



lean limit and scraped the valve cover on the right cylinder. I would have never believed that I leaned the cycle over to that angle. I sure don't remember it. That little maneuver cost me about \$180. I think that aggressive riders should consider cylinder head guards.

I returned the R1200S and asked if they might have an Aprilia RSV 1000 for rent, just to compare the cycles. They did, so I rented a 2006 Aprilia RSV 1000 after getting off the R1200S.

The Aprilia RSV 1000 R Factory was voted the best sport cycle in the 2006 Master Bike competition. This is an international event held each year by the editors of the major magazines from almost all countries. It is a highly prized win for manufacturers of motorcycles, and is stated to result in a 30% sales increase in the sport-bike market.

The Aprilia seems shorter and it is about twenty pounds lighter, but the wheel-base is almost identical. The riding position is different, but not terribly uncomfortable. The engine has much more noise, but does not have excessive vibration due to counter balancing. The cycle has a stiffer ride and the front forks give much more feedback. The overall feel is quick and nimble.


In riding the Aprilia, you simply turn the cycle. No lean is required unless you are really flying. The brakes still are among the very best on anything. You better brace yourself if you try a full-on stop! But they aren't too sensitive, and give great feel. On the Aprilia, you carve the road up. On the BMW, you flow with the road. Both cycles

have definite personalities. The BMW is smooth and refined, and the Aprilia is fast and furious. Both cycles are forgiving.

The BMW R1200S is a very good effort and is a step-up on any sport cycle they have produced. I know it isn't a "Blood and Guts," no compromise track cycle, but it has already won the Daytona endurance event. I am convinced that one reason that it won is the ease of rider effort required to sustain a fast pace for extended time. Not to mention ease of maintenance. One reason the magazine testers give it a hard time is that no shaft-drive is going to feel or handle like a chain-drive cycle. The British magazine testers call the handling "quirky," but I have noticed their opinion has changed drastically after getting used to the cycle, and some of the best international cycle magazines are now calling it the best all around sport bike available! If you remember a few years ago, this is the same response that the news media had

to the BMWGS cycles.

What BMW has done is give the consumer a very good platform to improve upon if racing is the requirement. This is a thrilling and exciting sport cycle, where the capabilities are well above the sport rider's ability, whether they are advanced or a beginner. I, like many, wish that BMW would introduce hard luggage for this cycle and I think that they will. Also the British publication *Motor Cycle New*, claims that BMW will soon introduce an "SP" model aimed at the "Thunder Twin" and similar classes. It would be great if BMW would restart the BMW Cup events.

In my first article comparing the BMW to the Aprilia, I stated that I wished that BMW would sharpen the handling and increase power to offer a more thrilling sport bike. I got my wish! I returned home and purchased an R1200S, just like the one I rented in Switzerland! 

Riding back from the dealership to the hotel, I found the cycle to be a joy to ride in sweeping, curvy road sections. A light touch on the brakes is all that is needed to scrub off speed.