

New Bikes

2011 YAMAHAS

YAMAHA UNLEASHES A TRIO OF TANTALIZING NEW MODELS

by Scott Rousseau

UNLIKE ITS AMERICAN counterparts, Yamaha/Star painted a slightly dimmer, although perhaps more realistic, picture of the current motorcycle market at its 2011 new model launch in Southern California. “Unfortunately, the motorcycle industry is still declining slightly,” a Yamaha spokesman said. “Fortunately for us at Yamaha, there are some bright spots.” The company’s Star cruiser brand continues to lead the over-900cc metric cruiser market, its YZF-R1 now tops the sales charts in the 1000cc sportbike category, and its WR250X fortifies Yamaha’s leadership of the Dual-Sport segment.

Playing to its strengths, Yamaha has three all-new models for 2011, including the much anticipated XT1200 Super Ténéré adventure bike, FZ8 naked sport and the new Stryker, a mid-displacement, chopper-style cruiser cut from the same cloth as Yamaha’s successful Raider.

Yamaha Super Ténéré

A clear shot across the bow of the BMW R1200GS, the Super Ténéré is coming to America in direct response to demand by customers who saw it was available this past year in Europe. Called an early-release 2012 model in the US, it reportedly shares nothing with Super Ténéré models of old (although it is the same model currently sold in Europe). The Super Ténéré is powered by a DOHC four-valve parallel twin utilizing a 270° crank that has the firing order and sound of a 90° V-twin. This uneven firing order is said to provide a more tractable power delivery—which should enhance traction in the dirt. Its 1199cc displacement comes courtesy of 98.0mm bores and a 79.5mm stroke. Its ultra-lightweight pistons are made of forged aluminum for strength, and it breathes through a down-draft fuel injection fitted with 12-hole injectors.

The Super Ténéré features Yamaha’s Chip-Controlled Throttle (YCC-T), a fly-by-wire technology that enables an all-new traction control system that works by regulating both fuel volume and ignition timing to control rear wheelspin. Three traction control settings are available to tailor the system to rider preference: Off, TCS1 (On) and TCS2 (partial control). Also, like Yamaha’s World Championship-winning YZF-R1 superbike, the Super Ténéré also features two driving modes (the R1 actually has three): “T” (touring) mode, which provides softer engine response, and “S” (sport) mode, which delivers maximum performance and a sharper throttle response.

Engine vibration damping is handled by a pair of gear-driven counterbalancers ideally located both fore and aft of the crankshaft. Yamaha engineers worked to keep the engine package as light and compact as possible by using a dry-sump oiling system that lets the engine sit lower in the frame and a single side-mounted radiator that allows the engine to be placed as far forward as possible. Even its cylinder head cover is cast of lightweight magnesium to reduce the Super Ténéré’s CofG.

The Super Ténéré’s wide-ratio, six-speed transmission carries a low first gear for tight and twisty trail work and a tall 6th gear for highway cruising. Its shaft drive uses a hypoid-style final drive design that permits a 10% smaller and lighter ring

gear, reducing unsprung weight and decreasing chassis “jacking” effects on- and off-throttle—a good thing as the Super Ténéré does not feature a final drive torque control device such as BMW’s Paralever or Moto Guzzi’s CARC systems.

The Super Ténéré’s steel main frame hangs the engine as a stressed member of the chassis, thus lowering the CofG for lighter handling. An aluminum subframe and swingarm further reduce weight. Its 43mm male-slider fork is fully adjustable, while its rear monoshock has a handy remote preload adjuster and rebound damping adjustability (but no compression adjuster). Suspension travel is 7.48" both front and rear, nearly the same as a BMW R1200GS (7.48" front/7.87" rear) and more than a Moto Guzzi Stelvio.

