

August 3rd, 2011

Hi Rick & Team,

I've had my Aprilia Mana 850 for a couple of months now. I bought her from you (Rick Gill MC's) as a demo after originally looking at an Aprilia Pegaso 650 Strada. I've been busting to tell everyone what I think about her, and thought I should write it down.

I can say I've fallen in love with the machine. I just love riding, anyway, but on my Mana it is pure bliss. I'm amazed she lasted a couple of years as a demo, as it only took me one ride to know she was brilliant.

The design concept of the machine is beautifully elegant, and exquisitely built.

I believe this machine represents the future; not only of motorcycles, but potentially the internal combustion engine.

I've never been a fan of the idea of the gearbox, even if I do enjoy the pleasure of a well timed shift. As an Engineer, I know that the only reason the gearbox (and clutch) exists is because of the limitations of internal combustion engines, and we've been designing around that for the last hundred years. Trying to get extended torque and power bands, and shuffling them around gear ratios is just an endless game of compromises, when what IC engines do best is one optimised speed.

I've always wanted a low revving, Italian machine and now I have a beautiful example. Whoever did the programming at Aprilia for the CV Transmission deserve a major award. At whatever speed I'm travelling when I open the throttle, my Mana immediately just growls and she gives me maximum torque and power. There's no need to think about revs or gears, and no lag or possibility of stalling. I can be going 10 or 140km/h and the response is the same. All I have to do is ride and think about my surroundings and the road. It takes even the most humdrum city ride from a sometimes annoying gear-shuffle to a joy, with her beautiful growl that never whines.

The Programmers also did their job perfectly for motor braking. I get smooth, constant deceleration right down to the very low speed where the centrifugal clutch unlocks and motor braking drops out. Because that point is so predictably well defined, it's perfectly acceptable and easily allowed for.

The Mana is possibly the ultimate city/highway commuting machine. I know she's not a sports or touring machine, but I see no reason why a similar CV transmission could not be applied to those formats. I would have thought that instant, maximum torque and power at any speed would be the holy grail for those formats. Sure, it might be harder to pop wheelies, and might not suit off-roaders, but then, maybe it just hasn't been played with enough to write the idea off. There's a hundred years of pre-conceptions to overcome, first. Gear shifting is not the sum of what riding (or driving) is all about. Fun at times; yes - but it only exists because IC engines are so hobbled by speed range constraints.

Cheers

David Cope