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TVS Raider High on Style Quotient

FIRST RIDE



MG ASTOR

INTELLIGENCE INSIDE

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MG



Astor

Intelligence Inside

The automotive industry is so dynamic with a lot of new regulations in terms of emission norms, safety norms, speed limits and so on. The vehicle manufacturers on one hand are developing new products depending upon the customer need and on the other hand to meet the government regulations. MG Motor, the recent entrant into the Indian market is meeting customer expectations with segment leading features and regulations, with their cars like Hector, Gloster, Hector Plus and ZSEV. MG is predominantly in the SUV space with both internal combustion engines and EVs. Within two years the company has marked its presence in the Indian market and now it is ready to shake it once again with its new car Astor.

Astor is essentially the petrol version of the ZS EV. But it isn't just a motor swap. What you have is a whole lot of goodies inside, and of course, you have a facelift on the outside too. The Astor has got an all-new bumper and headlights. And while the headlight and bumper treatment, maybe a little subtle, what isn't is the new grill. The grill is a cool looking design and MG calls it the celestial grill and



1 Shared the same dashboard as ZS EV 2 17-inch diamond-cut alloy wheels 3 Attractive at first sight - Celestial Grille design 4 Personal AI Assistant with In-built Wikipedia

it does look quite nice and it's very eye-catching.

On the side, Astor gets new alloy wheels. The 17-inch rims look new and stylish too. They also show off the red callipers on both the front and rear disc brakes quite nicely. Apart from these two new changes, there isn't anything new from the ZS EV. At the rear, you do have new taillights. The design is new. It looks nice and attractive. I particularly like these segmented little displays inside.

And the bumper has a new

treatment at the diffuser end with two fake exhaust outlets. There's also a lot of badging on the rear with the MG logo, ZS, Astor and it has ADAS lettering, which is one of the highlights of this car, which we will discuss ahead. Boot space is quite large and MG has not disclosed the capacity, but it appears sufficient for regular use. Plus you also have a 60:40 split seat to increase the luggage space. The spec sheet reveals that the Astor is slightly longer, taller and wider than the Hyundai Creta and Kia Seltos SUVs, which will be the

primary competitors of the Astor.

I felt like spending more time inside the cabin, because MG said that a whole lot of fun lies inside and you may remember the tagline of MG Hector when it was launched 'Internet Inside'. Now in the Astor, it is beyond the internet and it has got Advanced Driver Assistant System (ADAS) Level 2 system and Artificial Intelligence (AI). Something we are hearing for the first time in this segment, isn't it? Yes, let us go and talk to Astor.

Hello Astor! The robot placed



in the centre of the dashboard just turned and looked at me. With few voice commands, you can open the sunroof, keep the desired cabin temperature and many more. It also has an on-board SIM through which you can check things on the internet. It's powered by Wikipedia. So you can ask for pretty much anything, but to fully exploit the system, we think it would be better to go with Alexa or Google Home.

The other changes are the new touchscreen, which is larger at 10.1 inches. It's not the smoothest to use, but it's loaded with quite a few native apps and has Android Auto and Apple CarPlay connectivity. Speaking of which, the Astor has a fully connected car experience

and it takes it a step further with the digital key that you can install on your phone. You can fully operate and use your car without the actual key. MG has also given the upholstery a complete makeover. And it looks really rich like in luxury cars. There are three colour combinations and the deep red, which we drove looks premium and has nice features like a six-way power driver's seat. It also comes with a PM 2.5 cabin air filter and a 360-degree camera.

When it comes to safety features it has six airbags, ABS and ESP, along with the level 2 ADAS system. Autonomous Level 2 not just makes driving more comfortable and intuitive, but also keeps your safety at the forefront. The system uses both radar and camera input and it is comprehensive with features like lane-keeping aid, lane departure warning, lane change assists, blind-spot and rear cross-traffic alert, adaptive cruise control, and auto emergency braking.

Lane Functions keep the vehicle within the lane to prevent the vehicle from deviation due to distraction. In case of any unintentional lane departure, it warns the driver through visual and acoustic signals. Astor also has a Speed assist system that will monitor any traffic sign on the road from which it is



The 6-speed automatic torque converter complements the turbo engine very well and gives a comfortable feel especially in day-to-day traffic. The engine is a bit noisy inside the cabin and MG could have done some more insulation to avoid it.

possible to infer speed limit. The system alerts the driver in case of overspeeding through visual and audio means. It also comes with a forward collision prevention system that alerts the driver about a probable collision with a four-wheeler, two-wheeler or a pedestrian when the gap becomes too close. In case the driver takes no action on the alert then the vehicle applies autonomous deceleration.

Considering the requirement of the light required, intelligent headlamp control recommends activating and deactivating the high beam depending on the traffic and environment situation to obtain optimal usage of headlights while driving at night. With all these features and a few more in the cards, MG has demonstrated its Autonomous Level 2 capability in the Astor.

MG has partnered with homegrown blockchain firm Koinearth, to record the data into something called a 'Digital Passport'. For the customer, the digital passport is simply an interface on the app, which shows the data the car has recorded. The platform will include the auto-maker, insurance firms and even resellers, to use this data for future decisions. For instance, insurance premiums for a good driver can be lower than that of someone whose Passport data shows that they drive more recklessly. Similarly, when the customer sells their car in future, service records etc. can be stored on the Passport to help determine the resale value.

The twin dials that were on the ZS EV are now with the digital display in the Astor, which gives you a whole lot of information. And I must say in terms of treatment,



it's quite nice and neatly laid out and the information is quite easy to pick up.

Now in terms of the seats, they are quite broad. It's really broad, so taller, bigger people would feel quite comfortable as well. The steering wheel too looks nice, it's got this little perforated leather wrapping and a flattish bottom. The rear is pretty much the same, as the ZS EV. There's a lot of space for people of average height. There's a nice place to stretch out and the headroom two is generous. In terms of features, what I'm sure owners would love is this really large panoramic sunroof.

The seating position is also comfortable and it does appear more natural compared to the slight knees-up posture in the ZS EV, which was to make space for the batteries below. Other features

are rear AC vents, twin USBs, as well as a flip-down armrest with some integrated cup holders.

Like the Skoda Kushaq and Volkswagen Taigun, the Astor will only be petrol driven. Astor comes with a choice of two engines and an entry 1498cc naturally aspirated engine developing 110hp and 144Nm, and a more powerful, 1349cc turbocharged engine that churns out 140hp and 220Nm. The 1.5 litre has a 5-speed manual gearbox and an 8-step CVT automatic, while the Turbo is available only with a 6-speed automatic torque converter. We drove the three-cylinder turbo engine and I would say it is responsive and smooth. The 6-speed automatic torque converter complements the turbo engine very well and gives a comfortable feel especially in day-to-day traffic. The engine is

a bit noisy inside the cabin and MG could have done some more insulation to avoid it.

The suspension is on the softer side, which means it offers good comfort on the normal roads but at the same time we felt some body roll and discomfort over speed breakers. Interestingly the steering comes with three modes: Normal, Urban and Dynamic but the normal mode does the job for most of the conditions. So what else? MG has ticked most boxes and only one is pending, which is the price. If you are entering into the midsize SUV it has to be cost-competitive and tech loaded. MG has provided ample tech now we need to wait and watch on the price announcement. If MG is pricing Astor competitively, it can surely give a tough fight to the Creta, Seltos, Kushaq and Taigun.



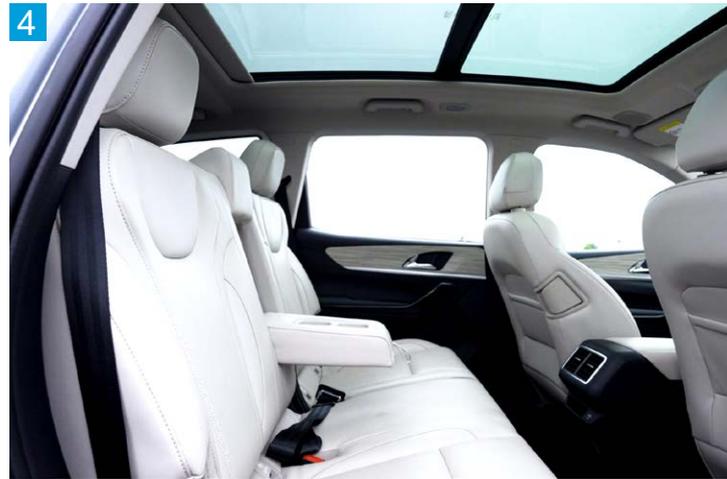
As the name suggests the XUV700, is a step-up over the XUV500. And in that regard to give it more presence, it is bigger. It is longer. So it's a sizeable car and this change in proportions just makes the lines flow better. It looks more mature. The lines are softer and cleaner, so the XUV700 may not look as striking as the XUV500. But it is big enough to look confidently straight at its rivals. The overall design in terms of the details, there's no one element snatching the attention. Therefore the entire car looks better.



XUV700



**engineering
marvel from
Mahindra**



1 10.25 inch dual touchscreen infotainment system / instrument cluster **2** Sequential LED indicators, full LED headlamps and LED DRLs **3** Side view mirror with integrated indicators **4** Ample head room and spacious cabin

The front portion wears an all new grill and the logo. The dual 'C' shaped led DRLs are an evolution of the design seen in the XUV700. Features like the swipe style turn indicators, and of course, full LED headlamps, LED fog lamps and cornering lamps adds value to the car. So you've got something that's fact and distinctive.

The side profile has got some nice attractions too especially with the pop-out door handles. There are two variants of these pop-up door handles, the one with the simple mechanical kind, which just

pops out when you use it. It retracts right back in. And then there's the motorised kind, which pops out when you unlock the car and then goes back in when you lock it. If you are looking for a simpler and less complicated version, I would suggest the mechanical version. Another interesting element to notice is the wheel arches and the window line, which looks like an XUV's DNA.

The rear portion looks better with some sharp edges. The tail lamps also look sharp and give a premium feel. The placement of the

new logo and reverse camera look like an aftermarket fitment. While looking at the entire tailgate, it is made of plastic to accommodate sharp lines. Also by using high strength plastics in many areas the XUV700 is lighter by 160kgs which translates for better fuel efficiency.

The boot has enough space for a small overnight journey with all three rows in use, and if you need more luggage space, you can drop one of these seats down the back end more. If you are looking for more luggage space then you can



go for the five-seat variant.

Let's get into the house now. House? Yes, I have a reason for that. We always look for a spacious house for comfortable living and now cars are said to be the second home and the XUV700 offers ample space for all the passengers. This car will be marketed as a seven seater so first we stepped into the third row and this isn't really bad. The space that was offered in the third row is enough to accommodate a normal person who is around 5.5 inches and more than enough for kids. Getting in and out is also pretty easy and you've got enough foot room to sit comfortably. The third row also gets independent control switches for air-condition, one charging socket, cup holders and

a big glass area for greater viewing.

Since the car is wider it is very comfortable to accommodate three people in the second row. The front seat can be adjusted from the second row and even with a taller passenger in the front, you can get plenty of knee room. The window lines are low and have a good glass area. So it feels like an airy cabin. With the supportive and comfortable seats and flat floor the

long distance travels are going to be very comfortable.

The driver and co-driver seats welcome you with a great viewing around the car. It is such a mature looking cabin, nothing feels overdone. In fact the materials are soft touch and are nicely done. The interior is made up of hard and soft plastics but it all looks like quality stuff. There are even wood finish in certain areas, which

Also by using high strength plastics in many areas the XUV700 is lighter by 160kgs which translates for better fuel efficiency.



gives a premium feel. So the front seat experience in the XUV700 is certainly a big step forward, with the basics, hitting the spot that XUV will treat you well in every role.

XUV700's design is good, has spacious cabin and now the features. The feature list is long and well spread out. Even in the base MX variant the car comes with an eight inch touchscreen system and a seven inch digital display for the driver. AX3, you get a few more goodies like the Reno X system with the two 10.25 inch displays, which are super crisp. The AX5 variant gets the curtain airbags for all the three rows. XUV700 also comes with a DVR feature, which allows you to capture the feed from all the cameras. I like the dash cam and there's a lap time recorder. And finally, if you have to talk about the AXM variant, that's where you get all the bells and whistles, like the dual zone climate control, powered seats and if you're wondering about the Sony 12 speaker sound

system and the wireless charger, well, all those are going to be part of the tech pack.

What else does the top end variant offer you? Safety, yes XUV700 doesn't just want to keep you safe when you're in an accident, it wants to help you avoid it altogether. And that's where the top variant comes in because that's packing segment first radar

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based ADAS technology. Basically you've got features like lane keep assist, which actually steers the car for you to keep you in your lane. It has lane departure warning, auto emergency braking, which means you can avoid collisions.

When you start driving the XUV700 you realize that the ADAS technology actually works in Indian conditions. So like when you don't have proper road markings it still senses the edge of the road and steers you in the right direction. So it feels helpful, not annoying. And then you have adaptive cruise control, which understands the distance between the cars in Indian conditions is typically lesser than other countries and it adapts accordingly. The car also comes with the auto emergency braking. And of course, electronic safety aids include ESC and all the add-ons like hill hold, secondary collision mitigation and in terms of airbags, you get seven on the top end.



