>	
F/R	220-mm disc/130-mm drum
<b>TYRES</b>	
F/R	90/90 R12 / 90/90 R12
<b>DIMENSIONS</b>	
L/W/H (mm)	1805/645/1140
Wheelbase	1301 mm
Ground clearance	150 mm
Seat height	770 mm
Kerb weight	118 kg
<b>CHARGING TIME</b>	
0-80%	4.5 hours
0-100%	6 hours
Range	55-75 km
<b>PRICE</b>	~ 1.15 LAKH (on-road)

## LEAN ANGLE

APRILIA TUONO 1100 RSV  
FACTORY PIKES PEAK RACER





# SURVIVE AND WIN

## A motorcycle that conquered the race to the clouds

By Alan Cathcart *Photographs Kevin Wing*

Motorcycle racing is inherently perilous. But there is no more downright dangerous race on the planet than the annual Pikes Peak hill climb held in Colorado since 1916, the second-oldest motorsport event in the USA after the Indy 500, and the oldest involving motorcycles. Exactly 19.99 km in length, on grades averaging 7.2 per cent in steepness, the 156-turn course winds up the side of the imposing 14,115-foot-high peak that's the tallest in the Rocky Mountains' southern range, and wasn't fully asphalted until 2011. The race starts at a 9000-foot elevation, so it's run entirely at the kind of altitude that has people panting for breath — and motorcycles the same.

While there are token attempts to line a few of the corners with metal barriers and even Airfence, there are still innumerable unfenced precipices where the penalty for a mistake is to plunge off the side of the mountain to certain death. Even riding up the relatively narrow road leading to the peak on a streetbike, as I have done, is a pretty daunting experience. The idea of actually racing a motorcycle up it fills me with horror — and I speak as a

ten-year veteran of the Isle of Man's TT Course, with four top-10 finishes to my name....

Which made me all the prouder — as well as all the more relieved! — to hear that 36-year-old Rennie Scaysbrook had finally achieved his four-year ambition of becoming the King of the Mountain. He did so by winning 2019's Pikes Peak event outright on an Aprilia Tuono 1100 RSV4 Factory, after three years of riding a KTM there to finish second twice, and fourth once. He became the first Australian to win the event by smashing the existing course record by a massive 4.662 seconds in setting a time of 9:44.963, to achieve his principal target of defeating the other factory-backed entries from Ducati, BMW and KTM in winning the Heavyweight Division category.

Tragically, though, his closest rival for outright victory, Carlin Dunne, at 36 the same age as Rennie and a four-time previous winner of the event, was killed after inexplicably crashing at the very last turn aboard the Ducati factory's prototype V4 Streetfighter running in the Exhibition class. Now do you see why I was so relieved that Rennie

had survived the race intact?

That's because the young — well, he is to me! — Aussie has been a semi-detached member of the Cathcart family ever since he came to stay with us in England at the age of 11. My friendship with his dad Jim — the first Aussie to race in the AMA 500MX Championship, as well as Mike Hailwood's teammate on the Great Man's return to road racing in 1977/78 — led to Rennie and I also becoming the best of friends, and now colleagues on the Cycle News masthead. As such, I was initially horrified when I learnt he'd decided in 2016 that he was going to race Pikes Peak — and had even persuaded KTM North America to support him with the loan of a 1290 Super Duke. Horror turned to admiration when Rennie qualified on pole for the race against previous winners like Jeremy Towe and Carlin Dunne.

For 2019, Rennie had a very clear of how he wanted to go about winning with the Aprilia, and that involved hiring Jeremy Towe as crew chief. Towe, 38, is widely regarded as one of America's best-ever open-road racers, having raced twice at the IoM TT, finished on the rostrum at the



Macau GP, and won Pikes Peak in 2014 on his self-built Kawasaki. So a brand-new 2019-model Tuono 1100 Factory was shipped to Toye's shop in San Diego to be built up as a PP racer with several parts cannibalised off an RSV4 Factory.

The Tuono's 1078cc 65-degree V4 engine was left completely stock, but with the addition of an Akrapovič titanium exhaust system from the Aprilia aftermarket catalogue. But after much experimentation, the team finally settled on ultra-low overall gearing of 15/54, compared to 15/42 as stock! That's the sort of gearing stunt riders opt for, but Rennie had a good reason for fitting it. 'At the tyre test we did earlier, I was like — this thing is so slow!' he says.

'We knew we had exactly 170 bhp at sea level, but when we got to 6000 feet, we were at 160 when we first mapped it, and then we had issues with the fuel. When we changed the map with the correct fuel, we'd lost about 8 bhp more. We actually got back up to 162 bhp by race day, but it was a serious amount of work for the guys. So we decided to drop the gearing so that the bottom three gears would flash by in an instant, and I'd spent most of my time in



The fastest cockpit up Pikes Peak! One-piece handlebar looks weird but is necessary



The V4 plays this pipe beautifully



Optimum tuning is essential at high altitudes

**'We actually got back up to 162 bhp by race day...'**







the top three gears, except in the hairpins where it was always bottom gear, to get a hustle out of the bend. It worked — I think you'd only get about 140 mph out of the bike if you're lucky, but it gets there really quickly!

The chassis side was where Toye spent most time, firstly transforming Aprilia's naked hotrod into a racer by fitting Attack Performance rear sets, and a SharkSkinz replica RSV4 seat and fairing, which was then painted and wrapped in a fetching Italian tricolore colour scheme by Syndicate Racing in Denver, Colorado. Toye then rotated the handlebar ten degrees downward to compliment the RSV4 fairing, after shaving the stem just a little on the bottom to give the bars a lower stance before rotating.

Toye then fitted the 5-mm-longer fully-adjustable 43-mm Öhlins NIX30 fork from the RSV4 Factory streetbike and the TTX35 rear shock, again off the superbike. The longer suspension helped resolve the ground clearance problem, mainly derived from the fact that Rennie had opted to run such soft suspension settings on the Aprilia.

I discovered this for myself a couple of months after his winning exploits, when he and Shane Pacillo brought the victorious Aprilia to Buttonwillow Raceway in California's Central Valley near Bakersfield, for me to try it out on the 12-turn 4.99-km track on the bike's first time in action after Rennie had crossed the line to win the race. The pancake-flat terrain — albeit with a couple

of neatly manufactured hills, each with a blind apex on the top — is about as far away from Pikes Peak as you could ever get, and so too were the torrid weather conditions, with the sun beating down to deliver a draining 40.5 C ambient temp. Phew!

Hopping aboard for my first of three 20-minute sessions on the bike revealed a slightly higher (seat height is 840 mm vs 825 mm stock) and more spacious riding position than the stock Tuono I'd just been riding to re-learn the circuit on, reflecting Rennie's slightly taller height. But this, coupled with the flat stock handlebar, that's slightly tilted down to let you tuck better behind the screen on straights, allows you to lever the bike around quite easily, especially through tight turns. You



don't need to hang off it to get it to steer, so it wasn't as physical a ride as I was expecting – even in those temperatures!

However, it does pay to do all your braking in a straight line, if possible, then turn in quite late to the apex so as to have space on the exit to carry decent turn speed. That's because braking hard while leaned over, and especially trail-braking on the angle, will cause the Aprilia to try to sit up and understeer, which you then have to counter with a good tug on the handlebar, and shifting your body in the seat. So it's best to avoid that, if possible.

