WORLD EXCLUSIVE FIRST TEST

EXCESS ALL AREAS

The £45,000, 185bhp, 159kg Veltro redefines exotica. Welcome to the fastest, most powerful and most expensive MV ever

BY MICHAEL NEEVES PICTURES BY MARK MANNING

The light weight and superb Pirelli slicks on the Veltro make it ridiculously confidence-inspiring

THERE’s exotica, and then there’s super-exotica like the MV F4 Veltro. The version we’re riding around the Guadix circuit in Southern Spain is built solely for track use, hence the “Pista” name – Italian for track. It costs a whacking great £45,000, pumps out 185bhp and scoots to an authentic top speed of 190mph.

The only small numbers with this Italian masterpiece are its weight (at 159kg it’s lighter than a supersport 600 or a World Superbike racer), and how many will be made, namely 21. Incredibly, despite the price, UK importers Three Cross Motorcycles have already sold two, so if you’ve got that sort of cash burning a hole in the back pocket of your Armani suit you’d better get a move on.

WHAT’S SO SPECIAL THEN?

In short, everything – even where it’s built. The Veltro doesn’t come from the regular MV factory in Varese near Lake Como, instead it’s hand-built in San Marino by the Cagiva Research Centre.

CRC could be described as the dream factory of the motorcycling world, it’s where 500cc Grand Prix Cagiva race bikes used to be built, and where the MV Agusta F4 and Brutale were originally designed by co-owner Massimo Tamburini – the man who designed the Ducati 916.

The Veltro’s tubular steel frame is standard F4 1000 fare, but this elegant structure now houses the engine from the 171bhp F4 Tamburini, complete with its variable height inlet trumpets which lift clear of the throttle bodies at 10,000rpm to unleash hell (allowing laryn signs without sacrificing any mid-range power). A titanium racing exhaust pushes things even further to an eye-watering 190bhp.

Elsewhere, if you can get close enough to it (a crowd comes as standard) you’ll see more exotic materials than on the space shuttle. The fairing (complete with quick-release fasteners and an enclosed belly pan that doubles as an oil catch tank – as per racing rules), seat unit, heel guards, fairing and clock bracket, bagger and front mudguard are all carbon-fibre and the engine has a magnesium sump and rocker cover, helping to contain all the titanium bits inside it.

Tyres are Pirelli slicks with a taller 55-profile rear tyre for extra side grip and better turning agility, wrapped around lightweight Brembo wheels (the rear sprocket is quick-release).

The swingarm is magnesium alloy. There’s a racing quickshifter and a dash that gives you more information than a Sky Plus digibox, a racing fuel filler cap and an aluminium radiator big enough to cool a power station.

At the rear sit a fully-adjustable Sachs shock (with separate ride-height adjuster) of the same design used on Schumacher’s Ferrari F3 car. Fully-adjustable 38mm Marchiagos upside-down forks live up front with billet aluminium brackets for the radically-mounted four-piston Brembos.

It’s all finished in exposed carbon-fibre and matt black (like MotoGP bikes look during their winter tests) and now I’ve got the serious hoots.

THERE’S A ROAD BIKE, TOO

THERE’s a Veltro for the road called the Strada, which is ‘only’ £56,000, so you’ll only need five numbers to come up on the National Lottery to buy one, not six. Only 99 Stradas are planned. The Strada has the same power and top speed as the track version, but its road kit (with lights and indicators) pushes the weight up 10kg, not a big problem when you think it will still be lighter than the less powerful Kawasaki ZX-10R! Its race exhaust comes in a separate box though, only for track day use, of course. The only thing missing from the road bike is the quickshifter and race dash.

IT’S NOT FOR THE NERVOUS

JUST summoning up the courage to take the Veltro around the track in the first place takes some doing; shattering £45k’s worth of rare two-wheeled mentalism that doesn’t belong to you isn’t something even worth thinking about. But with a shaking hand on the starter (or the left bar, as there’s no switchgear on the right) the titanium pipes burble into life and we’re off down the pillanes.

With just the rider’s mass stopping the wheel-like Veltro from floating off into space there’s little impression of weight when you flick from side to side to keep the tyre-warmer heat in the Pirellis, just like a full-on superbike racer. And with a few laps under our belts to get into the groove...
it doesn’t take long to figure out that it goes like a proper superbike too.
Blatting through the gears (road shifting, minus the quickshifter, which hadn’t yet been fitted to this Veloce – No 23 and launched on the matt black 21-litre fuel tank, arms curled around it like a scared child holding a teddy, the MV goes like nothing you’ll ever find on the road.
It bludgeons you with a hammer blow of gale-force, ear-splitting, face-altering acceleration. It’s all you can do to keep up with the relentless speed the Veloce is happy to dish up for your masochistic enjoyment.
The power at low rpm isn’t great, not helped by the tall gearing, but once in its stride – at around 600rpm – it takes off, all the way to 15,000rpm when a selection of lights flash at you to signal it’s time to change gear.
Coming off the gas and on to the freight-train-strangeness four-piston Brembos, the mechanical slipper clutch does its thing. Bang, bang, down through the gears, popping and banging on the overrun, don’t blink the throttle, and you glide serenely on to your chosen coming line.
Mid-corner and on a neutral throttle the electronic air-bled system kicks in, releasing the compression in two cylinders and keeping the throttle response nice and smooth, until the corner is finished and it’s time to unleash the fury again.
After just five laps of GUAX’s a sunny cross between Knockhill and Cadwell, my arms are already pumped and my brain is fried, in the same way a packa superbike racer likes to assault you.

IT LIKES TO TAUNT YOU
I hate it when you ride a bike that has so much grip, so much compound and feedback from the chassis that it seems to laugh at your attempts to go fast through the corners. The Veloce is that bike.
The front Pirelli slick grips like bubble gum while the rear does its best to control 185lb at the rear, which, as I’m writing this now and not sucking hospital food through a tube, tells us it’s done its job.
The Veloce is very stable on the track and comfy too – once the adjustable footrests have been dished in to suit – which gives the rider lots of confidence, the only downside of this is that it’s very difficult to steer through a flip-flop chicane without hearing the sound of your heels popping – it takes that much physical effort to haul it over. Also, this bike’s rear spring is from the 26kg heavier Tambauro, so it’s a bit stiff, even on the track.

VERDICT
THE: Veloce is probably the ultimate boy’s toy. Although it has been designed to be ready to race (which doesn’t make it seem so expensive when you think how much you’d need to fully race-prep a GSX-R1000), most of the fortunate will either use them out on a track day or sit this piece of motorcycling art in their lounge; after all I can’t imagine it really being competitive against a 200bhp-plus Crescent Suzuki, for example.
It is a thoroughly impressive piece of kit though and really is the closest thing you’ll ever find to the full World or British Superbike experience, but without needing the necessary race licence.

THANKS TO GUAX for CIRCUIT FOR TRACK TIME: www.guaxcircuits.com