

Suzuki's seminal GSX-R750F is 30-years old this year. Here we look back on its origins and development to see what's made it a continual success ever since.

Suzuki's marketing for the original GSX-R750F told you all you needed to know about the original machine.

Here was a road bike in the foreground, with a race machine in the background. Shot at Paul Ricard the original GSX-R750F sat just in front of the Suzuki GS1000R XR41 Endurance racer. 'Realize a dream, realize the Suzuki GSX-R750,' said the marketing blurb, while inside that first brochure the telling phrase 'born on the circuit and returned to the circuit' was also given top billing. If you were a bike-mad teen or adult in the mid-1980s, you were on the cusp of something new. While people were grappling with pit closures, politics and perms, bikers were coming to terms with a new class in motorcycling: the race replica.

Other bikes had fairings, some were very fast, but in the Suzuki GSX-R750F, finally you had a machine which brought together all the elements of a pukka racing motorcycle for the road.

Etsuo Yokouchi was in charge of the project – a former Suzuki race team manager – and he had asked people what sort of motorcycle they wanted to ride while he travelled over Europe and they told him in no uncertain terms that they wanted a machine which looked like those they saw on race-tracks. The result was the GSX-R750F. The GSX prefix was already used on the then current four-strokes in Suzuki's range, while GSX-R was already used on the first GSX-R400 of 1984.

During the pre-production process engine parts from an existing GSX750 were looked at to see how tough they were and were destruction tested. Yokouchi says: "I felt we as an engineering company were being too conservative. So, we continued testing parts until they broke. Often we found the differences would be just a single gram either way between reliability or not. These grams add up, so getting weight and mass right helped both reliability and light weight."

With his background in racing, that was why water-cooling was initially not considered. The best compromise was oil-air-cooling of the otherwise unremarkable 16-valve DOHC engine. It was strong: one early GSX-R750 engine was destruction tested at 12,500rpm (2000rpm over peak power rpm) for 30 hours. It was still in one piece at the end of the test.

The GSX-R750F was based in part on the existing XR41 and the GSX-R400 GK71. This middleweight machine was almost 19% lighter than its peers, so following on from that, the 750F would be around 176 kilos in weight. The GSX-R750 featured a cranked double-cradle frame in aluminium and an endurance twin-headlight look. The bike was to be clothed in a lightweight fairing and the machine was to have a claimed target output of 100bhp.

With project go-ahead in January 1984, the first prototype was being ridden in May, then five months later the bike was on show at Cologne. The first production machine came off the Hamamatsu line on January 25th 1985. In the UK the bike was first priced at £3499.

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