However, the braking is

superlative thanks to Brembo's best, with the twin 330-mm floating front discs gripped by four-piston radial M50 Monoblock calipers, with a radial master cylinder and metal braided brake lines, and the stock Bosch ABS disconnected. Just a single finger on the lever will slow the Aprilia down from hard on in sixth gear to third, leading into Buttonwillow's first blind hilltop turn, where the Tuono's confidence-inspiring handling let me choose the precise line almost inch-perfect every lap, after I'd learnt it by following the local track-day experts. Thanks, guys!

Also, despite the slipper clutch I'd gained welcome added engine

braking in shifting down to third just before climbing the short incline on the same Race mode Rennie says he used for the race. Basically, from the 12,500-rpm rev limiter — which thanks to the short PP gearing I was hitting twice per lap at Buttonwillow — down to 9000 revs the Tuono essentially freewheels, but then from there on down to around 4000 rpm, there's constantly increasing engine braking. This not only helps stop the bike, but also pulls you nicely into the apex of the turn, with the slipper clutch ready to help prevent any rear wheel chatter. Moreover, there's little trace of instability even when leaning on the brakes, which does indeed cause some front-end dive thanks to





Trick parts make all the difference



No, Schwantz wasn't riding it



Superbike-spec everything! Gotta have maximum control when tackling Pikes Peak

those soft but compliant suspension settings, but not at the expense of directional control.

That glorious engine is as much of a gem in the PP-winning bike as I've grown used to it being on my various rides with it in Italy. The V4 motor starts delivering serious performance as the tach needle hits the 5000-rpm mark, and engine acceleration starts to pick up faster. From 7000 rpm upwards acceleration becomes explosive — it's the only word to use for it — and with peak torque delivered at 9000 rpm, I found that was where the front wheel will start to pop up lazily off the tarmac exiting a turn in second gear, making me glad I had the Öhlins steering damper well wound up. Rennie must have switched off the anti-wheelie programme as well as dialling the eight-stage TC down to Level 1.

But then hold the gear and at 10,000 rpm there's another dose of top-end power that will send you rocketing forward as the engine heads for the rev limiter in a way that's seriously satisfying — and definitely dramatic. You especially can't help appreciating the smoothness of the perfectly dialled-in two-way powershifter, complete with an auto-blipper for clutchless downshifts punctuated by a musical

blip from the distinctive note of the V4 motor as you hook a lower gear. The Tuono's ultra-distinctive engine note is still as intoxicating as ever, the lazy-sounding V4 drone in some ways at odds with the startling performance available at just a twist of the wrist which allowed Rennie to break the outright record at Pikes Peak by an amazing FIVE seconds. Respect!

However, this sadly seems to be the end of the road for the Pikes Peak-winning Aprilia Tuono — for after Carlin Dunne's tragic passing, it's unfortunately been confirmed that there will be no motorcycle race there in 2020. This makes it quite likely that Rennie Scaysbrook may ultimately be the all-time record holder on two wheels for the course, and the Aprilia a very historic motorcycle. Rennie, meanwhile, is turning his attention to something much safer — by racing in the Isle of Man TT! 'They call it a Tourist Trophy, so I'm going to be the tourist there,' he says. 'For sure I have no ambition or expectation to go up against Peter Hickman!' Yes, but I remember him saying the same thing four years ago when he told me he was going to do Pikes Peak — and look what happened there. No pressure, Ren! ■

## MOTODATA

### APRILIA TUONO 1100 RSV FACTORY PIKES PEAK RACER

<b>POWERTRAIN</b>	
Displacement	1078cc, V4
Max power	170 bhp@11,000 rpm (at rear wheel)
Max torque	NA
Transmission	6-speed
<b>CHASSIS</b>	
Type	Twin-spar aluminium frame
<b>BRAKES</b>	
F/R	330-mm twin discs / 220-mm disc
<b>TYRES</b>	
F/R	120/75 R17 / 200/60 R17
<b>DIMENSIONS</b>	
L/W/H (mm)	NA/NA/NA
Wheelbase	1450 mm
Ground clearance	NA
Seat height	840
Kerb weight	170 kg (without fuel)
Fuel capacity	NA
<b>TOP SPEED</b>	225 kph
<b>OWNER</b>	Piaggio Group Americas Inc., Costa Mesa, California, USA





**TANK SLAPPER**  
GO FAST DON'T DIE

# ABOUT OLD NEW FRIENDS

**Riding in Thailand with Americans, pondering over what's seldom spoken of in motorcycling — go fast, don't die**

*By Varad More Photographs Kaizad Adil Darukhanawala*





Motorcyclists the world over speak one common language — having fun. Every time you get on the bike, the idea is to seek fun wherever you go. Nobody ever went for a ride and returned bored or dejected. It's a universal motorcycling emotion. And one that brings up a phenomenon that is largely found only amongst motorcycle riders — Old New Friends. Basically, it's meeting a fellow biker and hitting it off instantly. No elitist salutations or formal introductions, just connecting like a long-lost friend you bumped into in a bar in some

random city, sharing endless motorcycle stories.

So, when an invite for an exclusive Moto Retreat in Thailand landed in my inbox from the crew at Go Fast Don't Die, I knew the week-long plan was going to be all about going crazy with motorcycles and motorcyclists from the Far West, particularly from Wyoming, USA, which is where the GFDD crew hails from. They make motorcycle lifestyle apparel that, instead of focusing on the dangers and perils of motorcycling, highlights the risk and rewards attached to it. Their message might seem outlandish

at first, but once you get to spend time and ride with them, it is easy to see what they're on about. It's something each one of us feels every time we head out with our motorcycle, anywhere in the world.

Similar to the spiritual yoga retreats that have been taking over the world, the Moto Retreat from Go Fast Don't Die is about looking at motorcycling in a deeper manner and connecting it to our everyday lives. How motorcycling as a lifestyle not only makes you more compassionate and empathetic towards others, but also how it reflects largely on life off the saddle





**“The retreat plan was pretty straight and simple, unlike the winding roads...”**







He's got abrasion-resistant forearms, our guy



Wondering whether they left the tap running... in another country



Mannequins are becoming more realistic



Ah, if only Honda would bring this, the CRF250L, to India!



for every individual, edging them to take well-calculated risks for the higher rewards that come thereafter.

The first Moto Retreat was held in Bali, and this was the second outing for the crew. So there we were in the hilly landscape of Chiang Mai, North Thailand, far away from the touristy honeymooner and backpacker favourite beaches that Thailand is known for. The retreat plan was pretty straight and simple, unlike the winding roads leading to some spectacular locations around Chiang Mai. Breakfast was accompanied by warm and insightful discussions where every participant shared their life stories and spoke about how or why motorcycling became an integral part of their lives.

Following the morning group-thinking session, a quick brief about the day's plan was shared,

after which we would hit the road for the day. Every day we had a new location to ride to, each of which involved riding through some incredible mountain roads, followed by sumptuous lunch and then returning to our quaint homestay in Chiang Mai. On the first day, we all went for a quick ride that helped break the ice and allowed everyone to gauge everyone's capabilities and skills on the motorcycle. When we had come to a conclusion about the ideal speeds we would maintain to keep the group close and safe, it was easier for everyone to find their comfort zone and ride within their limits.

