

WICKED!



«2012 GSX-R1000

A U S T R A L I A N

**MOTOR
CYCLE**

**Z
E**

**WHAT'S
UP DOC?**

**WHY ROSSI'S
RULE HAS COME
TO AN END**

AUSTEST 2011

**FIST
FIGHT!**

THE VERDICT Aprilia's RSV4 APRC battles for superbike supremacy



**RSV4F vs CBR vs R1 vs GSX-R1000
ZX-10R vs 1198SP vs S1000RR vs F4**



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PROJECT ZX-10R
We build your ultimate Ninja!



RARE RACER
Million dollar Porcupine tested



GP TITLE FIGHT
Stoner & Lorenzo battle heats up





AUSTEST 2011
AUSTRALIA'S ULTIMATE SPORTSBIKE

■ TEST RENNIE SCAYSBROOK ■ PHOTOGRAPHY KEITH MUIR AND SAM MACLACHLAN

READY TO RUMBLE

The world's fastest motorcycles have been put through the AMCN wringer to find the top superbike of 2011



**MOTOR
CYCLE****SUPERBIKE
HONOUR ROLL**

1995	Honda CBR900RR
1996	Yamaha YZF1000R
1997	Honda VTR1000
1998	Yamaha YZF-R1
1999	Yamaha YZF-R1
2000	Yamaha YZF-R1
2001	Suzuki GSX-R1000
2002	Suzuki GSX-R1000
2003	Suzuki GSX-R1000
2004	Kawasaki ZX-10R
2005	Suzuki GSX-R1000
2006	Kawasaki ZX-10R
2007	MV Agusta F4 R 312
2008	Honda CBR1000RR
2009	Honda CBR1000RR
2010	BMW S1000RR

It's on again. AUSTest is back for another year and this time we've ridden, pushed, blasted and near broken the fastest motorcycles on the planet in an all-out effort to find which one is Australia's ultimate sportsbike.

The test this year has been a gruelling one. Three days of riding through wind, snow (yes, snow!) rain, hail and sunshine on the road, followed by a glorious day on a private road a week later with some of the fastest riders in the country has given us a winner – and it's not what we had expected.

The superbike line-up for this year is headed by the defending 2010 champion – the BMW S1000RR. Last year's superbike sensation set a

new standard for the class with its four engine maps integrating with the adjustable, on-the-fly Dynamic Traction Control and superb BMW ABS system. It also reset the game in the power stakes; 137kW (184hp) on our dyno last year was absolutely unheard of for a production bike – that kind of power is normally reserved for factory Superbikes that no one gets to ride.

But it wasn't the total annihilation BMW or we expected. Aprilia's gorgeous RSV4 Factory was snapping at the BMW's heels on road and track, and the sublimely smooth GSX-R, while relatively basic in comparison to its Euro counterparts, came out a surprise winner of the track component.

The 2011 test is different. The BMW is relatively unchanged (save for the heavier mass crankshaft), and it has to fend off an Aprilia with an all-new whiz-bang electronic system that is touted as the best production system yet.

There's also the much hyped, all-new Kawasaki ZX-10R. The first Japanese superbike to come out with traction control as standard, it has power aplenty with all the controls the BMW boasts – but can it stack up in the real world? Then we head to Italy, with two new rockets in the form of the Ducati 1198SP and the MV Agusta F4. Ducati is bringing back a name in SP that means one thing – ball-tearing performance. Equipped with a race quickshifter and an engine that can compete with factory Superbikes straight out of the crate, the Ducati 1198SP is uncompromising, tough and brutally fast.

The Suzuki GSX-R, Yamaha YZF-R1 and Honda CBR1000RR are all unchanged for 2011 and could easily provide a surprise or two, as some of our testers found out...

This year's test is a mix of road, track and private road riding, all aimed at revealing the best superbike of the lot, and saving the winner a place on the prestigious 16-year old AMCN Superbike honour roll.

Well enough chit-chat. Let's get into it. AUSTest 2011 is go!



Aprilia RSV4 Factory APRC



aprilia The Aprilia RSV4 Factory finished third behind the BMW S1000RR and the Suzuki GSX-R1000 in last year's AUSTest. But while the Aprilia hasn't mechanically changed for 2011, it has copped an all-new electronics package that has well and truly hoisted it into BMW outright-honours territory.

