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**ZRX1200 EXTRA!**  
See video and more pictures of the 'Britain's Got Biking Talent' winner

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## KAWASAKI ZRX1200S SPECIAL

It looks like a sinister show bike, but this ZRX is a hard-working everyday machine



# Riding a real winner

The 'Britain's Got Biking Talent' competition pulled in over 4500 examples of specials and restored classics. Michael Neeves tried out the winning 170bhp Kawasaki ZRX1200 special and can confirm it's as much about 'go' as show

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**B**IG Zeds have always put the fear of God into me. I remember being intimidated by Simpson Bandit-wearing, tasselled leather jacket-clad bikers riding open-piped, tiny number-plated Z1000s in my teens. And now I'm faced with another scary Zed.

This is no ordinary Big Zed. It's £22,000-worth of highly modified, big-bore (1224cc) ZRX1200S. It is also the winning entry in MCN's 2007 'Britain's Got Biking Talent' competition, backed by insurance firm Carole Nash. It was one of 4500 machines entered into

our 'Rate My Bike' section at motorcyclenews.com, where MCN readers could view and vote for their favourite machine.

As the winning bike, not only is the ZRX one of the coolest specials in the UK, it also features in the 2008 Carole Nash calendar. Owner Karl Galloway's prize was a trip to any MotoGP round of his choice in 2008 – he's decided to go to Motegi in Japan later in the year.

Almost every single component, nut and bolt that could be changed to make the original 2004 bike faster, lighter and meaner has been changed to produce Galloway's creation. But that's not the most impressive part of

this project; incredibly it only took four months for him to turn his standard, owned-from-new, 40,000-mile workhorse into this ultimate special. What's



more, 38-year-old Galloway, who works in insurance in the City, did most of the work himself – even though he is not an engineer and has never been a bike shop

mechanic. He's just lucky his missus was so understanding when he disappeared to his garage for hours on end while working on it. Only the real specialist jobs like

The end result is even more gob-smackingly stunning in the flesh than in pictures, with incredible attention to detail such as the tiny indicator switches

**'Galloway did most of the work himself, but he's never been a bike mechanic'**

built into the bars to replace the standard switchgear – but, on closer inspection, the ZRX isn't perfect. There are stone chips on the satin-black swingarm

(based on the standard item, but clad and braced to give it the MotoGP-look) and tiny markings on the beautifully painted tank where the braided clutch and brake hoses rub on full lock, are giveaway clues that this bike actually gets ridden.

This is no molly-coddled, concours-standard show bike – it gets used most days, was ridden to Italy and back last summer and has racked up 9000 miles since it was finished in 2006.

Pulling away from a standstill is as drama-free as on a standard ZRX, backing up the fact that this is a bike that has been built to be ridden. Despite initial impressions, this sinister-looking beast is a pussycat on the move, gliding along at legal speeds. Even the stubby little carbon Akrapovic end can doesn't make too much of a racket at bimbling speeds.

With lots of leg room, an upright riding position and not even a hint of a vibration through the metal handlebar grips, it is comfortable and a pleasure to ride.

I take a deep breath and nail it, unleashing all 170bhp and 95ftlb of torque to the rear Bridgestone BT-014. In first gear, all that power mated to the shorter-than-standard gearing (one tooth

less on the front sprocket, two teeth more on the rear) turns the throttle into a pulley for the front wheel. The more you twist it, the higher the wheel climbs into the air. Second gear is the same story and it finally settles down in third, by which time you're so far over the ton, windblast is trying to rip your head off.

The nitrous isn't rigged up – and I'm thankful for that. It can unleash another 50bhp at full throttle, giving this thing power on a par with a MotoGP bike!

As it is, even with the full application of right wrist, the ZRX is friendly and predictable. Its bulk is enough to damp out any wild behaviour and the power delivery is smooth enough for perfectly controlled wheelies – something that's tricky to do on a snatchy fuel-injected Yamaha FZ1. No naked bike produced today accelerates as hard as this. It's certainly a mile away from anything the Japanese would ever dare produce, B-Kings included.

This is a very special machine and a worthy winner of Britain's Got Biking Talent. The best thing about it, taking into account all the modifications, is that it rides like a properly sorted bike. Oh, and it has rid my fear of big Zeds once and for all.



**From top to bottom: Keihin flatslide carbs are fitted with carbon slides and custom alloy trumpets; stubby Akrapovic can isn't as loud as you'd think; Nitrous Oxide kit has the potential to unleash an extra 50bhp at full throttle (luckily for Neeves it wasn't hooked up during his test ride); Quickshifter moves the cogs of the rebuilt gearbox**



It looks like one mean motorcycle, but our man says it's a smooth and sorted machine to ride

## SPECS

**Cost:** £22,000 (including original bike)  
**Power (measured):** 170bhp @9800rpm  
**Weight (approx):** 185kg  
**Torque (measured):** 95ftlb @7250rpm

## TECHNICAL SPEC

**Engine:** 1224cc Muzzy big-bore kit with high-compression (12.5:1) JE pistons mated to a balanced and strengthened crankshaft. Gas-flowed cylinder head with Yoshimura ST-1 cams and Muzzy adjustable cam sprockets. Phase oil-cooler, crankcase-breather plate and racing catch tank, PMC cam oil-feed line kit and braided oil lines. Dyna coils, Denso plugs and Taylor HT leads. Custom-built Bito R&D Keihin flatslide carburetors (with carbon slides), custom-made alloy trumpets and inlet spigots and Ivans airbox block-off kit linked by an Active quick-action throttle. GSG Moto/Moko engine and clutch covers. Active radiator, Samco water hoses and Muzzy alloy fan. Akrapovic exhaust and carbon can. Rebuilt six-speed gearbox with Orient Express quickshifter and Renthal front sprocket. Big CC NOS kit. Goodridge clutch lines.

