

**WOW!** Kawasaki's 145-horsepower ZZ-R1200 sport-tourer



Triumph's  
2200cc Mega-Cruiser!

# MOTOR CYCLIST

ALSO KNOWN AS "SUPERBIKE CENTRAL"

**Totally Tested:**

Literbikes on the street,  
strip, track and dyno

# Superbikes 2002!

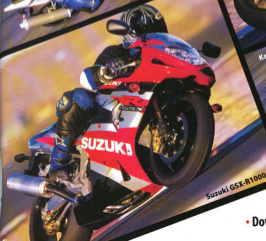
CBR954RR vs. ZX-9R vs. YZF-R1 vs. GSX-R1000



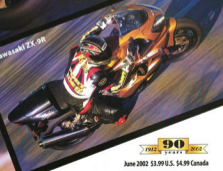
Yamaha YZF-R1



Honda CBR954RR



Suzuki GSX-R1000



Kawasaki ZX-9R

90  
1912 2002

June 2002 \$3.99 U.S. \$4.99 Canada

**The Real World:**  
• Critical Helmet Facts  
• Downshifting • Trick Tools



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ROADWORK	RACETRACK	ERGONOMICS	SPECIFICATIONS	OPINIONS	FINAL TALLY
dodging Buicks twisties	scorching tires the acid test	→ this won't hurt a bit connect the dots	how big is that? oh mama, it's data	what he said everybody has one	winners & losers the envelope, please

## Ergos Explained



### ← HONDA CBR954RR

Drop yourself onto the Honda and the first impression is always, "Wow, this thing is tiny." The numbers bear out the notion. Not only is the fairing low and narrow, but the handgrips are amazingly, 600-class close to the seat. Yet with the greatest effective bar rise and the second-most legroom, the Honda creates the kindest ergo package of the four superbikes. One that is, unfortunately, undermined by a hard, oddly formed seat, a sorry saddle of which none of our riders could speak charitably.



### ← KAWASAKI ZX-9R

Go big, that's the theme. Back when we were younger and literbikes were tall and long, the ZX-9R must have felt football sized. Now it's huge. In fact, it's more a visual trick, because the bars aren't terribly far from the saddle (closer than the Suzuki's), which is the measurement that most influences perception of height. Taller riders will appreciate the Kawasaki's greatest-in-class legroom while those of you suffering from early shoulder cramp will love the ZX's tall bars. Overall, a large but comfortable package.



### ← SUZUKI GSX-R1000

Normal GSX-R stuff here. Lowest bars, pegs most forward, longest reach across the flat-topped tank. You are definitely stretched out over this motorcycle, putting a lot of weight on your hands; but this is about the only way you're going to keep the front wheel on the ground, so it makes sense. Perversely, the Suzuki's seat is wonderful—generously padded and elegantly shaped. Some riders complained that the GSX-R's footpegs angle up outboard, forcing feet into odd angles; others didn't notice.



### ← YAMAHA YZF-R1

As with the Honda, the YZF-R1 feels tiny from the saddle. That minimalist fairing disappears from view and the reach across the tank is shorter than ever. For 2002, the tank is lower and further forward than on the previous R1—and you can feel it. Unfortunately, Yamaha also angled the clip-ons downward (as it did on the '01 R6) and many of our testers disliked the setup. What's more, the Yamaha has the tightest-in-class legroom, a minuscule 17 inches. Believe it or not, the half-inch difference between the R1 and the GSX-R seems like much more. An uncompromising package.

## Get 'Em Up and Go



FOR \$289, YOU CAN HAVE HELI'S CNC-machined aluminum-riser bars, which are claimed to be taller than GSX-R1000's bars by 1.5 inches. We installed a set on our GSX-R in a couple of hours and put the bike back in the ergo jig. Now the bars have an effective rise of 2.4 inches and the bar/seat distance is down to 29.4 inches. Why the difference between our numbers and Heli's? We take the measurement at the center of the grip, and the way the Heli bars get the additional height is mainly by elimination of the stocker's droop. That is, the ends of the Heli bars are quite a bit higher.

Without a doubt, the Heli-equipped GSX-R is a more comfortable motorcycle. At first, the almost-flat angle of the bars seems odd, but the increased rise is immediately welcome. They accept stock end weights, so vibration isn't an issue. Nor do the clip-ons hurt the GSX-R during hard riding, though you'll spend a bit more brainpower keeping the front tire stuck to the ground.

It's a tight fit for the throttle cables between the fairing support and the ignition cylinder; there's a small spacer in the kit to raise the upper triple clamp, but you still have to route the cables with great care. Also, the screw holding the clutch-adjuster stopper comes in contact with the riser. Otherwise, it's a simple install, retaining the stock clutch cable and brake line.

We like the combination of now-comfortable GSX-R1000 and Heli bars so much that neither is going to be sent packing any time soon.