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# FAST BIKES ULTIMATE V4



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**VS**

**2007 GP ICON**

**DESMOSEDICI RR**

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# ULTIMATE V4





# RACE PROVEN STREET WISE



Rider: Mathew Scholtz Photo: Brian J. Nelson



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A test of time,  
wallet size  
and exotica, we  
pitched Ducati's  
GP-inspired  
Desmo RR against  
the firm's decade  
fresher Panigale  
V4 Speciale.

WORDS > DANGEROUS  
IMAGES > CHAPPO

**S**ilk sheets, the finest of wines and not even Ron Burgundy's jazz flute performance can hold a candle to the suave delights of the charismatic V4. From a performance point of view it's possibly the greatest configuration of all time, typically comprising a rich delivery of torque with a high-revving disposition, meaning you get the ponies and the punch.

And to make the deal even sweeter V4s are compact in all the right places, being only two cylinders broad and, dependant on the angle of the cylinders, petite in length too, meaning you can achieve short wheelbases and aerodynamically pleasing silhouettes. Oh, and then there's the traction inducing drive to mention, and the perfectly harmonised primary balance (90°). That's got to make them the perfect engine, right? Well, kind of. If you've ever changed the exhaust on one or, worse still, tried to remove or fit a bank of carbs (or injectors), your battered knuckles, crooked neck and willingness to put that bike on eBay the moment the job's done, would suggest you disagree.

They can be a nightmare to work on, and good luck trying to get the rear cylinders balanced or running at the same temperature as the front ones. Then there's the added costs involved in producing two lots of cylinders, heads, cams and what-not. Nah, they're not perfect, but they're still bloody brilliant. So brilliant that it's hard to ignore their consistent presence in GP racing over many decades, on two-strokes and fours, always at the foreground of the field. It's the configuration that powers Marquez's conquering Honda RCV and, more fittingly in this case, Ducatis GP18, which is said to have inspired the Italian firm's first iteration of a mass-production V4 sportsbike... the Panigale V4.

Of course, that's if you choose to ignore the last mass-production V4 they made, which was a much closer mirror image of the firm's 2006 MotoGP steed. Yes, I'm talking about the 'sell your kidneys to own one' Desmosedici RR, which had me and Boothby arguing like schoolboys over who should ride it first. I won, but more importantly, here's what we made of this most exotic of pairings...