In terms of powertrain options, the XUV700 comes with manual, automatic, petrol and diesel engines and all-wheel drive as well. The 200 horsepower petrol is one of the smooth engines I have ever driven. It has got a good amount of grunt, which means whether you're planning for an overtake, it just doesn't break and gets going easily and smoothly. If you want to hustle it, the gearbox might feel a bit slow, but it is smooth, but you've got the grunt from the engine to make up.

The diesel comes in two states of tune, 156 PS for the lower MX variant and 180 PS version with the six speed manual gearbox. The 180 PS diesel engine is really easy to use. It has got good torque right from the low revs. So driving it around isn't a hassle.

This diesel engine gets three drive modes, 'Zip, Zap and Zoom. The zip mode is basically for your calm commuting within the city. When you use the zap mode, the steering wakes up, responsiveness

improves, so that's for when you're in a bit of a rush and the zoom mode, as the name suggests is when you're in a proper rush, preferably out on the highway, because that's when throttle responsiveness gets really sharp. All the modes also adjust the ESP, which kind of pushes the braking intervention that much further. And if you use the custom mode that gives you one additional little bit of control, which is the settings for the air-conditioning system.

Mahindra engineers have worked extensively with top Tier 1 suppliers to make the XUV700 the best. The XUV700 comes with a new chassis and updated suspension and components. So you have FSD dampers, which are basically meant to tune out a lot of the roughness or the imperfections. In the rear you have a multi-link suspension, which tackles road surfaces with so much more confidence, it doesn't get upset over bumps. This is a confident machine and something

that you will enjoy spending time traveling with.

When it comes to comfort, the XUV700's suspension can soak up big bumps with ease. And if you're looking to go off-road, there is a good amount of ground clearance on offer. While talking about off-road the all-wheel drive system will enable you to go further down the rough road if you choose to venture out. But it's an on demand system. So it's primarily improving stability and enabling some off-roadable set up.

The suspension setup, which is a bit on the soft side, especially at the rear. If the suspension were firmer, the XUV700 would feel flatter and improve its long legged ability to the end degree. The cabin insulation could have been better, it is not absolutely silent. There are some bits which feel plasticky, but they look fine. There are some feature misses, basic ones, for instance, of the four power window switches, it's only the driver's switch that has auto up and down and the IRVM isn't auto-dimming, there is no ambient lighting and there are no ventilated seats on offer. For the backseat, there are no sunshades for these large windows. So it's interesting to see where Mahindra has cut costs, which is on some extra features. It could be a bit more engaging in terms of the cabin experience.

But the new vehicle comes across as a sense of a very usable and very likable machine that is coming with some incredible segment first technology for safety. The new XUV700 is definitely a winner for Mahindra but it has to fulfill the customer demands in terms of deliveries and not to make them wait for a long time.



AVINASH NORONHA

 J T THULASIDHARAN



VW TAIGUN A SPORTY SUV

New entrant to the mid-size segment

A few years ago, Indian consumers barely purchased or considered buying a utility vehicle especially the midsize SUV as compared to the popularity of other car models. However, over the past few years, the SUV market in India has witnessed rapid growth. The companies that shied away from entering into this segment are now forced to get into the segment to increase their market share. The recent entrant in this segment is the Volkswagen Taigun, which is the first product under its India 2.0 project. Volkswagen has launched the Taigun in the midsize SUV market to take on the likes of Hyundai Creta and Kia Seltos. We took a spin of this newly launched India made German car to understand whether it will give a tough fight to the Korean rivals.

The Volkswagen Taigun is an immediate cousin of the Skoda Kushaq. The two vehicles sharing the same platform that has been developed in India. The MBQ-A0-IN platform promises economical pricing and flexibility in design, without compromising on the marquee's reputation of building tank-like cars.

Taigun comes with two engine options, the 1-litre three-cylinder and the 1498cc four-cylinder petrol engine. Understandably, we were given the sportier and larger capacity SUV to try out in the gorgeous landscape of Udaipur. To make its genes obvious to the onlooker, the 1.5-litre turbo-petrol engine gets the GT badge. This midsize SUV is built for fun as we found out.

The 150 PS/ 250 Nm Taigun that we got our hands-on, is available as a 6-speed manual and



1 Premium interiors with dual-tone dashboard **2** 10-inch touchscreen has inbuilt Android Auto and Apple CarPlay **3** 1498 cc unit, which belts out 150 PS and 250 Nm **4** 8-inch digital cluster, the manual gets an analogue cluster

a 7-speed dual-clutch automatic. Surprisingly, the difference doesn't end in the gearbox. The manual is vanilla in comparison to the automatic. There are many nifty features that you get on the 7-speed Taigun, which are missing in the manual. The company's reasoning is that people who buy automatics are more prone to splurge, while manual buyers are more cost-conscious. We don't completely agree with that train of thought! Aesthetics and features aside, the automatic gets 17-inch dual-tone wheels vs. the 16-inch single chrome on the manual. Which does make a difference in the driving experience.

Physical Presence

Though Taigun is badged as

a midsize SUV, it has an SUV like presence. The Taigun does not have an SUV like road presence like its competitors offer. What it loses out in muscle, it makes up in aesthetics. The lines flow smoothly throughout the exterior. There is nothing protruding or jutting out, which disturbs the visual appeal. And it does look rather striking in its Curcuma Yellow and Wild Cherry Red.

The Taigun is contemporary in appearance without being path breaking. It is not going to have a rabid group of lovers and haters. Except for one standout feature. The use of chrome. Volkswagen has been rather liberal with its usage of chrome in front and rear. But whether that is good or bad, we

need to wait and watch to hear the customer feedback.

Hop Inside

The inside of the two variants is also different. While the automatic gets a sunroof, push-button start-stop and 8-inch digital cluster, the manual gets an analogue cluster, a regular key and well, roof rails.

The interior of the Taigun feels solid and built to last. Yet, it doesn't have the plush and premium feeling you expect in a vehicle in this segment. The interiors are functional, but nothing you'd write home about. All the plastic interiors are hard and feel robust at first touch. There are many small design elements like the backlit gear selector, which are pleasing to



the eye. And you will spend some time admiring it all as you sink into the ergonomically superior seats. The flat-bottomed steering wheel goes well with the driver seat to give you a comfortable driving posture.

It is not just the driver, but the passengers who will be happy as well. The seats are all wide and comfortable and give an expansive view of the world outside. Even from the rear seats. At 5'11" I had sufficient legroom and have no complaints. Four adults fit comfortably, and while there is a 3-point seatbelt for the passenger at the centre, you really wouldn't want somebody there. It will become a tight squeeze, not perfect for a long drive.

For storage, starting from the rear, you get a 330-litre boot. Which looks bigger than the number depicts. And to make luggage life easier, the rear seat splits 60:40 to make even more room. In the cabin, you have sufficient storage space for your phone, coffee cup, water bottle and more.

What's in the Box!



The big news is that the Taigun gets Electronic Stability Control (ECS) as standard across all variants. You also get the mandatory ABS, dual airbags and parking sensors as standard. Then you have tyre pressure deflation warning, hill hold control, auto-dimming IRVM and a bunch more stuff that will help keep you safe. Volkswagen has always given safety the highest priority and the Taigun is

no different in this regard.

The 10-inch touchscreen has inbuilt Android Auto and Apple CarPlay, which is great for people who own a phone. Which is everybody! Both these variants get a wireless charging pad to help you get rid of messy wires, climate control, cruise control and a reverse camera. The automatic also has auto LED headlamps and side and curtain airbags.



Under The Hood!

Coming to the second most interesting part of the Taigun. The engine. A 1498 cc unit, which belts out 150 PS of power @ 5000 – 6000 RPM and 250 Nm of torque @ 1600 – 3500 RPM. Peak torque starts really low and you can feel it while pottering around town at city speeds.

The 1.5-litre TSI EVO engine uses a potent mix of Stratified Direct Fuel Injection, optimisation and turbocharging. Not quite a conventional setup, but it does provide oodles of power without being excessively thirsty. As one would expect from Volkswagen, fuel efficiency is not the priority and it is acceptable, without being exemplary.

The Drive...

This brings us to the most important thing of any machine. How does it work in real-world conditions?

This is where the Taigun leaves its mark. It is a driver's car. If you enjoy the mechanical aspects of the machine, you will love the Taigun. What it might lack in features in comparison to the competition, it more than makes up in road play.

The Aravalli hills around Udaipur was a perfect setting for experiencing the Taigun in all its glory. Short twisty sections interspersed with a few straights. Put all thought to one side and just let the SUV loose and you will forget that it is an SUV! It handles superbly, driving on rails through the corners. Braking is fantastic, hammer the brakes and you can feel the machine linearly pushing into the asphalt. The acceleration is sublime for a machine this size, leaving you with a happy grin. Miles get munched with nary a thought.

Yet, it is not at all a crazy machine. If you are in a sedate mood, you can happily breeze along the highways. You will not even notice that only 2 out of the 4 cylinders are firing! To save fuel, the Taigun uses tech which switches to a 2-cylinder mode. And the switch is seamless.

Both the automatic and manual, are bliss to drive. For those who love their driving, the manual is just so much more fun. This is why it doesn't make sense that Volkswagen has chosen to give much fewer features to the manual variant vis-à-vis the automatic. The only downside we experienced while driving the manual, was a

heavy and sticky clutch. This could be because the vehicle we got had already seen a week of use by our exuberant journo friends!

The Automatic can also be enjoyed to its zenith. You switch to the sport mode for controlled joy, where the gear shifts are at a slightly higher RPM. Or use the paddle shifters for being in much more control of the machine. Even with all the glamour and oomph, the automatic just doesn't make you as happy as the manual!

Should you buy one?

Yes, if you like to drive. Yes, if a mechanically sound machine is what you prioritise.

No, if you are looking for SUV road presence. No, if you compare features to its segment rivals.

Would we get one? You bet!

Pricing

Volkswagen has priced the Taigun at an introductory price range of Rs 10.49-17.49 lakh. Though the cost is very competitive, we need to wait and watch how the Taigun survives in this heavily competitive market.



WHAT MAKES HIGHNESS A HIGHNESS?

IS IT LEGACY? IS IT THE VOICE? IS IT BEING HIGHLY SELECTIVE?
IS IT MOVING AROUND WITH THE NOBILITY? IS IT BEING IN
TUNE WITH THE TIMES? IS IT JUST PURE CLASS? WHAT MAKES
HIGHNESS A HIGHNESS?

YOUR HIGHNESS IS HERE



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Creative visualisation. Actual product may vary from the image shown.



Honda Big Wing
—EXCITES THE WORLD—

BHARGAV SRIDHARAN

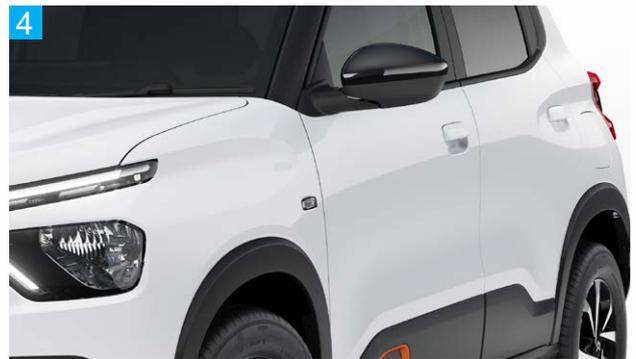
Citroen

Premium hatchback in SUV styling

After the entry into the Indian market with its premium SUV the C5 Aircross, the French carmaker, Citroen is ready with its second car, the new C3 for the mass market segment. Recently the company unveiled the production-ready car, which will cater to the B+ premium hatchback segment. If you want to be in the mass market it has to be priced competitively at the same time loaded with features. Therefore, the French company has developed a new Common Modular Platform (CMP), which will be catering to emerging markets like India and South America. The platform has been heavily localised for India with more than 90 percent of components being locally sourced.

C3





1 Two-tone colour treatment for the dashboard **2** Infotainment system with smartphone integration
3 A vibrant panel on the dashboard that matches the exterior shade of the car **4** SUV inspired design language for this premium hatchback





The C3 is the first of the three new models, based on the same platform, which are coming to India as part of the company's C-Cubed programme. Besides the platform, the India-bound Citroën C3 looks different from its European version. Except for the name C3, the India-bound sub-4-meter car is completely new with an SUV-inspired design and styling. This includes its tall-boy stance, muscular profile, rugged side and underbody cladding, and sporty alloy wheels. The C3 is 3980 mm long and comes with a ground clearance of 180 mm.

The new C3 comes with signature Citroën styling and looks distinctive in shape with the high position of the bonnet and the design of the front grille. The Citroën logo is neatly incorporated in the grille and it seamlessly merges with the DRL that features a pair of split-LED headlamps with Citroën's double-slat grille connecting the two units. The sides of the vehicle are muscular, set off by protective bubble panels sculpted into the bodywork. The large wheels (635mm), high ground clearance (180mm) and short overhangs to cope with angles in the road surface and avoid

The Citroën logo is neatly incorporated in the grille and it seamlessly merges with the DRL that features a pair of split-LED headlamps with Citroën's double-slat grille connecting the two units.



