

OLD V NEW

1997-'02 DUCATI ST2 ★ 2004-'05 DUCATI ST3

'97-'02

DUCATI ST2

- ✓ Torquey, very stable at speed
- ✗ Hard seat for a sports tourer



THE grunty ST2 was Ducati's first stab at a popular sports tourer

'04-'05

DUCATI ST3

- ✓ More power, more comfortable on long trips
- ✗ Vibey and lacks ST2's fork adjustment



Ducati ST2 vs ST3

Ducati found new customers with their durable yet soulful ST2 sports-tourer, but is the later ST3 the better option?

DUCATI ST OWNERS' PANEL

ANDY BLACKWELL

ANDY is 41 years old, a self employed engineer and lives in Hertfordshire. He's owned an ST2 since 2002 and has demo ridden the ST3.

HENRY BRYAN

51-YEAR-OLD Henry is a project manager from West Sussex and owns an ST3, but has spent a weekend demo riding an ST2.

PAUL JAMES

50-YEAR-OLD Paul, from Northants, is a dedicated member of www.ducatisportingclub.com and owns a Ducati ST2, ST3, 750 Sport, plus a 996R... you could say he's a bit keen on 'em.

PERFORMANCE

Andy: "In terms of speed, I don't think there's a huge difference between the two models. It was hard to accurately compare performance because the ST3 model I rode wasn't the best example and had suffered a hard life as a demonstrator. It didn't impress me that much and felt a little rough, more vibey than my own ST2."

Henry: "The ST2 runs out of breath a bit at the top end, whereas the ST3 has much more in hand when you rev it. The ST3's motor seems to make just as much power in the midrange, but delivers it in a much more willing kind of way."

"I think the ST2 may have a slight edge in low-down torque, plus it isn't quite as vibey as the ST3. But all round the ST3 is undoubtedly more responsive, quicker and more

fun. The throttle action isn't so heavy and the gearbox is smoother too, which makes it more useable."

"When it comes to braking, both bikes are similar, but the brakes need a bit of squeezing at the lever. In terms of handling they are also very close; I liked that the old ST2 had a full range of fork adjustment, whereas the ST3 has preload only."

Paul: "Compared to the ST2, the ST3 is a missile. It accelerates far quicker and cruises better at high speed. The brakes are just as good as on the ST2 and the ST3 handles superbly."

"The main thing I like about STs are the torquey nature of the engines, the way the bikes just lunge forwards when you roll on the throttle. The ST3 has the edge, especially at higher speeds, but the older ST2 is still good."

"I've tweaked my ST2 with an FIM

engine chip, plus free-flowing pipes. It's opened up the bike that little bit, plus it makes a very addictive noise now."

"The ST2 and the ST3 can surprise a few people on other big bikes. They are capable of making rapid progress."

RIDING

Andy: "The main difference when riding the ST3 is how good the softer seat is compared to the old ST2. It makes the bike a lot more comfortable."

"I haven't done any big tours on my ST2, but I have clocked up 12,000 miles in three years, mainly riding it to work. The ST2 is good as an all-day machine, but I have fitted a higher screen as I'm quite tall – but one of the reasons I'm selling the ST2 is that I find the semi-sporting riding position quite tiring now I'm getting a bit older."

"I was very impressed with the tyre and brake pad life of the ST2 as well. I got nearly 10,000 miles from the original tyres and only replaced the rear brake pads at 12k. The brakes on the ST2 and ST3 are superb."

Henry: "I've done 300 miles in a day on the ST3 and the seat is excellent,

THE ST2 offers budget Ducati thrills, but with practicality thrown in, too



OLD



ST2 dash is well laid-out, and is bristling with information

NEW



ST3 clocks are simpler, more futuristic, with cool back-lit dials

OLD



SACHS rear shock offers a great ride for ST2 owners

NEW



BUT the ST3 seems to be more stable at high speeds



THE ST3 was more powerful, more comfortable and holds its price well

especially compared to the ST2. The ST3 also has a better screen, which helps direct the windblast away from the rider and I also like the new generation instrument panel, which is easy to use, even with gloved fingers.

