

OLD V NEW

2001-'04 BMW R1150RT ★ 2005 BMW R1200RT

2001-'04

BMW R1150RT

- ✓ Few better for mile-eating
- ✗ Ground clearance is limited



ALTHOUGH one of the all-time top touring bikes the R1150RT had plenty of scope for fine-tuning



THE R1200 is better in almost every respect - power, weight, comfort, mpg, handling, braking and design

BMW R1150RT v R1200RT

Could the all-new R1200RT big tourer prove to be even better than the previous R1150? Our panel of owners explains all...

BMW RT OWNERS OWNERS' PANEL

PAUL DICKINSON, 42



A MOTORCYCLE training instructor with www.in-gear.co.uk, Paul did

84,000 miles on his beloved 1150 before trading it in for a new R1200 earlier this year.

JOHN TAYLOR, 55



JOHN owned a R1150RT for four years and wishes he had kept it instead of

buying the R1200RT.

GEORGE EDWARDS, 43



GEORGE runs www.rtrider.co.uk, a website dedicated to BMW RT

owners. He owned an 1150 for four years, covering nearly 50,000 miles, and is already up to 6000 miles on the new 1200RT.

PERFORMANCE

Paul: "The new model feels smoother straight away. It fires quickly, the throttle is lighter and the engine feels more responsive. On the move it just gets up and goes, and it really thrives above 3000rpm. At first I was arriving at corners much quicker than I realised - and two-up performance is a revelation compared to the 1150."

John: "I'm not that impressed with the new model. The 1150 would cruise at 5000rpm-plus like a turbine. By comparison, the new 1200 feels very harsh above 4400rpm in top. The 1200 has more power, but lacks the low down grunt that the older bike had. However, once you rev it there's noticeably more power."

"Fuel consumption varies from 58 to 46 miles to the gallon, depending on the terrain and my right hand."

George: "I always ride two-up with the wife, and usually fully loaded, so the extra power is really noticeable. There's much more punch out of corners, compared to the old 1150 which felt a bit sluggish."

"With the new bike there's a surge of power, especially above 6000rpm, but there's still plenty of low down grunt, too. It also means that you don't have to change down the gearbox so often. On the old 1150 I used to drop down to fifth gear on A and B roads, as it didn't have the grunt for overtaking in top. The new 1200 is far better, I just leave it in top most of the time."

RIDING

Paul: "The 1200's seat is slightly higher than the 1150, but the new bike is still easier to manoeuvre at low speeds and the top heavy feeling has virtually gone. "The back brake is also improved,

and the front feels more progressive than the 1150 - but I wouldn't say it was better, only different. The suspension takes care of rougher surfaces in a more gentle way and it's better two-up, too - less likely to ground out. There's been many a time when we've scraped the 1150's centrestand during fast cornering."

John: "The weight reduction has made the new bike easier to ride, especially on back roads. However, on long fast sweepers it doesn't feel as planted as the old 1150."

"Low speed handling is much better on the new bike and the rear brake is much better as well. I hated the old linked-brake system - it was too sharp, a nightmare in a gravelly car park two-up. The non-linked brakes on the new bike are far better. "The low beam is also much better

BMW's big tourer took some beating for comfort, but had niggly problems...



BMW dash is typically teutonic - clear and functional



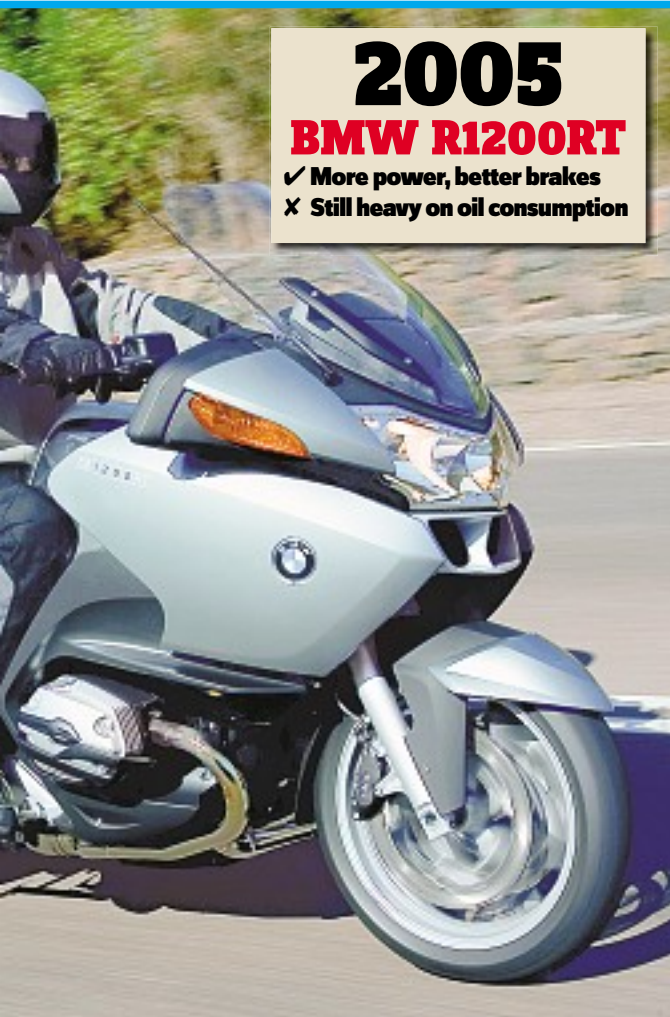
THE 1200 gets modern dials and a multi-function digital display