**Chassis:** Powder-coated black by Edward's of Braintree with Phase engine protectors and Tsugaki engine bars. Arata rearsets and Phase footrest hangers and sprocket guard. Standard swingarm is braced and clad. GSG Moko Alloy headstock and headlight brackets. Switchgear integrated into flat bars. Billet mirrors. Standard wheels powder-coated black by Triple-S with Bridgestone BT-014 tyres. Hesa tail and seat unit. Clever Wolf carbon-fibre under hugger, bellypan and carbon-fibre tank protector. GSX-R750 carbon mudguard. Paintwork by JPS, Takeley.

**Electrics:** Absolute Protec alarm/immobiliser, Acewell speed and temperature gauge, Phase earthing kit, Oberon billet indicators. Re-positioned starter button and ignition barrel. Trigger switch for NOS.

**Suspension and brakes:** Fully adjustable Showa forks with decorative shrouds and twin WP rear shocks. 2x320mm Galfer front discs with six-piston Pretech billet calipers. 250mm rear disc with single-piston caliper, Goodridge steel lines all round. Performance Technology radial brake and clutch master cylinders with Rizoma reservoirs. MEK rear brake torsion arm.



If you want to give up fossil fuels, there are much less sluggish means of personal transport than this slowcoach scooter

## E-MAX 110S

# Watts the point?

Green machines don't have to be slow, but this electric scooter is way behind in the headlong rush to save the planet, says Angus Farquhar

DO you dream of the day we can all replace our fossil fuel-burning bikes with equally fun and exciting but emissions-free machines? I do. So when given the chance to test one of the latest all-electric scooters to come on the scene, I was more than happy to give it a go. After all, great oaks from little acorns grow. Unfortunately, the e-max 110s failed to live up to my expectations.

OK, it looks alright, although it doesn't stand out from the crowd as a funky teen-dream scooter. But look a little closer and you realise some of its parts have a disappointing lack of style.

The most striking example of this is the massive centre-stand hanging off the rear end – there's been absolutely no attempt to hide it under the chassis. Then there's the cheap-looking swingarm and a square box that protrudes out the back to house one of the massive silicon lead-acid batteries – a case of form following function in a pretty crude way.

Underneath the speedo is an LCD readout showing a bar graph display of the battery charge level and the amount of current being used, along with mileage and trip readings.

Now I'm use to riding slow

stuff like mopeds and bicycles, but the e-max 110s is slow with a capital S.

There is a big red boost button on the right-hand bar which, when pressed, increases the acceleration to what you would expect as the normal level, but to press it every time to mimic acceleration isn't what is needed.

Speed-wise the 110s topped out at an indicated 27mph, but UK distributors Baroni have assured me that the scooter has been limited intentionally to that speed, presumably to increase the bike's range – the faster you go, the quicker the charge drains.

Manufacturers e-max claim that, restricted to 30mph, the 110s will travel 50-62 miles before needing a recharge, depending on road conditions and riding style. They also claim that a new, more powerful motor, due in soon, will allow the e-max to reach the mid-forties in mph terms without affecting the range too much. However, the new motor won't provide any more acceleration, which is the bike's main problem.

There are plus points, though: because the bike can be restricted to 30mph, it is classed as a moped, enabling holders of car licences who passed their tests before

February 2001 to ride without L-plates. It's also exempt from road tax and the London congestion charge. Personally I'd rather go the bicycle route and get fit.

For over £1000 less than the e-max's £2973 price you could get yourself a Peugeot Speedfight 50, a proper scooter with three times the range, bundles more accessible drive, 100mpg economy and the ability to be de-restricted to do over 50mph (if your licence allows).

So where does the e-max fit in to everyday life? If you



'Boost' button makes acceleration barely adequate



Clunky centre-stand shows this scooter's lack of style

**'Personally I'd rather go the bicycle route and get fit'**

## SPECS

**Cost:** £2973  
**Power:** 3.4bhp (claimed)  
**Weight:** 191kg  
**Availability:** now  
**Colour:** black, yellow, green  
**Info:** 0208-1234-698  
www.baroni-EVs.com

## TECHNICAL SPEC

**Engine:** 4000Watt electric motor built into the rear wheel, 4x 12V/60Ah silicon lead acid batteries, 3-5hours charge time  
**Chassis:** steel cage frame, oil pressure hydraulic shocks, one front disc with twin-piston caliper, rear disc with single piston caliper.

were incredibly environmentally conscious, only lived a few miles from work in the middle of London, didn't do roads with a limit higher than 30mph and were too unfit for a pushbike, the e-max 110s might be worth contemplating.