The Super Ténéré wears Yamaha’s ABS as standard equipment and features a Unified Braking System (UBS) as well. Yamaha’s UBS is linked front to rear, which means that pulling the front brake lever activates both the front and rear brakes. The rear brake operates independently of the front. Speaking of brakes, the Super Ténéré carries dual front 310mm wave rotors with four-piston

monobloc calipers and a single rear 282mm wave rotor with a two-piston caliper. Tire brand has not yet been confirmed for the US, but the Super Ténéré rides on trick tubeless spoked wheels, a 19" x 2.50" front and 17" x 4.00" rear, fitted with 110/80R19 and 150/70R17 radial tires (the same sizes as the big GS). The design of the wheel uses a central ridge to accept the spokes at the rear, with two such ridges on the front rim.

Other dimensions: 60.6" wheelbase, 575-lb. claimed wet weight (our last GS measured 532 lbs.), and a 6.0-gal. fuel capacity (5.28 gal. on the GS). A two-position seat height; either 33.25" or 34.35" (slightly lower than a GS) also allows the rear portion to be removed separately to expose an additional rear rack. The windshield can be adjusted to multiple positions, and sturdy handguards are standard equipment but heated grips are an option, as are other sure-to-be-popular items such as top-loading aluminum panniers, a top case, tubular steel crash guards, a skid plate (the front-mounted oil filter is particularly vulnerable), a taller windscreen, wind deflectors, a lower seat, fog lamps, a headlight shield and more.

If price were the only consideration, the Super Ténéré is bound to be a hit with riders looking for a more economical foray into the adventure category than its European counterparts can offer; its MSRP has been set at \$13,900. Like the FJR1300 and the VMax, the Super Ténéré will be available only through Yamaha’s Pre-Delivery Deposit Program. Between September 2010 and March 2011, buyers can place a \$500 deposit to get on the list to purchase the Super Ténéré, which will be delivered in May of 2011. Orders will be filled on a first-come, first-served basis. Buyers will have their choice of two colors: Impact Blue or Raven Black.

We anticipate a first riding impression of this new machine in time for the January issue at the earliest.



Yamaha Super Ténéré

Yamaha FZ8

Yamaha released a “teaser” photo of the FZ8’s headlight on its European website early this year, fueling speculation about a new middleweight standard that would replace the old FZ6 and stand as a gap-filling model between Yamaha’s open-class FZ1 and the bargain-priced FZ6R. As it turns out, the all-new streetfighter-styled FZ8 will, in fact, complete the trio in 2011 while also being the first truly naked bike to be offered by Yamaha in the US.

Its 779cc DOHC, four-valve, inline four-cylinder engine borrows heavily from the previous-generation (non-crossplane crank) R1 engine, but features an all-new ceramic composite-coated cylinder block with 68.0mm bores, and a new pent-roof cylinder head, new cams, 26mm intake and 22mm exhaust valves and new 35mm throttle bodies. Its non-crossplane crankshaft swings forged pistons connected by Yamaha’s “Fracture-Split” rods through a 53.6mm stroke. Compression is 12.0:1, and Yamaha officials say that the FZ8’s tuning is designed to emphasize abundant low- and mid-rpm torque. To help achieve that character, Yamaha engineers made the intake funnels very long and the inner pair 25mm longer than the outside pair to spread the advantage. The exhaust is routed through a 4-into-2-into-1 system that features a catalytic converter and O2 sensor but no EXUP valve. Power is delivered through a six-speed transmission with revised gear ratios designed to complement the smaller 800cc engine.

Designed for quick and nimble handling, the FZ8 chassis is made of cast aluminum and features a Controlled Fill die cast aluminum swingarm. However, we were told that it is not the same chassis used by the FZ1, despite the outward similarity.

Yamaha engineers paid particular attention to the FZ8’s weight distribution, targeting a front-end weight bias of 51% to promote a light and nimble handling feel. Considering the wind pressure encountered by a naked bike, the FZ8’s ergonomics move the handlebars 5mm farther forward than the FZ1’s handlebars and the footpegs are 15mm aft and 10mm lower than the FZ1’s pegs. Its claimed seat height is 32.1". Its fuel tank has a 4.5-gal. capacity, and Yamaha claims an average of 37.8 mpg for the FZ8. Its wet weight is listed as 470 lbs. (which is actually lighter than the 476.5 lbs. the FZ6R measured on our scales in 2009).

