

# A café racer returns

**Buell's new 2009 1125CR has smoothed out previous niggles, making a slick café racer, writes Chandan B Mallik**

**Craig Jones, extreme stunt rider and world record holder for the longest stoppie, explained the major changes in his signature hooligan style**

At Dubai Autodrome, Craig Jones, stunt rider and record holder for the longest stoppie, helped us extract every ounce of performance from Buell's new 1125CR café racer.

I had tested the 2008 1125R a couple of months ago, during peak summer here, and noted several shortcomings. Among them was an engine that seemed to sputter at low speeds, under 4,000rpm. And although the 72-degree V-twin offered a strong, flat torque curve, to about 7,000rpm, despite the engine's three isolating counter balancers, there was a nagging chassis vibration. The stiff suspension made it feel unsettled and the ride was choppy. Worst

was the excessive heat build-up from the engine that seemed to penetrate the radiator shrouds and make riding uncomfortable.

Buell seems to have removed these niggles with the revisited 1125R family. Not only has it upgraded the existing 1125R, it has also expanded the line-up with a café racer-style machine based on the 1125, the 1125CR.

The riding position and line of sight are now both better. And the electronics also tellingly manage the engine. Meanwhile, the

mapping for the injection and ignition programs has been updated. While output and torque remain unchanged, it now runs smoother even at low revs, with the earlier issues of heat transfer seemingly well contained.

Although the 1125CR is powerful, any hint of gear change harshness has been eliminated by the hydraulic-vacuum assist clutch, designed to offer some slippage between gear shifts, ensuring smooth and quick transitions.

Also boosting performance is the shorter final drive gearing (76/27, over 70/27). It was no surprise off-the-line acceleration has been upped significantly.

I was also impressed with the improvements in the steering. Despite weighing the same as the 1125R, the CR feels lighter and more agile, thanks to recalibrated front dampers. Lighter, alloy rims have also significantly lowered the unsprung mass, as has the unique disc-brake arrangement. Here, the drilled discs is directly attached to

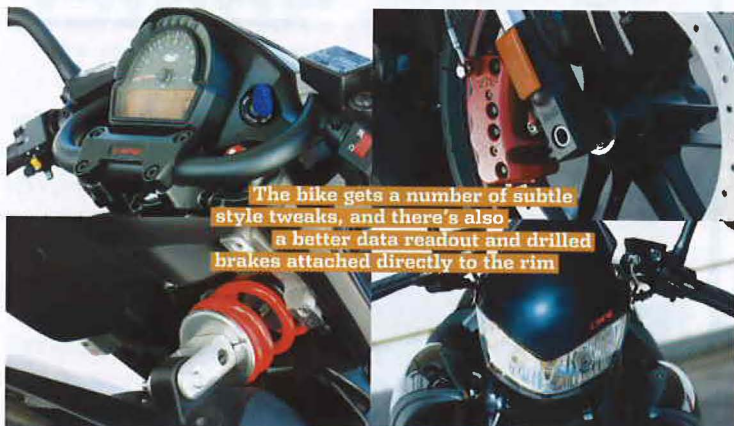
the rim, rather than the hub. This also allows bigger eight-pot calipers to be mounted instead of the regular six for better stopping.

## 70/27

the shorter final drive gearing, previously 76/27

At the Drome, on the street simulation course, the rear felt vague, needing extra input from the rider. But on track, despite a dusty surface, I could trail-brake deep through corner with the brake lever gently pulsating back and forth as if feeding me with data about the delicate relationship between rubber and asphalt.

A café racer is a bike modified for speed and handling, not comfort. But the 1125CR scores in all three. The bike proves you can have balance speed and comfort. The wild styling, performance and price should attract riders to to the 1125CR, starting from Dh52,900. <



The bike gets a number of subtle style tweaks, and there's also a better data readout and drilled brakes attached directly to the rim