

Speed Triple: Riding it...

It's not on the extras list, the small snarl you get free with a Speed Triple. A curl of the lip, a squint of an eye. It's not aggression - it's a reflex action that just can't be helped. You're mad, bad and dangerous to know. An outcast biker on a roaring deathtrap. Or so the rest of the world thinks.

Let them think that, it's part of the appeal. While you stay safe in the knowledge that you're riding a high-quality British-made machine with over a decade of development behind it (and great dealer back-up). It's like Ozzy Osborne biting the head off a bat...made of rubber.

The sensation of quality is there as soon as you climb aboard. There's a solidity to the steering, like the resistance on the volume knob of a very expensive amplifier, it's a joy to touch. Reassuring and contradictory. For something that looks to all the world

like it's just been crashed, the handling is sportsbike precise. Fast turning and stable.

Triumph call their trademark triple engine 'primal', but that's selling it short. It's a masterstroke of engineering. Put it any gear, shift at any revs, ride at any speed and the engine obeys instantly. The spread of power is beyond reproach. No rev is wasted, the long stroke and clever head ensuring every fuel atom explodes into torque.

Remember this isn't a detuned sportsbike with the fairing missing; it'll do 160mph. It's a real rock star, not a manufactured boy band. But over 90mph, fingers start to lift from the bars and pain strikes a spot between the shoulder blades. Sounds like a great excuse to dodge motorways (which is good). This is a manifestation of Triumph's confidence and a bastion of Great Britishness.



8 One technician bolts in the engine, another presses the head bearings and adds the VIN.



9 With the production line constantly moving forward, the shock and chain are fitted.



10 Next up a technician bolts on the swingarm and adds the wiring loom and control cables.



11 Downpipes are added next. Smart tools recognise each model and torque bolts down.



12 Forks are fitted, all fluids are added and tested for leaks using a vacuum system.



13 Next up comes the top yoke, bars, control levers and footpeg hangers for the pillion.



14 The bike's really taking shape now. The stubby exhaust cans and wheels are fitted.



15 After that comes the clocks, radiator covers and those distinctive twin headlamps.