

the Ducati PCS Monster Turbo



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Not everyone in the USA is obsessed with Harleys to the point whereby they sport an eagle logo on their jim-jams and fit a chromed airbox on their microwave.

"The bike ticked-over reliably, if hardly quietly thanks to sweet-sounding pipes, and pulled away effortlessly with a light clutch action and no hint of temperament or fuss"

Personal Cycle Service are a tuning shop who prove this point, particularly when they build something as gorgeous and funky as a Turbo charged Ducati Monster.

With 104bhp, a beautiful one-off exhaust system and sharper styling all over, the Monster is transformed from a cute, urban runaround, to a wheelie-popping animal with arm-wrenching acceleration. It might not be everyone's idea of the perfect bike, but it's a bold fusion of Italian pizzazz and raw, good ol' fashioned American poke.

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Vital Statistics

Engine	Air/oil-cooled SOHC 4-valve 90-degree desmo V-twin
cc	904
Claimed power (bhp)	
Compression ratio	9.2:1
Transmission	6 speed

Cycle parts

Carburation	2 x 38mm Mikuni
Primary drive	Gear
Final drive	Chain
Frame	Steel ladder frame
Suspension, front	41mm Showa fork
Rear	Showa monoshock, adjustable for preload, compression and rebound damping
Brakes, front	Twin 320mm Braking Products discs, four-piston Brembo calipers
Rear	Single 245mm disc, twin-piston caliper
Tyres, front	120/70 ZR 17 Bridgestone Battlax radial
Rear	180/55 ZR 17 Bridgestone Battlax radial
Fuel capacity	16.5 litres (3.6 gal)
Wheelbase	1430mm (56.3in)
Rake	23 degrees
Trail	104mm (4.1in)
Dry weight	190kg (418lb) approx

Performance

Top speed	
Fuel capacity	14 litres (3.7 gal)

Buying Info

Current price	\$4000 (about £2700) for kit
Kit available from: Personal Cycle Service, 594 Ballough Road, Daytona Beach, Florida 32114,	

United States. Tel: +1 904 253 2586. Fax: +1 904
253 3578

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Not everyone in the USA is obsessed with Harleys to the point whereby they sport an eagle logo on their jim-jams and fit a chromed airbox on their microwave.

Daytona in early March is teeming with big V-twins. They rumble and roar through the town, day and night. Custom bikes and tourers, neat ones and horrible ones — almost all of them Harleys with loud pipes and laid-back riding positions. But there are some quick bikes, too, if you know where to look.

Hidden away in the centre of this Harley-mad town, Personal Cycle Service is an oasis for those who prefer their V-twins faster and with an Italian accent. PCS have been tuning, modifying and selling bikes in Daytona for 14 years. There are no Hogs here, just Ducatis, Bimotas, Guzzis and the odd Laverda. Most of all, there's the firm's hot new project bike: the Turbo Monster.

From the right side it could almost be a standard M900, apart from pearl-white paint, a neat bikini fairing, a shiny air-filter cover, some chassis mods and a dash of added carbon-fibre. But this particular Ducati is about as sweet and innocent as Al Capone's violin case. Come round the other side, and you can't miss the turbocharger below the steering head, feeding the pair of standard 38mm Mikuni carbs, and the pair of parallel pipes that run down alongside the front pot before bending back towards the twin carbon cans.

The Mobster's, sorry Monster's, IHI turbocharger is notable not only for its compact size but also for having an integral exhaust wastegate, which is preset to allow between 3.5 and 5psi of boost. "That gives two advantages," says PCS boss Tony Foster, who developed the system with turbo expert Mike Lee of High Gear Specialties. "One, owners aren't tempted to turn up the boost and wreck the motor; and two, waste gas is dumped back in the exhaust system, so it doesn't blow back over the bike."

Even running a modest 4psi, this Monster has been dyno-tested to give a rear-wheel maximum of 104bhp at 9200rpm — over 50 per cent up on the standard bike's 68bhp. If that sounds worrying from a reliability point of view, Tony Foster disagrees. "The bottom end will take it fine because it's very similar to that of the 916, which makes similar power and spins faster. With any turbo the oil is the weak point in the system, so our kit includes a new oil filter and a supply of Agip semi-synthetic oil."

Other kit parts include hand-made exhaust pipes (one downpipe is retained), a new fuel pump and fittings (the standard pump cannot make the pressure required for turbocharging), the plumbing required to pressurise the airbox, a mounting kit to relocate the Ducati's oilcooler, three sets of jets (for standard, modified or open pipes), plus all the oil lines, wiring and connectors needed to bolt the whole lot on in less than a day, Foster says.

