



BEAUTIFUL BAVARIAN

M1 MOTORSPORT BMW S 1000 RR

Words: Glen Williams Photos: fotoCD

Zuper! The first of the new BMW S 1000 RRs to take to the track as a pukka race bike was inevitably going to be watched closely, here is the low-down from behind the bars at Manfeild.

There's a new player on the block in the Superbike game - and it's in the form of the BMW S 1000 RR. Thanks to the good people of M1 Motorsport I managed to wangle a ride on one of the flying propellers at Manfeild recently, and it didn't disappoint.

Many of us have been reading the hype in the media over the past year or so about the all-new and groundbreaking S 1000 RR from BMW - and I for one was keen to see how much of it was true. Unfortunately you are often required to 'read between the lines' with some of the factory-driven media releases and it can be hard to sort out some of the 'half truths'.

The official launch was covered by BRM Ed, Fraser (issue 67) - and whilst I'm sure the all expenses paid first class trip to Portugal and the promise of as much ice cold free German beer he could drink didn't at all coerce him from telling the whole truth and nothing but the truth.....

Nevertheless, I wasn't about to turn down the chance to take a quick spin at our local racetrack myself to form my very own opinion.

I was also very interested to see how all this new technology in the form of traction control, anti-wheelie, ABS, Gyro 'lean angle-ometer' thingies all worked compared to some of the older style Superbikes that I have had the pleasure of racing and riding which had none of this modern fan-dangled stuff.

Up-specced

We turned up at Manfeild in the middle of winter - but with the weather gods on our side, it was dry and 'relatively' warm. The M1 team's



Sloan and his BMW are already chalking up race wins in the Actrix Winter Series



superbike pilot, Sloan 'Choppa' Frost, was on hand to help out with things and explain some of the extra bits 'n' bobs that had been fitted to this bike for the racing they have done this winter season and also for this test day. It turned out to be a fairly short list and included an Öhlins TTX36 rear shock built up by Robert Taylor, a set of Öhlins 30mm Nix cartridges replacing the standard Beemer fork internals, a full race spec 'Devil' exhaust system and a Power Commander (version five).

It turns out that the team are still in the very early stages of building this bike up for the 2011 NZ Superbike series and are waiting for Motorcycling NZ to ratify the final version of the NZ Superbike rules before making more substantial investments in specialised race parts. In its current spec the bike pretty much fits in with the Superstock class rules.

Sloan felt that the modifications made to the bike were a definite improvement to the standard machine and had netted them 10% more horsepower and faster lap times - which all come in rather handy when it comes to racing.

Vee-haf Eegniton

After a quick check and play with the various knobs and buttons - the bike was programmed to run in 'Race Slick Mode' which gave me maximum power, full traction control, ABS on the front brakes only and anti-wheelie function to play with, and with this we went out on track.

First impressions whilst rolling out of pit lane were that the bike felt

"...it doesn't come in with a bang and is all very subtle - sneaky those Germans eh....."

TRACK TEST

M1 MOTORSPORT
BMW S 1000 RR



smaller than any other Superbike I had ridden before. The footpeg / handlebar / seat positions were more akin to a 600 Supersport bike's dimensions (and whilst that sounds like a boring over used comparison – it is the truth of the matter). For a bike that has had very

little motor development the power delivery was pretty impressive – and it was particularly strong from around 10,000rpm upward. It had no discernable power-band as such but it definitely seemed to be happiest and more willing in the higher part

of its rev-range where it showed its true colours. The bog-stock quick-shifter system worked faultlessly and allowed wide-open throttle up-shifts without touching the clutch. This feature is a handy advantage on a bike like this as it gives you one less thing to have to worry about, with missed gear-changes being a thing of the past. It also provides you with a cool little 'pop' from the exhaust as you change up a gear – just like a real race bike!

The shift-light in the centre of the dash was both large and easy to see in your peripheral vision, ideal for shifting a gear out of corners when you might be still hanging well off to one side of the bike.

Keeping your weight forward on this baby when making those gear changes is a must, unless of course you like small power wheelies upon each shift...