SOME like linked brake stability, some hate the loss of rider control



HOWEVER, BMW ditched it as a standard feature on the 1200



2005 BMW R1200RT

✓ More power, better brakes
✗ Still heavy on oil consumption

on the new bike, but there's no adjuster now for some reason. The pillion seat is too slippery, too – my other half is constantly sliding around. The old 1150 seat was much better."

George: "The new RT is much lighter and easier to ride. On the old bike, fully loaded and with the wife on the back, we had a problem with ground clearance – the new bike is much better. "I've owned BMWs for the last nine years so I'm used to the stiff feeling of the front end. The brakes are much better than the old bike, too – the front is more progressive and thankfully they've got rid of the linked brakes."

OWNING

Paul: "I'm more than happy with the new version. The miles are totting up as I use it for instructing and I've even taken it on track. Like all boxers it uses some oil, but maybe not as much as my 1150. Also, the 1200 is better on fuel, as I get 47-49mpg compared to 42-43mpg on the older bike. "The RT is expensive and they seem to have a low book value used if high mileage, which seems stupid as it's built

for high mileage. So I plan to keep mine for the duration of its life – as I ride 30,000 miles a year, in nine or 10 years it will have been fantastic value!"

John: "When I first picked up the new RT it was very vibey. Pidcock Motorcycles sorted it but I've still got other complaints; you only get one key and the fact that no tool kit is supplied is a sick joke. I complained and as a goodwill gesture they sent me a proper spare key and a tool kit. "The mirrors have a major blind spot so I've a pair of GS mirrors, which fit fine and are a massive improvement."

George: "I've owned RTs before so I was expecting it to use oil, but that should decline as the miles mount – it also gives about 55 miles to the gallon. "The standard panniers are more than large enough, but they're easily scratched so I've fitted some clear protective plastic to protect them. "The rear Bridgestone tyre needed replacing after 4800 miles, which isn't as long as on the older bike. But they're really good, I always fit Bridgestones."

MODEL GUIDE

2001

R1150RT
Introduced to replace the 1100RT, with a 17inch rear wheel, bigger bore engine and redesigned styling. It also came with Evo brakes and fully integrated ABS.

2005

R1200RT
A completely new model, with a whole re-design. 24 kilos lighter with power output quoted as 110bhp.

AN EXPERT SAYS:

Adrian Earl, service manager, Balderston BMW, Peterborough
"The 1150RT is very reliable and I've seen them with as many as 60,000 miles. Customers seem to hold on to them. The new bike is more powerful and much lighter, but the old 1150RT still has a following. We still get customers asking for the old 1150. But the new 1200RT has sold amazingly well. Before they were even launched – as soon as they appeared in the press – we had customers placing orders. I've not seen a problem with one yet and MCN's long term test RT has already passed the 13,000-mile mark in less than six months without a problem."

PARKER'S PRICE GUIDE
NOW INCLUDES BIKES!
PARKER'S

VERDICT

Paul: "The new RT is a very fine bike. It's lighter, quicker, the gearing is better, and it's more comfortable. "The R1200RT is all the things that I wanted my 1150 to be. Like all bikes it won't suit everyone but it's worth a try. This is my fourth RT and I've long been converted to BMW."

John: "As you can gather I'm not too pleased, although it's no fault of Pidcocks. I've spent the best part of £12,000, waited four months for it, and it's turned out to be inferior to my old 1150. I just hope it smoothes out and stops drinking oil – I've just come back from touring Europe and it's better, but I still don't like it as much as my old bike."

George: "Some say it's expensive, but I disagree. You don't have to do anything to it, it does everything I ask of it and by riding for three or four years to 60 or 70,000 miles I'll get my money's worth. You can buy cheaper bikes but not many will last 70,000 miles. I think it's worth the money and I'm really pleased with it."

ONE DAY WITH...

KYMCO XCITING 500



KYMCO'S Xciting may not win in the performance or handling stakes, but for the money it's a decent commuter buy

Exciting? Well, no, but great value for money...

