



Gruntier CBR-based motor loses 3bhp

revel in the hard sucking engine-braking of the Ducati and Triumph, the Honda was running on and demanding one hell of a fistful of brakes, which had to be trailed into the corner more often than I'd have liked.

In short, although the CB's mill is by no means dull it certainly seems it beside the other two. It drinks more fuel too.

Handling-wise, the CB's far, far better than its old-fashioned looks might suggest. Although it dwarfs the diminutive Ducati (it's a full 110mm longer and 110lb heavier) the Honda manages its bulk remarkably well. The steel double cradle frame is all new; the box-section aluminium swing-arm is massively proportioned and the forks and rear shocks are quality, well-damped kit.

Long and slow-steering it may be – but it hardly feels it thanks to the leverage provided by the high, wide bars. At speed, though the suspension is a little soft and wallowy compared to the other two, the CB is stable, secure and planted. And it's only when the pegs start to ground that the beast starts to feel uncomfortable, the front tyre becomes vague and the sheer weight of the bike starts to win the war with the suspension, turning the whole plot into a marshmallow. It's never truly worrisome though.

The front-end problem seems to be the fault of the tyre, with the profile of the Dunlop too severe with too small a contact patch. While the rear was happily scrubbing up to the edge, barely two-thirds of the front profile was being used.

At more sensible speeds, however, the CB won friends with everyone who rode it. It's a doddle to ride, looks good, is well equipped (the only one here with a mainstand and coming with the best mirrors and instruments), was by far the most comfortable on the pillion and is respectably fast too.

In comparison with the Monster's menace and the Speed Triple's sheer polished aplomb the CB1000 always suffered a little. On its own, on a gorgeous day, none of that seemed to matter. ▶