

## ***RIDING WITH THE OLD BLOKE***



### **NORTON IS BACK**



**Norton is back! Again!** You might remember the re-launch of this iconic brand more than a decade ago. It was hardly a success anyway, but its demise was finally sealed when the owner was charged with defrauding pension funds that had invested in the company.

But it was rescued by an Indian company **TVS Motor Company**. Yes, I know what you're thinking – another iconic British name going to India! But they are still being made in UK. Not only that, but they spent quite a bit of time working on the bike to make it reliable. Sounds half promising – and it's a snazzy looking bike! Read the story [here](#).

### **THE GLORY DAYS OF BRITISH MOTORBIKES**

And speaking of British bikes... In the early years of motorcycles there were no slick and fast Japanese bikes. The bikes everyone (*outside America anyway*) took notice of were British. This video presents the history – and the culture – of the British Motorcycle. It's a very interesting video to watch. Click [here](#). (Thanks to Rod for sending me these two items).

### **AND WE ALL ASKED...WHY??**



This.... (*whatever it is – you really can't call it a bike!!*) was cobbled together using a **5-litre supercharged Rolls Royce aircraft engine** to power it. And as you can see – it is **BIG!!**

It's owner is Lucky Keizer. Apparently he happened upon this 1938 V12 Rolls-Royce aircraft engine lying in a paddock on an outback Australian farm, and wondered what he could do with it. He decided to build a bike around it. But first he managed to cut two cylinders off, so it is now a V10. Once completed, he claimed it could achieve 400km/h. He completed this project sometime in the 1980s. Back then it had a nose-cone with a shark's head painted on it – perhaps you remember seeing it? Well, it has popped up online again, looking a little different, *but still as useless!*

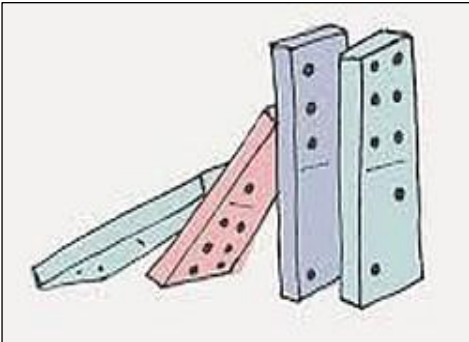
## WHAT IS THE BEST SUPERBIKE?



Superbikes haven't figured prominently in bikes I've tested, or even mentioned a lot, on the website and Facebook page – or these Blog things. That's because most of us are over that sort of thing. Not many of us like riding crouched over with our head between our knees and our bum in the air. We're too old for that sort of thing – even if we were once into that style of riding. (*I said "not many of*

*us", but I know there are some who still ride superbikes and do track days etc*). But we – well most of us I'm guessing – are still interested in what is at the top-end of the performance scale. What are those superbikes really like? And which one is best? Well, here is a brief summary of the main contenders, from online magazine **MCN**. It's a good concise summary. Click [here](#).

## THE DOMINO EFFECT



We've all heard those stories – perhaps even seen the results – of a bunch of bikes being parked close together, and one falls over, crashing into the next one, which falls and...! But what if all the bikes were your own? I guess the risk of this happening comes with the territory when you own a lot of motorbikes – as does journalist Guy Allen. And recently that is just what happened. Click [here](#) for his story of what hit what and how much damage it did.

## RETRO BMW TRIKE



**I think this is cool!** Designed and built by ShifCustom, a custom design house.

The trike is based – stylistically – on the legendary BMW M328 sports car produced in 1932. Under that very retro bodywork is a traditional BMW boxer engine almost matching the original car's engine capacity, but exceeding its power. Click [here](#) for the story.

## BEWARE OF POTHOLES

This applies more specifically to those living along the Eastern part of Australia, but I'll mention it anyway. You see, we've had a bit of rain lately. Actually ***a lot of rain!*** And if that sounds familiar, yes we had a lot of rain earlier in the year too, which closed many roads. And it's happened again! **In the first four days of July we had more than twice the highest total on record for the whole month!** Residents in flood-affected areas had to evacuate – *again!* Some for the third or fourth time in a matter of months! And were faced – *again!* – with massive clean-ups. I can't imagine how difficult, frustrating, and traumatic that would be! So to talk about potholes would seem to be

talking about the most trivial of effects of these rains. But as this is a motorcycling publication, I will refer to the damage that has been inflicted on roads. Because there is danger out there for motorcyclists!

Roads were flooded again, and some suffered damage from landslips. Favourite riding roads were closed again. While that is disappointing for us (*but frustratingly inconvenient for the residents who are affected by these closures!*), perhaps of greater significance for us is the condition of roads that are still open.



