

“ The design is its forte, and when coupled to a winning engine it has all the hallmarks of a great bike.

SPECS> BENELLI TRE-K AMAZONAS 1130

ENGINE:	1130cc, DOHC, liquid-cooled, In-line three
MAXIMUM POWER:	123.37bhp @ 9000rpm
MAXIMUM TORQUE:	84.8 ft-lb @ 7000rpm
GEARBOX:	Six-speed
FINAL DRIVE:	Chain
FRAME:	ASD steel tube trellis
SUSPENSION:	FRONT: USD telescopic fork
REAR:	Monoshock, adjustable preload and rebound
BRAKES:	FRONT: Twin 320mm discs, four-piston Brembo calipers
REAR:	Single 240mm disc, two-piston Brembo caliper
TYRES:	FRONT: 110/80-19 REAR: 150/70 - 17
SEAT HEIGHT:	850mm
WHEELBASE:	1520mm
DRY WEIGHT:	205kg
FUEL CAPACITY:	18 litres
PRICE:	£8549
CONTACT:	0870 850 6525 www.benelliuk.co.uk

FIRST GLANCE RATING>

LOOKS	★★★★★
PRACTICALITY	★★★★☆
PERFORMANCE	★★★★☆
VALUE	★★★★☆
OVERALL	★★★★☆

calipers on 'wavy' discs, Marzocchi upside down forks – identifying the Amazonas as more of a road-biased proposition than a hardcore dual sport – to a mock carbon fibre heat shield and aluminum bash plate. Upswept, under-seat exhaust, hidden beneath a stylish back end, (although rather let down by the amount of plastic hanging off to hold the number plate indicators) and black Takasago spoked wheels with Metzeler Tourance tyres completes the purposeful off-road look.

Although I didn't get the chance to sample the Benelli off-road, on-road it's an incredibly rewarding ride. The first and



probably lasting impression is the engine; it's simply inspired. The 1130cc inline triple gives a phenomenal amount of power in an almost linear progression from the moment you twist your wrist, right through to the limit at 9500rpm. Things do get busier at about 6500, as the engine components regroup to push you on with a final surge before it exhausts itself at the redline. Roll the throttle on at around 80mph; it's reminiscent of a greyhound out of the trap, it rushes forward taking you past three figures in a matter of seconds – wonderful! And what's more, it all happens to an amazing F1 V-ten soundtrack from those underseat pipes. It's far from anti-social though, more the voice of someone who has to be respected.

It idles higher than any other bike I've ridden, at between 1250 and 1450rpm. This makes it sound that little bit more urgent and threatening, strange, but apparently a characteristic of the Benelli triple.

Back to the journey, and I'm already soaked through by the time I get to the end of the road. My 'boil in the bag' wetsuit is seeping water into my crotch and I still have 435 miles to go! But fortunately I'm focused on the job and manage to ignore it. The hand guards do a fair job of deflecting the rain and the adjustable screen keeps some of the water and wind off, making the ride a little more pleasurable.

What's slightly less than pleasurable, and something you might want to check before you sign the cheque, is the seat height. Benelli list it as 850mm, but it feels more like 940 to me. I have a 32in inside leg and I'm faltering on tiptoes at the lights. Like many, I'm someone who likes to have my feet on the ground, especially when negotiating any undulating surface and it's a big issue on the Benelli.

What looks like an attempt at counteracting the enormous seat height, is a very slim seat. To the eye, it looks incredibly uncomfortable, with seemingly very little padding and not much width to it at all, but to the behind it's heavenly; soft, well shaped and narrow enough to allow those tip toes to hit Tarmac. Combined with the positioning of bars and pegs, I'd go so far as to say it's one of the most comfortable machines I've ever ridden. It's a perfect position for touring and long distance work; posterior ache didn't set in until around 350 miles – very good by today's standards.

Above: Be careful where you park it, as hordes of Benelli fans will flock to you.

Below: Looks hellish, but if you're tall enough to get on it, the Benelli's seat is very comfy.

