



New F3 is
bristling
with high-
tech and is
beautifully
clothed

5 CHASSIS Reflecting the rest of the MV range, the F3 has a tubular steel trellis frame, with different wall thickness tubes for rigidity and flex. It also has an aluminium alloy single-sided swingarm. The wheelbase is just 1380mm, the Daytona 675's is 1395mm. All-up dry weight is 173kg, the Triumph's wet weight is 185kg. It's hard to fault the handling of the F3. Stability is excellent, the steering is light and there's lots of feel for what the tyres are doing.

6 SUSPENSION The 43mm Marzocchi forks and Sachs shock are fully adjustable – the shock also has high and low speed compression adjustment. The suspension gives excellent ride quality and control. Settings were on the soft side during our test, to maximise grip in the freezing conditions, so the F3 didn't feel as taut and crisp-steering as it could do on a warmer track.



7 ELECTRONIC UPGRADES

An electronic quickshifter is available as an optional extra. It works well, but it's not as smooth as the systems on the BMW, Aprilia or Ducati. MV is also working on a lean-angle sensor for the traction control, as well as anti-wheelie and launch control. Although the hardware is ready to accept these electronic riding aids, they'll be available as either an optional extra or be incorporated into an updated model later.

4 WHEELS AND TYRES

The F3's aluminium alloys are shod with Pirelli Diablo Rosso Corsa rubber – 120/70 x 70 at the front, 180/55 x 17 at the rear. It's Pirelli's top-level road tyre and it provides good grip, feel and quick warm-up times in all conditions. The rear tyre has a slick edge for increased grip and a sticky SC2 compound. The treaded centre is constructed from a harder



compound for good durability. For our track test, which took place at the south of France's Paul Ricard circuit in decidedly wintry temperatures, in order to get the most out of the bike we used the latest Pirelli Diablo Super Corsa SC2 race tyre (with tyre warmers), with a new 180/60 x 55 size rear, which gives a bigger side footprint for increased levels of grip.

WORLD OF TRIUMPH - ESSEX



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News MV Agusta F3

Continued from page 13
disappointed – if the test had ended after this first 20 minute run, I'd have said the F3 is seriously flawed – but it isn't.

The traction control was also set on level five out of eight at first, so it was also quite intrusive. It works well, unlike the systems on the new F4 and Brutale, thanks to the ride-by-wire system, which brings the F3 up to the level of the best, like the Aprilia APRC, Yamaha's new R1 and BMW's S1000RR.

Because of the cold, the traction control was working overtime in many corners. The electronic help is hard to detect at first, but you soon realise it's pulling you back and this sensation, coupled with the jerky throttle in the corners, makes the F3 feel like an old bike coughing and spluttering onto reserve.

But switching the riding map to 'Normal', which can be done on the move by pressing the starter button, ironed out

11 The ride-by-wire system brings the F3's traction control up to the level of the best available

MCN'S MICHAEL NEEVES

the power delivery nicely. Now I could do what I wanted with the F3 in the corners and there was no more lurching sending me wildly off-line. The only downside was that full acceleration wasn't there any more and it didn't feel as fast, either.

As well as a very soft 'Rain' mode, which would have made it even slower, MV has endowed the F3 with a 'Custom'

mode, which lets you dial in your own throttle, power delivery and engine braking parameters.

MV gave us a custom setting with a 'Normal' throttle response, but 'sporty' everything else and the F3 instantly felt much improved. There was good throttle connection in the corners, which boosts confidence, and I could let that inline three-cylinder 675cc short-stroke motor sing along the straights. The traction control was now on a less intrusive level three that didn't dilute forward thrust.

In this setting, the F3 was a different animal and the bike I hoped it would be. To be fair, the bitterly cold track conditions hadn't helped – you'd never have chosen to do a trackday in them, however nice it might look in these pictures.

With its electronic shackles thrown off, it's clear the F3's engine is a masterpiece on the track. It spins up fast like a four and howled along Paul Ricard's famous

Mistral straight. It spins so hard you have to keep an eye on the revs as it's easy for the motor to hit the 15,000rpm rev limiter. Changing up around 13,000rpm keeps the motor nicely on the boil.

I also got to try out the quickshifter. MV is offering as an optional extra. It lets you slice through the gears without shutting the throttle or using the clutch. It does the job, but isn't the smoothest I've ever used. Talking of gears, I missed a lot of shifts between second and third. It was usually while I was banked over to the right, so maybe I wasn't being positive enough with my foot on the gearlever.

It will be interesting to see what this very racy motor will be like on the road. It might be too revvy and highly strung for lower-speed work, although the grunt of its three cylinders and electronic riding modes may carry it through. We'll find out in a few weeks when we pitch it against the Daytona 675s.

With all my attention focused on the riding modes, I failed to notice how the Rossi M1-style counter-rotating crankshaft affected things. It doesn't wheelie out of slow corners as much as I was expecting, so perhaps it was at work there, it's hard to say.