**Potholes have appeared on roads everywhere.** Secondary roads and back-roads are perhaps worst affected, but there can be potholes on major roads too. The holes pictured here were on a T-intersection not far from my home. Being on an intersection means your attention would be more on traffic than the immediate road surface. (*Although you should always be aware of road surface, of course!*). **Hitting these things unexpectedly could easily result in a crash.**

While these are very obvious, they become much less so when covered by water. What can appear like just a wet road can easily hide devastatingly deep potholes. My daughter recently was caught by that. It was on a roundabout and what looked like just a slight amount of water lying across the road hid a brutally big pothole. As she drove (in her car) around the roundabout, suddenly BANG! The front right tyre was punctured by dropping into a huge pothole. Facebook posts revealed many others were caught by the same hole, with one woman reporting that both tyres on the right side were punctured by the hole. And it makes you think, *if you hit that on a bike...!!* I've hit a couple of big ones (at very slow speed) in the car, and one small one on the bike. No damage. But I've done a lot of dodging them! So **we need to be extra-careful**, because these potholes can appear anywhere on any road!

## ELECTRIC BEEMER



At the moment there is a fleet of BMW's new electric scooter, the **BMW CE 04**, making their way around dealers across the country, giving people a chance to test-ride it before the model's official release to the public in November. I went in to my local BMW dealer to have a look and arrange a test-ride, but didn't realise it was only there for a short time, so I missed it. I had hoped to at least look at one and sit on it. Oh well, I enjoyed browsing

around.

BMW is not new to electric scooters, having produced a couple of them in previous years, including the C Evolution that ran from 2014 till 2020. The CE 04 is a kind of follow-on from that, although it competes in a lower class; being a bit smaller, lighter, and less powerful than the C Evolution. The description is (apparently) all in the name. "C" is BMW-speak for scooter, "E" probably stands for "Evolution" (although it could also stand for "Electric"), and 04 tells us that it competes in the 400cc petrol-engined scooter class.

It puts out a somewhat uninspiring 31 kW, and a slightly more impressive 62Nm. As you probably know, electric motors put out their maximum torque basically from the

get-go; so **it actually performs a lot better than you'd expect**. BMW quotes a 0-50 km/h time of 2.6 seconds – fast enough to blow off most 4-wheelers at the traffic light grand prix. Road test reports praise its performance around town and say it is great fun to ride. Top speed is said to be 120km/h.

It has other advantages for city riding, including being narrower than a traditional scooter, making it ideal for slicing through traffic. It might weigh 231kg, but a lot of that is in the batteries, which are almost at ground level; so it feels much lighter than it is.

So much for the good things. It does, however, suffer from the usual disadvantages of electric vehicles. **The range** of EVs might be getting better, but this will run out of spark at 130 km, according to BMW. Depending on how it is ridden and other variables; so think something less than that in real terms. Then to get it to full charge takes well over four hours. That's from a normal home socket. A fast-charger (which is an expensive optional extra) reduces that to an hour and 40 minutes. **So forget interstate cruising! Or even a decent day ride!**

The other problem it has – again like most EVs – is **cost**. To get one of these things on the road will set you back **just under \$22,000**. That's about twice the price of its petrol-driven competitors. Hard to justify, even if it does have a lot of fancy tech.

So who will buy these new electric scoots? Well, not me! Apart from (a): not wanting another bike, and (b): not having a spare \$22,000, electric vehicles have zero appeal for me – although I acknowledge that they could be good, once the range is increased and the cost reduced by about half. A big problem for us is that we don't have the infrastructure in Australia to run them. "But it costs nothing to run them!" their devotees will shout. Well, unless you have a roof full of solar panels, then yes it **will** cost you – especially with the cost of electricity going up.

But some people love them and will buy them. I read that a survey of owners of the C Evolution gave them a very high rating; and this one is much better. So it will probably sell okay; despite the negatives.

Click [here](#) to read a very comprehensive description and review by AMCN.

## **GEOFF RIDES SOUTH-EAST EUROPE**

Our prolific world traveler (*is there a country he hasn't ridden through yet?*) Geoff, has just returned from a motorcycle trip around South-East Europe; and he has another great adventure to tell us about. I really enjoy reading the stories of his trips (he writes very well!). So click [here](#) to read about his latest adventure.

## **LOOKING BACK – MY FIRST DUKE!**



We're going back to 2004, and **my first ride on a Ducati**. I've ridden quite a lot of Dukes over the years, but this was the first one. It was courtesy of a ride day put on by the local Ducati dealer. There were a few to choose from, but I ended up taking the **Ducati 620i** for a test-ride. My own bike at the time was a Yamaha XJ600; so I was interested to see how a Ducati compared with a standard Japanese bike of about the same capacity.

It was comfortable (more so than some others I sat on), and pleasant to ride. Probably quicker than my Yammie, but not outstandingly so. Strangely (*for me!*) I didn't say a lot about the ride. Anyway check out what I did say [here](#).

Well, that's it for now. I hope you enjoyed the read. Stay safe, and enjoy the ride!

*Elwyn*

(The Old Bloke)