



GILLES rearsets cost £200 and are highly adjustable



FAIRING bracket from SES (£95) fits in neatly



SPEEDO removed and loom chopped back - very tidy

# race machine

been recommended by a friend who said they were one of the few aftermarket fairings which didn't need a lot of mods to fit. While £699 sounds expensive for an aftermarket GRP fairing, it's remarkable value for something fully painted, stickered-up and which fits neatly as well as the factory panels.

I mounted the top fairing on to an SES fairing brace ([www.saundeng.co.uk](http://www.saundeng.co.uk)) that is also excellent value at £95. With the top fairing fitted the bike looked stunning and I didn't want to spoil it by fitting some below par rearsets so opted for some black Gilles adjustables (01870-2402118). For £200 the quality is fantastic and they give enough adjustment even for my lanky frame.

Two months and £1771 later the only small jobs left are to finish mounting the bottom half of the fairing, fit a chain and sprockets and put some tyres on my new wheels. I've got a couple of other bits to buy from Ducati

but that should cost £100 tops. £3371 isn't the bargain bike I was after but by the end of it I should end up with a stunning track bike. The thing is, will I be able to stop tinkering enough to ride it?

## Test Notes

### HIGHS AND LOWS

**When I got it:** June 2002  
**Bought for:** £1500  
**Value now:** £3000  
**Mileage:** 11,595

**WHAT WE LIKE:**  
The thought of owning one of the best-looking bikes ever made for a knockdown price. It should be quite good to ride too.

**WHAT WE DON'T LIKE:**  
Spending money on parts I don't need - like the wheels

**BITS WE'D RECOMMEND:**  
The Vimori fairing and Gilles rearsets are stunning value for money.

## EXPERT GUIDE TO...

# Yamaha YZF1000 Thunderace

It has raced the Isle of Man, but this old-school superbike now makes a brilliant sports tourer

### 1996-2003 YAMAHA YZF1000R THUNDERACE

★★★★★  
**COST:** £2200-£5000  
**POWER:** 145bhp  
**WEIGHT:** 198kg  
**TORQUE:** 70ftlb

**FUEL:** 20 litres/35mpg/180-mile range

**SEAT HEIGHT:** 790mm

**RAKE:** 24°  
**TRAIL:** 97mm

**Model changes:**  
**1996:** Model introduced  
Colours: red/white or black/grey  
**1997:** Wiring modified to allow for alarm to be fitted. Colours now: black/blue or black/white/red.  
**1999:** Colours now black/blue only  
**2000:** Colours now: black or red  
**2003:** Model discontinued

**TECHNICAL SPEC**  
**Engine:** Liquid-cooled, 1002cc (75.5mm x 56mm) 20v dohc four-stroke in-line four  
**Top speed:** 165mph  
**Insurance:** Group 16 (of 17)



WHEELBASE: 1435mm

**B**ACK in 1996 the Thunderace was a land-based missile at the forefront of sports bike style and performance - but then along came the R1 and everything changed. But instead of immediately disappearing, the Ace's role was changed to that of a sports tourer.

It was a role the big Yamaha relished as its less focused design included a decent fairing, a broad, comfortable seat, less extreme riding position and plenty of mounting points for baggage. Even though it's not especially heavy

at 198kg, the softish suspension means the Ace can ground out, but at least it's a stable and predictable handler.

This fact wasn't lost on several racers at the Isle of Man TT in the new-for-1996 1000cc Production race.

It was the second most popular bike in the race after the FireBlade (which won in the hands of Phillip McCallen), and although the Honda was a more nimble machine, the Thunderace was far more stable and, in the words of one racer: "A lot easier to get through the likes of Ballacrye flat out."

## MCN SAYS

### IT'S BEST AT...

✓ **BRAKING**  
The Thunderace marked the first appearance of Yamaha's awesome one-piece, four-piston brake calipers which currently adorn the R1. These things are two-finger powerful and make a mockery of some six-piston designs.

✓ **GOING VERY FAST**  
Expect to see more than 170mph on the clock, which turns out to be a genuine 164mph. Faster than the Blade at the time.

✓ **LUGGING BIG LOADS**  
It's large enough for two-up riding and popular with larger riders.

✓ **STAYING ROCK SOLID**  
Even above 150mph the Ace is incredibly stable. Nothing upsets it mid-corner; 'tankslapper' is not a word in the Yamaha's dictionary.

### IT'S NOT SO GOOD AT...

✗ **SAVING YOU CASH**  
High mileage engines will drink oil quicker than you realise. As it's a 20-valve motor expect large service bills when the valves need checking. Rear tyres can be ripped up in less than 2,000miles.

✗ **TIGHT CORNERS**  
Compared to today's sports bikes the Ace feels heavy and slow steering, especially on the track, even though it weighs less than a '04 Ducati 999.

## OWNERS' SECRETS

### CHECK EXUP CABLES

You need to keep an eye on the EXUP cables and make sure they're lubed. They can get covered in crap so check them every time you clean the bike.

**Adam Ragul, Blackpool**

### AVOID DECKING OUT

Lifting the pre-load has helped the ground clearance and fitting an oval exhaust has stopped the can dragging.

**Jeff, Thunderace owner**

### BOOST YOUR BRAKES

The standard Sumitomo calipers are excellent, but I've added steel hoses to give a bit more bite for trackdays.

**Tony Johansson, Thunderace owner**

### ALTER YOUR GEARING AND BLITZ AN R1

I've gone up seven teeth on the back sprocket and it still does an indicated 160mph - it's a bit extreme but it slaughters my mate's R1 in top gear.

**Paul, Essex**

### LIFTING pre-load improves ground clearance



### IMPROVE WINTER RUNNING

In winter it takes ages for the bike to warm up, so I cover the radiator over with tape to keep it warm.

**Paul Berryman, Kent**

### BRIDGESTONES ARE PERFECT

Bridgestone BT010s suit the Ace perfectly. There are better tyres for the track but for the road these come highly recommended.

**Steve Morris, York**



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