

Rock the Caff-Bar

was a pudding basin replete with a white scarf. Mods and rockers in punch-ups on Brighton beach every bank holiday, and anyone who rode a bike that wasn't British needed their heads examining – often with a pair of knuckledusters and a bike chain. Unemployment was non-existent, and British bikes ruled the roads of the world – you'd queue with 40,000 others to watch them trounce the opposition at a Brands Hatch National meeting. When the pound in your pocket bought five gallons of petrol, and left

enough change for a cod and chips wrapped in newspaper. Ah yes, those were the cafe racing days...

Well, whether they really were or not, the facts are that the stripped-down, lean 'n' mean machines that the '60s produced, have so far not been revived in the current retro market. OK, the Speed Triple has 50 per cent more weight, cylinders and performance than the Triton it emulates, but nothing since Ducati's bevel-drive 900SS more than a decade ago so perfectly captures the minimalist yet meaty appeal the cafe-racer concept crystallised so well. And in spite of having been developed using Triumph's established modular engineering concept, the Speed Triple is in many ways the most distinctive, the most hard-edged and the most individual of the quartet of models that make up Triumph's three cylinder range.

Actually, the fact that there is only a 900 Speed Triple, and not a 750 version shows

Above: Left side of the motor that so disgraced early Tridents now manages to look the part. Left: Clocks are suitably spartan. Below: The British café racer is alive and well and living in Leicestershire



what this bike is all about – performance. Essentially a 900 Daytona without bodywork, restyled with superb attention to detail, cloaked entirely in black, and with the subtlest flash of chrome – to create the perfect two-wheeled cafe noir. Unless of course sir prefers cappuccino, and you opt for the Daytona yellow version: orders are currently running at five to one in favour of the Black Beauty.

Wheels, brakes, suspension (including the flat-topped triple clamp introduced across the range this year) and exhaust system are all lifted from the Daytona, the

