

Ultra
Special



Numperplate, tail light and indicator assembly bolts on quicker than you can say, 'Who do you think you are?' Max Neukirchner?

KLEIN 2004 YAMAHA R1

IT'S JUST A BLOCK CONNECTOR. BUT IT MAKES THIS R1 RACER ROAD-LEGAL IN 15 MINUTES

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You have to hand it to the Germans. They know how to put on a show. We're in Hockenheim as guests of PS magazine's annual Tuner GP, and it's some kind of paradise. Blistering weather. Magnificent food. Cold, refreshing beer served in earthenware tankards. And ten F1-spec pit garages awash with fast, trick German specials. We're drawn to one very special R1.

It turns out to be built by Yamaha dealer Dominic Klein, who last year put together perhaps the finest FZ1 in the world. The owner is 36-year-old Sven Kuhn, a special customer at Klein Yamaha – special enough to have wangled a lot of the parts on this bike at cost. Which is how, when we ask if we can have a go, Dominic answers 'Sure' without even bothering to check with Sven over on the other side of the garage. 'He owes me one,' the man says, grinning.

Beside me was to have been the Baron who, as master of the Nürburgring, is PB's allocated German test rider. But his excellency is indisposed, victim of yet another car fluid spillage on that most lethal of circuits. In his place is Andy Carlile, riding companion of the Baron and, quite possibly, new lap record holder at 7m 14. Which he's done on his own 2004 R1.

We pore over the bike, figuring out the rationale for little details, pestering its creator with questions. It looks like a racer, but the headlights are real enough, and the fairing wears a couple of tiny indicators. Sven explains: 'I wanted a fast track bike which could be road-legal in 15 minutes.'

Come off it. The bike has loud pipes, slicks and no numberplate. 'No, it's possible. I'll show you.' He produces a pair of removable baffles for the Micron silencers. They fix in with one screw each. Tyres are sorted with a spare set of wheels. But the legal stuff at the back? Sven beckons us over to a van, and slides open the door. An entire numberplate, tail light and indicator assembly clips onto the back end and secures with four screws.

Except those indicators are as hard to spot as a lizard on a rock. Surely, in the land of TÜV homologation, they'll get you nicked? 'It's no problem,' Sven insists. 'They meet the regulations.'

Dominic confirms this. 'Only the horsepower is a bit dodgy. ▀ ▀



Who is... Dominic Klein

A GERMAN DEALER WHO'S DEVELOPED A REPUTATION FOR THOUGHTFUL ASSEMBLY AND METICULOUS SET-UP.



WANT ONE?

Klein Yamaha can supply or build anything you see on this bike apart from the front discs and exhaust, both of which are now extinct. There's a lot of exotic stuff in this R1.

'We don't have an internet shop, but an e-mail or fax in English is fine,' says Klein. Fax 0049 6831 701121 or visit yamaha-klein.de.

For BKG parts, visit shop.bkg-bikeparts.de.

because of the extra emissions and noise. The bike's papers say 173PS (170.5bhp), and no 2004 Yamaha made that much as standard. This bike has 180PS, so... 'Say no more. No copper is going to know the difference.

The engine work is sensible stuff that leaves the bottom end alone. 'Sven wanted a quick race bike where you don't have to change the engine every year. So it makes power, but not at the cost of reliability,' Klein explains. Part of that brief led to the thinner 520 chain conversion. 'It's lighter and costs less power, so more goes to the rear wheel.' Is it safe to use a chain that skinny on a bike churning out so much torque? 'It's safe, no problem. It just wears a little faster.'

Sven was also after what Dominic describes as, 'very exclusive suspension.' The race spec Ohlins gear and Japanese Galespeed wheels cost more than a stock R1, but it's the smaller things you find yourself pondering. Fully adjustable bars, footrests and lever controls, even down to a variable rear master cylinder ratio and gearchange toe-peg. Three bolts per leg on the BKG bottom yoke. Rattly, wavy (but in a good way) cast iron brake rotors. A skeletal rear brake disc that looks like the kind of thing Death would have on his chopper. A one-off radiator by Boeckers, revered in Germany as the man to fashion such things. A carbon-weave skin on the frame which, up close, resembles the skin of a komodo dragon. With the black silicone sealer around the intake pipes and unpainted glass fibre fairing it lends the bike a slightly shabby, but purposeful air. 'No bike is crash proof, but this one is definitely slither proof,' observes Andy. It needs to be. Besides pottering down to the shops, the bike gets used for fun at Hockenheim, the Nürburgring GP circuit, Anneau du Rhin, Magny Cours and Zandvoort.

There's one more detail: a quick-action throttle delivers all 177.5 rear wheel horsepower in an eighth of a turn. Andy's eyes glitter. 'No fucking about,' he deduces. Time for a spin.

The track session's only 20 minutes, but Andy is wringing wet with sweat from the grip of the Bridgestone slicks. 'That is a very fast motorcycle, but it's easily controllable. With the power and quick-action throttle you short-shift a lot,

particularly in the Parabolica (a long, through-the-gears left hander), where you end up flat in sixth. He has the gearing spot-on. It's not quite revving out in top at the end of the Parabolica, but if it was my bike all it would need would be a bit more throttle.

'The quickshifter is very sensitive. You have to consciously keep your foot away from the lever, so your foot is skimming the road on lefts – unless you want to change gear. After a couple of laps I got used to it. I can't say I'm that impressed with the feel from the discs, though; if somebody told me they were original Yamaha equipment I'd believe them.

'It feels very wide with the way the bars are set up, but it doesn't half turn easily. The stock R1 is fine, just a little heavy to get over the mid-point. This one flips over real nice.

'I think Dominic's built a race bike with just enough manners to make it liveable to the pub and back. I just want to take it home with me right now, and get used to it.' ☺

SPEC

ENGINE

Stock cams with modified timing, raised compression, flowed ports. Boeckers radiator. Micron race exhaust with no Exup leading to twin silencers with detachable baffles. Power Commander III and Dynojet quickshifter. 520 chain conversion.

CHASSIS

Braking cast iron discs, severely lightened rear disc. BKG yokes, chain adjusters and paddock stand cut-outs. Ohlins steering damper, shock and forks. Magura master cylinder, vapour-blasted callipers. Stock swingarm with grease nipples on pivot. Galespeed aluminium wheels from Japan.

BODYWORK

Carbon fairing bracket/mudguard. Fibreglass fairing and seat unit. Front/rear spindle and engine crash bungs.

CONTROLS

BKG footrests and bars. Brake pedal return spring on rear master cylinder. Race pattern gearshift. Eighth-turn throttle.

