



instead. The mirrors are barely adequate. There's not an awful lot of steering lock. There's no mainstand and the sidestand is Ducati's usual springy nightmare affair. The ignition switch is curiously mounted behind the headstock in a cut-out at the front of the tank. The pull-out choke knob is hidden away between the frame tubes down the left-hand side and pillows are a very secondary consideration.

But the Monster is very much the solo rider's bike. It's harsh, it's distinctive and delivers great gobfuls of fun.

If you want a bike that makes you feel dead hard, aggressive and is stuffed up to its gunnels with rich, fruity (if unconventional) fun there's not much that's in the same league. The Monster is silly and uncomfortable but it's also addictive, invigorating and exciting too.

TRIUMPH SPEED TRIPLE



UNDOUBTEDLY THE SURPRISE package of this threesome. Where the CB and Monster wear their development, style and philosophy on their sleeves, the Triumph – on paper the closest to a parts bin special – is almost a jammy gem. There's little to it that, in the context of the rest of Triumph's

range, is either new or original. There seems little reason to expect excellence. Only the white-faced clocks are new. And yet, against the odds, it's the one bike here that gels, excites and invigorates the most.

It, truly, is a special machine.

The Speed Triple somehow adds up to an awful lot more of a motorcycle than merely a Triumph 900 Daytona without a fairing. For a start, the riding position is spot-on. With clip-ons slung reasonably low beneath the top-yoke and semi-rearset pegs, the Speed Triple's true cafe racer crouch is significantly more radical than either the CB1000 or Monster, yet is never uncomfortable nor cramped.

On motorways it's one of the few unfaired bikes that is truly unaffected by the wind blast at 85mph. Through the ►

The aptly-named Monster is the kind of motorbike to bring out the worst in people – not that tester West needs any second bidding. Don't try this at home kids