Throttle action was light and in my opinion almost too responsive (if there is such a thing) - there was

zero lag or delay in its action, so the bike demands a very steady throttle hand when you are going through the motions of hard braking, turning-in and gear changes all at once. I commented afterwards to Sloan about this and that I felt that the crank acceleration/deceleration was almost 'too fast', and interestingly he advised that the next series of S1000RRs were being released with a slightly heavier crankshaft.

The lever on zee right

All this power of course demands a decent set of anchors and the Beemer does not disappoint here either. It has a 'soft feel' lever but they are brutally strong and consistent; I couldn't detect an ounce of fade. Great to see that the company has outsourced industry leading radial-mounted four-piston Brembos for the job with these puppies grabbing hold of 320mm discs. Another nice touch is that the steel braided front brake lines are a stock issue on this bike.

If the ABS was working during my ride I didn't notice it, which is probably how it's meant to be, although I challenge any rider to get a front Dunlop slick breaking traction with any vigour – these tyres were fitted to this machine and offer simply outstanding grip.



Very cool

"It has a 'soft feel' lever but they are brutally strong and consistent; I couldn't detect an ounce of fade."

I can't really comment on the rear brake as I never touched it, other than the lever being set too high for my liking with my pointy-out feet style interfering with it during right-hand cornering.

Traction – who needs that?

With respect to the electricravery - officially called 'Dynamic Traction Control' I was able to put this to the test by running the bike through a large wet patch that had been left on the track from the previous night's heavy rain on the exit of one of Manfeld's turns. It all worked pretty seamlessly from the riders perspective, you can feel it break traction and the motor sort of 'flattens off' quicker than your sphincter muscle can operate (and in my case that's pretty quick). The bike pretty much remains in a more-or-less straight line and as soon as traction is back it gives you the full-monty horsepower again, but even that is delivered back to you over a moment or two (maybe half a second or something like that). What I am saying here is that it doesn't come in with a bang and is all very subtle - sneaky those Germans eh.....

Like the ABS this all happens very subtly and the technology in its application works in a way so that it doesn't interfere overly with your desires to get from point A to point B as fast as possible. In patchy conditions I can see this traction control stuff being extremely useful as it is obviously capable of smoothing out any potentially sudden changes in bike attitude. I would still be wary though of relying on some of this technology on our famous NZ road's shiny wet tar patches – as it can't beat the laws of physics. When there's no grip at all you'll be gone-burger.

It would also be neat to ride this bike on a racetrack with all this stuff turned off (especially if conditions were ideal and grip was plentiful) – just to see how much speed or lap time could be gained or lost.

Around Zee Bendz

The real proof of the pudding (or should that be Strudel?) for any sports bike shows up when the road (or the track) gets bendy. The Beemer's capability to put the power on the ground and be a little more idiot proof to get out of corners was obvious, but its ability to steer into them and offer the rider a neutral line through the turns was also pretty darn good too – I would score it a 8.5 out of 10 for this in its current early set up.

The bike had a slightly heavy feel when turning in and it had a slight tendency to 'lift' out of the turn when you got on the gas. When it was flat on its side mid-corner it felt superbly neutral and it would steer wherever you wanted it to go – very nice.

We had a small problem with one of the handlebars moving during my ride and this may have had an effect on the steering out of the turns – In fact Sloan later confirmed that the bike was improved in this area when the bars were re-set correctly.

All in all, this is indeed an excellent big bore sports bike that no doubt would be rather intimidating to ride anywhere near its potential on a public road. But what it will do is hopefully make the M1 Motorsport team a strong competitor in the upcoming National Superbike Championship.



“I would still be wary though of relying on some of this technology on our famous NZ road's shiny wet tar patches”



I hear on the grapevine there is more horsepower to come for this bike by late this year – and I think that will be a good thing if it's going to run with the other top level national superbikes.

Maybe next time we review it, the Beemer will have a No1 on the front of it? The team at BRM wish the BMW M1 Motorsport guys the very best of luck for their season.

Check the newest Superbike team in New Zealand out at m1motorsport@live.com

BRM