We had a plethora of motorcycles to choose from including Royal Enfield Classic 500s, Royal Enfield Himalayans (loaned to us by Royal Enfield Thailand), rented Honda

CRF250Ls and Thailand-made machines from the local bike maker Stallions Motor. They make a variety of retro-modern small-capacity machines ranging between 150cc and 400cc, and we had a variety of café racers and scramblers from the range. So while the GFDD crew was used to the Hondas and Yamahas, this was the first time they were straddling Royal Enfields, and suffice it to say that some of the riders refused to let go of the keys to the Classic 500s and the Himalayans throughout the retreat.

We rode to the famed Doi Suthep temple located outside of Chiang Mai and the road leading to the temple, though a bit crowded with traffic, was still quite a perfect Sunday riding road. There we also got to eat probably the best meal on the entire ride — Khow Suey.





*Holy mother of wheelbases, Batman!*



*Sound advice, that. And not just for bikers, either*



*Chrome motorcycles never get old, do they?*







One high horse we don't mind getting on!



When no one's decided who the lead rider is, so no one knows where they're riding to

## “Have fun and take chances, and celebrate the rewards that follow...”



It is a noodle soup made of egg, noodles and chicken or vegetables, with coconut milk and garnished with a variety of spices. Not to start with the recipe of it, but it's a must-have dish for any traveller headed to North Thailand. On the following day, we visited a rescued-elephant sanctuary where we spent most of the day feeding those gentle giants and bathing them in the river. Very touristy, one might say, but when told about these beautiful creatures being rescued from the logging industry where they carried wooden logs twice their size, without proper care or food, it did feel good to have contributed to the cause.

Next up was the biggest ride of the retreat — to Pai. A small town situated about 150 km up north of Chiang Mai and offering a day full of riding twisty mountain roads. Having ridden down this road a few years ago, I was certainly looking forward to doing it again. We started off earlier than the other days and made it to Pai for lunch. We took a quick detour for some fresh strawberries and coffee that Pai is famous for

before starting back for Chiang Mai. Every day, we reached home by sunset well in time to finish an early dinner and then set out to experience the music-rich nightlife of Chiang Mai. All of us packed into big vans, we'd hit the party hub of Chiang Mai to let our hair down, complementing a day full of motorcycling and the rewards of making Old New Friends on motorcycles.

About Go Fast Don't Die, their message is just a more befitting and connected way of saying, 'Have a safe ride!' Have fun and take chances, and celebrate the rewards that follow rather than live a mundane life because someone else thinks it's too unsafe. It is unsafe for someone probably because they do not fully comprehend the risks involved and hence look at it from a highly uninformed viewpoint of an outsider. As a motorcycle rider, you are inside the arena playing the game rather than being a distant observer worrying about the perils. You are the protagonist of your own story, so make it a story that you can cherish. Whatever it is, make it count. ■



# SURVIVORS »»»»»

COCOONED AND SHELTERED, THIS IS THE FOUR-WHEELED DEAL

## KEEPING TRACK

THE VENUE IS A BOON FOR OUR PHOTOGRAPHER



A hydraulic jack takes the pain out of this

Most of the stories in our magazine have a specific kind of photograph we call the tracking shot, in which the camera is moving in front of or alongside the subject. The process involves Kaizad, our photographer, getting into the back of a car and holding on for dear life as we follow closely in other vehicles. Normally, we use a hatchback or an SUV to take these pictures because the wide opening allows us to play with the frame and angle of the picture, but this month, because of logistical issues, we've had to use a sedan for tracking on a couple of shoots. The result was some great photography, but also a few bonks on the head for Kaizad as the trunk threatened to close everytime we came upon an undulation in the road. Now, he may not remember his full

name anymore, but he did remember to ask us to bring the Venue along for all future shoots.

This month, the Venue happily followed some capable machinery to far off locations and it came away with a few battle scars. The front passenger side tyre went completely flat after a shoot, but thankfully, it happened outside my house, not in the middle of a farflung field. A quick trip to the local tyre guy fixed the Venue right up, of course. I want to tell you that we've learned our lesson and that we'll leave the off-roading to the 4x4s, but I can't because that's simply not true. We absolutely plan on taking the Venue off the beaten path to get that perfect shot. We'll just be more careful about it.

### LOGGING IT OUT

#### HYUNDAI VENUE

- > Lightens you by **12.48 LAKH**  
(on-road, Mumbai)
- > Lived with **Aditya**
- > Odometer reads **15,337 km**
- > Drinking habits **14 kpl**

@Hyundailndia  
#MotoringVenue



# COFFEE RUN

**THE S-PRESSO CONTINUES  
TO WIN HEARTS**



For me, nothing beats using a motor-cycle, whether for work or pleasure. So when I started working at *Motoring World*, I was looked up and down many times by Kartik who, on the third or the fourth shoot, gave me a dressing down for riding long distances with my heavy camera gear! And then he soothed my frayed nerves from the verbal lashing with a cuppa on four wheels — the Suzuki S-Presso! It was also somewhat of a Christmas/New Year present for me as I got the S-Presso on December 24, 2019, and since then I have used it exclusively for all my shoots logging over 2500 km to date.

The S-Presso, given its easy-going nature and operational ability, has been a godsend for shoots given that

my camera gear is now well sheltered. Thanks to the nature of the topography in and around Pune where we do most of our shoots, it almost invariably involves runs which are a mix of the Expressway plus a lot of runs in the hills. The nimble S-Presso is delightful for a newbie driver like me, as is the infotainment system where hooking up my phone helps me to stay handsfree whether to take (not make) calls or to listen to music. The S-Presso is also frugal, averaging between 12 to 16 kpl, purely judging from the onboard display. I am not too flustered when I compare figures with my mother who has her own S-Presso and she, with her careful driving, gets around 16-18 kpl, too! Everyone sips his/her coffee in his/her own way, I guess!



*The one four-wheeler I can live with*

## LOGGING IT OUT

### MARUTI SUZUKI S-PRESSO

- > **Lightens you by** 5.48 LAKH  
(on-road, Mumbai)
- > **Lived with** Kaizad
- > **Odometer reads** 5202 km
- > **Drinking habits** 14.1 kpl