So how does it tackle corners? Well, fortunately the MV is pretty much spot-on in the handling department. Turning into corners is done with the lightest of touches on the bars and it changes direction with little effort.

There's a good feeling for grip at either end of the bike, which was more than useful in the temperatures. The roomy riding position is good for clambering all over the bike, too.

The technicians had set the adjustable suspension on the soft side, which caused some movement in the faster corners, but stiffening the Sachs shock and Marzocchi forks would have sacrificed ultimate grip. The suspension is good quality, so adjustments you make will make a noticeable difference to how it reacts.

The Brembo brakes are superb, offering consistently strong stopping power at the end of the front straight, where you're hard braking from midway in sixth gear to barely tickover in first.

The slipper clutch and electronic air-bleed system stops the rear wheel clattering and bouncing, too, which makes the F3 stable with Brembo pistons squeezing the twin 320mm discs for all they're worth.

Tell us what you think
www.motorcyclenews.com

THE FACTS

MV AGUSTA F3 675 £9999

Engine: Liquid-cooled, 675cc (79mm x 45.9mm), inline-three-cylinder with counter-rotating crankshaft, DOHC, 12v Six gears.

Electronic rider aids: Eight-stage traction control and four riding modes.

Claimed power: 128bhp@14,440rpm

Torque: 52ftlb@10,600rpm

Claimed dry weight: 173kg

Frame: Tubular steel trellis frame with aluminium alloy side plates. Single-sided aluminium swingarm

Suspension: Marzocchi 43mm upside down forks, adjustable for preload, rebound and compression damping. Single Sachs rear shock adjustable for preload, rebound and compression (high and low speed) damping.

Front brake: 2 x 320mm discs with four-piston Brembo radial calipers.

Rear brake: 220mm disc with twin-piston Brembo caliper.

Rake/trail: 23.5°/99mm

Front tyre: 120/70 x 17, Pirelli Diablo Rosso Corsa

Rear tyre: 180/55 x 17, Pirelli Diablo Rosso Corsa

Fuel capacity: 16 litres

Wheelbase: 1380mm

Seat height: 805mm

Colours: Silver/red, white, black

Contact: www.mvagusta.co.uk

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The big questions

SHOULD TRIUMPH BE WORRIED?

No. Although the F3 has a similar 675cc inline three-cylinder engine, it's a different animal to the Daytona 675 and will appeal to different people.

The Triumph is more refined, has more grunt and the base Daytona 675 is a lot cheaper. The MV is uncompromisingly in-your-face angry and full of technology.

IS IT FAST?

Oh yes. This is a 128bhp, 173kg machine, after all, so it has plenty of acceleration and a probable top speed of close to 170mph on a good day. You don't get a lot of impression of speed on a sterile track like Paul Ricard, but it should feel ballistic on a UK track and on the road.

WILL IT MAKE A GOOD RACER?

There are no plans for MV to make race kits or go racing yet, so you'd struggle to make it into a top-level supersport racer. But it would make a great Superstock 600 bike, where you're only allowed to change the exhausts, the rear shock and the fork internals.

HOW THE MV F3'S RIVALS COMPARE

On something other than simple comparisons – the buying experience. If MV's 23 UK dealers can persuade potential customers their back-up and parts support has moved on from the bad old days, the F3 may well make a dent in the sales of this lot...



SUZUKI GSX-R600

PRICE £8907

Power: 109.7bhp

Weight: 187kg

Torque: 46.1ftlb

Highlights: Light, with Showa Big Piston Forks and Brembo monobloc brakes. Lots of grunt



KAWASAKI ZX-6R

PRICE £8728

Power: 114.4bhp

Weight: 191kg

Torque: 46.1lbft

Highlights: Big Piston Forks, slipper clutch. One of the best engines in its class



HONDA CBR600RR

PRICE £8900

Power: 106.1bhp

Weight: 184kg

Torque: 45.8lbft

Highlights: ABS option, electronic steering damper. Very smooth



TRIUMPH 675

PRICE £8499

Power: 111.5bhp

Weight: 185kg

Torque: 49.1lbft

Highlights: Light, brilliantly torquey engine



YAMAHA R6

PRICE £9128

Power: 111.9bhp

Weight: 189kg

Torque: 46.4lbft

Highlights: Slipper clutch, high and low speed damping



MV F3

PRICE £9999

Power: 128bhp (claimed)