Citroen products will be positioned at the forefront of the Indian market, thanks to a strategy of high-level localisation based on the two joint venture agreements between the Stellantis Group and the CK Birla Group (car assembly and distribution and power-train manufacturing).

damaging the front bumper, black wheel arches and roof rails that increase the height of the vehicle, are all elements inspired by SUVs. The rear light signature is also fairly prominent and echoes the two horizontal lines visible on the front end which forms a triangle.

The interior of the new C3 looks fresh with the two-tone colour treatment that has a vibrant panel on the dashboard that matches the exterior shade of the car. The centre

of attraction in the dashboard is the 10-inch capacitive touchscreen that offers the Mirror Screen function, to reproduce the display of the driver's smartphone apps. The car also gets a three-spoke multi-functional steering wheel, along with other features like a USB charger and a 12V socket among others.

According to Citroen, the new C3 offers exceptional cabin space as well. In terms of the wheelbase,

it's quite long at 2540 mm, which indicates the impressive interior space. It offers passengers in the second-row seats among the largest legroom in the segment (851mm) and kneeroom (653 mm). The front seats give occupants the best elbow room (1,418mm) and market-leading headroom (991mm). The rear seats offer the highest level of spaciousness to transport passengers in the greatest comfort.

Though the company hasn't revealed the powertrain details yet, the C3 is expected to be powered only by a 1.2-litre turbo petrol engine in India, which means there won't be any diesel engine on offer. In terms of the transmission, it will come with a 5-speed manual and a 7-speed dual-clutch automatic. Once we get our hands on the new C3, we will let you know the performance of the vehicle and how it behaves in the urban and open roads.

By studying the behaviour of Indian customers when using new technologies, Citroën has taken the integration of mobile phones with the C3 to a new level by creating brand-new dedicated equipment to make life easier for these users: the specific position for the driver to place their mobile phone in the central console, the three special locations (two near the vents at each end of the dashboard and another near the central vents) for attaching clamps to hold a smartphone, the quick-charge USB sockets (one at the front and two at the rear), the 12V socket and the storage cavity between the first row seats accessible to rear passengers and created specifically to avoid damaging the mobile phone cable. Everything has been thought

out, right down to the channel to conceal the cable at the bottom of the pen tray. Two clips have been incorporated on either side of the heating controls to guide the cables of two smartphones (the driver's and the passenger's) to the USB and 12V sockets. There are also two attachments inside the glove compartment to hold rolled-up cables.

With all these options and SUV inspired design language for a premium hatchback, it is understood that Citroën has studied the Indian market and the needs of the customers. It is said that the Indian automotive market is growing rapidly and is expected to reach over four million

cars sold annually by 2025. In that, B-segment hatchbacks represent nearly 23% of the market. Buying a car is the second most important purchase after a house. It symbolises social success and a strong aspiration towards greater independence and mobility.

Citroën products will be positioned at the forefront of the Indian market, thanks to a strategy of high-level localisation based on the two joint venture agreements between the Stellantis Group and the CK Birla Group (car assembly and distribution and power-train manufacturing). The new Citroën C3 will be launched in the first half of 2022 and is expected to be priced between Rs.6 lakh to Rs.10 lakh (ex-showroom).



BHARGAV SRIDHARAN

📷 SURESH KUMAR & RAKESH

Hyundai enters the performance segment i20 N Line



If you wanted to look sportier and cheerful, wear sportier attire and be energetic. Similarly, Hyundai wanted to bring their sports variant and they have chosen its hot-selling premium hatchback the i20 and launched Hyundai i20 N Line. For Hyundai, N means Namyang, which is the R&D centre for the company

and of course, the legendary Nurburgring circuit. N brand will be Hyundai's version of AMG or M from Mercedes-Benz and BMW. The i20 N Line is not the full-blown N range, but it's the N Line, that doesn't mean that it's just a cosmetic job. The changes in the N Line run deeper than cosmetics, and there are a fairly significant number of

mechanical changes as well.

So, what is the difference in terms of driving experience? Is it sportier as Hyundai claims or not? MotorVikatantellsyouhowthecar looks and feels like. In terms of design, the N Line i20 looks a little sportier and a little more energetic





1 All-black interior with red accents that run across the cabin **2** Aggressive sporty looking headlights **3** 16-inch alloy wheel with red caliper highlights **4** Rear AC vents to improve cooling for rear passengers

Hyundai has priced the i20 N Line very competitively. If you look at the top variant, the difference between the standard i20 and the N Line is just about Rs 50,000. And for the incremental price that you're paying, you get quite an amount of kit. You get a better-looking body on the outside.

compared to the standard i20. The immediate change you notice is the new grill, which has got a checkered layout to it, and it gives it a bit more sportiness. Of course, there's also the N Line batch placed in the grill and you've got the nice sporty looking red insert in the bumper.

On the sides, you get different sets of 16-inch alloy wheels, which are much nicer looking than the kind of stuff we have been seeing from a lot of automakers these days. The car also gets red inserts in the lower portion of the doors similar to the front bumper. The

N Line also wears a lot of black inserts across the car especially the spoiler, which is much larger than the standard car. The rear also gets a sportier bumper and a very good looking twin layout exhaust pipe. So all of these changes give the N Line i20, a much sportier design than the standard version.

Once you step inside the cabin of the N Line, the changes just like the exterior are subtle yet evident. And that lets you know, that this car is a little bit sportier than the standard i20. It has got an all-black interior and red accents that



run across the cabin like the red stitching on the seats, red piping, red stitching on the steering wheel and red chequered flag motif and the N logo on the leatherette seats as well. So all of these things add to the sportiness of the cabin and let you know that it's a bit more than your standard i20. In terms of space, nothing has changed. It's still the same as the standard i20. So you get the same amount of space and that means it is still a comfortable place to be in with a good amount of legroom, knee room, and headroom in the rear.

In terms of features too, it's a well-loaded car as the N Line is positioned above the top

variant of the standard i20. It's a fully connected car and more importantly, there's a lot of safety and convenience that you get with it.

So now with the appearance is done, let us get into the meat of the N Line, where the performance comes into play. Like I said earlier, the changes are not cosmetic. There are some mechanical changes as well. So what are those? The first big change that you can see is the rear disk brakes, which means, it brakes a lot better than the standard car. It also has an updated suspension, a very slightly tuned one to have that little bit better feel. The suspension damping rate

Once you step inside the cabin of the N Line, the changes just like the exterior are subtle yet evident. And that lets you know, that this car is a little bit sportier than the standard i20.



has gone up by about 30% and that means you get lesser body roll and better control through corners. The steering is also responsive in the N Line as the torque has been upgraded and as a result of which now you get much more weighted steering which is more engaging and that is something that the standard i20 missed out on.

You might think, earlier I said let us get into the performance part but still not talking about the engine performance. Yes, I don't have anything to say on that, since there are no changes to the powertrain, it remains the same. But if you look at it in a nutshell, the N Line is a fast car. It is a quick car with the same one-litre turbocharged engine. You get the 120PS and 172 Nm of torque. You get a seven-speed dual-clutch transmission, or the IMT to choose

from in terms of transmission. And as a result of that, both the versions are pretty quick.

So what is there in the performance plate? The exhaust note has been improved. And as a result of that, it's now a little louder and peppier. From the moment you start the car, it is evident that it's a louder exhaust, and that's a good thing. Even when you're driving, it's quite audible. But once you cross 4,000 RPM, that's when the exhaust just fades out beyond that.

With the overall cosmetic change and mechanical tweaks except for the engine, i20 N Line is much more fun and more importantly, it is now a much more engaging car to drive. And that is precisely what the i20 was missing but the i20 N Line now brings that back.

So that brings us to the most important bit and that's surprising if you look at the pricing. Hyundai has priced the i20 N Line very competitively. If you look at the top variant, the difference between the standard i20 and the N Line is just about Rs 50,000. And for the incremental price that you're paying, you get quite an amount of kit. You get a better-looking body on the outside. Yeah. A good set of changes inside the cabin as well. But more importantly, you get a car that has been mechanically tuned to be more fun and more engaging. And for the amount that you're paying, I think the N Line offers very good value for money.





MOTOR
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J T THULASIDHARAN

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TVS

Raider

High on Style Quotient

Although TVS has carved out the Apache brand in the 150cc and 200cc segments, it has been longing to make a mark in the 125cc segment for some time. The 125cc segment might appear to be for commuter bikes, but Bajaj and KTM have been attracting Gen Z by launching bikes with a sporty look in that segment as well. TVS has launched a new bike based on this formula of being a sporty commuter in the 125cc segment.

The new Raider 125 targets the Z generation. TVS wants to offer the new Raider as a balanced mix of both commuting and sportiness. We went to the test track inside the TVS Motor factory in Hosur to test ride this new bike. Here is our full review of the performance, features and style.



1 Negative digital LCD display 2 124.8cc engine produces 11.3bhp and 11.2 Nm torque 3 Front DRL to the rear taillight all lights are LED 4 Peppy exhaust note as like 150cc bike

Design

The Raider is designed to look like a 150cc bike at first glance. Designed with a sporty look from the front DRL to the rear taillight. All lights are LED. TVS has used a petrol tank similar to the Apache fuel tank. The silver tank shroud and belly pan attached to the tank add more beauty to the design of the bike. The split slip on the back is just for a little sporty flavour, though designed like a commuter to accommodate two people comfortably. Although the Raider looks small to look at, it definitely gives the feeling of a big bike while sitting on it.

The riding position is a bit more flexible than a complete commuter

bike. Footpegs are designed to fit that. A premium feature in this new 125cc Raider is the negative LCD display with many features such as a gear indicator, two trip meters, fuel economy, side stand indicator and helmet indicator. In a few months, the top-end model with a TFT display with Bluetooth connectivity will also be released. We give this Raider a thumbs up for the design.

Performance:

The Raider is powered by a three-valve 124.8cc engine that produces 11.3bhp at 7,500rpm and 11.2 Nm torque at 6,000rpm. TVS has introduced a new feature called 'Integrated Starter Generator' technology. Turning the engine on/

off with this feature makes the start noiseless and smooth. Also, with this ISG the engine automatically shuts off when stuck in traffic. Simply twist the accelerator to start the engine again. TVS claims that this could save a significant amount of petrol. This worked well when we rode it.

For the first time in the 125cc segment, Raider has two riding modes, the Eco and the Power. Eco mode for mileage. It also claims 3% more mileage on the Eco mode than the Power mode. You can travel in power mode to fully realize the power of the bike. However, the above on/ off system does not work in power mode. It is given only for Eco Mode.



Raider runs smoothly without any stress on the engine even when going over 95 kmph. The engine was smooth even when going at 103 kmph on the TVS test track. If the performance is good, we will think that the mileage will be less.

The Raider's performance lived up to our expectations. A smooth engine and ample initial (low-end) power make this commuter a sporty bike with great performance. Raider runs smoothly without any stress on the engine even when going over 95 kmph. The engine was smooth even when going at 103 kmph on the TVS test track. If the performance is good, we will think that the mileage will be less. However, TVS claims 67 kmpl mileage. Thumbs up for performance as well.

Riding quality and handling

TVS has given this Raider a brand-new chassis. Telescopic fork at the front, mono-shock suspension at the rear. Not gaining weight just for the sake of having a sporty look. The overall weight of the bike is 123 kg. Also, since the height of the seat is 780mm, even shorter people can ride easily. Handling is good. The front is provided with disc brakes and the rear with drum brakes. TVS

has given this Raider a Combined Braking System instead of ABS. The braking of this variant was not as good as expected. There is another variant with drum brakes at both ends. We didn't get the chance to do a test ride. ABS has not been given, but they have given the disc and drum setup. When we asked the TVS officials, they said, customers will have to pay thousands more for ABS and that will affect the pricing of this bike. To keep it in the 125 segment price point ABS has been dropped.

Should I buy it?

