

On

Your Bike?

MotorMadness

Fact File

- Can-Am Spyder
- Engine: 1330cc in-line three cylinder
- Power: 115hp
- 0-62mph: - secs
- Top speed: - mph
- Transmission: six-speed semi-automatic
- Seat height: 675mm
- Weight: 850lb (F3), 1,012lb (RT)

Ian Lamming test drives the Can-Am Spyder

HANDLEBARS, check, saddle and footpegs, check, twistgrip, check. I must be riding a motorbike then.

But while the back features a single wheel as you would expect, the front is about as wide as a supermini and comes with two wheels. So it's a trike then, I think, well sort of, in reverse.

Marketing blurb over-uses the phrase 'unique' when describing new models coming to market.

Let me assure you, you don't know unique until you have ridden a Spyder – it's like nothing else known to man.

Developed by BRP, the Can-Am Spyder shares its genes with the likes of Ski-Doo and Lynx snowmobiles, Sea-Doo watercraft and Can-Am all terrain vehicles.

Start the 1330cc in-line triple and the Spyder bursts into life with a menacing growl. Press a button to release the parking brake, stick your foot on the foot brake and use your left thumb to engage the first of six gears on the semi-automatic box using a paddle shift on the bar and you are off, well nearly.

Take your foot off the brake and twist the throttle and the Spyder moves calmly forward in a controlled fashion.

If you think it feels weird then just wait for the first bend. Your brain tells your body you are on a motorbike but the Spyder can't lean of course. So you turn the bars and shift your weight to the inner wheel, and round she goes.

The other strange thing if you are a biker is that there are no levers on the handlebars, no clutch, no front brake; the semi-auto box takes care of the transmission and the right hand footbrakes operates all three wheels and comes with ABS of course.

You also have to remember the extra girth, compared to a slim-line motorbike, to avoid the kerb and anything either side of the gap – ie parked cars or on-coming vehicles.

But it is surprising how quickly the brain adjusts and the smile on your face begins to widen.

The Spyder experience is stupendous and rewarding in a way that few cars are nowadays. You have to keep your wits about you, employ a degree of skill and finesse and the rewards are off the charts.

Exhilarating? Oh yes. This thing flies. The triple pumps out a lusty 115hp and with just 850lb to pull, that's a power to weight ratio to be proud of. If you dare it will hit 60mph in just

over three seconds, which is supercar performance and it does it with wonderful charm and a great sound.

Thumb the paddleshift and you don't even have to power-off to make clean changes, it just slots home like an F1 car at full chat.

Lazybones here allowed the semi-auto box to take care of the down-changes on its own so you can concentrate on its idiosyncratic nature – and it even has reverse.

What I have failed to mention so far is one of its best traits – its looks. Both the sporty F3 and the touring RT look absolutely incredible, like the evil ride of a James Bond villain's henchman.

Build and specification are stunning too and the Spyder comes with traction and stability control, ABS, dynamic power steering, LED lights and alloy wheels. RT even gets heated seat and grips, cruise control, luggage and a hi-fi.

Spyder has so much going for it and if you buy one you can expect to join a culture, an elite club, a lifestyle. It will draw attention until you put it back in the garage but it won't be long before you get it back where it belongs, on the road.