



European XS650C gets twin discs, flat bars and rear-set pegs. We get US model.

TAMING YAMAHA'S TRAD TWIN

from a roadster with pure racing geometry, especially one with narrow and semi-flat handlebars, but what I did not anticipate was the crawling speed cornering instability. In a straight line the ride was perfect, but as the bike was cornered it resisted, as though rigged with excessive trail or maybe a fat, flat section tyre. Then, once at a particular point, it would let go and flop into the bend.

Once over 50 km/h the characteristic disappeared completely and things went perfectly, giving the kind of confidence few other big Japanese bikes do. I feel sure that with a good set of tyres the situation would alter, for despite an old fashioned frame style, there's no reason now, with all Tait's mods, why anything but top performance should be forthcoming.

The engine ran more smoothly than some counter-balanced crank vertical twins I have ridden, and was happy cruising at anything up to top speed. Even then economy was remarkably good: The only other comparable big bike to it in my experience is the R60/6 BMW, both equipped, interestingly enough, with constant velocity

carbs which return an all round performance far superior to any wholly mechanical instrument.

I was most impressed indeed with the constant level of the oil in the sump during the 3200 km test. Combined with the very efficiently metered carburetion, the lack of oil burning returned a combustion chamber cleanliness only equalled by Laverda before they gave in to demands for multi-grade oil use with their engines, and stopped machined valve stem/guide clearances at zero. (Multi grade oils contain solids which form ash. Unless given room to move around in, it builds up solidly and can cause a seizure.)

Jumping back a bit, a comment must be made on the fine performance of the new 650 Yamaha's suspension system back and front. Firmer than most Japanese gear, it was well damped and perfectly matched. With footrests slightly more rearward than previously, the riding position was excellent for all speeds.

Taken all round I liked the bike a lot and would recommend it as one of Europe's best buys, but I would advise any potential owner to change to another set of tyres he knows he can trust implicitly. The Bridgestones are the only things which let the 650 down. *

SPECIFICATIONS

MAKE YAMAHA
 MODEL XS650(C)
 PRICE \$1659

ENGINE: Air-cooled transverse parallel (vertical) twin. All alloy engine with steel cylinder liners. Wet sump lubrication common to transmission, 2.5-litre capacity. Built-up crankshaft with four roller and one ball race main bearings. Roller bearing big ends. Bore and stroke 75 x 74 mm. Compression ratio 8.4:1. Capacity 653 cm³. Claimed power 36.5 kW at 7500 rpm. Torque unknown (previously 54.3 Nm at 6000 rpm but now lower). Carburetion by 2 x 38 mm Mikuni constant velocity instruments via wet foam plastic filter.

TRANSMISSION: Five-speed through wet multi-plate clutch incorporating multi coil springs, shock absorber. Left side change, one down and four up. Primary drive by straight cut gear. Primary reduction 2.66:1. Final reduction 1.94:1. Gear ratios (overall :1), 12.73, 8.21, 6.72, 5.66, 4.95.

FRAME: All welded tube steel duplex engine cradle with single tube spine saddle tube.

SUSPENSION:

Front: Internally sprung, two-way oil-damped telescopic forks.

Rear: Pivoted fork with two-way damped load adjustable suspension units.

WHEELS, BRAKES & TYRES:

Front: 19 in. x WM2 racing alloy rim and 3.25 in. Bridgestone ribbed tyre. Twin 26.6 cm hydraulic disc brakes.

Rear: 18 in. x WM3 racing alloy rim and 4.00 in. Bridgestone studded tyre. 17.7 cm s/s drum brake.

ELECTRICS:

Source: 12V x 154W crankshaft-mounted alternator charging 12V 15 a/h battery.

Ignition: Twin coil and contact breaker.

Lighting: 177 mm (7 in.) x 50/45W headlamp and all ancillary lighting.

CAPACITIES:

Fuel tank 13.62-litre steel tank including 2.27-litre reserve

Engine oil 8-litre wet sump including transmission

DIMENSIONS:

Dry weight (claimed) 215 kg. Kerb weight as tested 204 kg

Wheelbase 166.3 cm

Overall length 217.4 cm

Overall width 71.1 cm

Overall height 111.7 cm

Handlebar width 73.6 cm

Seat height 80 cm

Footpeg height 24.1 cm

Ground clearance 13.9 cm

PERFORMANCE

ACCELERATION:

0-100 km/h 6.1 sec

Standing 400 metres 14.9 sec

MAXIMUM SPEED . . . 162.5 km/h (90.72 kg/rider)

FUEL CONSUMPTION:

Overall 22.7 km/l

High speed 20.59 km/l

Cruising 24.8 km/l

BRAKING:

From 50 km/h 9.8 m

From 100 km/h 36.2 m

HOW DO THE FINER POINTS SCORE (Out of 10)

Instrumentation	7
Comfort	8
Tool kit	7
Quality of finish	6
Vibration	7
Lighting	9
Positioning of control	8