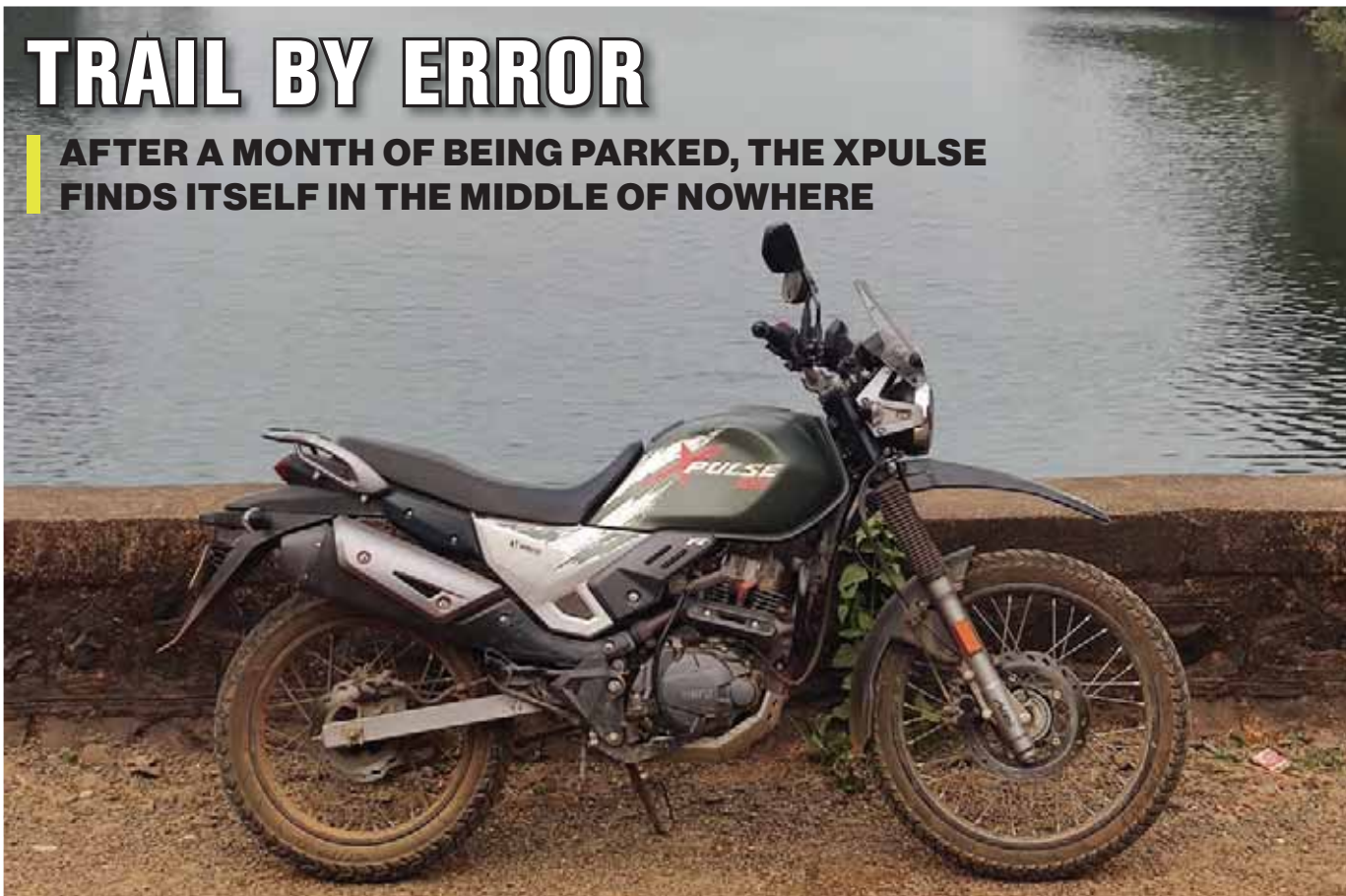
@MSArenaOfficial  
#MotoringSPresso

# SURVIVORS >>>>>

LIVING LIFE ON TWO WHEELS, MONTH AFTER MONTH. AFTER MONTH

## TRAIL BY ERROR

AFTER A MONTH OF BEING PARKED, THE XPULSE FINDS ITSELF IN THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE



Locked within four walls, I really wish I could time travel. Not too far back, just to the previous month. Re-spawn right at the bottom of the 17-km trail that leads to the top of a hill overlooking the Varasgaon dam near Pune. It was a spot I accidentally discovered on Google Maps. It looked like a perfect weekend getaway, so without wasting time I saddled up on the Xpulse and headed out.

After I turned off the state highway and made my way through a maze of small villages and hutments, I arrived at the start of the trail, as per the navigation on the display. The trail looked far too tricky at first, but I still decided to give it a go. A lot of this confidence was primarily because of the Xpulse, and not because of my offroading skill set.

I stood on the pegs and started the

climb. The Xpulse calmly navigated the path along steep inclines and although it might not have the firepower of a big-capacity enduro machine, it has that strong low-end grunt with a well-tuned suspension setup which was more than enough to crawl our way to the top of the hill.

Once perched atop the mountain, the view was breathtaking, to say the least, but what really got my attention was how capable and composed the Xpulse is on any kind of terrain. The high ground clearance allowed me to comfortably ride up over the big boulders and the relatively low seat height meant my feet could reach the ground well in time, when needed.

No panic attacks or paranoia about getting stuck and stranded in the

middle of nowhere. No signs of the Xpulse running out of breath or breaking apart. The next day I rode down the same trail, a lot more confident than I was when climbing it. I arrived home happy and safe just in time to hear the news that the country is going into lockdown. Bummer.

### LOGGING IT OUT

#### MOTOCORP XPULSE 200

> Lightens you by **1.28 LAKH**

(on-road, Mumbai)

> Lived with Varad

> Odometer reads 3416 km

> Drinking habits 40 kpl

@heromotocorp #MotoringXPulse



Presents



# WHICH CAR



# WHICH CAR



## FORD



### FIGO

**FOR:** Powerful and efficient engine, great handling  
**AGAINST:** Rear seat headroom

Price	Engine	Cyl.	Power	Torque
5.23-7.65 Lakh	1498ccD	4	98bhp@3750rpm	21.92Kgm@1750-3000rpm
	1194ccP	4	94bhp@6500rpm	12.23Kgm@4250rpm



### FIGO ASPIRE

**FOR:** Powerful and efficient engine, great handling  
**AGAINST:** Rear seat headroom

Price	Engine	Cyl.	Power	Torque
5.99-8.62 Lakh	1498ccD	4	98bhp@3750rpm	21.92Kgm@1750-3000rpm
	1194ccP	4	94bhp@6500rpm	12.23Kgm@4250rpm



### FRESA

**FOR:** Powerful and efficient engine, great handling  
**AGAINST:** Rear seat headroom

Price	Engine	Cyl.	Power	Torque
5.91-8.36 Lakh	1498ccD	4	98bhp@3750rpm	21.92Kgm@1750-3000rpm
	1194ccP	4	94bhp@6500rpm	12.23Kgm@4250rpm



### ECOSPORT

**FOR:** Great build and Handling, Aggressive Price  
**AGAINST:** Stiffer ride

Price	Engine	Cyl.	Power	Torque
7.91-11.45 Lakh	1498ccD	4	98bhp@3750rpm	21.92Kgm@1750-3000rpm
	1497ccP	4	123bhp@6500rpm	15.30Kgm@4500rpm

## HONDA



### AMAZE

**FOR:** Diesel Engine with CVT  
**AGAINST:** Potent competition

Price	Engine	Cyl.	Power	Torque
5.93 - 9.79 Lakh	1199ccP	4	89bhp@6000rpm	11.21Kgm@4800rpm
	1498ccD	4	99bhp@3600rpm	20.40Kgm@1750rpm



### JAZZ

**FOR:** Superb fuel economy for the diesel  
**AGAINST:** Diesel engine lacks excitement

Price	Engine	Cyl.	Power	Torque
7.45 - 9.40 Lakh	1199ccP	4	89bhp@6000rpm	11.21Kgm@4800rpm
	1498ccD	4	99bhp@3600rpm	20.40Kgm@1750rpm



