



**The best place to buy and sell bikes**

**MCN**

**Bike reviews**

**2005**

## ROAD TEST

KTM SUPERDUKE

[www.motorcyclenews.com/bikereviews](http://www.motorcyclenews.com/bikereviews)

# Do bikes get any better than this?

KTM's funky new Super Duke is fun, it looks great and, on paper, it's a goer – but can it really live up to the hype?

BY MICHAEL NEEVES PICTURES BY HOWARD BOYLAN

**K**TM has hailed its new Super Duke as the ultimate go-anywhere, do-anything sports bike. But have the Austrian firm's marketing men gone mad or is its new V-twin street bike really that good? So, in between miles of giggle-inducing

wheelies, stoppies and rolling burnouts we decided to find out.

First we pitched the 999cc Super Duke against one of the best superbikes there is – the Aprilia RSV1000R – to find out who would win on track and along our fast and twisty B-road test route.

Then, to see if the KTM can actually let you clock up the miles in comfort, we've put it up against one of the best all-rounders you can buy – Yamaha's superb, R1-powered Fazer 1000.

Surely it can't be better than both of them... can it?

## IS IT A SUPERBIKE?

IT'S only when you jump a 'real' sports bike after hooning around on the KTM that you realise how brilliant the Super Duke actually is. Having spent the last hour stretched out on the KTM, I'm struggling to work out why anyone would want to be as uncomfortable as you are on the Aprilia RSV1000R.

The Aprilia is track-shaped – that means you ride with your legs up around your ears with hands grabbing bars that seem so low you swear they've been fitted to the front wheel spindle. You feel every pebble in the road, too, as track-hard suspension does little to insulate you from the bumps. The Aprilia, just like every other superbike out there, is damned uncomfortable.

But I'm not here to give the superbike a hard time. The fact of the matter is that around the national circuit at Rockingham, and on fast, billiard smooth roads, the Aprilia simply blitzes the Super Duke – just like it was designed to do.

But back in the real world, where most roads are tight, twisty and bumpy, the roles are reversed and Aprilia actually can't keep up with the KTM. And that's even more impressive when you realise that the Super Duke will only do 135mph. The reason for this unexpected inversion is that the Aprilia simply isn't as agile and its hard suspension makes it buck and shake over bumps so much that you can't

use full throttle. It's only when a long straight arrives that the Aprilia claws it back.

Boasting more power than a new ZX-6R, but with considerably more torque, the Super Duke is no slouch, but the most impressive thing is how it makes all that power. We were amazed to see the KTM's power curve on the dyno – it's virtually a dead straight line. Such a linear power delivery makes the Super Duke a piece of cake to ride fast. In any gear and in any situation you just twist the throttle grip and the KTM rockets forward, what more could you ask for?

## PERFORMANCE

### KTM Super Duke

**Top speed:**  
136mph  
**Standing 1/4mile:**  
11.64 secs@121mph  
**0-60mph:** 3.5 secs  
**0-100mph:** 7.1 secs  
**Top gear roll-on (40-120mph):**  
16.80 secs

### Aprilia RSV1000R

**Top speed:**  
166mph  
**Standing 1/4mile:**  
11.01 secs@136mph  
**0-60mph:** 3.5 secs  
**0-100mph:** 6.53 secs  
**Top gear roll-on (40-120mph):**  
18.25 secs

**WILDLY different riding positions, surprisingly similar performance**



## IS IT FUN?

OH yes! The Super Duke is a mono-wheeling, tyre-smoking advert to the world that you don't need a 180mph missile to have fun. In fact you don't even need a 150mph missile, because the KTM only does 135mph.

What makes it such a hoot boils down to one thing – it's so easy to ride. With such a smooth, progressive power delivery, there are no surprises when you open the throttle.

Less experienced riders can simply go

as fast or as steady as they want. And for those with a few miles under their belts there's enough grunt on tap to take liberties with the beautifully poised chassis.

