

STAR MOTORCYCLE'S STRATOLINER

# A New Star Is Born

YAMAHA MADE HISTORY LAST MAY, when it became the first motorcycle company to create an all-new brand from a range of existing motorcycles.

Yamaha's new brand, Star, is a collection of motorcycles that combine the best attributes of both cruiser and touring bikes. The first in the line, the Star Stratoliner S, is a blend of the best attributes of both cruiser and touring bikes.

When the company realized the lineup was strong enough to support a brand.

The newest member of the Star family, the Star Stratoliner Cruiser Tourer is a blend of the best attributes of both cruising and touring bikes. When Star Motorcycle has created a whole new category, the cruiser-tourer.

Available in three different levels of trim, we tested the top of the line, the Stratoliner S.

Power is provided by a 113 cubic-inch (3854 cc) air-cooled, overhead OHV, 48-degree V-twin engine with fuel injection and a position sensor. The motor makes 101 horsepower at the crankshaft (91 hp at the rear wheel) and 124 pound-feet of torque at the crank (yielding 117 pound-feet to the road).

The Stratoliner's power is transmitted through a six-speed, belt drive. The new aluminum frame weighs only 37 pounds. Additional weight savings come from an eight-component aluminum rear swing arm. The exhaust setup is a large chrome, two-into-one right-side setup, with a sweet-sounding, deep-throated tone.

The Stratoliner S tips the scale with a dry weight of 725

pounds, but its low center of gravity and remarkable balance provide a much lighter feel, tempting floorboard-dragging transitions from turn to turn. The ride quality is exceptionally comfortable thanks to 46 mm dual forks with 5.3-inch travel up front and a single-shock Link-Type rear suspension with 4.3-inch travel.

The Stratoliner S travels on Bridgestone radial tires — 130/70-18 in the front and 190/60-17 aft. Wheels are polished 12-spoke hollow cast alloy. Stopping chores are handled by 298mm dual front discs assisted by a 320mm single disc at the rear handle.

On the road, acceleration is smooth and instantaneous over a broad torque range, and shifting up or down delivers smooth transitions. Braking is positive and effective as well.

The Stratoliner S's road manners are most pleasing due to the bike's incredible stability, which was proven

while encountering strong, gusting crosswinds during our test ride. The weight mass positioning and low stance allows for both slow- and high-speed maneuvers with equal aplomb.

Riders long-of-leg may need to move their inside turn leg away from the tank to clear the beach style bar when executing tight, slow speed exercises.

The Stratoliner S generates the appearance of a custom bike with a streamlined art nouveau look. The directional and running lamps resemble a '30 Cadillac El Dorado's teardrop-shaped units fore and aft. The trapezoidal brake and taillight feature a clear lens with red LED lights beneath. Badging is discreet (almost nonexistent), providing individual personalization with less hassle.

The new Cruiser Tourer will no doubt challenge other models for attention, and will likely capture an increased market share for Yamaha.

One thing is for sure, it's no pretender. It's the real deal. ■



◀ The Star Stratoliner combines the best attributes of both cruiser and touring bikes