### WR-V

**FOR:** Impressive styling features  
**AGAINST:** Diesel version lacks power

Price	Engine	Cyl.	Power	Torque
8.08 - 10.48 Lakh	1199ccP	4	89bhp@6000rpm	11.21Kgm@4800rpm
	1498ccD	4	99bhp@3600rpm	20.40Kgm@1750rpm



### BR-V

**FOR:** Very refined petrol engine, Spacious  
**AGAINST:** No option for AT on diesel variants

Price	Engine	Cyl.	Power	Torque
9.53 - 13.83 Lakh	1497ccP	4	117bhp@6600rpm	14.78Kgm@4600rpm
	1498ccD	4	99bhp@3600rpm	20.40Kgm@1750rpm



### CITY

**FOR:** Best-in-class mileage  
**AGAINST:** Ride quality could be improved

Price	Engine	Cyl.	Power	Torque
9.91 - 14.31 Lakh	1497ccP	4	117bhp@6600rpm	14.78Kgm@4600rpm
	1498ccD	4	99bhp@3600rpm	20.40Kgm@1750rpm



### CIVIC

**FOR:** Excellent Fuel efficiency, Abundance of Safety  
**AGAINST:** Sluggish cruise control

Price	Engine	Cyl.	Power	Torque
17.94 - 22.35 Lakh	1799ccP	4	140bhp@6500rpm	17.74Kgm@4300rpm

## HYUNDAI



### SANTRO

**FOR:** Good Looks, Peppy Engine, Low Maintenance  
**AGAINST:** Needs better Mileage and Safety features

Price	Engine	Cyl.	Power	Torque
4.30-5.79 Lakh	1086ccP	4	68bhp@5500rpm	10.10Kgm@4500rpm



### GRAND i10 PRIME

**FOR:** Spacious, Easy to drive, Mileage  
**AGAINST:** Handling needs to be better, Styling lacks flair

Price	Engine	Cyl.	Power	Torque
4.60-5.69 Lakh	1120ccD	4	70bhp@4000rpm	16.60Kgm@1500-2750rpm



### GRAND i10 NIOS

**FOR:** Styling, features  
**AGAINST:** Suspension too soft for highway

Price	Engine	Cyl.	Power	Torque
5.05-8.04 Lakh	1186ccD	4	74bhp@4000rpm	19.40Kgm@1750-2250rpm
	1197ccP	4	82bhp@6000rpm	11.62Kgm@6000rpm
	998ccP	4	98.63bhp@6000rpm	17.50Kgm@1500-4000rpm



### XCENT PRIME

**FOR:** Spacious, Easy to drive, Mileage  
**AGAINST:** Handling needs to be better, Styling lacks flair

Price	Engine	Cyl.	Power	Torque
5.37-6.40 Lakhs	1197ccP	4	82bhp@6000rpm	11.62Kgm@6000rpm
	1197ccD	4	70bhp@4000rpm	11.62Kgm@6000rpm



### ELITE i20

**FOR:** Stylish Design, Projector Headlamps  
**AGAINST:** No tractional Control and Dual stage Airbags

Price	Engine	Cyl.	Power	Torque
5.60-9.34 Lakhs	1197ccP	4	82bhp@6000rpm	11.62Kgm@6000rpm
	1396ccD	4	88bhp@4000rpm	22.45Kgm@1500rpm



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## ARA

**FOR:** Quality Interiors, Design, Powerful Engine  
**AGAINST:** Needs better comfort

Price	Engine	Cyl.	Power	Torque
9.23 Lakh	1197ccP	4	82bhp@6000rpm	11.62Kgm@4000rpm



## VENZA

**FOR:** Stylish Design, Power Sunroof, Long Feature list  
**AGAINST:** Rear Space cramped, 1.2l Petrol needs power

Price	Engine	Cyl.	Power	Torque
6.55-11.30 Lakhs	998ccP	4	118bhp@6000rpm	17.50Kgm@1500-4000rpm
	1197ccP	4	82bhp@6000rpm	11.62Kgm@4000rpm
	1396ccD	4	88bhp@4000rpm	22.45Kgm@1500rpm



## i20 ACTIVE

**FOR:** Projector Headlamps, Stylish Design  
**AGAINST:** No traction control and Hill hold

Price	Engine	Cyl.	Power	Torque
9.93 Lakh	1197cc	4	82bhp@6000rpm	11.62Kgm@4000rpm



## CRETA

**FOR:** Space, Design, 6 Air bags  
**AGAINST:** Over priced, Petrol engine needs more power

Price	Engine	Cyl.	Power	Torque
7.74-9.93 Lakhs	1197ccP	4	82bhp@6000rpm	11.62Kgm@4000rpm
	1396ccD	4	88bhp@4000rpm	22.45Kgm@1500rpm



## VERNA

**FOR:** Ventilated Front Seats, Petrol & Diesel Automatic  
**AGAINST:** Low Mileage, Low Ground Clearance

Price	Engine	Cyl.	Power	Torque
8.18-14.08 Lakh	1591cc P	4	121bhp@6400rpm	15.40Kgm@4850rpm
	1582cc D	4	126bhp@4000rpm	26.51Kgm@1500-3000rpm
	1396cc D	4	88.76bhp@4000rpm	22.43Kgm@1500-2750rpm
	1368cc P	4	98.6bhp@6000rpm	13.56Kgm@4000rpm



**FOR:** Comfortable and quiet cabin, Great exterior style  
**AGAINST:** High Cost of Ownership, Low Mileage

Price	Engine	Cyl.	Power	Torque
15.89-20.39 Lakh	1999cc	4	150bhp@6200rpm	19.98Kgm@4000rpm



## TCSon

**FOR:** Futuristic & modern looks, Class Leading fit & Finish  
**AGAINST:** Expensive

Price	Engine	Cyl.	Power	Torque
18.77-26.97 Lakh	1999cc P	4	150bhp@6200rpm	19.98Kgm@4000rpm
	1995cc D	4	183bhp@4000rpm	40.78Kgm@1750-2750rpm

## KIA



## SELTOS

**FOR:** Beautiful design and road presence  
**AGAINST:** Steering lacks feedback

Price	Engine	Cyl.	Power	Torque
16.34 Lakh	1493cc	4	113bhp@4000rpm	25.50Kgm@1500-2750rpm

## MAHINDRA



## V100

**FOR:** Option for 6 seater, SUV like looks  
**AGAINST:** Small tires, boxy design

Price	Engine	Cyl.	Power	Torque
7.95 Lakh	1198cc	3	80bhp@5000rpm	11.72@3500-3600rpm



## XUV00

**FOR:** Abundance of Safety measures, Refined Engine  
**AGAINST:** Most features reserved for Top-end trims

Price	Engine	Cyl.	Power	Torque
12.69 Lakh	1497cc	3	115bhp@3750rpm	30.59kg-m@1500rpm



## TUV00

**FOR:** Rear wheel drive  
**AGAINST:** Low quality of Materials vis the competition

Price	Engine	Cyl.	Power	Torque
10.55 Lakh	1493cc	3	98bhp@3750rpm	24.48kg-m@1500-2250rpm