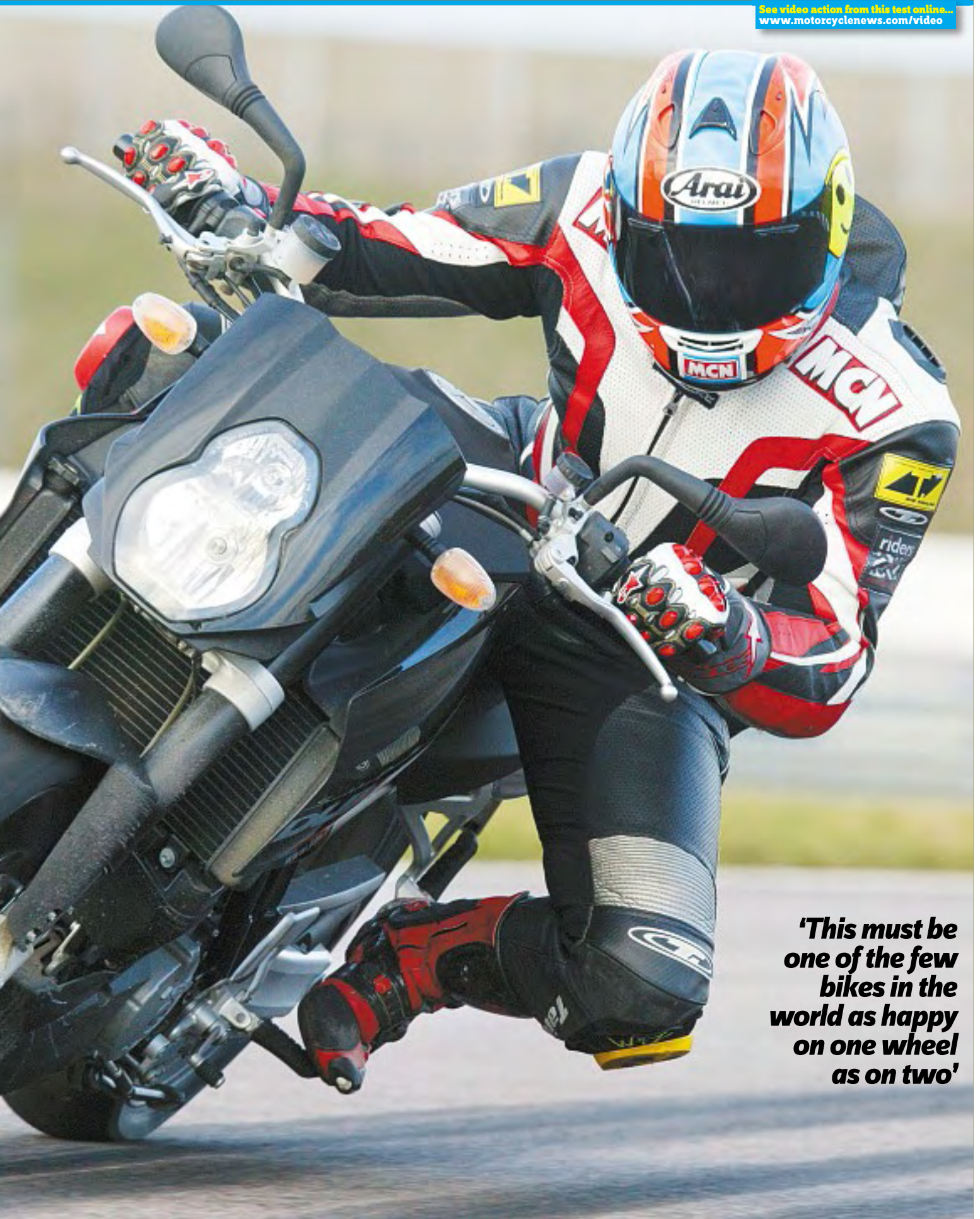
Through the twisties, you simply never need to worry about ground clearance – there's loads. And the fully-adjustable WP suspension lets you dial in a set-up which is absolutely perfect for you.

Through tight madgery stuff you can ride it like a supermoto, pushing it down

from side-to-side, giving race replicas the hurry-up. While on faster corners it's road race style, knee down, giving those race reps a surprise again.

And then there are the wheelies. This must be one of the few bikes in the world as happy on one wheel as on two... happier even.

It's equally able to flatter your attempts at stoppies, backing it in, rolling burnouts and the like. Who cares if it's got no wind protection?



