

Speed Triples

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one that was still completely standard. 'If it's going to be modified then I want to start with a clean canvas' and as the bikes aged some signs of wear and tear could be found. Given his budget, Mike avoided the examples with corrosion forming around the horns and pitting alloy, and went for a mint, one-owner machine with 20,000 miles clocked-up.

'It cost me £3200 from Carl Rosner after a bit of hard bargaining, but I've bought from Rosner's before and they've always looked after me.'

So does the reality match the dream? Mike's the first person to admit that the older Speed Triples aren't absolutely perfect. 'The brakes could certainly be better. As it's so very heavy they lack bite, and I'd prefer more feel to them. It's also a pain not having a centrestand. And a carb rubber split after only three weeks, which wasn't covered by the warranty!'

Even so, you won't get him to swap his original Triple for the 955 version. 'It always puts a smile on my face, even when I just sit on it. I know that I'm riding something really special with a certain ... presence, I guess, on the road. It gets lots of attention, despite being relatively new. I think the classic looks draw people in, although it doesn't appear old.'

'Riding it is a hugely satisfying experience. It's such a physical bike to haul around which makes it very engaging and enjoyable. Even without a fairing it's still pretty comfortable on the motorway. And the torque delivery is a blast!'



▲ **Hidden**
hard the 509
proves faster,
but the original
Speed3 wins
on rider
comfort

Mike also reports a warm welcome from the Triumph Owners' Club, who made him feel completely at home with meetings attended by old and new Triumphs alike. Mike believes that his black beauty will stand alongside the T955 as the Hinckley Triumph classics of the future and intends to hang onto his for many years.

'It's just so totally black' were his final words... ■



Bug-Eyed But Beautiful

Richard Parkes (above, right) actually intended to buy a T595 when his chum Mike dragged him to Carl Rosner's shop. There, the menacing T509 sealed his fate...

'I always liked the original Triumphs' says Richard, 'and I've owned lots of Japanese sports bikes and wanted something different. I think the Hinckley bikes have really come on in recent years. I bought a Sprint and really liked it; it was very comfortable and competent.'

'The Daytona was my first choice, but it was just too single-purpose and probably too fast for road riding. I've always liked the looks of the 509: it's just so mean, and really stands out on the street. I didn't intend to buy a bike that day but just got carried away, and then there it was! Brand new, in black, for £6500 just before the registration letter changed.'

Despite the improvements to the later Speed Triples, Richard still has a couple of grumbles; 'The chain wears quickly and it's very difficult to adjust without a centrestand. We have to do all sorts of mucking around with a paddock stand every 750 miles. The downpipes are hard to clean at the front - and actually, it would be much nicer if the exhaust note was louder! Mike's bike can be heard over mine when we're riding together and sounds so much better...

'The 509 is also quite uncomfortable at speed and my neck suffers on long trips. Still, it helps to keep speeds legal. And overall the bike is simply fantastic to ride. It's got more performance than anyone needs and looks amazing. I much prefer the style and performance of the current Speed Triples to the original version, which looks pretty dated now. You wouldn't get me to swap!' ■



1994 Speed Triple

Engine:

3-cylinder, water-cooled dohc, 885cc (56x65mm), 98bhp @ 9000rpm, 6.2lb/ft @ 5900rpm

Chassis:

3 x 36mm Mikuni flat-slide

Transmission:

5-speed gearbox, chain final drive

Frame:

Steel backbone

Tires:

Front 120/70-17

Rear 180/60-17

Suspension:

Front 43mm telescopic fork; Rear alloy swinging fork, tri-link monoshock, adjustable

Brakes:

2 x 30mm discs, 4-pot calipers; 25mm disc, 2-pot caliper

Dimensions:

Wheelbase 1490mm weight 209kg (461lb)



2002 Speed Triple

Engine:

3-cylinder, dohc, liquid-cooled, Sagem fuel-injection, 108bhp @ 9000rpm, 7.2lb/ft @ 5800rpm

Chassis:

alloy perimeter frame

Tires:

Bridgestone BT16, Front 120/70-17; Rear 190/50-17

Brakes:

Front 320mm discs 4-pot calipers; Rear 220mm disc 2-pot caliper

Suspension:

Front adjustable 43mm telescopic fork; Rear single-sided swinging arm, Showa adjustable spring/damper

Dimensions:

Wheelbase 95.5in (2426mm) weight 432lb (196kg) fuel capacity 45 (80)