## BOLERO

**FOR:** Fuel Efficient, Rugged Build  
**AGAINST:** Underpowered and uncomfortable seats

Price	Engine	Cyl.	Power	Torque
7.74 - 9.42 Lakh	2523cc	4	62bhp@3200rpm	19.88Kgm@1400-2200rpm



## BOLERO POWER

**FOR:** Fuel Efficient, Rugged Build  
**AGAINST:** Most features reserved for Top-end trims

Price	Engine	Cyl.	Power	Torque
7.49 - 8.86 Lakh	1493cc	4	79bhp@3600rpm	19.88Kgm@1400-2200rpm



## THAR

**FOR:** Off-roading capabilities, Muscular Style  
**AGAINST:** Expensive, Uncomfortable

Price	Engine	Cyl.	Power	Torque
9.60 - 9.99 Lakh	2498cc	4	105bhp@3800rpm	25.18Kgm@1800-2000rpm



## TUV00

**FOR:** Good Ride Quality, 9 Seats on offer  
**AGAINST:** Interior material quality

Price	Engine	Cyl.	Power	Torque
9.93 - 11.42 Lakh	2179cc	4	118bhp@4000rpm	28.55Kgm@1800-2000rpm



## MARAZZO

**FOR:** Stylish, Spacious, Feature rich  
**AGAINST:** underpowered

Price	Engine	Cyl.	Power	Torque
10.00-14.77 Lakh	1497cc	4	121bhp@3500rpm	30.60Kgm@1750-2500rpm



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## SCORPIO

**FOR:** Refinement in engine performance  
**AGAINST:** Expensive

Price	Engine	Cyl.	Power	Torque
10.00-16.63 Lakh	2179cc	4	118bhp@4000rpm	28.55Kgm@1800-2000rpm
	2523cc	4	70bhp@3200rpm	19.88Kgm@1400-2200rpm



## X V 00

**FOR:** Powerful, Luxurious features  
**AGAINST:** Cramped Third Row Seating

Price	Engine	Cyl.	Power	Torque
12.31-19.74 Lakh	2179cc P	4	138bhp@4500rpm	32.63Kgm@2000-3000rpm
	2179cc D	4	152bhp@3750rpm	36.70Kgm@1750-2800rpm

## MARUTI SUZUKI



## ALTO

**FOR:** ABS, EBD standard. Low Maintenance  
**AGAINST:** Low Build Quality, Lackluster design

Price	Engine	Cyl.	Power	Torque
3.90 Lakh	796cc	3	48bhp@6000rpm	7.03Kgm@3500rpm



## ALTO CNG

**FOR:** ABS, EBD standard. Low Maintenance  
**AGAINST:** Low Build Quality, Lackluster design

Price	Engine	Cyl.	Power	Torque
4.37 Lakh	796cc	3	48bhp@6000rpm	7.03Kgm@3500rpm



## ALTO 10

**FOR:** Cheapest Automatic, Great Mileage  
**AGAINST:** Cramped Interiors, Competition is more stylish

Price	Engine	Cyl.	Power	Torque
4.51 Lakh	998cc	3	58bhp@6000 rpm	7.95Kgm@3500rpm



## CELERIO

**FOR:** Best-in-class Mileage, aggressive pricing  
**AGAINST:** Old design, build quality not at par

Price	Engine	Cyl.	Power	Torque
5.43 Lakh	998cc	3	67bhp@6000rpm	9.17Kgm@3500rpm



## EECO

**FOR:** Big on space, mileage  
**AGAINST:** Old design, poor build quality

Price	Engine	Cyl.	Power	Torque
4.66 Lakh	1196cc	4	72bhp@6000rpm	10.30Kgm@3000rpm



## S-PRESSO

**FOR:** Spacious, Good Mileage  
**AGAINST:** Design is highly divisive

Price	Engine	Cyl.	Power	Torque
4.99 Lakh	998cc	3	65bhp@5500rpm	9.17Kgm@3500rpm



## WAGON R

**FOR:** Engine, 7-inch Infotainment, Android Auto and Apple CarPlay compatible  
**AGAINST:** Needs more safety features, lacking features on lower trim levels

Price	Engine	Cyl.	Power	Torque
5.91 Lakh	998cc	3	67bhp@5500rpm	9.17Kgm@3500rpm



## IGNIS

**FOR:** Best Safety features across variants, Apple Auto and Apple Car play, Outstanding handling  
**AGAINST:** Looks are divisive, cabin space slightly cramped

Price	Engine	Cyl.	Power	Torque
7.10 Lakh	1197cc	4	82bhp@6000rpm	11.52Kgm@4200rpm



## SWIFT

**FOR:** Good Styling, increased space, better features  
**AGAINST:** Lacks comfort for the segment

Price	Engine	Cyl.	Power	Torque
8.84 Lakh	1197cc	4	82bhp@6000rpm	11.52Kgm@4200rpm



## BALENO

**FOR:** Space, features, looks, safety  
**AGAINST:** Mileage could be better for CVT

Price	Engine	Cyl.	Power	Torque
8.90 Lakh	1248cc	4	74bhp@4000rpm	19.37Kgm@2000rpm



## DZIRE

**FOR:** Mileage, Safety, Space  
**AGAINST:** Base model is decontented, low ground clearance

Price	Engine	Cyl.	Power	Torque
9.53 Lakh	1197cc	4	82bhp@6000rpm	11.52Kgm@4200rpm



## ERTIGA

**FOR:** Mild-Hybrid, Great safety, and Climate Control  
**AGAINST:** Could get better features in mid models

Price	Engine	Cyl.	Power	Torque
11.21 Lakh	1462cc	4	103bhp@6000rpm	14Kgm@4400rpm



## BREZZA

**FOR:** Mileage, decent handling  
**AGAINST:** Design and interiors lack excitement

Price	Engine	Cyl.	Power	Torque
10.60 Lakh	1248cc	4	89bhp@4000rpm	20.40Kgm@1750rpm



## CIAZ

**FOR:** Mild hybrid tech, Automatic LED Lights  
**AGAINST:** No Diesel Automatic

Price	Engine	Cyl.	Power	Torque
11.38 Lakh	1248cc	4	89bhp@4000rpm	20.40Kgm@1750rpm

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### S-CROSS

**FOR:** Decent Ride & Handling, Good Engines  
**AGAINST:** Space, lacks style

Price	Engine	Cyl.	Power	Torque
11.44 Lakh	1248cc	4	89bhp@4000rpm	20.40Kg-m@1750rpm



### XL

**FOR:** Good Space, Comfortable Captain Seats  
**AGAINST:** Looks, 4-Speed Automatic

Price	Engine	Cyl.	Power	Torque
11.51 Lkhs	1462cc	4	103Bhp@6000rpm	14Kg-m@4400rpm

### MG



### ECTOR

**FOR:** Segment first iSmart connectivity feature  
**AGAINST:** Quality unsure yet

Price	Engine	Cyl.	Power	Torque
17.18 Lakh	1500cc	4	141bhp	25.50kg-m

### NISSAN



### MICRA

**FOR:** 6.2-inch Touchscreen Infotainment System  
**AGAINST:** Mundane Design

Price	Engine	Cyl.	Power	Torque
8.13 Lakh	1198cc	3	75bhp@6000rpm	10.60kg-m@4000rpm