***'This must be  
one of the few  
bikes in the  
world as happy  
on one wheel  
as on two'***

# ROAD TEST

KTM SUPER DUKE

[www.motorcyclenews.com/bikereviews](http://www.motorcyclenews.com/bikereviews)

## IS IT PRACTICAL?

COMPARED to our superbike, the Super Duke is considerably more practical. The riding position is easier to live with and the ride quality is more supple. It doesn't fare quite so well against the Yamaha Fazer 1000, though. For starters, the KTM's fuel range is awful. The Yamaha will do 36mpg and its 21-litre tank means you get almost 170 miles between fill-ups. But on the Super Duke the fuel light starts blinking at 80 miles and its 15-litre tank runs dry 30 miles later.

There's no wind protection on the Super Duke, either. Tucked behind the Fazer's generous half-fairing, you'd hardly know our test was conducted in the middle of winter. On the KTM, meanwhile, your crash-hat fills up with icy January air while your body gets belted by the chilly wind blast.

Pillions get a hard time, too, as it's all too easy to slide off the tiny rear perch even during moderate acceleration and there's nothing to hold on to aside from two piping hot exhausts. And with a tall seat, you can forget about getting your feet flat on the floor if you're less than 5' 8".

The KTM isn't anywhere near as practical as a Fazer 1000 – the lack of fairing means you discover neck muscles you never knew you had, the fuel range is tiny and the missus won't be happy as a pillion.



WIND blast makes riding the Super Duke (left) over distance a pain

THANKS TO: DK Motorcycles for the loan of the Fazer 1000 and Aprilia RSV 1000R, Rockingham is the official MCN test circuit – contact: 01536 500500 or [www.rockingham.co.uk](http://www.rockingham.co.uk)

# EVERYTHING half price sale



AT **INFINITY MOTORCYCLES** LEATHERS • WATERPROOFS • THERMALS GLOVES • CASUAL & MORE!

EVERYTHING SHOWN & MUCH MORE HALF PRICE! FOR EXAMPLE...

**Plus HALF PRICE FRANK THOMAS**



**F11603** Leather Jkt RRP £149.99 **NOW £74.99**

**F11501** Leather Jkt RRP £149.99 **NOW £74.99**

**Ositts Waterproof Jkt** RRP £260 **NOW ONLY £99.99**

**Airblast Waterproof Jkt** RRP £185 **NOW ONLY £77.49**

**Delta Ladies leather Jkt** RRP £260 **NOW ONLY £99.99**

FIRST COME FIRST SERVED. HURRY! ALL MUST GO!



**Ladies Outlaw Jkt** RRP £129 **NOW £69.99**

**Ladies Outlaw Jns** RRP £129 **NOW £64.99**

**Turbo Leather Jackets** RRP £199 **NOW £99.99**

**Ladies Western Jns** RRP £199 **NOW £49.99**

**SAVE £100**

**half price gloves...**

**GP Redliner Gloves** RRP £49.99 **NOW £49.99**

**Meteor Gloves** RRP £49.99 **NOW £24.99**

**Sparta Gloves** RRP £24.99 **NOW £12.99**

**half price essentials...**

**Inner Gloves** RRP £6.99 **NOW £3.50**

**Under Helmet** RRP £7.99 **NOW £3.99**

**MAIL ORDER:** Call: 0870 89 10 400 Click: [infinitymotorcycles.com](http://infinitymotorcycles.com)

**GUILDFORD**  
01483 511344

**SOUTHAMPTON**  
02380 338311

**PETERBOROUGH**  
01733 341341

**YORK**  
01904 675600

**FARNBOROUGH**  
01252 408100

**GRT. PORTLAND ST.**  
0207 6375002

**HANGER LANE**  
0208 991 3969

**TWICKENHAM**  
0208 744 3999

**HOLBORN**  
0207 242 1111

**PURLEY**  
0208 763 5701

**CLAPHAM**  
0207 720 6072

**MAIL ORDER**  
0870 89 10 400

**INFINITY MOTORCYCLES**

[www.infinitymotorcycles.com](http://www.infinitymotorcycles.com)

## SECOND OPINIONS

### THE RACER!

MCN Road Tester Bruce Dunn likes his sports bikes and he loves his race bikes even more, as a privateer entry in the 250cc Grand Prix at Donington Park last year.



"It's like a supermoto with superbike performance. The combination of performance, style and power is a winning one. You seem to be isolated from all the power a superbike gives, whereas you get a raw emotion of power and wind rush on the KTM. It might only have 107bhp but it feels like it's got 150bhp."