As for suspension, the FZ8’s 43mm male-slender fork is not adjustable and its linkage-type monoshock is preload adjustable only. Suspension travel is 5.1" at both ends. The FZ8 rides on 17" x 3.50" front and 17" x 5.50" rear five-spoke cast-aluminum wheels shod with Bridgestone BTO21 tires, a 120/70ZR in the front and a 180/55ZR in the back. Braking is handled by dual 310mm front discs with four-piston monobloc calipers (front) and a 267mm disc (rear).

The FZ8 will be available in December 2010, in only one color choice: Raven Black. MSRP is \$8490.

Stryker

Yamaha officials say that the new Star Stryker is being introduced to fill a need for a smaller, lighter companion model to its Raider chopper, and that may be true, but just as the Super Ténéré is clearly aimed at BMW’s best-selling R1200GS, the new Stryker



Yamaha FZ8

1300 is an obvious attempt (to us, anyway) to cut into the sales success of Honda’s popular 1300 Fury.

The Stryker should be a worthy challenger, as its V Star 1300-derived, dual-counterbalanced, 60° V-twin displaces 1304cc—practically the same as the Fury’s 1312cc. However, whereas the Fury engine is undersquare, the Stryker’s bore and stroke is oversquare, measuring 100.0mm x 83.0mm, and its single overhead

cams operate four valves per cylinder instead of three.

Its forged pistons ride in ceramic composite-lined cylinders and the rods ride on a single crankpin. The Stryker’s twin-barrel electronic fuel-injection is a closed-loop system that features dual 40mm throttle bodies with 12-hole nozzles and an O₂ sensor for precise fuel metering regardless of altitude. Its five-speed transmission sends power to the rear wheel via belt drive.

While the Stryker’s profile may look similar to the Raider’s, which is based on an excellent-handling aluminum chassis, the Stryker’s is a steel double-cradle design. However, it does feature a similar 40° rake achieved via a 34° steering head angle in conjunction with a 6° offset triple clamp. Its weight distribution is given as

45% front/55% rear. Like the Raider, the Stryker engine is incorporated as a stressed member of the frame. Its claimed seat height is a low 26.4."

The Stryker’s suspension consists of a nonadjustable 41mm fork and a linkage-style single shock, and its muscular appearance is enhanced by cast aluminum five-spoke wheels that are the same sizes as the Raider’s to ease customization via wheel swaps. The tire sizes are also the same; a 120/70-21 front and a massive 210/40-18 rear. Braking is handled by a single 320mm front disc and a 310mm rear disc.

But perhaps the biggest clue that the Stryker is intended to “calm the Fury” lies in Star’s own press materials, which state, “No cheap plastic fenders here. Steel fenders front and rear are ideal for customizers who want to cut, chop or modify their bikes.” Scheduled to be in dealerships by September 2010, the Stryker will be available with a starting MSRP of \$10,990. Its available colors will include Raven, Impact Blue and Reddish Copper.

Other Changes

Yamaha is making a few detail changes to some of its popular models for 2011, and we don’t think it’s a coincidence that some of these updates are things that MCN has recommended in some of our model evaluations. They include: heated grips as standard equipment on the FJR1300, a new ECU with improved off-idle and low-speed settings for the FZ1, and a new seat, handlebars, fuel tank Emblem and more chrome(!) on the V Star 1300.



Star Stryker

Bottom Line

Yamaha/Star may have only released three new models, but they have been clearly targeted to enhance the company’s presence by simultaneously filling in its own model gaps and taking on the strongest contenders in some really tough market segments. Are they winners? We look forward to testing all three models head-to-head with their established competition to find out very soon. ▀