

I have been riding motorcycles since about 1971 when I bought my first motorcycle, a brand new Honda CB250 painted in candy gold and white. Cost me \$629.00 ride away!

Since then I have had a countless variety of road bikes, trail bikes, trials bikes, cruisers, tourers, sports bikes, outfits etc etc. Everything except (until now) a scooter.

Things happen as you get older and joints, bits etc sometimes have to be repaired and/or replaced. In 2016, I had a big year having one knee and two hips replaced due to arthritis. Riding my last normal bike, a Triumph Sprint GT SE, was getting a bit painful on any reasonable journey and to get on and off.

The time to bite the bullet had arrived and I had to look at an alternative. The only real options were a Spyder or a Scooter. Not being real comfortable with Spyders (plus the size!) I looked at Maxi Scooters with The Suzuki Burgman, BMW and Yamaha being the only realistic options with a largish engine for trips.

Both the BMW and Yamaha had great write ups etc but for my height, the physical size (dimensions) didn't suit as they were a little small and as such, the Suzuki 650 Burgman interested me. It is BIG scooter being both heavier and slightly longer than the Sprint GT.

The first thing I noticed was that on first impressions, it is a good looking machine.



The test ride was a bit of a challenge in that sitting on it (or in it), there is a lot of bike in front of you and behind you with a whole new set up for riding. I did like stepping through the bike rather than throwing my leg etc over panniers, seat etc. The first thing you have to comprehend and adjust with is that there are no foot pedals, there is no clutch or clutch lever (CVT), the clutch lever position is your rear brake, there is no neutral, you have a handbrake etc etc





One of the first things I noticed was just how quiet, smooth and easy it was to ride. Resisting the urge to pull a clutch in at lights or when stopping or wanting to change gear is a bit of a challenge but soon came natural. I arrived back a bit later and after a bit of haggling, bought it (about \$15K on the road).

In my opinion, the Suzuki Burgman 650 is your Rolls-Royce of scooters; it's big, classy and, above all else, comfortable. Not to mention the excellent weather protection and storage options that it provides, all adding to its excellent touring benefits (I have mounted a GPS to the Brake Fluid cover).

Looking at some older reviews, the scooter has undergone relatively few changes over the years, but recent ones have included the adoption of

floating front brake discs, a lighter anti-lock braking system, updated instrumentation (with 'Eco Drive' indicator), a new fancy muffler, a redesigned park brake lever (really necessary when parking on any slope-side stand does NOT lock...) and a change of colour (white, white or white...)



I have had it for nearly 12 months now and it gets better and better to ride. It handles our twisty roads in the Northern Rivers with ease due to the low centre of gravity and decent rubber. I have done a few over nighters with friends and wouldn't hesitate to head off on a trip anywhere on this thing for all the aforementioned reasons, and also because it's such a great machine that meets my requirements.

The scooter is fitted with a 638cc liquid-cooled twin-cylinder engine with a power option button that works similar to the setup on a lot of automatic cars. It really does give the Burg some extra push — not that it needs it though as I found most of the time I was in the normal ride mode (good for overtaking). The power button also gives you extra engine braking, which is useful in steep downhills as it holds the gear and uses the compression of the engine to slow the bike down rather than constantly dabbing the brakes.

Some caution is required in that there is no neutral so if your stationary without a handful of brake, give it a rev and your off. It is definitely no 'slouch' on any road and just proved to me how 'under riding' I was on the Triumph. I do have a tendency to scrape on some corners only because it is so willing to get through them and one feels very confident on it. I have surprised many of my friends keeping pace with them.

You can go from auto to manual mode, which gives you the advantage of holding a gear for as long as you want (good on twisty hills..), but once I got over the initial fiddling I just left it in lope-along fuel economic auto mode.

The gadgetry continues with the Burgman's retractable mirrors, electric screen (fast). Suzuki says the mirrors are great for parking in tight confines (true) but they work when the scooter is in motion too. Filtering in traffic or roadworks takes away some anxiety of hitting someone.. The Burgman is wider than most scooters so this handy feature actually makes a big difference.

The wet weight is about 275kg, but you wouldn't know it when you're on the go. Centre of gravity is low, making it very easy to balance, and at only a few clicks you don't feel the need to drag your feet for balance.

This is the most comfortable motorcycle I've ridden, ideal for long journeys. The seat is sensational and there is plenty of room to stretch your legs, move them around, forward, cruiser style, what ever you want. The under seat storage is capacious at quoted 50 litres, which is enough to put a couple of helmets and riding gear away.

There is so much convenient storage in the cockpit with two top areas and a lockable glove box with a power socket for charging various electrical items.

Handling is fantastic. In the city it initially feels a bit wide to nip through traffic, but once you get used to it it's no problem. On a twisty road the Burgman can be punted as efficiently as most road bikes.

The Bridgestone tyres are great. Solid in wet and dry conditions, with reasonably good feel from the 120 aspect ratio front and the matching 160 rear. Plenty of meat for cornering and comfort.

The Burgman is certainly up there in the high-class scooter ranks. I have read that Suzuki has reduced drag by 35 percent over the old model which helps when pushing it backwards, but on something as luxurious as the Burgman you don't want to push. I personally have not had any problems moving it around. Its looks, size, stylish lines and LED lights make it stand out in the crowd, and has made life, well, simple and supremely comfortable. My fuel consumption has been 3.8l/100klm and not being a 'slouch' I find that pretty good. Like I said, I have done a few trips on it and have absolutely no doubt about its capabilities.

If I had to pick any negatives, only a few. The screen could be a little taller for us tall blokes, the side stand should 'lock' in position so if the scooter rolls forward on a slope, the stand won't go up and lay it on the deck, Speedo not very accurate (GPS fitted, very handy) and lastly, I would like a neutral setting. The last thing is, its a SCOOTER! With a bit of a stigma and plenty of jibes (who cares? - I'm happy).

Technical stuff

SPECS: 2018 SUZUKI BURGMAN 650

ENGINE

Type: Liquid-cooled, four-valve in-line twin

Capacity: 638cc

Fuel system: Electronic fuel injection

TRANSMISSION

Type SEVCT selectable auto or five-speed manual

Final drive: Series of gears instead of belt/chain (works good)

CHASSIS AND RUNNING GEAR

Front suspension: 41mm telescopic fork

Rear suspension: Horizontal monoshock, preload adjustable

Front brakes: Dual 260mm discs with ABS

Rear brake: 250mm disc with ABS

DIMENSIONS AND CAPACITIES

Claimed weight with all fluids except fuel: 275kg

Seat height: 756mm

Wheelbase: 1585mm

Fuel capacity: 15 litres (I can get 350klm before perspiring...)