**'It's like a supermoto with superbike performance'**

### THE ROAD TESTER!

MCN Road Tester Adam Child is a stunt addict. It's impossible to turn your back without him trying to pull a wheelie. It seems to be incurable.



"The Super Duke is so much fun, but really easy to ride at the same time. Although it's got loads of power it's in no way vicious - oh and it's a doddle to wheelie. You could pass your test on the KTM in the morning, do a trackday in the afternoon and impress your mates stunting in the evening. I want one! Shame about the small tank though."

**'Although it's got loads of power it's in no way vicious'**

### THE ROAD RIDER!

MCN Reporter James Tindall spends most of his time pounding the streets for MCN Live. He did over 8000 miles last year on his Fazer 600



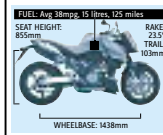
"The KTM looks fantastic - and, more importantly, brought out the grins every time I sat on it. It felt like a proper stunt bike from the minute I got on it, and would make a fantastic street bike or back road blaster. The Fazer was steady and a bit dull in comparison, but it would be my choice if I was riding to the south of France."

**'The KTM brought out the grins every time I sat on it'**

### KTM 990 SUPER DUKE

★★★★★  
**COST: £3455** (est)  
**POWER: 118bhp** (claimed)  
**WEIGHT: 179kg** (claimed)  
**TORQUE: 74ftlb** (claimed)

Available: Late February  
 Colours: Orange, black  
 Insurance group: 13 (of 17)  
 Info: KTM UK, 01280-709500



**TECHNICAL SPEC**  
 Engine: Liquid-cooled, 999cc (101mm x 62.4mm) 8v four-stroke, 75° V-twin  
 Chassis: Steel trellis frame.  
 Front suspension: WP 48mm USD forks, adjustable for preload, rebound and compression damping. Rear suspension: WP single shock, adjustable for preload, rebound and high and low speed compression damping  
 Brakes: Brembo, 2 x 320mm front discs with 4-piston calipers, 240mm rear disc with single-piston caliper  
 Tyres: 180/55 x 17 front, 120/70 x 17 rear.

### VERDICT

THE Super Duke really could be the future of sports bikes. We've proved that in the right conditions it will leave a full-on superbike like an Aprilia RSV 1000R trailing in its wake, but you don't need to be doing superbike speed to get your kicks.

We've also seen it's not actually as practical as a fine all-rounder like a Fazer 1000. The poor tank range and lack of wind protection sees to that.

So the Super Duke is aimed at sports bike riders, and rightly so. If you ride a supersports or superbike, and don't do much track work or travel big distances you should seriously consider this as your next bike. The KTM Super Duke is big, big fun. And we love it!

### MCN SAYS:

- ✓ Incredibly linear power delivery
- ✓ Faster than a superbike - on the right roads
- ✓ Easy to ride
- ✗ Limited wind protection
- ✗ Poor fuel range
- ✗ The devil within could get you into trouble



TWIN underseat cans - warn your pillow

JUST in case you weren't sure what it was...

IT wouldn't be a KTM without a bit of orange

FULLY adjustable WP single shock



SBK 2004  
 World Champion

is used by DUCATI

www.ducatiuk.com

DUCATI DESMO OWNERS CLUB

## Ducati Superbikes: the best Twins ever



Simply the best Twins on the planet. Ride the new 749 and 999 and experience what the press has been raving about. Ducati has raised the bar on high-performance, race-derived sport bikes - again. Redesigned to be more aerodynamic than ever, with an innovative, aluminium alloy, box-section rear swing-arm, these stunning machines provide breathtaking handling and sport performance for the most

passionate of enthusiasts. And every twist of the throttle, immense and tractable power is delivered by the world dominating Testastretta engine. All Ducati models come with a 2 year unlimited mileage manufacturer warranty. See [www.ducatiuk.com](http://www.ducatiuk.com) for details of your local authorised dealer. Ducati Superbikes: the best Twins ever.

Ducati 749 from £7,995 on the road.  
 Ducati 999 from £11,250 on the road.



Ducati thanks the Italian Desmo Owners Clubs, the lead actors in the Ducati People 2005 campaign, for their support.