"I haven't fitted luggage to the ST3, instead I use an Oxford tail pack, which is really good, but – odd for a sports-tourer – the ST3 doesn't have any bungee hooks to make fitting soft luggage easier. On the upside, pillion passengers all seem to like the grabrail on the ST3."

Paul: "Touring to Spain on the ST2 stands out as a great ride, and likewise my trip across Europe on the ST3 was top fun, especially the Nurburgring. It's like the maddest trackday ever!"

"Tyre-wise I rate the Avon Azaras as a great all-rounder, but Metzlers are also fine. The 2005 ST3 has a new wet clutch and that feels much smoother.

"The ST3 feels amazingly stable on the autobahn, even at 140mph, two-up, with luggage – there aren't many bikes that can match the feeling of security you get from the ST3 at speed."

OWNING

Andy: "Apart from the clutch plates needing replacement, the ST2 has been 100% reliable. The clutch only cost £60 to replace by the way.

"I have the bike dealer-serviced and it cost about £330 for the last big service, which is probably typical for most big bikes these days. I'm impressed with the overall build quality of the ST2 and Ducati definitely took a leap forwards with that model. The ST3 looks just as well made, but I think the overall styling is too rounded, too soft looking.

"One thing I would praise are the panniers on the ST2 which are excellent and have never leaked, despite some trips in poor weather."

Henry: "I like the practical touches on the STs, like the U-lock under the seat, or the height adjustable exhaust silencers for example.

"I've only had the ST3 for seven months and it's been totally reliable, but I have found the brakes felt a little bit 'dead' and the fasteners don't seem as durable as those on the ST2. Otherwise, the ST3 does everything really well."

Paul: "I have owned the ST2 for five years and have done 20k miles on it with no problems. It is built very well.

"The only reason I am selling it is because I need the space in the garage and it seems pointless to own two sports-touring type Ducatis.

"The only problem I had with the ST3 was when the horn bracket broke. I think it was just a one-off, as I haven't heard complaints from other ST3 owners. I have fitted panniers and a top case to both bikes, which is excellent luggage for big European tours."

VERDICT

Andy: "The ST3 is a bit faster, but on balance the only reason I would buy one is for the better seat on it. If you fitted the ST3 seat to the ST2 you'd have the perfect sports-tourer."

Henry: "Definitely the ST3. It's just better all round and the build quality has improved over the years."

Paul: "Go for the ST3. There are some great deals on it brand new and it's an awesome bike for the money. In almost every way it's better than the ST2."

MODEL GUIDE

1997

Ducati ST2 launched, featuring a 944cc, fuel-injected, 80bhp motor, 43mm Paioli forks, Brembo brakes, a genuine two-person seat plus a centrestand. It costs a whopping £9250 OTR.

1999

Price cut to £8150

2001

List price drops to £7250 on the road.

2002

Price down to £6400 as Ducati clear stocks ready for ST3 launch.

2003

All new ST3 is launched, featuring three valves per cylinder 992cc motor, making a claimed 102bhp. Showa and Sachs suspension, new bodywork, improved lighting and a softer saddle complete the package. It arrives in the UK during Spring 2004 and costs £7500 on the road.

AN EXPERT SAYS:

Craig Lormor, sales manager, JHP Ducati, Coventry

"BOTH the ST2 and ST3 have a good reputation for reliability, and as Ducati owners tend to be quite fastidious, they make good used buys, especially the early ST2 models. For two grand you can get a very nice bike, panniers, FSH, probably 20k miles, which is great value.

"The later ST3 has more punch, more comfort and they are holding decent money, generally around the £5000-£5500 mark PX."

ONE DAY WITH...

CCM FT35S



LOW-SEATED and distinctively styled, the FT35S will appeal most to stumpy riders who like to stand out from the crowd

It's a low rider – just not as we know it

THAT LOOKS LOW

IT is. This bike will make thousands of short-legged riders grin with delight, as they plant their boots firmly on the ground.

Its torquey DR-Z400 engine, small turning circle and excellent front brake all add up to real point 'n' squirt ability around town. Even commuting on wet cobbled streets is top fun.

BUT IT LOOKS UNFINISHED...