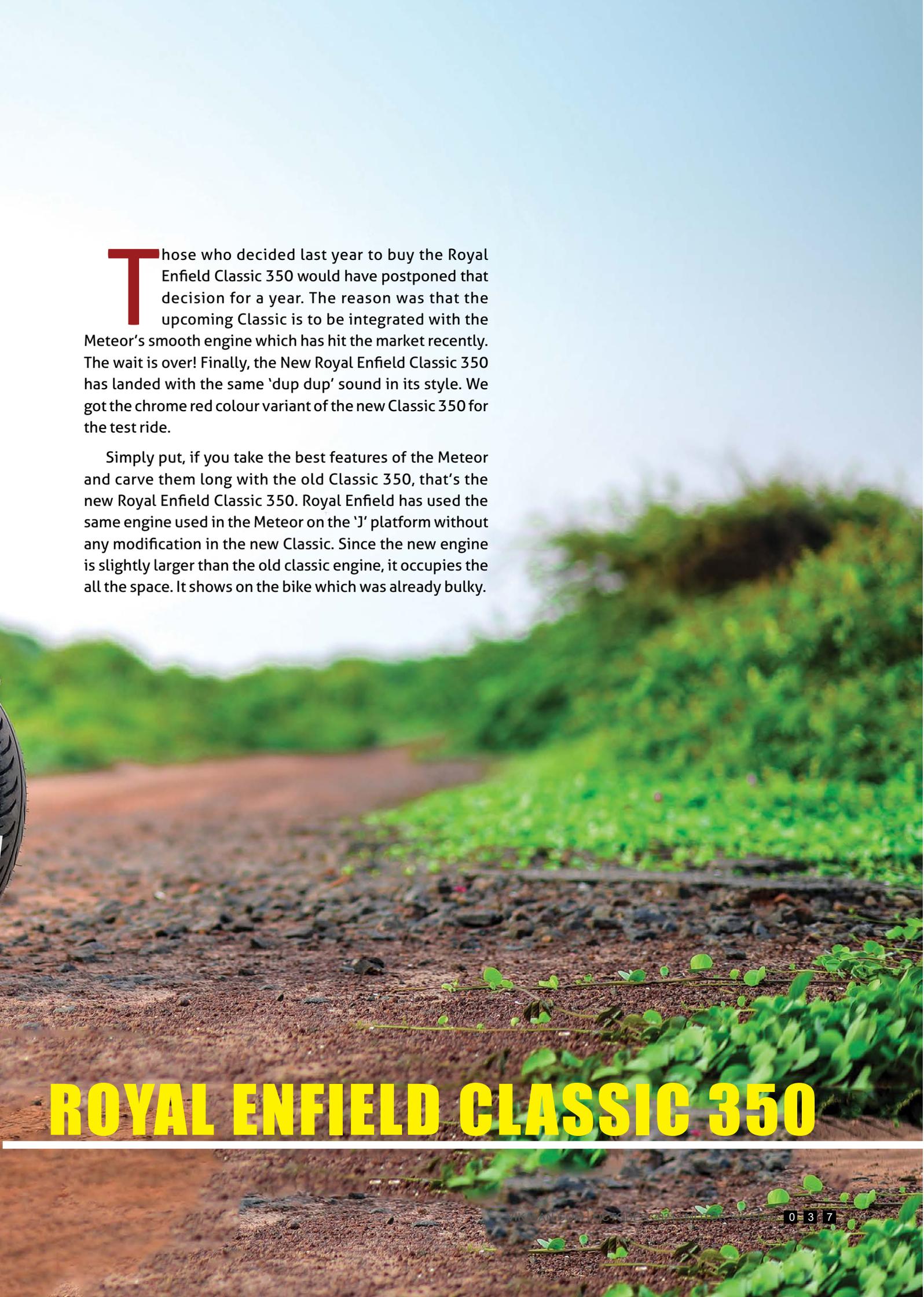
The variant with drum brakes is available at Rs 77,500 (Ex-Showroom). The disc brake variant is available at Rs 85,460 (Ex-Showroom). It is at par with its competitors Hero Glamour, Honda SP Shine and Pulsar 125. The Pulsar competes with the NS 125 in design. But the price of NS is 20,000 rupees more than TVS Raider. Overall, the best all-rounder bike in the 125-cc segment.



TEXT & PHOTO : J T THULASIDHARAN



A NEW THUMP IN TOWN



Those who decided last year to buy the Royal Enfield Classic 350 would have postponed that decision for a year. The reason was that the upcoming Classic is to be integrated with the Meteor's smooth engine which has hit the market recently. The wait is over! Finally, the New Royal Enfield Classic 350 has landed with the same 'dup dup' sound in its style. We got the chrome red colour variant of the new Classic 350 for the test ride.

Simply put, if you take the best features of the Meteor and carve them long with the old Classic 350, that's the new Royal Enfield Classic 350. Royal Enfield has used the same engine used in the Meteor on the 'J' platform without any modification in the new Classic. Since the new engine is slightly larger than the old classic engine, it occupies the all the space. It shows on the bike which was already bulky.

ROYAL ENFIELD CLASSIC 350



In the new Classic, they should have given two under-seat springs as the iconic symbol. But you can add it as an option in the DIY accessories. The height of the seat is 805 mm, 5 mm higher than the old classic. The fuel tank has been reduced from 13.5 litres to 13 litres. The new Classic has a new tail lamp design. Head Lamp is halogen to represent the classic style.

In the old bike the silencer extended a little beyond the length of the bike. In the new bike that length is reduced. Until now, Royal Enfield has been giving the

handlebar lock key on the side. But now comes in the ignition lock as other bikes. For a long time, Classic fans have been asking for 'Fuel Gauge Kudungappa'. Now Royal Enfield has fulfilled the wish. A digital fuel gauge on the small digital screen. It also has a Tripper pod on the side of the digital screen and adds a Turn-by-Turn Navigation feature if the mobile is paired with the Royal Enfield App. The trip meter, which was analogue in the old Classic, now comes as a digital screen.

New Classic comes with a single



1 Digital fuel gauge, a first! 2 'J' platform engine same as Meteor 350 3 Bybre brakes with 300 mm disc 4 New tail lamp design

cylinder, 4-stroke, air-oil cooled 349cc engine that produces a maximum power of 20.2 bhp at 6100 rpm and maximum torque of 27Nm at 4000 rpm.

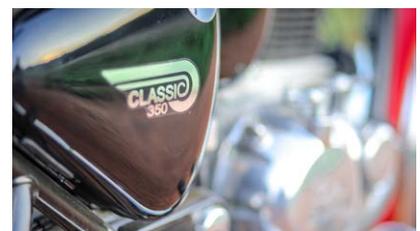
When riding the old bike, your body vibrates at 80+ km/h. Whereas I saw the speedometer while riding the new bike, I was riding around 100 km/h without any vibration. The engine is smooth to that extent. Not just the engine; gear shifting is also smooth.

We might doubt that since the engine is smooth, there will be no 'dup dup' noise of the Classic? Actually, the exhaust sound is slightly smooth, that's all. Otherwise, you can feel the thump

of that old Classic when the bike is revved up. Thanks to RE for keeping the thump pronounced.

Two colour variants with single-channel ABS; 9 colour variants are available with dual-channel ABS. Royal Enfield has transformed the Classic 350 into the Majestic Classic, using a logo similar to the one above the Royal Enfield name used on the Interceptor in the top-end variant of the Classic with new colours. RE also offers DIY motorcycle accessories to add owner experience with enhanced style, comfort and protection.

New Classic 350 base variant starts from 1.84 lakhs to 2.15 lakhs (ex-showroom).



PRASANNA ADITHIYA

 ARAVIND RISHIKESH

I am Aravind Rishikesh, working in SBI and also a wildlife enthusiast. I have been on wildlife journeys for the past 12 years. My hobby is to capture wildlife images and I've been publishing them in the name of 'Arali's Photography'. I love travelling, so I decided to go on a trip before the announcement of full lockdown. The destination was Amaravati, with a trek in the Chinnar forest area located on the way to Munnar. My friend Dheeran, a professional photographer, accompanied me on this trip.

For every road trip, I always choose my trusty black

Deep into the forest of

Bolero. This jeep is like a best friend to me. I modified my Bolero especially for off-road trips like this one. We started our trip on May 1st from Chennai and had breakfast in a small eatery near Arcot. There are many small hotels in this area where they serve delicious food. But crossing Udumalaipettai we didn't see a single hotel.

We registered ourselves in the Tamil Nadu Forest department check post which is located 23 km

from Udumalaipettai. Crossing the check post, we reached the Tamil Nadu-Kerala border. Across the check post in Kerala, and also Chinnaar Forest. On this side of the check post, we have the Anamalai Tiger Reserve.

Out there is a road for the Elumalaiyan Temple. It's the route that elephants take. The elephants' reproduction period is from November to March. During this period, we see male elephants with

big tusks known as 'Tuskers'. This is one of the important routes from the forest to the dam. Through the way, we saw many elephant calves.

The next one is the Pungan stream bridge. The view from this bridge, which is used to cross the backwaters of Amaravati Dam, is gorgeous. Crossing the bridge we reached an S-bend. The place below it is filled with trees. This region has herbivores only.

This forest area is a paradise

Amaravati

A Blissful Experience



for elephants. Specially created by mother nature for the reproduction of elephants. Mostly, elephants are seen in mountain forest areas like Ooty, Valparai, etc. But this forest is flat. Most don't even know that there is a forest out there. Elephants love this place. Elephants give birth to their calves here, and stay till the calf grows to a certain age, for their safety. The popularity of this place for elephants is easy to access to water and availability of food in the area.

We saw a calf with a big tusk, which is a rare sight. We were lucky to see this rare sight during our trip. After some time, elephants went into the forest, we also left the place with memories to cherish and many photographs.

On our return journey, we saw one more rarity. Two male elephants roaming side by side in the forest. Generally, male elephants roam alone. Adult male elephants roaming the forest like

friends is also a rare sight. We enjoyed the view but unfortunately were unable to capture it on our cameras since it was already dark.

Generally, male elephants are a bit dangerous. One male elephant is enough to make us panic, but here we got two tuskers. We were confused about how to cross the path, and what will happen next. But the tuskers were in a good mood! It felt like they gave a good farewell to us.

Apart from the elephants, we saw birds and other animals too. Among them, the 'Hawk Eagle' is most notable. This bird is known to change its colour according to the season. Peacock was on the roads in abundance, as there was less traffic due to the pandemic. We wanted to explore further but couldn't proceed as the full lockdown was announced. Because of the lockdown, we were forced to return.

We took a day's rest and began







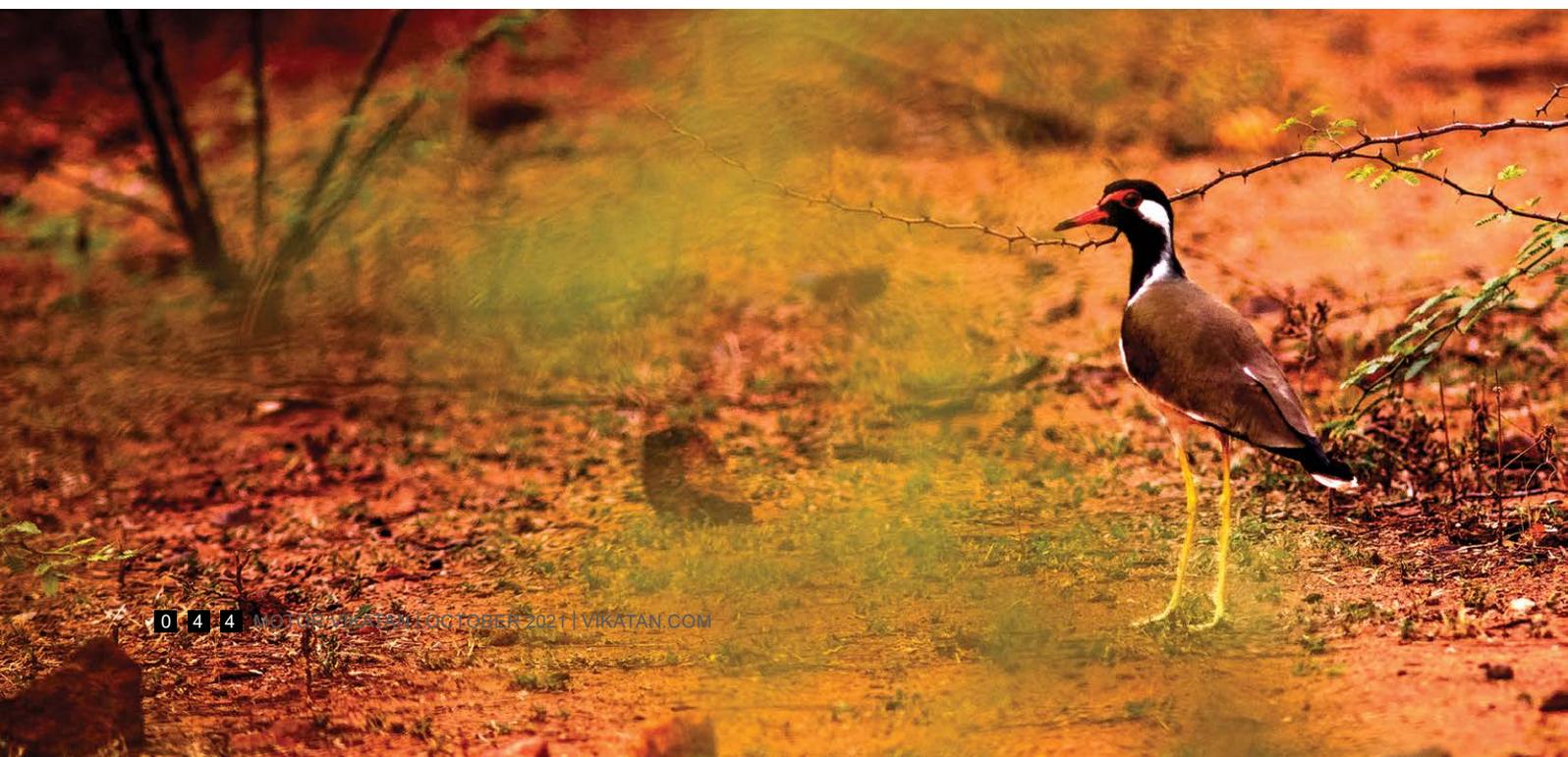
our journey the day after. Our next stop was Bettikuttai, near the Bhavani Sagar Dam. The speciality of this place is that one can see a herd of 50 to 100 elephants. We were lucky to see the reservoir filled with water since there had been heavy rain for the past three years. Unfortunately, we didn't spot a single elephant. But that is the charm of exploring nature, nothing is ever guaranteed.