### SUNNY

**FOR:** Space, Comfort  
**AGAINST:** Loose handling

Price	Engine	Cyl.	Power	Torque
9.94 Lakh	1498cc	4	97bhp@6000rpm	13.66Kg-m@4000rpm



### IC S

**FOR:** Stylish Design, Premium Interiors  
**AGAINST:** No Automatic

Price	Engine	Cyl.	Power	Torque
14.65 Lakh	1498cc	4	104bhp@5600rpm	14.48kg-m@4000rpm



### TERRANO

**FOR:** Looks rugged and upmarket  
**AGAINST:** No automatic transmission on offer

Price	Engine	Cyl.	Power	Torque
14.65 Lakh	1461cc	4	83bhp@3750rpm	20.40kg-m@1900rpm

### RENAULT



### WIDCAT

**FOR:** SUV Inspired Attractive Design, Fuel Efficiency  
**AGAINST:** Build Quality

Price	Engine	Cyl.	Power	Torque
4.92 Lakh	999cc	3	65bhp@5500rpm	9.27kg-m@4250rpm



### TRIBER

**FOR:** 7 Seater configuration, Attractive Design  
**AGAINST:** under-powered engine

Price	Engine	Cyl.	Power	Torque
6.63 Lakh	999cc	3	70bhp@6250rpm	9.27kg-m@3500rpm



### DUSTER

**FOR:** Comfortable for 5, Fuel efficiency, Powerful  
**AGAINST:** Outdated Interiors

Price	Engine	Cyl.	Power	Torque
12.50 Lakh	1461cc	4	108bhp@4000rpm	25kg-m@1750rpm



### LODGY

**FOR:** Car like dynamics, Extremely spacious  
**AGAINST:** Bland Interiors

Price	Engine	Cyl.	Power	Torque
12.12 Lakh	1461cc	4	83bhp@3750rpm	20.40kg-m@1900rpm



### CAPTIVA

**FOR:** Dynamic Stylish feature, Exterior design  
**AGAINST:** Outdated Interiors

Price	Engine	Cyl.	Power	Torque
13.00 Lakh	1461cc	4	104bhp@5600rpm	14.48kg-m@4000rpm

### SKODA



### RAPID

**FOR:** Impressive Build quality, driving dynamics  
**AGAINST:** after-sales service

Price	Engine	Cyl.	Power	Torque
8.82 - 14.00 Lakh	1498cc D	4	103bhp@4400rpm	25.50Kg-m@1500-2500rpm
	1598cc P	4	103bhp@5250rpm	15.60Kg-m@3800rpm



### OCTAVIA

**FOR:** Performance-oriented driver's car, Great looks  
**AGAINST:** Expensive, High Cost of Ownership

Price	Engine	Cyl.	Power	Torque
15.49-23.60 Lakh	1395cc P	4	138bhp@6000rpm	25.50Kg-m@1500-3500rpm
	1798cc P	4	178bhp@6200rpm	25.50Kg-m@1500-3500rpm
	1968cc D	4	141bhp@4000rpm	32.73Kg-m@1750-3000rpm

### TATA



### TIAGO

**FOR:** Great design, Safest car in class  
**AGAINST:** NVH

Price	Engine	Cyl.	Power	Torque
6.60 Lkhs	1199cc	3	85bhp@6000rpm	11.62kg-m@3300rpm



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### TIGOR

**FOR:** Great design, Safest car in class  
**AGAINST:** NVH

Price	Engine	Cyl.	Power	Torque
7.49 Lakh	1199cc	3	85bhp@6000rpm	11.62kg-m@3300rpm



### ALTROZ

**FOR:** Unique design, easy ingress and egress  
**AGAINST:** Engine

Price	Engine	Cyl.	Power	Torque
9.29 Lakh	1199cc	3	85bhp@6000rpm	11.62kg-m@3300rpm



### NEXON

**FOR:** great design & safest car in class  
**AGAINST:** Low fuel economy in petrol version

Price	Engine	Cyl.	Power	Torque
12.70 Lakh	1198cc	3	108bhp@5000rpm	17.33Kg-m@1500-2750rpm



### SAFARI STORME

**FOR:** Long-standing legacy, Decent safety features  
**AGAINST:** Poor acceleration and mileage

Price	Engine	Cyl.	Power	Torque
11.09-16.44 Lakh	2179cc	4	155bhp@4000rpm	40.78Kg-m@1750-2500rpm



### ARRIER

**FOR:** Stunning design, Great Interiors, Safety & Feature Rich  
**AGAINST:** No A D

Price	Engine	Cyl.	Power	Torque
13.45-17.32 Lakh	1956cc	4	138bhp@3750rpm	35.70Kg-m@1750-2500rpm



### EXA

**FOR:** All-wheel-drive optional trim available  
**AGAINST:** Steering feels vague at high speeds

Price	Engine	Cyl.	Power	Torque
13.72-19.29 Lakh	2179cc	4	155bhp@4000rpm	40.78Kg-m@1750-2500rpm

## TOYOTA



### ETIOS LIVA

**FOR:** Good driving dynamics  
**AGAINST:** Lacks some basic features

Price	Engine	Cyl.	Power	Torque
7.78 Lakh	1197cc	4	78bhp@5600rpm	10.62kg-m@3100rpm



### ETIOS

**FOR:** Good driving dynamics  
**AGAINST:** Lacks some basic features

Price	Engine	Cyl.	Power	Torque
9.13 Lakh	1197cc	4	78bhp@5600rpm	10.62kg-m@3100rpm



### INNOVA CRYSTA

**FOR:** Spacious, Comfortable, Top Safety, Build Quality  
**AGAINST:** Price, Mileage

Price	Engine	Cyl.	Power	Torque
14.93-21.71 Lakh	2393cc	4	148bhp@3400rpm	35.00Kg-m@1400-2800rpm



### COROLLA ALTIS

**FOR:** Excellent drive quality, Luxurious  
**AGAINST:** High price tag for the top model

Price	Engine	Cyl.	Power	Torque
16.45- 20.19 Lakh	1798cc P 4	4	138bhp@6400rpm	17.64Kg-m@4000rpm
	1364cc D 4	4	87bhp@3800rpm	20.90Kg-m@1800-2800rpm



### ETIOS CROSS

**FOR:** Good driving dynamics  
**AGAINST:** Lacks some basic features

Price	Engine	Cyl.	Power	Torque
8.16 Lakh	1197cc	4	78bhp@5600rpm	10.62kg-m@3100rpm



### GLANZA

**FOR:** Good mileage, Great Regenerative braking system  
**AGAINST:** Price

Price	Engine	Cyl.	Power	Torque
8.90 Lakh	1197cc	4	88bhp@6000 rpm	11.52kg-m@4400rpm



### YARIS

**FOR:** Segment first 7 Airbags, Gesture Control  
**AGAINST:** No diesel, Price

Price	Engine	Cyl.	Power	Torque
9.40 Lakh	1496cc	4	105bhp@6000rpm	14.28kg-m@4200rpm