Foster took great trouble to ensure that no standard parts required modification, so if necessary the turbo could quickly be removed to leave no sign of the Ducati's past life in organised crime. Even so, the view from the Monster's saddle as I left the PCS base gave a strong hint that this was no ordinary M900. Like any smart-suited Italian boy, da bike was in beautiful condition. Its handlebars and their clamps were polished and shiny. The Pro Italia fairing's screen partially obscured (because I'm tall) a classy GiaCaMoto tachometer, whose string of little red lights came on, one by one at 500rpm intervals, as the revs rose.

But as I pobbled slowly through Daytona's traffic there was scarcely a sign of the violence lurking in the Ducati's V-twin heart. The bike ticked-over reliably, if hardly quietly thanks to sweet-sounding pipes, and pulled away effortlessly with a light clutch action and no hint of temperament or fuss. Some fine-tuning of the jetting had apparently cured the midrange flat-spot criticised by a previous American tester, and the Monster seemed every bit as docile and sweet-tempered as a standard machine.

For the first few miles I was more conscious of the mods made to this bike's chassis, particularly a front-brake set-up that combined 320mm fully-floating discs from Braking Products with standard four-pot Brembo calipers and a 17mm master cylinder, instead of the stock 16mm item. The result was fearsome stopping power at the touch of the lever, occasionally threatening to overwhelm the upside-down front forks, which dived like a swimmer wearing concrete boots although their damping system had been revalved.

If the Ducati seemed normal at low revs, it certainly felt anything but when I got onto a clear stretch of road and wound back the throttle. The Monster leapt forward like a bullet from a tommy-gun, gathering speed at a rate that the standard bike could not have approached, while I hung onto the bars for dear life. This was 916-style acceleration, made all the more vivid by this bike's upright riding position and lack of wind-protection.

The Duke's new-found aggression was totally addictive, and available anywhere from about 3000rpm. That meant plenty of wheelies in first gear (in second, too, given some encouragement), or alternatively stonking roll-on performance from about 50mph in top gear. The white bike hammered forward with a most un-Monster like haste, Hindle carbon cans thundering like St Valentine's day, the wastegate fluttering noisily as I backed-off to change gear. It shot to about 130mph with startling rapidity, and given enough road and gearing would have been good for a genuine 150mph. Not that there was time to see that sort of speed on the dial during my test north of Daytona, as I kept my eyes firmly on the all-too-narrow road ahead while the turbo did its stuff down below. A V-twin engine is less than ideal for turbocharging due to its relatively

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large, infrequent power pulses (a multi-cylinder motor's smaller, more frequent firing intervals are more suitable) but there was no doubting the blown bike's added urge. The M900 is hardly short of roll-on performance in standard form, and for sheer grunt the Turbo Monster would take a lot of beating.

Only fly in the grappa was that opening the throttle too sharply with the engine under a light load tended to catch out the system, making the Ducati hesitate momentarily before surging forward. Basically, this was the infamous turbo-lag — which in this set-up has been minimised but by no means completely banished. The turbo-bike's seemingly inevitable delay between wrist movement and engine response was most noticeable given heavy-handed throttle work in the higher gears, but also made the aforementioned wheelies much more difficult to control than with a standard Monster.

Florida's mainly straight roads were not the best place to test handling, but the Ducati did enough to suggest that its modified chassis was well capable of handling the extra power, as well it should have been. The revalved standard Showa rear shock was a shade firm but gave a well-damped ride. High-speed stability was flawless, steering was light, and the V-twin's Bridgestone Battlax radials stuck to the road like an under-cover FBI agent to an unsuspecting hoodlum. Dymag magnesium wheels and the plethora of Progressive Composites carbon-fibre parts ensured this bike weighed little more than the 184kg of the standard M900.

If I'd been really serious about proving the Turbo Monster's ability, the only problem in Daytona would have been finding a rival to fight with. Like so many lily-livered punters in a Chicago bar, the Harley-riding hordes all backed down at the sight of the mean and macho Italian immigrant, although most of them couldn't have realised just what a punch it was packing. As I cruised back through Daytona's outskirts towards PCS's base I was just itching for the chance to blow those suckers away at the lights, but nobody rose to the bait.

Maybe it was just as well, because there were plenty of G-men about; and besides, Daytona could have done without more blood on its streets. The Turbo Monster had already more than proved its readiness for a battle, anyway. A little of the standard Duke's instant throttle response is lost, but the extra power is substantial and hey, sometime you just gotta make sacrifices, right? At \$4000 the kit is pretty good value for those in search of an instant hit of raw adrenaline. A slightly modified kit is available for the same price to fit the half-faired 900SS, too.

So if you gotta 900 Ducati and you just can't live without a little more excitement in your life, just pick up da phone and call Tony, okay. Don't mention who sent you. Just tell him you're gonna make him an offer he can't refuse.



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