

New Bikes

2012 Star Cruisers

Raider SCL Initiates New Limited-Edition Cruiser Line

by Scott Rousseau



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WHILE YAMAHA MOTOR Corp. USA has been taking it on the chin just like every other motorcycle manufacturer in the market, the company's Star motorcycle division has still provided a ray of optimism in otherwise bleak economic times. According to the MIC, Star is currently the second best-selling cruiser brand, behind Harley-Davidson (in the over-900cc cruiser market), and it's the best-selling metric cruiser brand, with nearly double the sales volume of its closest competitor. Currently, four of the top six best-selling "high-end" (1301cc and up) metric cruisers are Stars, and the Star Raider is currently the best-selling high-end metric cruiser, with triple the sales of its nearest competitor.

With the current popularity of the Raider, perhaps it's no surprise that Star has used that bike as a platform to launch its new Star Custom Line (SCL), a line of limited-edition factory specials with parts and accessories not available in Yamaha's expansive YPAD catalog, and with a level of style unlike any other Star production motorcycle. Say hello to the Raider SCL, the first of a new, elite breed of Star cruisers.

Raider SCL, Raider & Raider S

Available only in the US market, the Raider SCL's focus is on styling, and its retina-burning orange metallflake custom paint with six-layers of graphic effects and a wealth of precious metal bling indicate. Designed by partner GK Design of Lakewood, California, the SCL's paint scheme looks like one-off showbike's and immediately sets the SCL far apart from regular production Stars. Many of its shimmering chrome parts, including its custom-made Performance Machine wheels, are created exclusively for the Raider SCL, and match perfectly with the sculpted rear belt pulley and upper belt guard. Other unique appointments include a two-tone brown leather saddle with color-matched accent stitching; according to Star, no two seats will be alike.

Of course, would-be customers won't have to worry about shelling out extra dough for increased performance, as the Raider

SCL's air-cooled, pushrod activated four-valve, 48° V-twin is already legendary among metric cruiser powerplants for its performance. Its 100mm bores and 118mm stroke yield a monstrous 113 cid (1854cc), the largest-displacement production V-twin on the market today. Fuel injection is handled through twin bore 43mm Mikuni throttle bodies, with spent gases exiting through the Raider SCL's EXUP exhaust valve-controlled 2-into-1-into-2 exhaust system. Transmitted through a five-speed gearbox, the SCL makes a tractor-pulling 106.6 lb.-ft. of rear-wheel torque at just 2500 rpm.

Only 500 Raider SCLs will be built for 2012, their serialized production numbers noted on limited-edition badges that will adorn the 4.2-gal. fuel tanks. But this exclusivity doesn't come cheap, and the Raider SCL's \$19,990 MSRP represents a \$4300 premium over the Raider S.

Of course, if you miss your chance at the Raider SCL, the hot-selling Raider and Raider S models can be purchased and customized to your heart's desire. Powered by the same engine as the SCL, the standard Raider is available in Liquid Silver for \$14,590, while the more heavily chromed Raider S is offered in Raven (black) for \$15,190 or Nebulous Purple for \$15,390.

Roadliner S, Stratoliner S & Stratoliner Deluxe

While most of the changes to Star's regular production cruisers are limited to new colors, some are significant and unexpected, especially the changes to Star's high-end Roadliner and Stratoliner models. According to Star officials, research revealed that the Roadliner/Stratoliner's Art Deco streamline style was a bit too "over the top" and polarizing—cruiser fans either loved it or hated it. For 2012, Yamaha has toned-down the styling of both the Roadliner and Stratoliner Deluxe in hopes of broadening their appeal among would-be customers. Gone are the art deco ribs on the gas tank, and in their place are new tank emblems with a more subtle appearance. Also, the wrap-around front fender stay, which was a unique styling cue on both models, has been eliminated. These changes give the Roadliner S and Stratoliner S a greater family resemblance to other Star models, especially the V Star 950 and 950 Tourer.

Both the Roadliner and Roadliner S are back for 2012. The Roadliner S is available in a Seashell color for \$15,390. The Stratoliner S, which adds a police-style windshield, passenger backrest and leather-covered saddlebags, is available in Intense Black for \$16,590.

While it still lacks a six-speed transmission and cruise control, Star's top-of-the-line Stratoliner Deluxe handily won the engine performance category in our Batwing Bagger Shootout (December, 2011). That's no surprise, since the Road-

liner/Stratoliner clan uses the same 48° air-cooled powerplant as its Raider sisters. Returning for 2012 with the toned-down styling features of the Roadliner S and Stratoliner S, the Stratoliner Deluxe has received some neat upgrades nevertheless, most notably an all-new Garmin Zumo 665 GPS navigation/entertainment system that is controlled via switches on the Deluxe's left handlebar.