The place is so romantic, yet a little bit dangerous too. We saw animals such as wild buffalo, wild dog, moose, leopard and tiger there. Also spotted a rare breed of wild buffalo in this place.

The next prominent mention is the Red-Wattled Lapwing. This bird acts as a guardian to other animals in the forest. If they sense an intruder in the forest, they make a sound and alert the other animals in the forest. If the bird sees any predator, it signals to animals like deer and buffalo about the arrival of the predator. The lapwing is a good flyer. But it doesn't lay eggs in a nest on a tree. It lays eggs in the waste of the elephants. It creates a camouflage to incubate the eggs.

It's so difficult to leave the forest. If anyone is planning to go there after lockdown, book your trip in 'Chinnar Wildlife Sanctuary' online. They provide the basic needs. We must mention our best friend Mahindra Bolero ZLX on the trip.

One of my best journeys ends here. We saw many rare sights, many animals and birds too. Here we are again, waiting for the next off-road experience after the lockdown. Happy Tripping!



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*The product shown is for representation purpose only and the actual color, features and specifications may vary. *First made in India car with matte exterior color.

TEXT & PHOTO: AVINASH NORONHA



Motoring in Extreme

WIKAN

A photograph of a snowy mountain road. The road is covered in a thick layer of snow, with some tire tracks visible. A metal guardrail runs along the right side of the road. The background shows a snowy mountain slope with some rocks and sparse vegetation. The overall scene is serene and winter-themed.

The sight of snow is enthralling, walking in it, feeling it fall from the heavens on your bare skin and just watching the world around you get covered in a blanket of white.

For automobile enthusiasts, it is not just the sight that is amazing. But also, the lure of riding and driving in that white powdery stuff, which is exciting and challenging in equal measure. For those who haven't seen snow, you just want to dive into it and then hop onto your machine of choice and go for a spin.

Needless to say, most of us in India, never have the opportunity to see or drive in snow. For that, we must venture to the high Himalayas. Riding and driving in these conditions require a different mindset as well as a previously unexplored set of machine handling skills. You should plan a

TEEB





holiday to experience winter once at its finest. And when you do, keep these things in mind, so that you can enjoy your ride safely...

Traction

There's only one miserly god in these conditions, and that is the god of traction. Extreme winter conditions take the one thing away, which we are so dependent on. Without that reassuring feedback from the tyre on solid asphalt, we go from being seasoned veterans to absolute first-timers.

The rules of traction are:

1. Remember it is available in short supply
2. You need to undertake one activity at a time. Either steer, brake



or accelerate. Do two together and see your vehicle spin out of control.

3. Be as gentle on the throttle as possible. Hammering the throttle open as we do in normal conditions, will lead you to trouble fast.

4. Keep your body relaxed, the moment you tense up, you will make mistakes.

Snow

Among all the extreme winter conditions you can get, fresh snow is the best. Riding or driving in fresh snow is akin to doing so in slush. Your tyres will sink in a little, slide a little, but by and large manageable. As long as you keep your steering and accelerating inputs gradual.

The only challenge that can



arise is if it starts snowing while you are driving. Visibility will reduce substantially as the snow sticks to your visor/ windscreen. Situations might arise, where you need to stop and wait out the snowstorm.

If you can spot tyre tracks of a bigger vehicle like a bus or car. Try to keep your tyres within those tracks. Keep an eye for snow which is packed so hard that it has become ice. Use the clutch generously and throttle gently. Concentrate on the 'here and now and forget about your plans later in the day. Time isn't of the essence when navigating these conditions, safety is.

Ice

For a plainsman, the terms ice

and snow are interchangeable. Yet, the two are different. Driving on snow is relatively easy. Ice is at the whims of the traction god. You can take as much care as required, and still get thrown off your motorcycle, landing butt-first!

On the ice, your traction reserves are always bordering zero. The only mantra is to go slow, superslow. The world should look like it is being shot at 240 FPS! Keep your head up and see further ahead, slow down to walking speeds in advance for a turn. If on a motorcycle, then stick your legs out to help maintain balance. Your legs will also be able to catch a fall when stuck out. Worst case, you fall off your motorcycle. Don't fret, chances are nothing will get damaged on rider or machine at those slow speeds. Hop back on

and continue!

When you do need to brake, use the rear brake on your motorcycle. In a car or motorcycle, do not touch the brakes while turning. Slow, steady and smooth, will ensure you can navigate through tricky ice bits safely.

Black Ice

The worst of the trio. Black ice is ice that forms as a thin layer on the black asphalt. It is not visible to the naked eye from a distance. At times black ice might even form when there is no other snow or ice visible in the vicinity. A section of road with some running water in the shade is enough to form black ice in the winters.

Once you hit a patch of black ice, you need to navigate it in the



same manner as you would regular ice. The tricky bit here is spotting it early.

Keep a lookout for shaded spots on the road. Slow down beforehand. If there are any oncoming or other vehicles ahead, see how they move through that section. If you see another vehicle fishtailing, slow down, it is probably because they have hit a patch of black ice.

Starting Problems

One problem which drivers and riders might face is starting woes. Seeing a blanket of unforgiving snow might cause the traveller's spirit to not start. Getting back into bed with a hot cup of tea might be more tempting. Well, we can't help with that sort of starting problem.

This is for those, who are ready to venture out in these extreme conditions. Your vehicle is not built for operation several degrees

below zero. And it might cause a few heartburns before the engine roars to life. Problems will be exacerbated in older vehicles. Here are a few handy pointers to reduce this starting trouble to the bare minimum:

1. Don't leave your vehicle parked in the open overnight. Park it under a shade.
2. You can chuck a couple of mugs of hot water on the intake track to help the fuel to vaporise easily for combustion. Do this before you crank the engine.
3. On a motorcycle with a kickstart, use it, rather than trying to crank with the battery.
4. For battery-only vehicles, crank the vehicle and if it starts in the first three attempts, great. If not, stop. You don't want to drain the battery in the cold. Wait for the sun to rise and shed some heat on

the vehicle before cranking again.

5. Once the engine starts up. Let the engine idle till it reaches a steady state. It can take even up to 5 minutes for the engine to warm up properly. Be patient. Only once the engine is warm, then head out.

Other than operating your machines, you also need to take care of yourself. Food, drink and clothing are essential to being comfortable in these conditions. The mountains are no place for heroics, if you feel something is beyond your scope of skill, then hold back. A misadventure can turn fatal in quick time in these places.

Keep safety in mind and you will enjoy your extreme winter motoring holiday. There are few things as gratifying as testing your limits and surpassing them.



JT THULASIDHARAN

 KARTHICK N & THULASI

INTO THE GHATS

7 Days & 5 Mountains



The Western Ghats stretches for 1600 km from Gujarat to Kerala. According to UNESCO, it is older than the Himalayas, the world's highest mountain range. A total of 39 areas in the Western Ghats, including national parks, wildlife sanctuaries and reserve forests, were declared World Heritage Sites in 2012. We travelled for a week in this mountain range which has these heritage sites spread over 20 in Kerala, 10 in Karnataka, 6 in Tamil Nadu and 4 in Maharashtra.

Jeep enthusiast Ashwin, bike maniac Satish and camera expert Karthik were ready to leave. Four people including me started the journey in a 3-door Mahindra Thar and the Royal Enfield Himalayan.

Now Into the Ghats...

Our target was to reach the peaks of the mountains of the Western Ghats, where we could find off-road sections to test our adventure machines, the Thar and Himalayan. We planned to stay in forest camps rather than staying in hotels. The route was from Krishnagiri - Sakleshpur - Kudremukh - Agumbe - Kodachatri - Jog Falls - Gokarna - Goa - Hubli - Bangalore - Krishnagiri, which is about 2,000 km in total. Hubli - Bangalore - Krishnagiri, which is about 2,000 km in total.





PATLA BETTA HILLS

This hill is located at a distance of 44 km from Sakleshpur. The steep path was the most challenging. Cold winds and heavy rain made it even more difficult. Since this was the first mountain of the trip there was anticipation and fear. Aswin Rajwama drove the Mahindra Thar and Satish Kumar rode the Royal Enfield Himalayan to overcome all the off-road obstacles. Finally, we reached the top of the hill. We enjoyed the breeze at the top and then returned to Sakleshpur. We spent the night in a tent on a small cliff near Sakleshpur.





KUDREMUKH HILLS

Kudremukh Hill is 115 km from Sakleshpur. The Kudremukh mountain trek brought back interesting memories. The second day's goal was to reach Agumbe via Kudremukh. On this route, you have to cross a reserve forest. That too within an hour and a half. If it takes longer, you have to pay a fine. The police gave an entry card with a QR code at the entrance. There is also a ruined city in Kudremukh.

Human nomadism is not clean here. The only signs of human habitation were houses and mansions. Since no one was allowed to go there, we followed the rivers and crossed the forest path soaking wet in the rain. There are no words to describe the beauty of the Kudremukh mountain range. Roadside waterfalls add to the beauty. We learned from experience that even if we unknowingly touch the plants on the roadside, the insects will stick. We stayed in Agumbe the next day with an insect bite experience!





KODACHATRI HILLS

Kodachatri Hill is the next destination. The most challenging hill in the 'Into the Ghats' journey is the Kodachatri hills. The distance from the foothills of Kodachatri to the peak is 8 km. The worst hill route you can experience here. At the entrance, the department did not allow us to go. Because private vehicles can't go. Only local vehicles (jeeps) are allowed. This is recent government order to protect the environment. We spent almost an hour convincing the officers to let us go with one condition. We had to hire a local jeep along with us in case of emergency the other jeep can help us. And obviously, they didn't allow motorcycles to go. So only THAR was our companion.

Do you have to know how to drive off-road vehicles to reach the peak of Kodachatri? To put it in simple words, you can call yourself 'the best off-road driver' if you climb up and down the hill without any impact on your jeep on that route. Surprisingly, the Mahindra Thar climbed and descended this route very easily. Hats off to Aswinraj who drove the Thar and proved his off-road driving ability and Mahindra for manufacturing this capable machine to go anywhere.





JOG FALLS

Jog Falls is a popular waterfall in the Western Ghats. Another attraction on the way to Jog Falls is the experience of crossing the Saravati Reservoir on a ferry.

At Jog Falls, there are four waterfalls: Raja Falls, Rani Falls, Roarer and Rocket Falls. It was mind-blowing watching the falls and we didn't want to leave Jog Falls in a short period. But time is our master! That evening we had to reach Gokarna Beach and so we started our drive from Jog Falls.







DOT 4X4

On the way from Gokarna to Goa, turn right and there is a privately-owned hill owned by Mr Manjunath Tughle. He named it Dot 4x4. Many off-road competitions and rainforest challenges have been held here. With his permission, we pitched a tent for the night in Dot 4x4.

We cooked and ate dinner in the middle of the forest while seeing snakes pass our tent. The sound of insects, pouring rain and thrilling night made the evening unforgettable. The next day we took the Thar and the Himalayan into a nearby river and crossed the river for more off-road fun. The next day we had to return to where we started and it was a one day-long ride from Goa to Krishnagiri.