## VW



### POLO

**FOR:** Impeccable power and performance  
**AGAINST:** Low ground clearance

Price	Engine	Cyl.	Power	Torque
5.82 - 9.59 Lakh	999cc	3	108bhp@4400rpm	17.60kg-m@1500-2500rpm



### AMEO

**FOR:** Aggressive pricing, Good Mileage  
**AGAINST:** Rear seats cramped

Price	Engine	Cyl.	Power	Torque
5.94 Lakh	999cc	3	74bhp@4400rpm	9.6kg-m@1500-2500rpm



### VENTO

**FOR:** Interiors, Best-in-class build quality  
**AGAINST:** High cost of ownership

Price	Engine	Cyl.	Power	Torque
8.86 - 13.29 Lakh	999cc	3	108bhp@4400rpm	17.60kg-m@1500-2500rpm



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# TWIN OR LOSE

**KARTIK WARE**  
@kartik46



**T**his month's Yamaha MT-01 made me think about twin-cylinder motorcycles. The robust vibes from the 1670cc motor must've rattled a thought or two loose from the cobwebs of my mind. *Cycle World's* Peter Egan once mused if two cylinders were perfect for a motorcycle, and my mind wandered in that general direction. Torque and feel are what make a memorable ride, Egan wrote, entirely accurate as usual. And none can deliver those qualities like twins do, he finished. I agree, of course.

Twins have been around in India for a while, from old British imports to the Yamaha RD 350. I'm sure people with access to a twin-cylinder motorcycle have heard the exclamation 'Double engine?!' from well-meaning but uninformed passers-by. Wonder what they'd say to a Honda Goldwing or a BMW K1600GT. In any case, forget six-pots, there are so many different types of twins that singles, triples and fours seem quite hampered by their number of cylinders. Right there, the twin-cylinder motor is stronger on account of its flexibility. And then there are its many personalities.

Without even mentioning displacements, we're spoilt for choice. There is the delightful parallel-twin, compact and capable, and with the three crankshaft

angles it offers. With a 180-degree angle, it screams bloody murder. With a 360-degree angle, it barks authoritative statements. The 180 is smooth and revs hard, the 360 vibes more and feels better. Increasingly though, we're getting the P-twin with the 270-degree firing order, a mix of a more even firing order than the 180 and less vibrations than the 360.

Then there is the V-twin. Americans lay claim to this form, but that's mostly because the Italians want to call theirs by another name. Ducati and Moto Guzzi make

**“Most Indians spend their riding lives on singles...”**

90-degree motors and call them L-twins, but an L is just a different kind of V. Ducati makes longitudinal twins, while Moto Guzzi cylinders stick their heads out in the wind thanks to their transverse layouts. Ducati twins sound extremely mechanical, are supremely responsive and would rather die than go slow. Moto Guzzis, on the other hand, are examples of Italian indolence.

Speaking of which, no one does lazy better than the American V-twins. The sound and feel of a 45-degree V-twin is that of liquid thunder. There's nothing like it. At the exact opposite end, typically, the Japanese can make even the difficult V-twin feel smooth and balanced; the first time I rode the Suzuki V-Strom 1000, I stopped and checked if it was actually a V-twin. Then there's the boxer or flat-twin, epitomised by BMW. Mature and polished, it's like having a really cool uncle who can still pull mile-long wheelies.

Of all these, the parallel twin seems set to dominate the more accessible side of the motorcycling spectrum, using its harmonic balances and imbalances to turn engineering into riding feel. Twins are the way forward, as they once were a long time ago; In the '70s and '80s, Japanese manufacturers even made 125cc parallel-twins! Most Indians have spent their riding lives on singles and twins are the next step up. Who knows, for most of them that might be the last step they need, a wholesome mixture of fun, power and feel. Need proof? Just look at the lovely Royal Enfield 650s. And imagine what the KTM 490s (590s?) will be like.

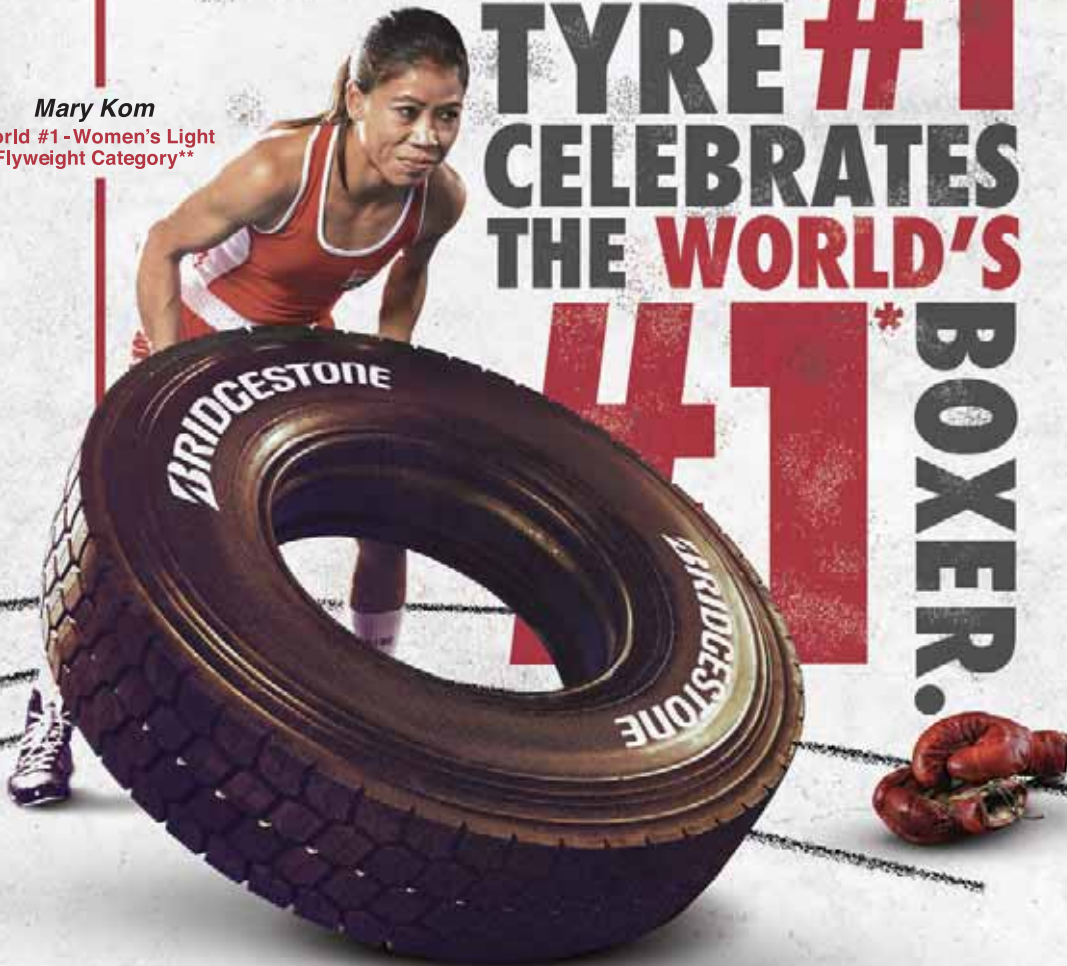
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