This new Aprilia Performance Rider Control (APRC) system houses an eight-stage, on-the-fly adjustable traction control system (ATC), Aprilia Wheelie Control (AWC) and Aprilia Launch Control (ALC), plus three different engine fuel maps accessed by the starter button. However, the system doesn't house an ABS system despite running front and rear wheel-speed sensors, like the BMW or Kawasaki. This electronics package is simply awesome on the track, and the ATC system more than proved itself on the road when we hit sleet, rain and snow on the road test.

The Aprilia's rorty V4 is a favourite among the testers for being extremely forgiving at low-revs with excellent fuelling. The bottom-end torque in the first quarter of the rev range is smooth and plentiful, and it transfers to a meaty

mid-range that doesn't suffer any major peaks or dips, although the Yamaha and Honda are clear winners here. The top-end isn't as full-on as something like the BMW's or Kawasaki's, but the way the power is delivered is much smoother and controllable than either of these two. Here's where the ATC comes in. On hard acceleration the ATC is the most unobtrusive system any of us had ever ridden. Shannon even went as far as saying he could race the bike with no changes, right away! The ATC system is an absolute asset to the machine, and makes the job of going fast on the throttle much easier. Part of the electronics package is the quickshifter, but out of all the systems on test, this was the least favoured, with a couple of testers noting the ignition cut-out was too long between shifts. The gearbox itself is quite nice though, and there's plenty of feel in the cable-operated clutch.

There's no escaping the fact the chassis is pure dynamite. The Aprilia is physically the smallest bike on test, by a fair margin, and feels almost Ducati-like in how thin it is between the rider's legs. The weight feels like it's carried in the perfect place in the chassis for aggressive



Main: The RSV4 Factory APRC slices corners with the agility of a 250, but it's still remarkably stable

1. Two dashes in one with the RSV4 – no multi-coloured flashing lights make reading it easy
2. Quickshifter-equipped but no adjustable rearsets

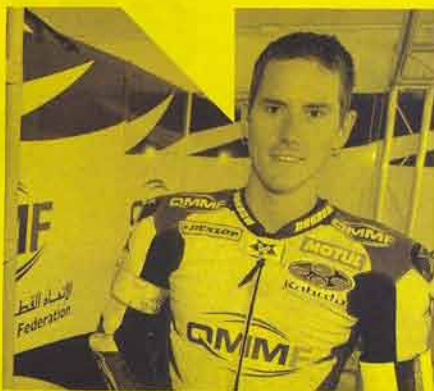
riding, resulting in almost the perfect amount of weight transfer under braking and on acceleration. The Öhlins fork does a magnificent job of giving precise feedback under high-pressure braking from the Brembo Monobloc/radial master-cylinder set-up – consequently, when the Aprilia is leant over, it is easy to feel where the tyres are and just how far you can push them. It's important to use the rear brake on the Aprilia, more so than any other bike. The tip-in is extremely fast but, provided there's a little bit of trailing rear brake, it is also very stable – similar to the MV Agusta, but better.

Another area earning the Aprilia points was the two-stage dash that went from road to race at the flick of a switch. The 'pegs are set at a lower level than any of the Japanese bikes and make the machine much more comfortable than the Honda, but you'll be wasting your time trying to strap anything to the back on the tiny tail-unit, despite the fact the chassis is actually quite comfortable.

The Aprilia isn't the most powerful bike here, but the brilliant electronics package, as well as the already impressive chassis and engine, means this bike is hard to beat.

SECOND OPS

Alex Cudlin: This bike is made to be raced – it feels like a racebike the moment you sit on it. The brakes are amazing and the drive out of corners, with the traction control working on the low levels, is fantastic. I think the R1 performed a bit better on the track because it had tyre warmers and track gearing – the Aprilia had neither of these and was still awesome! Plus it handled the two-day road ride really well, too. It is expensive, but you get a pretty special bike for the money.



OUT OF POCKET

Full fairing panel (side fairing)	\$378.10
Mirror	\$217.29
Handlebar	\$255.35
Brake Lever	\$219.14
Clutch Lever	\$81.81
Footpeg and bracket	\$219.05
Exhaust Muffler	\$972.67
Engine Case	\$278.59
Indicator-in mirror lens	\$29.48

ON THE BENCH

1000km 2 hours
Inspect drive chain, clutch cable, control cables, brake discs, engine oil, brake fluid, coolant, engine oil filter, tyre pressure, tightening torques, clutch cover, brake pad wear, flywheel, oil sump screws tightening, safety switches.

