

# GILERA **Family Tree**

Gilera's two-stroke singles wore their influences with pride but always had Italian quirkiness at their heart. Dare to be different

★ WORDS JIM MOORE

## ► TG2 125

(1982-1985)

122.5cc air-cooled, piston-ported, two-stroke single, 14.5bhp@7300rpm, 104kg, 75mph  
Colours: red, blue, beige, black  
Still a TG1 underneath, but sharper styling – new tank, panels, a colour-matched front mudguard and neat clock shroud, 12-spoke cast-alloy wheels, and the front caliper now mounted behind the Marzocchi fork leg – give the TG2 the look of a much newer machine. Again, continental sales only. Hideous custom-styled TG3 model sold alongside.



## ▲ TG1 125

(1977-1981)

122.5cc air-cooled, piston-ported, two-stroke single, 14.5bhp@7300rpm, 98kg, 70mph  
Colours: red, silver

Low-tech air-cooled single styled like the Suzuki GT range (Gilera weren't adverse to copying Suzuki – see SP-01). The piston-ported single was introduced alongside the GR1 trail bike with which it shared its engine, although the GR was quoted as making more power – 16.4bhp to the TG's 14.5 horses. Sold on the continent only, so finding one in the UK isn't easy.



## ▲ RV125

(1984-1990)

124cc liquid-cooled, reed-valve, two-stroke single, 19bhp@7500rpm, 134kg, 90mph  
Colours: red/silver/black

Gilera's answer to Yamaha's RD125LC was built with the home market specifically in mind, and has a spec to match that aspiration. Adjustable Marzocchi forks and rising-rate Monodrive rear suspension, derived from Gilera's motocrossers, looked after the handling, while an all-new liquid-cooled, electric start, reed valve single provided 19bhp for the 90mph top end. Arrived in the UK in 1986, but sales were slow due to strangled 12bhp performance.



## ▲ RV200

(1985-1988)

183cc liquid-cooled, reed-valve, two-stroke single, 22bhp@7500rpm, 135kg, 95mph  
Colours: red/white, graphite/white/red

Taking the RV125's capacity out to 183cc created the RV200, a bike designed to appeal to 18-year-old Italians not deep enough in pocket to afford the more exotic RV250 NGR. Mechanically identical to the 125 and not much more endowed in terms of performance, the 200 is the oft-forgotten model of the RV range.

## ◀ KZ125 ENDURANCE

(1988-1989)

124cc liquid-cooled, reed-valve, two-stroke single with APTS powervalve, 24bhp@9250rpm, 122kg, 95mph  
Colours: white/red

Trickness, or assumed trickness, means everything to technology crazy Italian youth, so the addition of a pair of twin headlamps and a flash new red-and-white paintscheme was enough to give the Endurance model the edge over the standard KZ model and extend its production run by a further two years in the face of even more exotic offerings from Cagiva and Aprilia.



## ► KK125

(1989-1990)

124cc liquid-cooled, reed-valve, two-stroke single with APTS powervalve, 25bhp@9500rpm, 125kg, 97mph  
Colours: red/white, black/white/silver

The last stand of what is essentially the KZ125. New all-enclosed bodywork and a sleek new fairing makes the KK a much better looking machine than its inspiration. As with the KZ, Gilera had to work out some ingenious solutions to component placement given the bike's seat-side exhaust exit; one such solution being the battery positioned just behind the front wheel.



## ▲ RV250 NGR

(1985-1987)

249cc liquid-cooled, disc-valve, two-stroke single, 33bhp@7500rpm, 160kg, 105mph  
Colours: red/silver/black

The opposition to the Japanese 250 two-strokes in the mid-'80s was this single-cylinder sportster from Gilera. Based on the RV125/200 and powered by a motocross derived disc-valve induction engine with added countershaft to reduce vibration. The barrel runs eight transfer ports and three exhaust. Triple disc brakes uprate the stopping power from the 125. Sold in Italy only. Rare.



## ▲ CX125

(1991)

124cc liquid-cooled, reed-valve, two-stroke single with APTS-2 powervalve, 29bhp@11,000rpm, 120kg, 101mph  
Colours: blue/red, turquoise/red

With its hub-centre steering, single-sided swingarm and all-enclosed space-age bodywork, the technically outrageous CX125 polarises opinion, but here at PS we love 'em. Looks as forward-thinking and strange today as it did 20 years ago. Chassis is steel rather than alloy but the rest of the bike screams 'trick', and the crankcase reed-valve induction motor is a beaut.



## ▲ SP-02

(1990)

124cc liquid-cooled, reed-valve, two-stroke single with APTS powervalve, 35bhp@10,600rpm, 133kg, 100mph  
Colours: white/red/yellow

Updated SP-01 got upside-down Marzocchi forks and Saturno-style paintscheme and enveloping front mudguard. The SP-02 was ready to race in Italy's hugely important breeding ground for GP talent, the Sports Production championship, with the simple removal of all road frippery. Never an official UK import, sadly.

## ▼ MX-1 125

(1988)

124cc liquid-cooled, reed-valve, two-stroke single with APTS powervalve, 28bhp@10,000rpm, 118kg, 98mph  
Colours: white/red, blue/white, black/red

The introduction of a mandatory helmet law in Italy in the late 1980s created a panic amongst home-market manufacturers. Would cool kids still buy bikes if they were forced to wear and carry lids? Gilera cushioned the blow with the MX-1. With the fuel tank relocated to the bellypan, the old fuel tank could become a helmet dock. The MX-1 got a new beam frame too, but kept the KZ/KK high-level exhaust.



## ▲ GFR125

(1992-1993)

124cc liquid-cooled, reed-valve, two-stroke single with APTS-2 powervalve, 31bhp@11,000rpm, 118kg, 102mph  
Colours: Gilera Racing: white/red/purple/turquoise

Styled to mimic the firm's (sadly) uncompetitive 250GP bike, the GFR is as roomy as a Japanese 250 and as quick as a production 125 stroker gets. Handling is sublime – hardly surprising given the quality of the chassis componentry – and it's more than capable of holding onto the coat-tails of a mid-'80s 250 if the motor's kept on song. A full-on SP version with higher-spec suspension, close-ratio gearbox and more radical porting was introduced in 1993 for eligibility in the Italian 125 Sports Production racing class.



## ▲ SP-01

(1989)

124cc liquid-cooled, reed-valve, two-stroke single with APTS powervalve, 34bhp@10,500rpm, 132kg, 100mph  
Colours: white/red/blue

Shameless cash-in on Suzuki's Pepsi RGV500 of the time, but no one was going to complain when it looked this good. Crankcase reed-valve induction motor makes a claimed 34bhp (although 27-28 horses at the wheel is closer to the truth). Gorgeous components abound, including a 300mm floating front disc, hollow five-spoke wheels, hinged tank for airbox access, and box-section chassis.

## ▼ MXR 125

(1989-1991)

124cc liquid-cooled, reed-valve, two-stroke single with APTS powervalve, 28bhp@10,000rpm, 125kg, 98mph  
Colours: black, red, white

Evolution of the MX-1, the MXR was a less sporty alternative to the SP-01 in '89. A redesigned fairing with twin round headlights and no screen and curvier lines distinguish the MXR from the earlier bike. Prettier than the MX-1 but ultimately destined to live in the shadow of the faster, more powerful and exotic SP model.

