

The Amazonas looks rugged enough but lacks genuine off-road ability



Benelli TRE1130K Amazonas

Benelli's all-rounder grows big wheels and knobbly tyres – but does that really make it an adventure bike?

By Mike Armitage Photography by Chippy Wood

Have you had the dubious pleasure of visiting a fast food outlet recently? They're all getting on the healthy options bandwagon, touting salad sub this, fresh that and grilled the other. But by the time everything's smothered in gloopy dressing and served up with a kilo of salty fries, these non-burger options are often no better for you than the traditional cow in a bun. They're pretending to be something they're not.

Which takes us somewhat tenuously to the new Benelli Amazonas. The standard TRE-K is their answer to the Triumph Tiger 1050 and Ducati Multistrada, using the long-stroke, 1130cc three-cylinder engine and assorted chassis parts from the naked TNT in a tall, half-faired all-rounder with grunting delivery, firm ride and distinct styling (see the October issue for a head to head with the British triple). Clearly keen to tap into the popularity of BMW's R1200GS, the Amazonas is the adventure TRE-K, graced with a 19-inch front wheel and chunky Metzeler Tourance tyres for a spot of *Long Way Whatsit* emulation.

And this is where the problem lies. Just as bolting a plough onto my old Saab

wouldn't convert it into a tractor, so making the bike look like it has potential on the loose stuff doesn't implant real dirt abilities. Especially as it retains the hard suspension, firm seat and long gearing of the normal TRE-K. It isn't a true adventure bike, lacking the considerations to off-road use and specific development of a GS or KTM's Adventure – admittedly I lack off-road skills, but I only have the confidence to tackle a couple of gravel farm tracks on the Benelli. And feel very out of place.

The rest of the riding experience is mainly unchanged: the burbling, surging triple still kicks in the bottom half of the revs, feels as though all the bearings are worn and makes a Triumph sound flat; the taut suspension devours fast, smooth bends; the riding position is natural; those analogue clocks look ten years out of date; and it only does 32mpg on a motorway and 29mpg on normal roads. Benelli claim the 810mm seat height is unchanged but it feels far higher than the base bike.

And unfortunately the alterations to this bike detract a little. The bigger diameter front wheel makes the steering heavier and a touch ponderous, and the knobbly tyres

are even more at odds with the sporty set-up than the vaguely off-road rubber on a TRE-K. At an extra £200, it's hard to see a point in the Amazonas.

So here's the rub: if you want a practical, three-cylinder tall-rounder, buy a Triumph. If you want one with a bit more noise, style and exclusivity, buy a Benelli TRE-K. And if you want to stray off the hard stuff, buy a KTM.

THE SPEC SHEET BENELLI TRE1130K AMAZONAS

Price	£8199
Top speed	130mph (est)
Power	106bhp @ 9000rpm
Torque	71 lb.ft @ 7000rpm
Engine	1130cc, 12v, dohc in-line triple
Bore x stroke	88 x 62mm
Compression ratio	12.4:1
Fuel system	fuel injection
Transmission	6-speed, chain
Frame	steel trellis, aluminium side plates
Front suspension	50mm usd telescopic forks
Adjustment	none
Rear suspension	monoshock
Adjustment	preload, rebound
Front brakes	2 x 320mm discs, four-pot calipers
Rear brake	240mm disc, two-pot caliper
Front; rear tyres	110/80 R19; 150/70 R17
Dry weight	205kg (claimed)
Wheelbase	1514mm
Seat height	810mm
Fuel tank	23.5 litres
Insurance	NIU7
Colours	yellow/grey
Available from	KJM Superbike 01257 451656