



Left: "¿Quién es más macho?" The Rocket III is all about its motor. A DOHC, twin-plug, four-valve triple displacing 2300cc, it produces a massive 140 lb/ft of torque just off idle. Ferociously responsive to the throttle, you've never experienced anything quite like it. Although its near-800 lb. wet weight and hard rubber prevents world-beating performance numbers, it has an intimidating presence that draws stares of disbelief. "No, that's not a car engine, but the biggest production motorcycle engine ever built."



Top: The asymmetrical gas tank holds 6.6 gals up high and you'll feel it slosh to the side when cornering. The instruments sweep back for a good view, but the long tiller handlebars are nearly 3 feet wide. The lack of wind protection and splayed riding position will make the rider into a veritable mainsail at high speeds—uncomfortable and inefficient.



Above: The rider's seat is big and well-shaped, sized like the controls to carry a large rider. But if you think you could sit on that tiny passenger seat and stay aboard the bike when the rider grabs a handful, you're kidding yourself.

Bottom: Triumph's typically have good brakes, and the Rocket III's are plenty strong with good feel, but the hard compound Metzeler Marathon tires didn't allow especially good stopping distances in our testing.



Right: The rear tire is a monster 240/50-16 on a 7.5"-wide rim, wider than most cars. The rear suspension travel is fairly short, just 4.13", allowing the shapely rear fender to hug the contours of the giant meat perfectly. The rule for customs is that a bigger rear tire is always badder, but its profile requires that you countersteer strongly to force the bike into an arc, so that the handling takes some getting used to at first.



TESTERS' LOG

I wasn't all that excited by the prospect of testing the Rocket III, thinking its exhausts would probably cook my right leg, and its enormous size would make it less than fun to ride on my favorite canyon roads, but I've changed my tune. The headers don't get too hot, the cornering clearance is sufficient, and the beast is actually much more fun to ride than I would have ever imagined.

Handlebars cut maybe four inches narrower would reduce your sail area considerably, but a windshield would help even more. Softer shocks with adjustable rebound would answer our only other real complaint.

In college I occasionally got the chance to borrow my friend Davy Albright's 427 '66 Corvette. Big-block power is incredible, but no motorcycle ever reproduced the Vette's sense of bottomless torque until the Rocket III arrived at our doors. The 500-cubic inch 10-cylinder Dodge Viper is the current automotive equivalent, and incidentally, the Rocket's pistons are the same size as the Viper's.

Nicely detailed, with plenty of smoothly finished chrome to polish, and a wealth of styling details that make you take a second look every chance you get, Triumph got it right. —Dave Searle

The original Rocket III was a lean, sexy looking bike. Unfortunately, like many people as they age, the ensuing years weren't kind to the Rocket. For me the bike is too long, too wide, too heavy, and just too much! Of course, if excess is your cup of tea, then the Rocket III may be your perfect ride. You want big? You got it, with a three-cylinder 2300 cc engine stuffed into the chassis, a massive rear tire that could be used for a small car, and 800 pounds of heft. The front end is quite heavy and tends to "fall in" during low speed turns. Changing directions also requires some rider effort—once a turn is initiated you must maintain a steady pressure on the bars or the bike will straighten up. The rear shocks offer a harsh ride, similar to the Rune, and the riding position is too stretched out for me. I need longer arms and legs to fit the bars and pegs.

On a positive note, the Rocket really does have stump-pulling torque, enough to rip 100-year-old oak trees out of the ground. And the exhaust note is like music to my ears, I just love that 3-cylinder growl.

—Walt Fulton

2004 Triumph Rocket III

SPECIFICATIONS AND PERFORMANCE DATA

ENGINE

Type:Longitudinal in-line three
Valvetrain:DOHC four-valve
shim-over-bucket valve adjustment
Size:2294cc
Bore/stroke:101.6mm x 94.3mm
Comp. ratio:8.7:1
Fueling:Sequential multi-point EFI
with three 56mm throttle bodies
Exhaust:3-1-3

DRIVE TRAIN

Transmission:5-speed
Final drive:Shaft
RPM @ 65* mph/redline ..2500/6500
(*actual, not indicated)

DIMENSIONS

Wheelbase:66.5"
Rake/trail.....32°/5.98"
Ground clearance:5.2"
Seat height :28.5"
GVWR:1287 lbs.
Wet weight:796.5 lbs.
Carrying capacity:490.5 lbs.

