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★ 100bhp ★ 186kg ★ 997cc ★ Looks fantastic

It's showtime!
Stafford guide
FREE inside



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National roads policing head Chief Constable Anthony Bangham wants to crack down on road users who stray just 1mph over the limit. The top cop said: "The existing speed enforcement guidance could, in fact, be encouraging driving at these more dangerous higher speeds rather than the actual speed limits."



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TECH SPEC

Brough Superior

Price: From £60,000 on the road
Engine: 997cc 88° V-twin, liquid cooled, 8v
Bore and stroke: 94mm x 71.8mm
Power: 100bhp @ 9800rpm (130bhp @ 8000rpm Sports version available)
Torque: 89Nm @ 7450rpm (120Nm @ 6400rpm Sport version)
Transmission: Six-speed, wet clutch, chain drive
Front suspension: Fior-type cast aluminium wishbone fork, titanium triangular links, monoshock with preload and rebound adjustment, 120mm travel
Rear suspension: Cast aluminium swingarm pivoting from engine, monoshock adjustable for preload and rebound, 130mm travel
Front brake: 4 x 230mm Berenger 4D Stainless discs, 2 x four-piston Berenger radial calipers
Rear brake: single 230mm disc, Berenger twin-piston caliper
Tyres: 120/70 ZR18 front, 160/60 ZR18 rear
Seat height: 820mm
Dry weight: 186kg
Visit: broughsuperiormotorcycles.com



Brough Superior SS100: FIRST CLASS TRAVEL

After years teasing us and ruffling the feathers of the die-hard fans of the original, is the new Brough Superior worthy of its name?

Words: Matt Hull **Photos:** Gary Chapman

First things first; the new Brough Superior SS100 is as a fantastic motorcycle to ride as its engineering is to behold. Secondly, you would attract less attention riding a pink camel, while naked, at the Grand National – shrinking violets need not apply. Thirdly, it costs from £60,000. And lastly, I can't think of a more reasonably-priced bike that would genuinely compare. This is a truly unique motorcycle.

Badge engineering is such a contentious subject, especially when it comes to motorcycles. Our love for a marque, its history and its models stretches far; so when someone buys the right to use a name, many have mixed emotions. Will any new bikes be true to the original ethos? Will they fit in?

Some work, some don't. Triumph has managed it well. John Bloor created a clever, sustainable business model that goes from strength to strength. Norton are aiming at a lower-volume, higher-end market, BSA hope a famous name will give the Indian-built bikes some cred, while AJS, Aerial and New Imperial are also badges to adorn new models. It seems an established name helps a brand

to grow momentum, which is why Polaris has Indian after trying so hard with Victory.

Back in 2008, Mark Upham gained the rights to the most famous of all motorcycle brands; Brough Superior. For those unfamiliar with the name, it was the fastest, most expensive brand ever ridden by thrill-seeking Oxbridge undergrads and those well heeled. George Brough was son of William Brough, who made bikes under the Brough name and George even rode one of his father's bikes at the TT. But George was a clever marketer and started up the somewhat ostentatiously named Brough Superior, using the yearly motorcycle show at Olympia to enthrall the media of the day with his latest creations. Brough Superior's best-known fan was one T E Lawrence, also known as Lawrence of Arabia who had seven of the marque, with an eighth on order when he was killed while riding in May 1935, aged 46.

So the new company has a lot to live up to. Hand-built in Marseilles, France, the design has taken years to perfect; giving enough of the original look while making it a bike you can actually ride. Love or loathe the look



“There are six gears and a chain final drive – it is delightful to ride a bespoke built engine that is so well finished.”

as you first see it, once you get up close few will be as cynical once you take in the details. That signature tank is 8mm cast alloy, which is then machined down to around 3mm for a perfect finish and to eradicate any possibility of a welded tank fracturing over time.

The paralever front end is something you don't notice while the bike is at a standstill, but you see it working in front of you while riding. The front and rear ends bolt to the engine in a Vincent-esque manner, with a hand-welded titanium framework clasp the tank and fuel injection system. Very few parts are not made by the factory – the wheels are bespoke made by an American firm, but the rest is in house. The machined levers have roller bearings in them for a precise feel, the top yoke frames the large speedo and at the back the underslung suspension

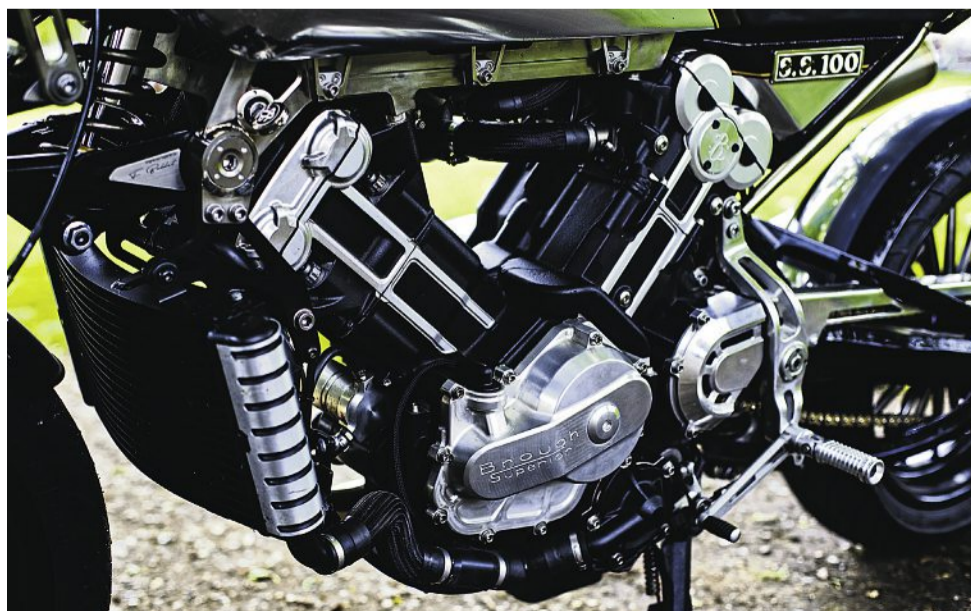
linkage holds an exquisite swingarm. The Connolly leather seat, the exquisite top yoke, the aluminium bodywork, titanium subframe and even the switchgear are all unique.