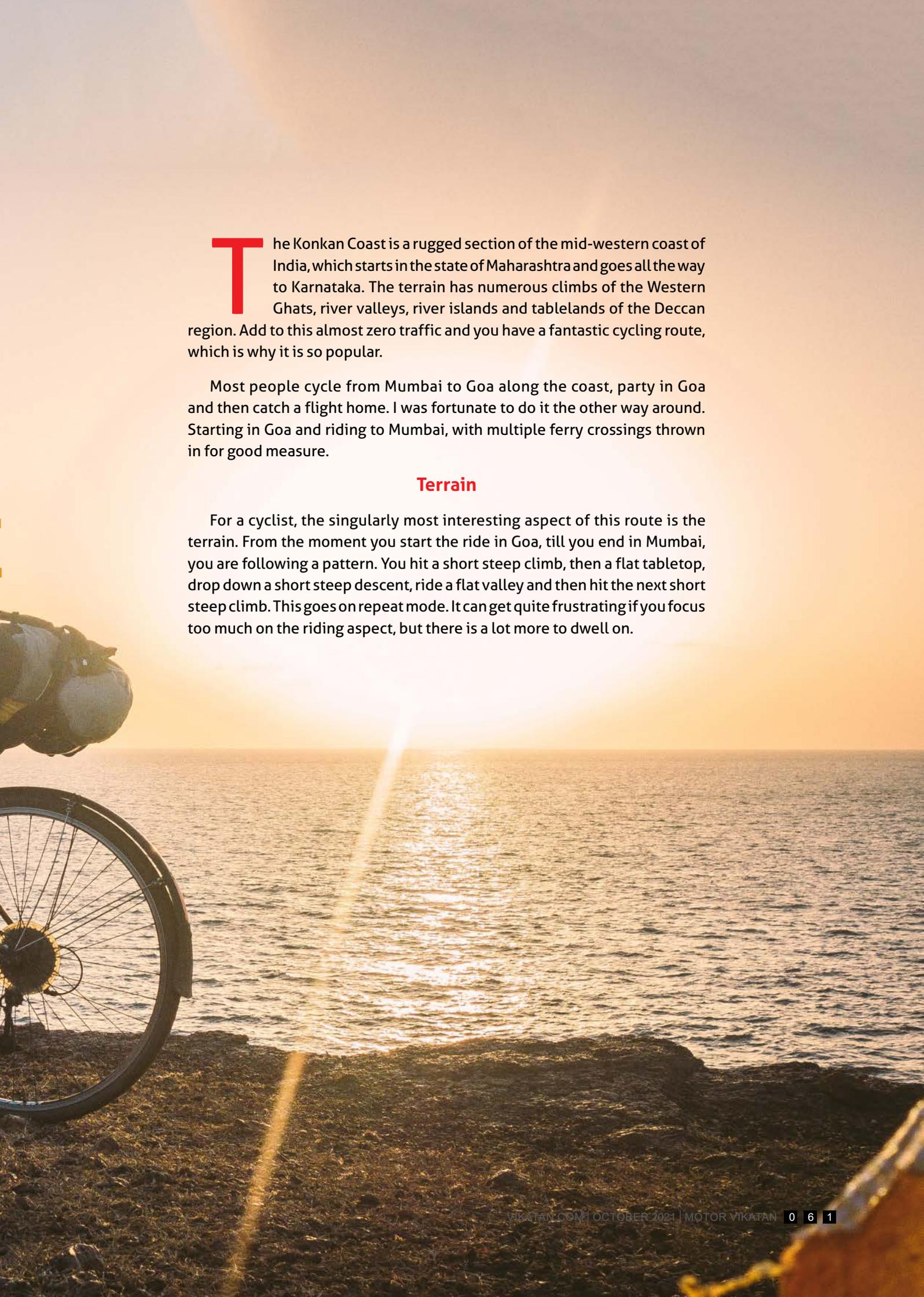
The adventure is not yet over. Watch the videos of the five mountain peaks from Chennai to Goa on the Motor Vikatan YouTube channel.



TEXT & PHOTO: AVINASH NORONHA

Peddalling Along the Konkan Coast





The Konkan Coast is a rugged section of the mid-western coast of India, which starts in the state of Maharashtra and goes all the way to Karnataka. The terrain has numerous climbs of the Western Ghats, river valleys, river islands and tablelands of the Deccan region. Add to this almost zero traffic and you have a fantastic cycling route, which is why it is so popular.

Most people cycle from Mumbai to Goa along the coast, party in Goa and then catch a flight home. I was fortunate to do it the other way around. Starting in Goa and riding to Mumbai, with multiple ferry crossings thrown in for good measure.

Terrain

For a cyclist, the singularly most interesting aspect of this route is the terrain. From the moment you start the ride in Goa, till you end in Mumbai, you are following a pattern. You hit a short steep climb, then a flat tabletop, drop down a short steep descent, ride a flat valley and then hit the next short steep climb. This goes on repeat mode. It can get quite frustrating if you focus too much on the riding aspect, but there is a lot more to dwell on.



Roads on this route are by and large decent. Too narrow and curvy for automobiles to go fast, which increases the safety quotient for cyclists. The only time you get a difficult riding patch is when you get off the road and ride on the beach!

Landscapes

The landscapes are incredible. From sunsets into the Arabian Sea to the sun rising over the Western Ghats. Idyllic fishing villages, with their docked fishing boats and early morning seafaring routines. The pristine beaches and coconut mangroves along the coast.

If you visit after the monsoons, then the place is a lush verdant green. The land was alive with the smell of rain mingling with the scent of saltwater from the sea. At other times of the year, you will see the green becomes gold. Some of the tabletops are golden grass for massive distances. And if you are lucky to be around at sunset, then







you enjoy the golden hour out here.

Proximity to the ghats also means an abundance of wild animals, including leopards. Yet, that is not reason enough to deter you from enjoying a ride in the inky black darkness. The sound of silence and the moonless night envelope you and make you forget everything else that exists in the world. Just the tiny beam of your bicycle headlight flashes the road ahead. The stars twinkling in the sky and being reflected in the many ponds, streams and rivers you ride past. Night riding is filled with mystique, with always the adventure of being watched by some wild animal in the vicinity.

If you go there during March-April, you get to ride through the Mango





Orchards in full bloom. The trees are laden with Alphonso mangoes and the scent of it wafts along with the breeze. You smell the mangoes long before you see them. Kind orchard owners will also offer a hungry cyclist a mango or two as a traveller's gift.

Cuisine

This brings us to the next most important thing for a cyclist. As the old saying goes, 'An army marches on its stomach', a cyclist pedals in like manner.

Food in the Konkan region has a typical taste. Breakfast is light with vada pav, missal pav or poha. For most cyclists that would require a double breakfast to keep hunger at bay. The real magic happens over lunch and dinner. Where seafood makes an appearance. Fish thalis are ubiquitous, yet you cannot tire

of them. The fish is fresh and since it is the primary food of the place, every eatery knows how to cook it well.

Closer to Alibag and you get delicious biryani as well. And with a dish like biryani, every corner of the country has a different type of biryani and everybody will promise you that their biryani is best!

Ferry Rides

A unique element on this route is the ferries that you need to take. Several small rivers are opening out into the sea and many of these rivers now have a modern bridge. But there are still 5 spots where no bridge exists and you need to hop onto a ferry to cross the river. At times you might miss the ferry, then you have to catch small boats. These boats sway a lot and you

need to grab your bicycle properly to ensure it doesn't fall and you don't get seasick!

It is therefore prudent to have the timetable of these ferries so that you can reach these piers on time. Which you would want to download and save on your phone in advance. Because phone connectivity is a major hassle. You are quite happy in the back of beyond.

The icing on the cake of cycling from Goa to Mumbai is that you end your ride on a ferry in a rather iconic place. Pick up your bike, walk up the slippery sea-washed steps at the pier and lo and behold, you are standing in awe of the majestic Gateway of India.

A royal welcome after an exhausting and exhilarating ride



PRADEEP KRISHNA M

Lewis or Max? The question is buzzing all over and the battle between these beasts has set the Formula One track on fire. The Monza incident, the tweets & the interviews that followed have taken the rivalry to the next level. There is a high possibility that the title race could go on till the final lap in Abu Dhabi. With 7 races to go and just 2 points behind Hamilton, Verstappen is on course to dethrone the seven-time champion and all he needs is that one quality that makes the Brit special!

Max Verstappen is not a 'One for the Future' driver anymore. He'll be turning just 24 at the end of September, but already has 7 seasons of Formula One experience under his belt. The youngest ever Grand Prix winner is running parallel to the mighty Hamilton and proving to everyone that he could be the next serial champion.

When you add him to the combination of Red Bull RB16B car, Honda's power unit (at least for this season) and the superfast pit crew of Red Bull, it becomes deadly! There is no surprise then that the majority of the racing world is choosing Verstappen over Hamilton for the title. Who knows, he could beat all of Hamilton's records someday! But there are some concerns. Some real concerns. Let's look at those in the past few races.

Despite having a superior car and technology, the one thing that set Verstappen apart is the aggression in his driving. He never hesitates to make a tough move even when the stakes are higher. We've all seen that in Silverstone. It was just the first lap, but he wouldn't let Lewis pass him. His failed move in Sochi during the 10th lap to overtake Charles Leclerc and Sebastian Vettel is one example among many to highlight Verstappen's ag-



Can Verstappen harness his Super Power?





gressive driving.

The irony of life is that sometimes our biggest strength is also our biggest weakness. Just take the superheroes, be it Thor or Iron Man or Queen Elsa, the one thing they suffered the most was to harness their power, channelizing their strength and ego. That's a huge struggle in real life too! That maturity in handling their strength is what makes someone a champion. Like Lewis Hamilton.

In the Russian GP, the rain started pouring with just 6 laps to go when Hamilton was battling with Lando Norris for the lead. The track became slippery and the drivers were finding it difficult to race with slick tyres. When everyone was pitting to change tyres, leader Norris was thinking about the finish line.

Hamilton, who was in touching

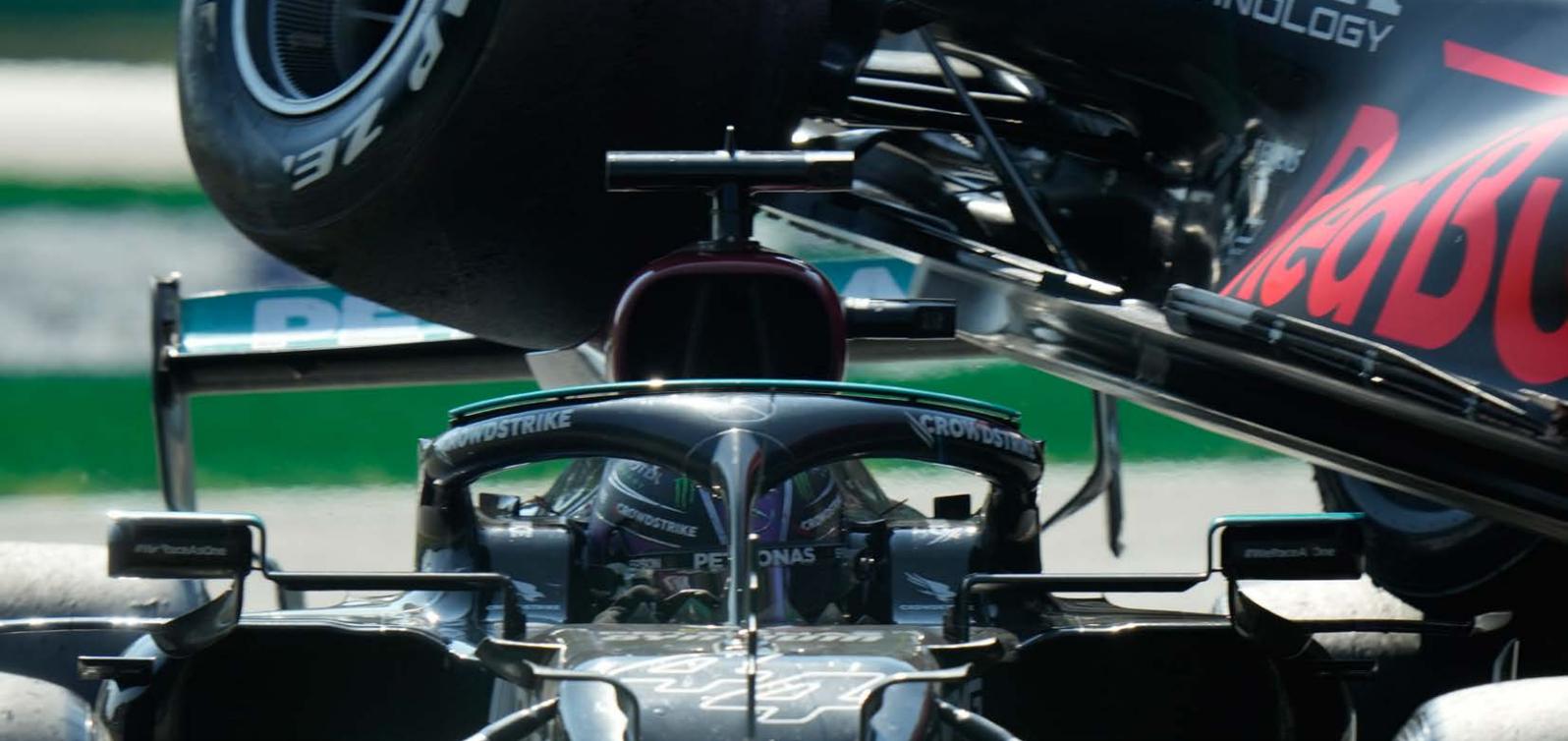
distance with Norris for a while, entered the pit in the 49th lap. When McLaren's crew asked Norris to pit, the 21-year-old refused and went on with the hard tyres. He had no grip and aquaplaned at turn 5 of the 51st lap. This allowed the defending World Champion to lead the race and he went on to win it eventually.

When we debate about Norris' decision not to pit, we should

not forget his history. He was a team player and he proved that just weeks before in the Italian GP. When both the McLaren cars were in the first two positions, Norris got a message, not to overtake Daniel Ricciardo. Norris who was faster among the two respected







the decision.

