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MOTORCYCLING : *BMW S 1000 XR*

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BMW Takes on the Greats with the S 1000 XR

BMW Motorrad recently introduced a brand-new 4-cylinder motorcycle into the growing Adventure Sports market. DRIVEN spent some time with it in search of its weaknesses. We found none.

Report by GAVIN FOSTER
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The German manufacturer traditionally uses a relatively small range of engines across a wide spectrum of products catering for very different rider needs – adventure bikes, sports machines, tourers, sports-tourers and roadsters. The S 1000 XR is the third new model to use a retuned 160 hp version of the 200 hp engine that first broke cover in the 2009 BMW S 1000 RR superbike, and the first ever 4-cylinder Beemer with any pretensions of being moderately dirt-capable. It is no rival for their own R 1200 GS or GS Adventure twins though, with its 17" front wheel, relatively low ground clearance and road-biased suspension. What it does, is take a swing at Ducati's 1200 Multistrada that squeezes the same amount of power out of a V-twin engine, and KTM's more dirt-oriented 1290 Super Adventure V-twin with its longer-travel suspension and 19" front wheel. All three of these 160 hp machines are tall and heavy, but the BMW doesn't feel as intimidating as the other two at low speeds.

The XR is a handsome and beautifully finished motorcycle. From the saddle it feels decidedly more like a GS adventure bike than the superbike it pinched its engine from, with an upright riding position and plenty of space to move around. Click it into gear and let out the clutch and you'd better hang on if you've been over-enthusiastic with your right wrist, because the big motorcycle gets going in a hurry. The power peaks at 11,000 r/min while the torque of 112 Nm maxes out at 9,250, but there's plenty of grunt on tap from as low as 2,000