



1994 SPEED TRIPLE 900

No matter how black your mood; no matter how ugly the roads during the coldest, slimiest, black-iciest snap of the year, Triumph's diablo black Speed Triple bludgeons you into the spirit of summer.

From 50 yards, the Speed Triple's growling black lustre is as blatant as a lump of coal in freshly fallen snow. From 50mph, the Triumph three, as thick and rich and creamy as a Christmas trifle, lunges into a speed warp that drops jaws in every car mirror flashing by.

Triumph continues to amaze. From nowhere the marque has, in three short years, risen to become the success story of world motorcycling.

The huge, black motor is stock Trident (or Daytona, Trophy or Trident Sprint come to that): three cylinders of proven (and now beautifully finished), lunging potency. It's equally at home quietly rumbling through 2000rpm traffic

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as wound through into the wheelie-tastic, warbling hell-for-leather beyond that lives between six and nine.

From the Daytona seat and pegs you lean forward to clip-ons slung low beneath the inevitably black top yoke. Beautiful, simple, off-white finished twin dials (which, at last, are now the right way round with the speedo on the left); a strip of tiny idiot lights framed by a brushed alloy plate down the middle, and up front nothing bar the open road and an appointment with adrenalin.

That riding position, after a few early doubts, is nigh-on perfect. The attitude is mean and purposeful, without being so radical that it's a pain. The pegs, now mounted on a gloriously crafted alloy plate, do ground their hero-blobs when you start using every millimetre of grip the Hi-Sports can deliver. But, for the most part, pegs are comfortable without pushing too much weight forward onto your arms.

The tall weight of the engine, spine frame and high tank is still there of course. And in very low speed corners there's

still a tendency to flop, requiring you to pull it through on the throttle. But with this Triumph, it really is a case of 'git dahn and get scratching'.

Brakes, again, are stock Daytona: four-piston Nissin calipers working on huge semi-floating 310mm discs and all connected to the span-adjustable lever by a couple of yards of Polydynamics' finest braided steel hose.

It all sounds dead posh, but in this day and age, compared to various six-piston confections, they remain merely okay. As it is, two fingers on the lever give you the power if not quite the instant bite and precision feel of the best of brakes, while a steadying lean on the rear pedal adds up to give you all the stopping power you need.

Instead, it's nailing the Speed Triple out of corners where this Triumph shows its true mettle. That four-valve, three-pot meatball of an engine remains one of the most invigorating motorcycle power plants around. And it's in the Speed Triple, perhaps more than in any other format, thanks to its steering and riding position, where you really can give vent to its all. And it's all is VFR-defying midrange combined with the sort of zestful, off-the-throttle urge from around 6500rpm that you'll find on nothing short of a FireBlade or ZZ-R1100...

The Speed Triple in black may at first glance look a bit like a Suzuki Wolf 125 after an overdose of steroids. It may not have quite the integrated originality of the more expensive and probably less durable Ducati Monster, but it's undoubtedly far, far more practical, far, far quicker and has, to my mind, just as much gob-smacking presence. *PW*

SPECIFICATION

Price £7499 **Engine** 885cc, liquid-cooled, dohc, 12v, inline triple **Bore and stroke** 76 x 65mm **Dry weight** 211kg*

Wheelbase 1490mm **Rake/trail** 27°/105mm **Tyre sizes** 120/70-17, 180/55-17 **Top speed** 148mph** **Power** 97bhp*