

**USED BIKE GUIDE**



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### READERS' WHEELS



## YAMAHA FZX750. ELEGANT MOVER

**A**BOUT SIX YEARS AGO, UPON THE honest recommendation of a friend I bought a FZX750 by phone, without ever having seen it or a picture of it. However, my friend said this was the only bike for me. When I got to the shop to pick it up, I was not disappointed at all. The looks are definitely different from anything else, the linear engine is everything it promises. The handling, although different from anything else, is excellent once I got used to it.

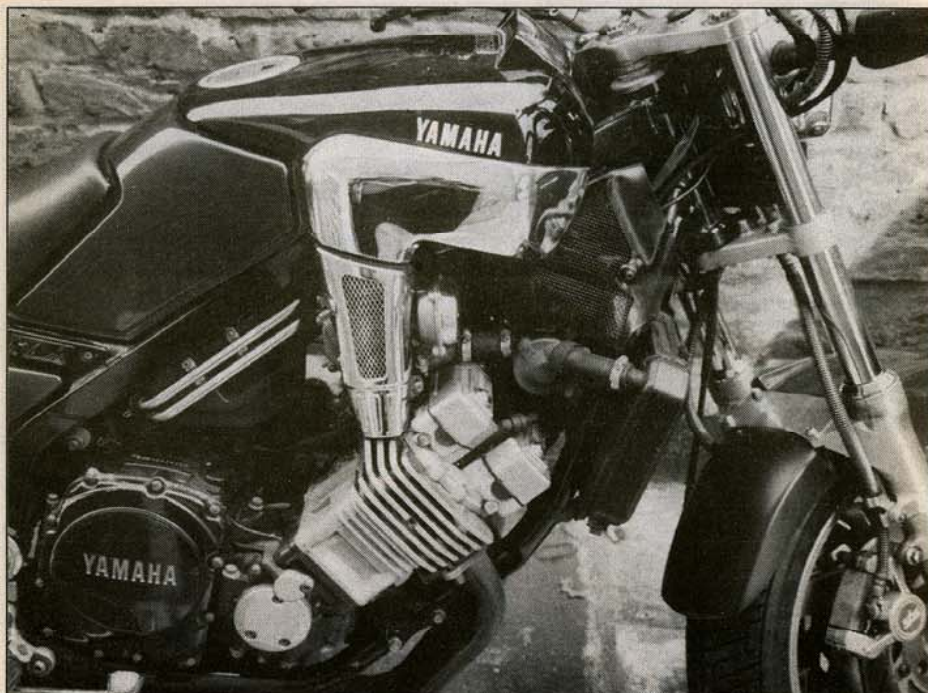
In town it is probably the easiest bike I have ever ridden (and I have ridden a few, having been a despatch rider in the late 70s-early 80s). It is

about as wide as a small 250, very light but with the full power of the FZ750 engine, quite a combination. It also seems to cope with the many pot-holes of London very well indeed. It has never let me down on handling no matter how hard I have pushed it. The braking is also excellent if well maintained. Like all Yamahas (I think) the brake calipers need the occasional strip and clean, but then maintenance is the key to a good bike.

The riding position is better adapted to someone of small stature as it is very low, and on long journeys it can be uncomfortable. Two-up is out for any journey lasting more than two hours unless



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both can ride and swap between rider and pillion every so often. Once while riding cross country with a rather larger passenger on the back, we hit some rougher terrain, my passenger did not manage to sit down comfortably for at least two days after the experience and vowed never to pillion on the FZX again!

In any case the range offered by the ridiculously small petrol tank (13 litres) means that 110 miles is about the maximum distance between fuel pumps, no good for Sahara crossings!

The engine is quite something else, mostly the same as the standard FZ750, with a few changes such as different carbs and slightly de-tuned, it pulls wonderfully without any flat spots in any gear or any rev range. It comes up to expectations in any situation I have been in so far, whether it is beating anything from the red lights in town or keeping ahead on a motorway. It also requires very little engine maintenance apart from the usual oil, oil filter, plugs, and air filter and occasional carb balancing.

The main maintenance drawback is that the alternator bearings need regular replacement (about every 12000 miles) which is probably due to the fact that the alternator rides piggy-back to the engine. This can work out to be a major mechanical job, which I have always entrusted to the bike shop. It has worked out quite expensive and time consuming. I also had to replace the alternator altogether when some cretin tried to steal the bike, and hot-wired the alternator instead of the starting system. Fortunately, it was then discovered that the FZR1000 alternator is exactly the same as the FZX's, so a secondhand alternator was acquired for £50 – not bad considering that the price of a new one is £452!

The other main drawback is that the way the air is taken in means that when it snows (not rains) it seems to 'swallow' snow with the air and runs rather roughly, this is usually cured as soon as it dries up or stops snowing (a fair weather friend!). If the air filter happens to be dirty the same happens too, so the air filter has to be changed

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*It will get me there in whatever mood I'm in, be it snail-like or girl-racer*



Generally speaking, it is a lovely bike to own and ride, other riders notice you because they think you've got a V-Max, and car drivers tend to pull out in front of you because the bike is so small, light and low they think it's a 125 on the prowl (they don't half get a surprise when you pass them by in a bit of a hurry!). All in all I have never had any nasty surprises from my FZX, it is entirely predictable and suffers rider errors quite well. My main pleasure is to know that it will start no matter what, it will get me there in whatever mood I'm in, be it snail-like or girl-racer, it feels elegant to ride and totally trustworthy.

In its league (ie. 750s sports or customs bikes) it compares well, as it is unusual to look at, not quite a custom, and not a full sports bike but with full performance.

The FZX is probably the nicest bike ever produced by Yamaha – in all respects, it's just a shame it did not sell well when it was available new, and there are few of them left now in the UK. In France, however, the FZX was very popular and the streets of Paris abound with them.

religiously every year. This can also be fiddly as the petrol cap (aviation style) and all the petrol tank covers have to be removed – at least an hour's worth of work.

One of its most endearing features is the hydraulic clutch; no more broken clutch cables – ever. The gearbox is also amiable, and takes a lot of punishment without a quiver.

Financially it cost me a new pair of tyres every two years or so, a new final drive chain twice so far although now I have fitted a Scotttoiler to it the chain life seems greatly increased, a new air filter element about once a year, oil filters and oil quite often as I am keen on good maintenance, a new exhaust 4 into 1 about 18 months ago, bearings for the alternator whenever it rattles too much. Petrol consumption is average.

Secondhand spares for the FZX are more or less non-existent in the UK, although most of the engine parts are the same as for the FZ750 and FZR1000, so hopefully in the long term spares should still be available for it.

**Jocelyne M J Rakower-Butelet / UBG**