As Garmin's top-of-the-line unit, the Zumo 665 is specifically designed for motorcycle use and has been beefed up to withstand vibration and inclement weather. Its Bluetooth

Stratoliner Deluxe



Stryker



capability makes it compatible with wireless Bluetooth helmet headsets, such as those found in Schubert and Nolan helmets as well as any aftermarket Bluetooth helmet accessory headsets. Plus, with an optional Sirius XM satellite radio subscription, it can provide the user with up-to-date reports on traffic conditions, road condition warnings, current weather and weather forecasts, and it includes a real-time weather radar. Of course, Sirius XM also provides virtually unlimited musical choices. The Zumo 665 is fully integrated into the Stratoliner Deluxe's audio system, allowing turn-by-turn voice navigation through the Stratoliner's speakers, when the system will interrupt any audio to deliver its voice instructions. Mounted just below the iPod/storage compartment in the fairing, the Zumo 665 has a flip-up design for added (out of sight, out of mind) security, but it can also be removed from its Garmin mount for ultimate theft protection.

Other Stratoliner Deluxe changes include new chrome trim for its fairing mounted speakers and a welcome new closeable lid on its iPod/storage compartment. Available in Liquid Silver, the Stratoliner Deluxe retails for \$17,990.

At the low-end of Star's air-cooled V-twin line now, the original Road Star is widely recognized as one of the first of a new breed of metric cruisers to become an acceptable alternative among staunch American-made cruiser fans, and it returns in two flavors for 2012. The Raven (black) Road Star S for \$13,490 and the Road Star Silverado S, which comes with a windshield and color-matched saddlebags. The Silverado S is available in Lunar White Pearl for \$15,590.

Stryker, VMax & Venture S

Star claims to have enjoyed successful sales of the Stryker 1300 chopper introduced in 2011, and it returns this year in bold new colors. The challenge, according to Star's product planning team, lies in coming up with unique paint hues when the vast amount of data collected from Star cruiser customers indicates that black is still the most desirable color. For 2012, the Stryker returns in Raven (black) for \$11,090 and in two new colors, either Candy Red or an eye-catching Reddish Copper, the latter with blacked out air cleaner

cover, exhaust fork legs and wheels for \$11,340. The Reddish Copper model also has a paint-matched pinstripe on the wheels for a subtle yet appealing detail.

Star's boulevard-bruising, V4-powered VMax power cruiser is also back for 2012 with minimal changes, including new grey seat cover stitching and a new side cover color that matches the brushed aluminum look of its air intakes. The VMax will be available in Matte Black for \$19,890.

Using an older generation of Yamaha's original Venture Royale V4, the full-dress touring Venture S returns in Intense Black for 2012. The Venture S now offers full iPod integration, and Star is even throwing in a brand-new iPod Nano to entice buyers who pony up its \$20,190 MSRP.

V Stars

Yamaha's mid-line, liquid-cooled, SOHC, V-twin-powered V Star 1300 returns in Candy Red for \$10,990, and the V Star 1300 Tourer which adds a windshield, backrest and leather-covered saddlebags is available in Granite Grey for \$12,090. Just below it, the air-cooled SOHC V-twin-powered V Star 950 also returns in two versions with new colors. The V Star 950 Tourer is available in Candy Red or Liquid Silver for \$8490, while the V Star 950 Tourer adds the police-style windshield, backrest and leather covered saddlebags and is available in either Raven (black) or Impact Blue for \$9490.

Last but not least, the \$4190 V Star 250 has also received minor updates for 2012, and perhaps deservedly so, as the V Star has been the gateway vehicle for thousands of new motorcyclists. This is because Yamaha has used it to support a myriad of rider training programs across the US.

In addition to new tank graphics, Star's smallest cruiser gets a new, drag-style handlebar with a flatter bend designed to improve ergonomics while riding it of the 1970s image portrayed by its old buckhorn-style handlebar.

While Star may not be taking bold new steps in the cruiser market, having the confidence to launch a new, limited-edition line of high-end customs and solidifying its existing models show that the company is taking its economic punches in stride and continuing to offer powerful, reliable and well-styled cruisers for the buying public. That's a positive sign. 🗨️

V Star 950 Tourer



V Star 250