The young driver who has respected almost every decision of the team in his career took such a decision because he was seeing victory. His first one. He might have thought that taking a pit stop could put him second behind Hamilton. So, he took an 'All or Nothing' decision. We can't blame him for this. It's a 21-year old's hunger for victory. But what Hamilton did was exemplary! That's where maturity and control come into place. That's what makes the difference.

Let's come back to Verstappen. If Max was in Lando's position, he would've done the same thing.

The hunger for victory alone won't drive Verstappen to take such a decision, his aggression too!

There is nothing wrong with showing aggression on track with bold moves. That aggression is good until that's flowing through your legs and brakes. When that aggression starts flowing in the head and comes out through your decisions, that won't do you any good. Verstappen has and will continue to have a huge problem with this.

During the Italian GP incident between Max and Lewis, it was seen that the Dutchman was furious with his slow pit stop which took almost 11 seconds. He was shouting at his engineers when they gave him info

about Norris in the next lap. After a few minutes, that clash with Verstappen happened. Verstappen's disappointment that day didn't start with that pit. It should've started with him.

Verstappen who started the race in pole position lost his lead to Ricciardo within few seconds, after an unusual start. He couldn't use the full potential of the tyres as Lewis Hamilton was on hard tyres, and Verstappen had to save them for a while. The frustration should have grown inside Hamilton on every lap. It was aggression that led him to that position.

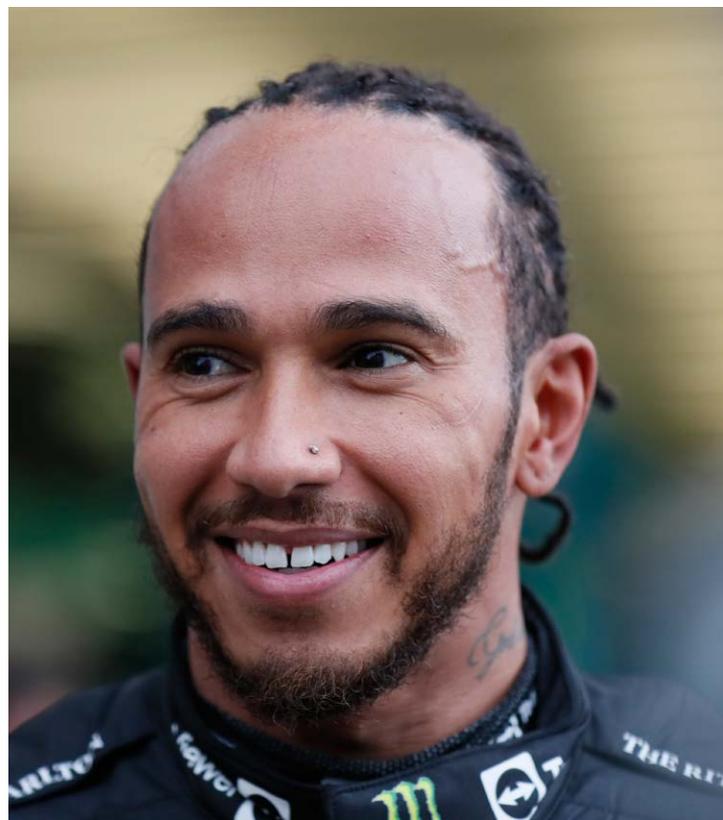
Whenever Max is on pole followed by Hamilton, that Red Bull





car would always turn a bit towards the left to check Hamilton. It wasn't like that in Monza because Hamilton was not behind him. The worst thing your aggression could make is underestimating your opponent. That coupled with a bad start made Verstappen lose his lead in a matter of seconds and turned on the frustration switch.

This is where Verstappen and Red Bull should be concerned. Like Norris, Verstappen has started to see his first-ever title and that could lead to consequences. In addition to Hamilton, he'll be facing a tough challenge with Valtteri Bottas who looks more energetic after his team switching announcement. Even if Verstappen wins the title this season, they have to work on this going into the next season. With Honda parting, the implementation of new regulations, and the pit crew that's losing its Midas touch, the consistency of Lando Norris, the arrival of George Russell to Mercedes. Verstappen will be facing more challenges than this season and all he needs to do is harnessing his superpower, aggression!



AVINASH NORONHA

J T THULASIDHARAN



Often, we see riders on their motorcycles with ill-fitted helmets. More attention is paid to the graphics on the helmet, rather than the fitting. Even a top-rated helmet will not be helpful in a crash if it does not fit you perfectly.

For that reason, here's your quick guide to help you choose the correct sized motorcycle helmet. Keep these 10 points in mind the next time you are planning to buy yourself a helmet.

Choosing the correct motorcycle helmet



It should fit snugly. The helmet might even feel too tight while pushing down on your head. Once in the correct position, it should be absolutely snug.

A helmet size too small will be uncomfortable and unbearable over any considerable distance.

A simple rule of thumb is that a motorcycle helmet should be as tight as possible, without being uncomfortable.



Ensure that the helmet sits squarely on your head. That means the helmet shouldn't be tilting forward or backwards on your head.

A helmet size too large will move around on your head. It will be noisy at speed since there will be a lot of room for the air to pass through. Along with the wind, there will be a lot of dust entering your helmet.

But most importantly, a helmet that is too loose can slip off your head in a crash. Leaving you with no protection at all for your skull.

Helmet brands and models offer not just different sizes but shapes as well. This is helpful because human heads are differently shaped as well. So, what is perfect for your friend, might not be ideal for you. Try different brands, till you find something which satisfies your requirements.

Keeping these points in mind will help you buy the perfect sized helmet for yourself. And keep you safe in the unfortunate circumstance of a crash.



The cheek pads of the helmet should touch your cheeks, without actually squishing your cheeks together.

There should be no gap between your temples and the brow pads.

On a full-face helmet, ensure that your chin or nose is not in contact with the chin guard or visor. At speed, this problem will get further exacerbated.

While trying on the helmet if you feel any pressure points on any part of the head, then you probably need to try on a larger sized helmet. Or maybe a different shaped shell.





VALENTINO ROSSI

A Legend of MotoGP!

Sports, like a community, are a sum of all its parts. All the elements taken together make something special. Individual elements when viewed in isolation are a little different from the ordinary.

Yet, there are exceptions. Once in a lifetime exceptions. Where the individual element is greater than the sum of all its parts. For motorcycle racing that individual is Valentino Rossi. We recount some of the grander aspects, as he announced his retirement from professional motorcycle racing in 2021. There are many things special about this superlative motorcycle racer, yet one transcends them all.



Rossi is bigger than the sport. A niche sport like motorcycle racing is never pitching to the masses. At no point in time do you expect an entire country to be following this sport? That is where his magic lies.

Rossi won his first World Championship in 1997, the same year that reigning MotoGP World Champion Joan Mir was born! Children who idolized him as they grew to love motorcycle racing, would go on to race the legend.

People who have never heard of MotoGP, have heard of Valentino Rossi. People started following the sport because of 'The Doctor', as he is adored by his fans.

Even in the nondescript small towns of India, we often see scooters and motorcycles with the fluorescent yellow 46, proudly plastered on their machines. These youngsters rarely, if ever, follow the sport. But they do know the legend.

A Career-Spanning a Quarter Century...

Valentino Rossi's illustrious career is well documented and his longevity is astounding. To put it in perspective. Rossi won his first World Championship in 1997, the same year that reigning MotoGP World Champion Joan Mir was born! Children who idolized him as they grew to love motorcycle racing, would go on to race the

legend.

Few motorcycle racers have raced against such a wide range of competitors. Riders who came up through the ranks to challenge Rossi's peak dominance, ironically retired before him. Casey Stoner, Dani Pedrosa and Jorge Lorenzo, were all considered the 'next big thing' in motorcycle racing. These are 3 of the most decorated motorcycle racers of all time and all retired before Rossi. Besides these three, Rossi has also raced another mercurial talent of the current generation, Marc Marquez. The racer who has been pencilled in to break all of Rossi's old records accrued over the years.

Always in the News

Rossi's charisma did not just exist on the saddle of his motorcycle. He was loved for his on-track and off-track antics in





equal measure. Some of his post-race celebrations were loved, remembered and even imitated by his competitors and fans.

The Golden Boy of motorcycle racing at one point in time could do no wrong. His legions of followers who would paint the trackside stands yellow supported him through thick and thin. Even when Rossi suffered horrendous results while racing with Ducati, his fans stuck by him.

A testimony to his popularity is easily measured in today's social media numbers. Valentino Rossi last won a world championship in 2009 onboard a Yamaha YZR-M1, yet he commands the greatest reach among his contemporaries. Rossi has 11.3 million followers on the popular social media platform, Instagram, equivalent to the numbers of the official MotoGP



handle. The most dominant racer in recent times Marquez, has half that following, with 5.5 million. While reigning MotoGP Champion Joan Mir has a paltry 478k followers in comparison.

Contribution to the Sport

Though Rossi announced his retirement in 2021, he has long laid the groundwork for it. During his heyday, there was a lot of talent emanating from Italy. Italian youngsters could be seen racing at the pointy end of things in all classes. Post Rossi, there were few and far between Italians who showed promise of doing well at the top.

Giving back to the sport, Rossi set up an Italian training camp. Working with young riders to coach them not just on the bike, but off the bike as well. In 2014, he floated his Moto3 team, with Italian



youngsters Romano Fenati and Francesco Bagnaia. Later the team progressed to Moto 2. In 2021, the team has a single MotoGP rider in the form of Luca Marini. 2022 will see a full-fledged team in the premier class.

Many argue, that Rossi's greatest contribution to the sport has been to revitalize motorcycle racing in Italy. Now there is a steady stream of young Italian talent, all the way from the CEV series to MotoGP. It is thanks to mostly one man.

Mind-Boggling Stats

After 26 Grand Prix seasons, the curtains fall on Valentino Rossi's career. In which he has become the only rider in the world to have more than 400 GP starts, with 115 wins to his name and 199 GP podiums.

Rossi is also the only rider to have won championships in the 125, 250, 500 and MotoGP classes. Racking up 7 premier class championships and 9 Grand Prix championships. He is one of the few riders to have raced in the 500cc 2-stroke



era, 990cc 4-stroke, 800cc and then finally in the current 1000cc 4-strokes.

Yet, these numbers don't tell the full story of the man. The rider Valentino Rossi is and will continue to be a MotoGP legend in the hearts of every MotoGP fan. He will be missed sorely by his competitors and fans alike...



The used luxury car market in India is flourishing as it enables enthusiasts to get The Thrill of Driving a supercar at a discounted price. In an interaction with Motor Vikatan, Siddharth Chaturvedi, Founder and Managing Director of Gurgaon-headquartered Boys and Machines said "We wanted to provide the same quality as a new car at a reasonable price at the same time provide excellent service. With strong momentum and growth, we now plan to target Tier 2 cities like Indore, Ahmedabad and Chandigarh in the next few months." Edited Excerpts:

► How do you differentiate yourself from your peers?

Boys and Machines focus on delivering the highest quality pre-owned luxury cars at the best price. Our competitive pricing and better quality give us an edge over rivals. Apart from this, our continuous process improvement, digitization,

**Luxury used cars at
Affordable prices**

-Siddharth Speaks

and booming physical presence in different cities pave an exponential growth curve. We thrive to not only fulfil but also exceed customer expectations.

●

► **What are all the new initiatives or offering you have planned to come up with in the next 12 to 18 months?**

We plan to expand our footprint both online and offline by connecting to customers and cater them with an experience and not just sell cars. We are planning to publish weekly articles revolving around the luxury car lifestyle, connecting on the digital front. While on the physical space, we are planning to open new showrooms in different cities. The combination of these will help us in reaching out to maximize our outreach. The future will see many digital initiatives to maintain and exceed customer expectations.

●

► **From which segment is the demand is coming?**

We are currently seeing a lot of demand for SUVs, as people are opting to travel by road after COVID, and SUVs are the most comfortable alternative for everyone to cover long distances or go off-road.

●

► **Currently you have only one Workshop in Gurugram, will you be expanding to the other cities?**

In the automobile sector, service is equally crucial. With time, we intend to expand our service centre facilities to all of the places where we have showrooms. So in the coming months, you can expect our workshops in Mumbai,

Hyderabad and Kolkata. On the showroom front, we are on the outlook to open up in Chandigarh, Ahmedabad, and Indore which will be followed by workshops in these cities. These additions will further solidify our relationship with our existing customers as well as attract new customers. As we believe, car selling is not a one-time transaction but a long-term relationship.

●

► **How do you ensure timely service for your customers and from where and how do you source components?**

At Boys And Machines, we have a follow-up action plan in place that reminds our sales and after-sales teams to contact clients about their next purchase plan, insurance renewal, periodic servicing reminders, and other car solutions. To make our process run more smoothly, we have a specialised crew with the best equipment available, as well as an easily available supply of often necessary and consumable materials such as brake pads, tyres, engine oil, air filter, and other products acquired from multiple licenced vendors.