XCITING? WHAT A DAFT NAME!

LET'S face it, Kymco already have a track record in dodgy monikers, having already given us the Ego, the People, and the frankly bizarre Yup.

It almost goes without saying that the Xciting, with a sedate 37bhp heaving a hefty 200kg kerb weight via a power-sapping automatic transmission, is actually anything but.

SO IT'S JUST ANOTHER BORING 500 SCOOTER?

WELL there's a bit more to it than that, so don't dismiss Kymco too quickly. The Taiwanese company now makes over half a million machines annually and has a reputation for high build quality thanks to a long association with Honda.

In fact, Kymco tops the scooter sales charts in Italy at times, and bucked the trend of falling scooter sales in the UK last year with growth of 9%.

BUT CAN IT COMPETE WITH OTHER 500S?

THE Kymco feels as solid and well-made as any of its rivals, and aside from a slightly lumpy pick-up from its automatic transmission, it's just as smooth.

Then there's its price. At just £3899 OTR, it's cheaper than Piaggio's X9 Evolution (£4699) and even the £4300 Aprilia Atlantic Sprint, let alone the £5299 Yamaha charges for a Tmax, or the six grand a Honda Silver Wing costs.

BUT SURELY IT CAN'T MATCH THEIR PERFORMANCE?

NO, but the Kymco is not far off its nearest rivals – the

UNLIKE other Taiwanese two-wheelers, this one's almost stylish!



single-cylinder Piaggio or Aprilia – and in this sector, that doesn't really matter much anyway.

What's important is that it's capable of the long distance commuting it's designed for, is able to sustain 80mph-plus speeds on motorways, is stable at speed and corners securely. All of which it does.

COOL. SO ANY OTHER COMPLAINTS?

WELL, the comfort is disappointing, as the huge seat is shaped so you don't make contact with much of it, and it's unforgiving, too. Ride quality can't match the Aprilia and the underseat storage is disappointing as well – there's the inevitable space for a full face helmet, but that's about it, so budget for a topbox if you plan to commute.

If you ride fast, don't expect to save much on running costs either – as consumption dips to 38mpg. Still, other big scooters aren't a great deal better, showing that a box of cogs and an oily chain are still hard to beat for sheer efficiency.

ANYTHING ELSE?

THE Xciting does better in one respect where Taiwanese products once



STORAGE is disappointing

used to struggle – and that's visually. It looks uncomfortably broad low down from the rear, but otherwise it's sleek – and almost dynamic.

The mirrors are oddly positioned to show mostly your fists, the red-on-black inner ring of mph speed figures is tricky to read, and the turbulence (if you're tall) makes focusing matters worse, but for all that it's still a credible rival to the Italians, who suffer their own design quirks.

In a nutshell, the Xciting offers most of what you need for the lowest outlay.

KYMCO XCITING 500

★ ★ ★ ★ ★
COST: £3899
POWER: 37bhp
TORQUE: 27ftlb
WEIGHT: 200kg

Available: Now
Colours: Silver
New for 2005: New model
Insurance group: 9 (of 17) – TBC
Info: Masco Ltd, 01743-761107 or www.kymco.co.uk

TECHNICAL SPEC

Engine: Liquid-cooled 498.5cc single-cylinder dohc four-stroke
Chassis: Tubular steel frame. Twin rear shocks with adjustable pre-load. 2 x 260mm front discs with twin-piston calipers, 240mm rear disc with single-piston caliper. Tyres: 120/70 x 15 (F), 150/70 x 14 (R).

THE new 1200 is sleeker, more powerful and more refined



2001-2004 BMW R1150RT

COST NEW IN 2001: £9550
USED PRICES:
2002-2003: £6395-6999
2004: £7000-7750

Insurance group: 11 (of 17)
Servicing: £200 minor, £240 main

TECHNICAL SPEC
Engine: 1130cc flat twin
Power: 85bhp
Chassis: Steel sub-frames; engine as stressed member
Weight: 253kg
Top speed: 130mph
MPG/range: 44/240 miles

2005 BMW R1200RT

COST NEW: £10,700
USED PRICES:
2005: £9850-£10,700

Insurance group: 13 (of 17)
Servicing: £165 minor, £185 main

TECHNICAL SPEC
Engine: 1170cc flat twin
Power: 110bhp
Chassis: Steel sub-frames; engine as stressed member
Weight: 229kg
Top speed: 135mph
MPG/range: 38/260 miles

MCN SAYS:

- ✓ Lowest price in the class for high build quality
- ✓ Decent looks with high specification
- ✗ High fuel consumption, disappointing storage and comfort
- ✗ Buzzing turbulence for taller riders, oddly positioned mirrors