



Billet aluminium frame, carbon-fibre bodywork and 198bhp justifies the £90,000 pricetag



Motec dash displays endless information



Carbon-fibre is flawless and functional



Crossplane R1 engine now packs 198bhp



Reynolds were first to make billet swingarms

gives me the nod, and I head out onto the Rockingham circuit on pre-warmed Pirelli slicks.

The R1-derived motor proves to be remarkably linear, which isn't what I was expecting. When not using the clutch on backshifts – it has an auto blipper – it backfires and crackles into the braking zones. I love it. After a few laps of acclimatisation I start to stretch its legs, and immediately the track feels comically small.

The straights just aren't long enough to really let it completely off the leash. You can get on the power early

for the pit straight as there's masses of grip from the rear, with the Motec electronics controlling a perfect blend of wheelie and drive. Tap two gears in rapid succession and I'm back on the amazing stoppers in what feels like a fraction of second.

The brakes are phenomenal, and part of a front-end set-up you'd find on a front-running CRT bike. The £3000 Brembo stoppers aren't just good looking, they're like a pair of vices bolted to the sublime £8500 Öhlins fork. It's one of the best front ends I've ever tried.

It seems to take no effort to get it to the apex. It's so light, and flicks and turns with such ease and fluidity, while the 16.5in Pirelli slicks offer a huge amount of grip and feedback. It feels like you'll never run out of lean.

I only tickled the surface of what this bike is capable of. It's an engineering masterpiece – and it works. A GP-level rider could get this on the grid, and if you've got the money, it's the closest you're ever likely to get to lining up next to Rossi and Marquez.

## 10. XENOPHYA DESIGN DESIGN HOUSE

### 'The Enfield we designed now sells over 300,000 units a year'

**Established:** 2001

**Based:** Cramlington, Northumberland

**Why they're great:** Styling house for Triumph and Royal Enfield.

Unlike Massimo Tamburini or Pierre Terblanche, you probably haven't heard of Xenophya [pronounced Zen-of-i-a]. But the Northumberland-based design company, founded by Mark Wells and Ian Wride in 2001, is becoming increasingly influential.

"We've done a huge amount of work that will never see the light of day and that is the hardest part of establishing a design company," says Wells. "Gaining a reputation has been an incredibly hard slog, but Royal Enfield invited us to the press launch of the Continental GT, that we designed, and Triumph credited us with the styling of the Tiger Explorer.

"Our biggest measurable success was probably the Royal Enfield Classic because it's a bike selling 300,000 units a year. The Rieju RS3 was a nice little bike, too. But for my own personal satisfaction, the Royal

Enfield Continental GT felt like a life goal achieved because it was a bike I felt I grew up with, going to classic bike races with my parents as a boy.

"Design is highly valued in Britain. But, people talk about British, Italian or German design, despite most decent-sized design studios being staffed by a multinational group of designers. For instance, Pierre Terblanche is South African; the designer of the Ducati Streetfighter was French; the lead designer of the last Monster is Dutch, while one of the top designers at Kiska [the design company that works exclusively for KTM] is a talented young British bike designer called Craig Dent.

"We're interested in global bikes, ones that can sell all over the world. There are 12 million motorbikes sold every year in India alone. We're also excited about a project we've been heavily involved with, making £60,000 replicas of Peter Williams' 1972 Norton Monocoque racer. We've nearly completed the first two and it will be launched very soon."



Wride (left) and Wells (centre) are designing machines for the masses

## 9. RACEFIT EXHAUST INNOVATORS

**Established:** 2004

**Based:** Darley Dale, Derbyshire

**Why they're great:** Featherweight titanium exhausts for the connoisseur.

Derbyshire's Racefit have gone about creating their exhaust business with admiral individuality. Their titanium slip-on end cans, for the most popular superbikes, gained a cult status for

being incredibly light and especially raucous. When Racefit started making their Legend systems – retro looking, titanium complete exhausts for four-cylinder naked muscle bikes – the exhausts were fitted to some of the toughest street bikes in the country.

In a switch to the normal way things happen, the credibility and reputation built up supplying the street market actually attracted the attention of race teams. Michael Dunlop won the inaugural Classic TT Formula 1 race on a stunning Suzuki XR69 fitted with a Racefit Legend.

"We're busier than ever," says co-founder and bearded ball of enthusiasm, Jon Keeling. Racefit also build show-stopping specials to promote the brand. The bikes have helped accrue a global following of builders who appreciate the quality and relative obscurity of the British company, compared to the products of companies who can afford to sponsor MotoGP teams.

Guy Martin, a long-time admirer of company, had Racefit make the one-off exhaust for his own turbocharged Pikes Peak racer.

