



£5995 Suzuki GSX1400

» An absolute leviathan of a thing 'but doesn't feel that big when you're moving', as they say. Well, it does at 550lb wet, but importantly it handles for such a behemoth. This example still wears its original 4-2 exhaust system but also sports a fairly nasty little fly screen. Original otherwise, aside from heated grips. The engine is the main attraction, a 1402cc oil-boiler (no relation to GSX-R/Bandit lump) with more than 90 lb.ft of torque on tap at 5000rpm for instant forward motion. Bit of a cult rarity, though £5995 is top money for a three-owner, 19,000-mile machine.



£7499 Kawasaki ZRX1200

» Look closely and you'll clock the monoshock conversion to this ZRX. Yes, that's a Metmachex braced alloy swingarm working an Öhlins shock. There's an Akrapovic pipe, and K&N air filters, too. It's a 2002 UK machine with 12,000 miles on its clocks. Putting the suspension conversion to one side for a moment, it's in the right colours, with standard mods (if you follow) and appears very clean. If the mono work has been done by someone other than a mate from down the pub with a stick welder, it's worth a punt.

All bikes available on MCN bikes for sale at the time of writing

[The Bike Cop]

Should I wheelie?

As a motorcyclist I know only too well the skill and practice it takes to execute a decent wheelie. And if you do one on a clear, straight road in the middle of nowhere with no junctions or hazards ahead, I understand that the only person you're likely to damage is yourself. But there are lots of buts.

The first is legal. Dangerous riding is defined as anything that falls 'far below the minimum standard expected of a competent and careful rider, and includes behaviour that could potentially endanger yourself or other riders/drivers'.

Frowned on

That means no wheelie will ever go down well with a magistrate. It doesn't matter how technically brilliant the wheelie was, you will always be seen as a lunatic. Essentially, as soon as you do a wheelie anywhere someone can see you, you're holding up a flag saying 'book me'.

A well-timed, well-executed wheelie might bring a smile to my lips, but from a legality point of view, there's no hope.

The implications of this are pretty sobering. If you're convicted of dangerous driving you'll get at least a year's disqualification and could be sent to prison for two years. OK, to cop the maximum sentence you'd have to have been an utter cretin (in town, past a bus queue of nuns, etc), but even the lightest sentence is no fun.

The second 'but' is the risk you're taking. I've been to a few accidents caused by wheelies and the problem is



often that even if riders do lots of practice, it's usually in areas that are quiet and well controlled. But when they try to show off, it's often not in those circumstances – they're overtaking a mate and don't see a junction, they're outside the chippy and don't notice the road camber, they're in town and don't bring it down in time for the next lights... the opportunities to muck it up are endless, and it only takes something to go slightly amiss for it to end in tears.

'No wheelie will ever go down well in court'

Non-transferable skills

The final thing I'd say is that, as a professional riding coach, the skills you need for wheelies – dropping the clutch suddenly at the right revs, overcoming your instinct to shut the throttle when the front comes up, etc – don't transfer directly to normal riding. If you learn to wheelie, you just get better at wheelies. Stoppies on the other hand are harder to argue against... but that's another story.

Giles Lamb
at Rapid Training

Giles Lamb spent 15 years as a police motorcyclist before joining Rapid Training – Britain's foremost advanced riding company. Rapid features a unique blend of road riding know-how and track-riding machine control. It is staffed by ex-traffic cops like Giles, TT racers, BSB riders and off-road experts.

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