●

► **Tell us about your digitalisation plan for both sales and service?**

Digitisation is the only way going forward. The online display of stock on the website and Instagram have enabled us to reach a PAN India audience, helping with lead creation. Today, a customer in any corner of the country, where we don't have physical stores or studios, can contact us digitally and make a purchase. We also

have a dedicated marketing and public relations team that works constantly with unique ideas and creatives to keep viewers engaged and informed about what Boys And Machines are up to, such as adding new stock, CSR activities, service schemes, and many other activities to keep our digital presence active at all times.

●

► **There are many parts in a luxury car, how do you maintain the same?**

As previously stated, to service exotic cars, we require the most up-to-date tools and software, for which we are already prepared, as well as have an industry-experienced after-sales team on-board to address auto solutions across India and maintain our SKU on time so that we do not run out of parts when they are required by our customers. We also import a few parts whenever required.

●

► **Are you planning to enter into luxury bike sales and service as well?**

We already buy and sell superbikes all over India. Yes, we only buy exotic sports bikes like the Ducati Diavel, Triumph Rocket, Suzuki Hayabusa, and other unique machines. However, because our primary concentration is on cars, we do not provide after-sales support for motorcycles. We deal with Superbikes occasionally out of love and taste.

So when we come across a unique superbike, we pick it up and present it to our valued customers purely out of passion.



S a m s u n g G a l a x y F 2 2



Features:

- 6.4 inch Super AMOLED display
- MediaTek Helio G80 processor
- 6 GB RAM + 128 GB storage
- 48 MP + 8 MP + 2 MP + 2 MP rear camera
- 13 MP selfie camera
- 6000 mAh battery
- Android 11

Plus:

- Super AMOLED display
- Battery life

Minus:

- Gaming performance
- Slow charging

One line review:

Samsung's intention of providing a good all-rounder within the budget segment is good. Yet, apart from the battery, this Samsung F22 lags behind its competitor in every other aspect. Narzo 30 provides great all-rounding performance with the same price tag as F22. If Narzo 30 and Samsung F22 compete for the place, our choice is Narzo 30 only.

Price:

4 GB RAM + 64 GB storage

₹ 12,499

6 GB RAM + 128 GB

₹ 14,499

Rating:



Oppo Reno 6 Pro 5G



Price:
₹ 39,900

Features:

- 6.55 inch AMOLED display
- MediaTek Dimensity 1200 processor
- 12 GB RAM + 256 GB storage
- 64 MP + 8 MP + 2 MP + 2 MP rear camera
- 32 MP selfie camera
- 4500 mAh battery
- Android 11

Plus:

- Feels weightless, Looks slimmer
- AMOLED display
- Fast charging
- Longer battery life
- Performance

Minus:

- Stereo speakers missing
- For this price range some features are missing

One line review:

Reno 6 Pro is nothing but the mere update of Reno 5 Pro. Reno 6 Pro shines in all the aspects But, it doesn't do justice for that price tag of 40,000. Mi 11 X and Realme X7 came with a lesser price tag than the Reno 6 Pro, But they have more features than the Reno 6 Pro. If it got more premium features or the lowering the price tag may do the good. otherwise, our choice will be Mi 11 X or Realme X7.

Rating:
★★★★★★★☆☆



Features:

- 6.43 inch Fluid AMOLED display
- MediaTek Dimensity 1200-AI processor
- 12 GB RAM + 256 GB storage
- 50 MP + 8 MP + 2 MP rear camera
- 32 MP selfie camera
- 4500 mAh battery
- Android 11

Plus:

- Great Processor
- Camera performance
- Fast charging

Minus:

- No IP rating
- 3.5 headphone jack missing

One line review:

With the OnePlus upgrade, came the OnePlus price upgrade too. Those who wait for the OnePlus brand mobile, but with a lower price can go for it. It's shine in every aspect such as performance, camera, battery, and charging. And also do justice for the price tag.

Price:

6 GB RAM + 128 GB storage

₹ 27,999

8 GB RAM + 128 GB storage

₹ 29,999

12 GB RAM + 256 GB storage

₹ 34,999

Rating:



Nokia G20



Price:
₹ 12,999

Features:

- 6.5 inch LCD display
- MediaTek G35 processor
- 4 GB RAM + 64 GB storage
- 48 MP + 5 MP + 2 MP + 2 MP rear camera
- 8 MP selfie camera
- 5050 mAh battery
- Android 11

Plus:

- Good battery life

Minus:

- Camera performance
- Slow Charging

One line review:

There we show a big 'NO' for this Nokia. A mobile with fewer features with a hefty price tag. Yes, 13,000 is hefty for this Nokia. There are much better options such as Narzo 30, Redmi Note 10 with a lower price tag than this Nokia, then what's the point in buying this one.

Rating:
★★★★★★★☆☆

Ever heard of truly wireless. Oh, wait what are you talking about, AirPods debuted 3 years back and you are still asking if we heard of them. Yes, Truly wireless is the most loved headphone type for the past three years after its debut in the market. The first Apple introduced its Wireless AirPods, which eventually became truly wireless earbuds. Yes, it's expensive in the past, but not anymore. Today you can afford a decent one as low as 1500 Rupees. After the smartphone players like Realme, OnePlus and Oppo came to play, the TWS earbuds became more affordable. Ok, how do we choose one? Let's see.

Budget or Premium one?

There are plenty of options out there. Starting from 1000, you can get earbuds for even more than 30,000. As we said earlier we can buy one for 2000 itself, but we can't expect it to perform extraordinarily well. It can satisfy our basic needs. But, we don't get premium features or noise cancellation which are readily available in the premium one. Decide before you buy.

What's the issue?

Those who buy these earbuds just to know how it feels or who think it's a lot of money for just a headphone may go for budget earbuds. But, if you are going to use the buds all day, try a premium one. As this is the beginning of this technology there are little flaws in the usage, primarily connectivity issues. But, in premium earbuds, the issues are less and we can enjoy some time with them. If we go for a premium one that is above 4000, we can get good-looking earbuds with great performance and a good battery backup.

Things to note:

* Buy earbuds that have an IPX rating. When we are going for a walk or jog, there are chances that our sweat may spoil

the earbuds. So, if we have earbuds with at least an IPX7 rating then it's great to go.

* Check whether the buds have noise cancellation or not. If there is no noise cancellation then attending a phone call with the earbuds on will become a headache for the person on the other end. They can only hear the noise surrounding us.

* Battery backup, earbuds launched with average battery backup up to 4 hrs. Choose one according to your usage.

Keep it safe:

Don't handle these earbuds like normal headphones. Taking good care of it is also important. Have to place it in the charging box after every use. As there are many possibilities that these earbuds can drop anytime unknowingly, they are manufactured according to it. Still, if we take good care, it'll serve us for a long time.

Here are some of the recommendations for you,





Jabra Elite 75T
Price: ₹10,999



OnePlus Buds Z
Price: ₹2,990



Samsung Galaxy Buds +
Price: ₹8,299



Oppo Enco W51
Price: ₹4,999



Realme Buds Air Pro
Price: ₹ 4,999



LUCAS

to manufacture India's first SemiSolid lithium-ion cells

SemiSolid technology to improve battery cycle life, safety and cost, that results in affordable electric vehicles

Energy storage in automotive, telecom and power transmission is on the rise due to the advent of various new technologies. Though there is rising demand, still the battery technology has not evolved and still, it is dominated by the lead-acid battery. Recently, 24M Technologies, a startup battery company founded as a spin-off from MIT in the US has made a breakthrough in creating semi-solid lithium-ion battery cells with an energy density exceeding 350Wh per kg.

Semisolid lithium-ion is a significant advancement in lithium-ion technology and combines an overhaul in battery cell design with a series of manufacturing innovations that, when fully implemented. This technology may slash today's lithium-ion costs by 50 percent and improve the performance of lithium-ion batteries. The technology will accelerate the global adoption of affordable energy storage.

In the automotive industry, we are seeing a lot more adoption of electric vehicles (EV), especially in India. To cater the growing EV market, Chennai-based automotive electrical components manufacturer Lucas TVS and 24M Technologies signed a license and services agreement to construct



TWS



one of the first Giga factories in India using 24M's innovative and disruptive SemiSolid technology.

The first plant with world-class safety standards will be set up in Thervoy Kandigai, Gummidipundi near Chennai and Lucas TVS expect to build other plants throughout India to support the growing energy storage, electric mobility and lead-acid battery replacement markets. The Chennai plant is expected to begin commercial production in the second half of 2023. Based on the aggressive targets set by Govt in the Renewable energy and Electric Mobility space, Lucas TVS plans to grow the capacity of the plant to a globally competitive scale of 10 GWh in two stages.

The conventional lithium-ion battery cells have a large fraction of inactive, non-charge carrying materials, supporting metals and plastics that are layered within a cell's casing. Those inactive materials are expensive and

wasteful. With the invention of the semisolid thick electrode, 24M eliminates more than 80 percent of these inactive materials and increases the active layer thickness over traditional lithium-ion by up to 5 times. Using thick electrodes, the cell also stores more energy, bettering the performance of the battery as well as its cost.

Beyond its cost advantages, 24M's patented cell design enhances safety, reliability, and traceability, by virtually eliminating potential metal contamination, the most common cause of shorts in conventional lithium-ion cells. In addition to these benefits, the SemiSolid electrode eliminates the use of binders and thereby enables the simplest and most efficient recycling of rejected or end of life cells. These advantages make it a preferred choice for demanding customers in critical areas such as energy storage and electric mobility.

The SemiSolid platform offers innovative solutions to the fast-growing storage and electric mobility markets and the emerging lead-acid battery replacement markets and is already seeing large capacities being planned globally in Japan, ASEAN, Europe, East Asia and the US. Lucas TVS will be the first to introduce SemiSolid lithium-ion batteries produced in India and specifically designed for the Indian market.

Lucas TVS plan to build products using different chemistries, in Pouch and Prismatic cell formats, with high energy density. The products will meet customer needs in e-mobility, stationary energy storage, including grid-scale markets, and lead-acid battery replacement. Lucas TVS will also be offering complete battery solutions to those customers who need them.



A Silent Revolution

The Journey of the Srinivasan Services Trust

Undertaking an action, without knowing 'what will be the outcome' is something we all do once in our lifetime. The action we start either ends with a failure or changes into a great deed that we have done in our life. The community service arm of TVS Motor Company, Srinivasan Services Trust (SST) is one such thing. When they started it in 1996, they never thought that they were going to change many people's lives. Now, they are here, having created a revolution after 25 years. It's a long journey and they have documented it as a book, 'A Silent Revolution, The Journey of the Srinivasan Services Trust'.

Here are some extracts from the book:

"The story of SST does not begin with the creation of a modest trust in 1996. It began almost a century before, when T.V. Sundaram Iyengar, started a bus service, the first of its kind in south India. It is hard to imagine that a bus could be a thing of wonder, an object of reverence and amazement. But when buses were first introduced in India that is what they were. More than 100 years ago, people saw these vehicles that moved with no horses or oxen in sight and fell to their knees and bowed. This is how the first TVS buses were welcomed in the villages of south India. Worlds of possibility opened up as people could now move around faster and with more ease. Tired feet were gratefully put up and long-suffering beasts of burden were

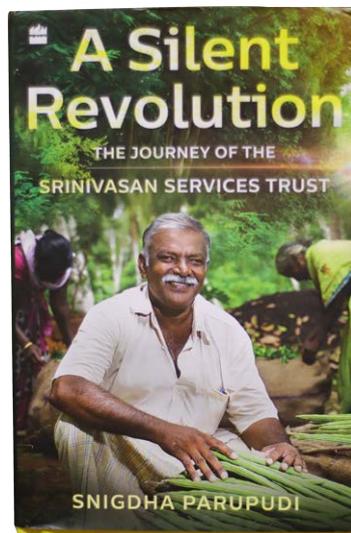
retired." Vehicles and Paths are not just that, it's the symbol of freedom and progress. That's the first thing TVS gave us in south India.

Vehicles may get built in a day, but roads are not. One of the fine works of TVS's social service arm SST was for the people of Elanthapattu situated in Tamil Nadu. "The people who live here in the Javadhu hills, close to nature, are part of the Malayali tribe. For centuries, this community has lived in isolation from the rest of the world. They encountered extreme poverty. While the rest of the world had moved on, they seemed to have been completely left behind, living much like they

had hundreds of years ago. According to the community, the most urgent need was for an access road that would connect Elanthapattu to the rest of the world. The people of Elanthapattu had been waiting for three generations for the 3.5 km traditional forest path to be expanded and laid out as a road. SST provided road-laying materials and the community members did the work of laying the road themselves. Many of the men in the community would travel to nearby cities to do the manual work; road-laying was one of the things they knew how to do well.

The pathway was cleared and completed in just three months. The effect of laying the road opened up this tiny hamlet to the world. The fact that the road had been made by the community themselves, after years of waiting, gave the people of Elanthapattu not just a road but a fierce sense of pride as well."

This is one of the works that TVS did with its community services arm. And there are so many works which are elaborated and documented in the book 'The Silent Revolution' by Snigdha Parpudi, the author of the book. Her fine work have been published in Parabola and National Geographic Traveller too. TVS did a great deed by doing community services through its community services arm and Snigdha Parpudi has done a great job by presenting it to us in such a great manner.



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