SUSPENSION

Front:43mm inverted forks
4.72" travel
Rear:Twin coil-over shocks
adjustable preload
4.13" travel

BRAKES

Front:Twin 320mm floating discs
with four-piston calipers
Rear:Single 316mm disc
with two piston single-acting caliper

TIRES & WHEELS

Front:150/80V17 Metzeler 880
Marathon on 3.50" x 17" wheel
Rear:240/50V16 Metzeler 880
Marathon on 7.5" x 16" wheel

ELECTRICS

Battery:12V, 18AH
Ignition:Integrated digital inductive
Headlight:Dual 60/55W

FUEL

Tank capacity:6.6 gal.
Grade specified89 octane (R+M)
High/low/avg. mpg:35.1/28.4/31.3

CycleStats™

PERFORMANCE

Measured top speed145.9 mph
0-1/4 mile11.44 sec.
@ 118.33 mph
0-60 mph3.59 sec.
0-100 mph8.29 sec.
60-0 mph129.1'
Power to Weight Ratio1:6.27
Speed @ 65 mph indicated59.2

M/C RATING SYSTEM

EXCELLENT
VERY GOOD
GOOD
FAIR
POOR

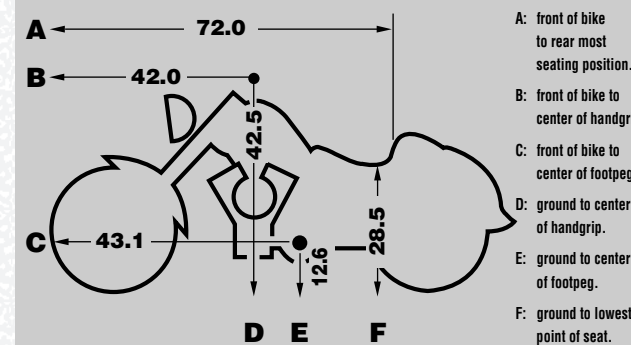
Open Cruiser

Engine ●●●●●
Transmission ●●●●○
Suspension ●●●●○
Brakes ●●●●●
Handling ●●●●○
Styling ●●●●●
Riding Impression ●●●●●
Instruments/Controls ●●●●○
Attention to Detail ●●●●●
Value ●●●●●

OVERALL RATING ●●●●●



ERGONOMICS TEMPLATE



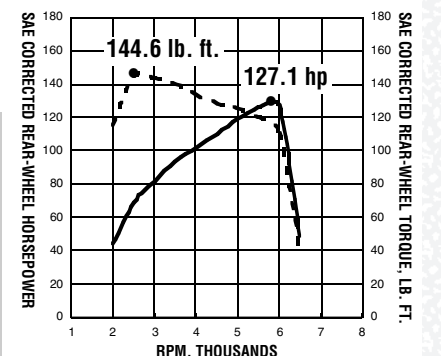
MISCELLANEOUS

Instruments:.....Analog speedometer, tachometer, odometer, dual tripmeters
Indicators: Check engine, high temp/low oil pressure, low fuel, neutral, turnsignals, high beam, alarm status (optional)
MSRP:\$15,990
Routine service interval:10,000 mi.
Valve adj. interval:.....20,000 mi.
Warranty:2 years, unlimited miles.
Colors:Jet Black, Cardinal Red

DYNAMOMETER DATA

Low end ●●●●●
Mid-range ●●●●●
Top end ●●●●●

A three-cylinder engine makes a good alternative to the ubiquitous V-twins. Smooth-running, with its torque reaction minimized by counterrotating balance, input and final drive shafts, it rumbles, growls and it flat goes like no other cruiser.



TEST NOTES

PICKS

- The world's biggest-displacement production bike engine
- Brakes that are up to the job; strong and easy to control
- Attractive muscular styling enhanced with nice detailing

PANS

- Handlebars so wide your body becomes a drag chute
- Overly stiff, underdamped rear shocks
- A passenger seat in name only

STANDARD MAINTENANCE

| Item | Time | Parts | Labor |
|------------------------|------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| Oil & Filter..... | 0.25 |\$13.02 + \$70 | \$15.00 |
| Air Filter..... | 0.2 |\$33.57 | \$12.00 |
| Valve Adjust..... | 2.8 |\$38.40 | \$168.00 |
| Battery Access..... | 0.5 |MF | \$30.00 |
| Final Drive..... | 0.15 |\$0.38 | \$9.00 |
| R/R Rear Whl. | 0.3 | | \$18.00 |
| Change Plugs (6) | 0.95 |\$33.00 | \$57.00 |
| Synch EFI | 0.25 | | \$15.00 |
| Totals | 5.4 | \$188.37 | \$324.00 |

Note: MCN Labor rate changed to \$60/hr. from \$54/hr. in May 2002