IT'S fairly close to the final production machine (available through a dozen CCM dealers from January 2006). But there are some changes on the way, some of which can be seen on the FT35S that CCM will debut at the NEC show.

CCM says the swingarm will be 50mm shorter on the production model, the forks will be beefier and the twin headlights will have a new mounting point. The exhaust will have a race can option, but the standard pipe will probably have a new road-legal Remus retro-styled end can.

CCM also plans to offer the flat tracker with a 650 motor, as a stripped-down race only version, and with a V-twin in the next few years.

LIKE THE TANK...

WE like it too – it's classy. The alloy tank is hand rolled and polished, featuring a retro CCM logo. The final FT35S will also have a range of paint schemes, with chequered flag and Union Jack motifs, all designed to offer the buyer the chance to customise the bike's looks.

MCN SAYS:

- ✓ Funky flat-track styling
- ✓ Durable DR-Z motor, classy chassis
- ✓ Low seat height
- ✗ Expensive for a 400 single



TAIL end is much tidier than many bikes of this type

DOES IT GO AS GOOD AS IT LOOKS?

IT'S no XR750 flat-track racer, but the 400cc Suzuki motor is in enduro spec, so the gearing is low. You can blat away from the lights pretty sharpish, beating most cars easily, until the engine runs out of steam around 65mph and gets a bit vibey at its 70-ish maximum.

It isn't a bike you'd want to ride from London to Liverpool on, but for urban riding and occasional trips along B-roads, it's great fun. The bike's WP suspension is surprisingly soft, the seat is comfy and the riding position is perfect for commuting. Even the mirrors work well.

WHO IS THIS BIKE AIMED AT?

THE FT35S should please new riders looking for a first 'proper' bike after passing their CBT – and it's likely to be cheap to insure and run. Shorter bikers will love the feeling of 100% confidence in traffic on the FT35S. Older riders might consider the CCM as a practical alternative to restoring a classic 'bargain'.

IS THERE A DOWNSIDE?

JUST one: the combination of low-volume production and top-quality components means this is never going to be a bargain rival to a Kawasaki ER-6. The FT35S is expected to cost around £5500 – a hefty price tag for a 400cc machine.

CCM says buyers will be able to 'self-build' a FT35S to suit their exact specifications, ordered direct from the factory or from the UK dealer network. They might also offer a version with an air-cooled motor, although these are getting hard to source due to ever-tightening emissions and noise regulations affecting manufacturers.

CCM FT35S

★★★★★
 COST: £5500 (est)
 POWER: 45bhp
 TORQUE: 28ftlb
 WEIGHT: 115kg

Available: January 2006
 Colours: Customers' choice
 New for 2005: New model
 Insurance group (est): 9 (of 17)
 Info: www.ccm-motorcycle.net

TECHNICAL SPEC

Engine: Liquid-cooled 398cc (90 x 62.6mm) single cylinder four-stroke. Five gears. 36mm carb
 Chassis: Tubular steel frame. Wp 48mm forks, fully-adjustable. Wp single rear shock, fully-adjustable. Brakes: Brembo 320mm front disc with four-piston caliper, 220mm rear disc with single-piston caliper. Tyres: 120/60 x 17 front, 150/60 rear



ALTHOUGH similarly-styled, the ST3 is better in most respects under the skin

1997-2002 DUCATI ST2	2004-2005 DUCATI ST3
COST NEW IN 1997: £6400	COST NEW: £7500
USED PRICES: 1997-2000: £1800-3000 2001-2004: £2700-4000	USED PRICES: 2004: £5000-6500 2005: £5900-6700
Insurance group: 14 (of 17) Servicing: £130 minor, £330 main	Insurance group: 14 (of 17) Servicing: £130 minor, £350 main
TECHNICAL SPEC Engine: V-twin, four stroke, 944cc Power: 80bhp Chassis: Steel trellis Weight: 212kg Top speed: 135mph MPG/Range: 45 / 180 miles	TECHNICAL SPEC Engine: V-twin, four stroke, 992cc Power: 102bhp Chassis: Steel trellis Weight: 214kg Top speed: 140mph MPG/Range: 45 / 180 miles

