


FIRST TEST

LEXMOTO VENOM 125

'Listen to some block-rocking beats while buzzing along at 60mph'

By Peter Henshaw

MCN GUEST TESTER

This Chinese 125 comes with a small price, but big speakers! The new Lexmoto Venom features an MP3 compatible sound system, so you can listen to some block-rocking beats while you're buzzing along at 60mph. And, what's more, you'll get change from £1500, too - quite a lot of it!

The Venom is at the flashier end of the 125 geared market, with an air-cooled overhead cam engine based on an old Honda unit, eye-catching white and blue graphics, and plenty of butch-looking plastic bodywork. A big analogue speedo sits next to a digital display with a tiny rev counter, fuel gauge, clock, tripmeter and gear indicator. It's called showroom appeal, and for young riders, the Venom has it in spades.

Climbing onto this pre-production version, the Venom feels like a super-

moto, perching you high and forwards, though the actual seat height is a reasonable 770mm. Chunky tapered bars and that flash dash add to the impression of a razor-sharp road weapon. It isn't, but the motor is a revvy little thing that winds up to 11,000rpm in the two lowest gears, according to the, probably optimistic, rev counter. It's still enough for spirited performance - use the revs and the Venom sprints up to an indicated 50-55mph pretty quickly and will cruise at 60-65. It tops out at an indicated 68mph and won't do any more, however flat you lie on the tank.

By then you'll be treated to a light show. The speedo is normally backlit in blue, but cross the 55mph barrier and it switches to a racier red, while the 'Lexmoto' logo flashes at you in the same colour. Production bikes won't cross this literal redline until 65mph, which is just as well - flashing red lights in your face are the last thing you want on an unlit road on a dark night.

Sharp looks, punchy motor and your own soundtrack



'The sound system is actually audible up to 50mph'

Run into this red light zone and high frequency vibes thrum through the seat and bars, despite the engine having a balance shaft. The seat itself is as cossetting as a plank of pine, but I can't imagine many riders buying a Venom for long hauls.

More impressive are the CST Magsport tyres which grip well, and the fact that nothing touches down, though the flip-up footrests aren't spring-loaded; flip them up without realising and you'll have unsupported, flailing feet. The suspension is good enough for the performance and the rear monoshock is preload adjustable. The brakes are very good, especially the twin-pot front disc, even if the caliper won't be red on production bikes.

Decent mirrors, a slim shape and reasonable acceleration make the Venom well-suited to the urban jungle, and your jungle will be massive thanks to that sound system - it's actually audible up to about 40-45mph while wearing a full-face lid, and without distortion, too. The controls are simple to use and it will download music from an MP3 via a USB port or Micro SD card. Just remember to turn the music down when stopped at red lights, or you'll really annoy the kid in the blacked-out Clio in the next lane... **MCN**