And then there are the brakes. To keep with the original look, small, twin, fully-floating discs per side are used to keep rotation weight down and to look similar to a drum. The calipers hold three pads; the middle one has friction material on both sides and they cost £300 a set.

The engine is a 997cc, four-valve, 88° V-twin. It has to be liquid-cooled to pass today's standards, adding the only unsightly part of the bike, the water pipes. Designed and built by Akira in Spain who also make Kawasaki's World Superbike engines, it makes 100bhp and a creamy 88lb-ft of torque, with 130bhp available in unhomologated Sport form. Apologies

for the lazy description; but creamy is the only way to describe the flat line delivery of the engine – gearchanges are optional. The side cases are sandcast and then machined lightly to still show the casting marks, holding forged pistons. There are six gears and a chain final drive – it is delightful to ride a bespoke built engine that is so well finished. The only downside is the engines are currently Euro 3 compliant, so have to be individually type approved. Brough Superior says this is just for the time being and are working to get the bike through Euro 4 compliance.

As with many high-end products, the SS100 can be finished as you wish. From paint to chrome, even gold-leaf emblems – the world is your – expensive – oyster. Word is there will be a less exotic version to follow the current models.



“When one is riding a gentleman’s bike, one must not forget one’s attire. Pockets are also essential, as there is nowhere to store anything...”



Riding a Brough Superior

Before you start, what does one wear to ride a modern Brough? It’s fast and powerful, but classic. Leathers and a wax-style jacket I surmised. When one is riding a gentleman’s bike, one must not forget one’s attire. Pockets are also essential, as there is nowhere to store anything...

The SS100 is tall – you can’t hide that fact. The tall engine means it can be little else and the fuel injection and other gubbins have to fit under the tank. I’m lucky, but others may feel on tip toes. The seat is as sumptuous as it looks and is long, so if you feel perched you can sit further forward to gain confidence. Steering lock is Ducati-esque, enough but that’s it.

You can U-turn it, but at this price I have to admit to peddling it round just in case.

Turn the reassuringly heavy key (made from brass to deliberately age) in the ignition which is under the tank (the key in the top yoke is the steering lock) and wait for the speedo needle and idiot lights to do a cycle and hit the starter button. The big short-stroke motor settles down instantly, reminiscent of a Ducati Panigale and is quick to rev. The exhausts are loud, but just the appropriate side of acceptable, so pull in the unfeasibly light hydraulic clutch, slot seamlessly into first and feel the impeccable manners of the fuel injection.

Interestingly, the throttle is

controlled by a cable, but it’s set up really well; this is no shed-built special devoid of development time. As you head up the gearbox with nicely spaced gears you can ride the torque and short-shift, or rev the engine. Peak power is at 9800rpm and it comes in hard around half of that. Sixth gear is relaxed, allowing cruising at 70-80mph with minimal effort and there is a lot more to go after that. 150mph is a genuine possibility – though I declined to test my theory...

The riding position, which is dependant on your size and stature can only be described as mild café racer. Slow speeds are not arm-wrenchingly awkward, yet at speed you’re not sitting in the wind. The clip on handlebars are nicely angled and feature thicker than usual grips. These feel nice, but make reaching to the switches less subconscious than on most bikes. But the only issue I had was the right-hand clutch cover sticks out a fair way and with one set of boots, hindered the rear brake. It has to be said that our test bike is a pre-production model and had passed through several journalists and test riders, so production bikes would be set up in a nicer manner.

One thing that won’t change on the production bikes is the fuel tank. Beautiful to behold, the finish is flawless with its natural milled alloy coming through the thick lacquer and the two fillers mimicking the original (it’s one tank though). But it only holds 10 litres – 10 measly litres. With a thirsty V-twin to supply this means you have a realistic range of 80 miles; less if you’ve been posing around town. It’s because the tank has to house the injection and airbox beneath it, but it’s poor – just as Harley’s Forty-Eight peanut tank is. Form over function gone too far – a gentleman may need to stop on a horse after that many miles, but not on his motorcycle.

This is a real shame, because unlike most high-end limited production bikes, the Brough fulfils its criteria of being a rider’s bike. You could ride all day, with no dramas and no discomfort. This is helped by the suspension. The telelever front end allied to a long (1540mm – 60.6in) wheelbase is unusual, though BMW’s K1300 tourer was similar. Steering inputs need only be fine and the SS100 heads for the exact point you want it to.