Every 10,000km 4 hours
As per 1000km plus inspect cylinder equalisation, spark plugs, sprocket pinion, steering bearings, wheel bearings, control unit diagnosis, air filter, cooling system, stand switch, stop switches, lights, fork seals, fuel lines, replace engine oil and filter.

20,000km 6 hours
The above plus rear shock absorber, rear suspension bearings, valve clearance, fork oil, flex coupling, clutch wear, replace coolant and brake fluid.

ON THE MARKET

■ **NEW PRICE \$29,990**

You need to allow for the huge differences in purchase price between the standard RSV4R and the Factory model. The \$6000 difference now between the models was actually \$9000 when the RSV4 was new. We calculated last year you needed \$17,741 to turn an RSV4 into a Factory. This makes the new APRC model even more attractive at \$29,990 with all the extra fruit. We would expect second-hand values to fall now the APRC is out. Both the R and Factory come with APRC.

Red Book lists the last two years

2009	\$16,600-\$22,100 RSV4
2009	\$23,050-\$30,750 Factory
2010	\$16,950-\$22,550 RSV4
2010	\$23,300-\$31,050 Factory

BITS AND BOBS

No thought of pillion comfort

Rear brake lever is hard to operate

Chrome around steering head looks cool but is easily scratched

Sticky clutch lever is span adjustable

Mirrors are too short

Dash switches are functional and easy to use

Top-line Öhlins and Marchesinis look great



47.5%

202.5kg

52.5%

Bar width	Bar height	Bar to seat	Seat height	Seat width	Seat to peg	Peg height
490mm	880mm	720mm	830mm	270mm	430mm	400mm



AUSTEST 2011

AUSTRALIA'S ULTIMATE SPORTSBIKE

AND THE WINNER IS...

As hard a choice as picking last year's winner was, it was an even tougher prospect this year. As predicted, the race came down to the BMW, Ducati and Aprilia. It's no co-incidence these are the most expensive bikes here, but we are talking outright performance, road tractability and comfort, electronic aids, power, handling, as well as value for money in an effort to decide the winner.

Each of these machines has an advantage over the other - the Aprilia for its agility and beautifully smooth engine; the BMW for its stupendous top-end grunt and brilliant ABS and quickshifter package; and the Ducati for its mind-blowing mid-range torque and exquisite exclusivity, not to mention it is the last 1198 and a true SP in every sense of the legend.

However, in the end, there can be only one winner of AUSTest 2011, and that is the Aprilia RSV4 Factory APRC. After coming so close last year to taking the crown, the Aprilia, courtesy of its superior handling and electronics package, has taken the top spot from BMW and raised the bar for everyone else in terms of what it takes

to be crowned AMCN AUSTest champion. The Aprilia was voted number one by all but one tester. Everyone agreed the APRC system was a superior rider aid to those offered by Ducati, BMW, MV Agusta and Kawasaki; the addition of the system made up for the shortcomings of the 2010 RSV4 Factory, and hoisted it above the BMW on the AMCN honour roll.

The balance of Superbike power has now well and truly swung the way of the Europeans, and the Japanese manufacturers will need to work hard in the coming years to close the gap. With the effects of the GFC now beginning to subside, you can bet in the coming 24 months the oriental manufacturers will be coming out with machines rivaling those of the Euros in terms of engine power, chassis components and electronic aids.

It's not an insurmountable gap, and those budget conscious buyers could do a lot worse than owning a new CBR, YZF-R1, GSX-R or ZX-10R, for all are excellent 1000cc superbikes. Also, with the price reduction of the once exclusive MV Agusta, it brings the prospect of



The Aprilia heads the BMW on the road - the order they finished in the test, as it turns out

Euro superbike ownership much closer than ever before to an audience that may never thought it possible.

But as good as they all are, one bike stood out. Congratulations Aprilia. The RSV4 Factory APRC is a superbike par-excellence!



Congratulations Aprilia - the RSV4 Factory APRC is a superbike par-excellence!