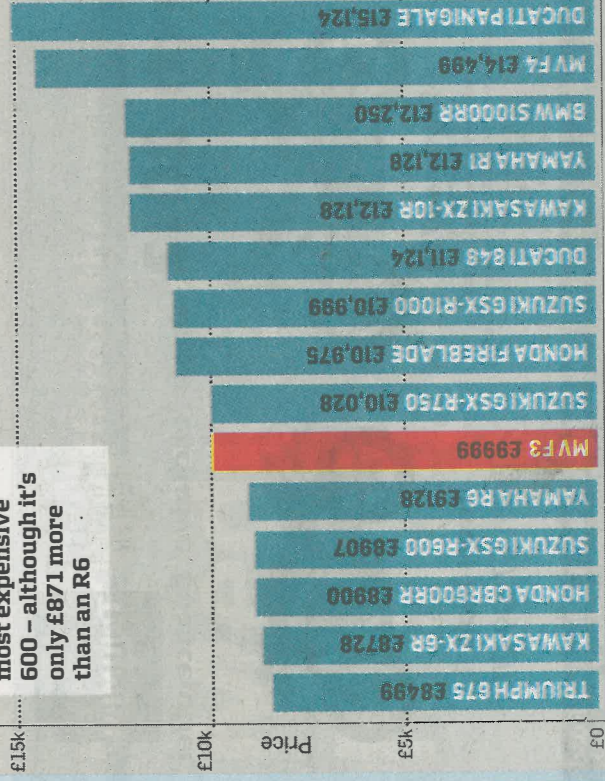
Weight: 173kg (claimed)

Torque: 52ftlb (claimed)

Highlights: Light, traction control, immaculate design

WHERE THE MV F3 FITS IN

Now the MV is the most expensive 600 – although it's only £871 more than an R6



Ducati 1199 Panigale
exclusive first ride
Go to page 2

First ride of new
Suzuki GSX-R1000
Go to page 16

MV BOSS REVEALS COMPANY'S NEXT MOVE

Talking to MCN, MV Augusta CEO Giovanni Castiglioni said:

"We took over the company from Harley-Davidson in August 2010 and since then we've been through a strong restructuring process. In 2010 we had three products: one F4 and two Brutales. In 2011 we put the entry-level Brutale 920 into production, as well as the F4R, F4RR, the 160bhp 1090RR Brutale and the more affordable 1090R Brutale. Sales and profit are up considerably.

"In 2010 our products used to cost between £10,000 to £19,500. With the new F3 and the Brutale 675, which we'll introduce this year in March/April with our new mid-range three-cylinder engine, we will have a more affordable range of products, from £7999 to £17,999. This is the only key that

MV has for success – expanding our model range.

"Even though we're producing cheaper, less expensive bikes, we are still at the top of the medium-weight sector. We will always be a premium product with high-level components, but we decided to get into this category with an aggressive price and a top product. The F3 is special.

"We are now developing new products and we will present one per year. We are struggling with time, but are trying to present a new product for the Milan show in the autumn. It's not a supersport or a naked, it's a new segment for MV.

"Thanks to the sales of the F3 Serie Oro and orders for the standard F3, MV Augusta has already made more profit in January 2012 than we did for the whole of last year."



MV boss Castiglioni (left) says a new bike will be shown in November

Riding position is surprisingly roomy and the engine is more flexible than a CBR600RR or ZX-6R. But it is an extreme bike which might be hard work on the road. Read more in our world-first road test in MCN in two weeks

@mcnbikesforsale.com SUPERSPORT BARGAINS

If £9999 for a new MV F3 seems a bit salty, there are thousands of cheaper 600s for sale on MCN's bikes for sale website. Here are a five of the best...



2000 Suzuki GSX-R600
£1875

22,000 miles on the clock, rare totally standard machine, clean and tidy condition, decent tyres, taxed and tested.



2004 Suzuki GSX-R600
£3200

8200 miles, all paperwork (including all MoTs), two keys, original exhaust comes with it



2009 Kawasaki ZX-6R £3995

4700 miles, full service history, metallic blue, Datatool alarm, always garaged, full Akrapovic plus original exhaust



2006 Yamaha R6 £5100

4900 miles, full service history, one owner from new, immobiliser, metallic black



2010 Triumph DAYTONA 675
£6300

1100 miles, Special Edition, as new, full service history, Datatool alarm, Datatag, rear cowl, dry miles only



Verdict

The MV Augusta F3 is a stunning creation and, better still, costs less than ten grand. OK, that's a lot for a supersports machine, but you get an awful lot of performance, style, character, exclusivity and technology for your money.

In warmer track conditions, I think it would have shone even brighter, but will such a focused track bike will be good for the road? We'll find out soon when we test it on UK roads against its main rivals.

The F3's electronic riding modes dominated everything during our test. There's a mode to suit every situation – I found it in the end, but it nearly ruined my opinion of such an important bike. I'm all for electronics – they can be brilliant – but they should enhance a great bike, not mess with it.

With all the fiddling with the riding modes and the icy conditions, our test left me wanting more. The F3 has a lot more up its sleeve than it showed us in

In warmer conditions, I think the F3 would have shone even brighter

MCN'S MICHAEL NEEVES

one day at a freezing cold race track and I don't think we scratched the surface of its potential.

It really is a mini-supersport and like nothing anyone has ridden before.

The Italian firm has again created one of the most beautiful shapes in motorcycling and now it's even more achievable to be able to open your garage door on a Sunday morning and see this looking back at you. How tempting is that?