

WORDS BY: ALASTAIR 'A-FORCE' FAGAN PICS BY: FLOW IMAGES



We love us a good K5 Gixer Thou' here at Fast Bikes, and with £25,000 chucked at one, you can be sure that it's going to bop!

Standard bikes suck, especially after a few months of fettle-free living. The power feels bland, the brakes get soft, and handling becomes as common as a tracksuit, ten Lamberts and a bottle of White Lightning in the local playground on a Monday night.

And besides, performance is essential to our lifestyles. It's in our blood. It defines us. It makes us who we are. Modification is a representation of our individuality, a way of expressing ourselves, and it's almost an art-form when executed correctly.

This GSX-R1000 K5 is a mint example. We're not talking anodised dust caps, some race-rep stickers and buckage spent on pointless bolts. The owner of this stunner, Mr Dave Cowley, took our favourite ever Suzook and glammed-it-up with passion and precision.

You'd be forgiven for not thinking that's the case from just a quick glance at the bike. This K5 is as covert as a camouflaged pantyliner in a nunnery. In the Arctic. Those stock colours and plastics conceal a raving loony that lurks under the skin, furthering the donor bike's already bonkers mindset and mass-capability. There's not even a hint of tack, or wrongly placed stickers. Just sexed-up metal.

BST carbon wheels make up a large percentage of the £25,000 that's been spent

on modifications here. We already know that standard K5s turn quickly, feeling nose-heavy, pointy and abrupt, but carbon wheels make things twice as sexy as they've ever been before. It's like giving your fave poster girl an extra vagina to play with: you can't go wrong.

Handling has been drastically improved in every area, with a lightning change of direction and the benefit of added feel from beneath. Less unsprung weight gives a lighter and more invincible feel to cornering in general. And those

wheels are up for some mileage, too. Dave has covered 20,000 miles on the BSTs, as they were one of the first mods.

There's nowt wrong with the K5's box-fresh suzzies for everyday duties, but if you've got a more focused animal and money to spend, then suspension has to be the next box to tick, particularly with carbon slags on-board. Old-school Öhlins Road and Track forks are Dave's choice for looking after the front-end, while an Öhlins 46 PRXLS shock does t'other.

We may well bemoan similar suspension that has been slung onto Italian production bikes, but this set-up is nothing short of stunning. 100% Suspension did all the re-valving and customised it for Dave's vertically challenged, Pedrosa-esque stature, yet it still remained versatile enough for my burger-munching fat ass.

The plush action we found in evidence on the suspension here makes for a more than welcome change from the race-firm setups that we've experienced on most reader's exotica. The net result is

that it allows this K5 to track the typically undesirable state of our UK roads beautifully.

Despite the overall softness we found here, the initial stroke

wheels and adjustment that's been undertaken, this thing doesn't sacrifice track pace either.

Thanks to the K5's already stunning chassis, the softness

“ THIS THING DOESN'T SACRIFICE TRACK PACE EITHER ”

is controlled, and the damping is superbly balanced. We didn't encounter any surface that was too rough, but thanks to the

doesn't induce weight transfer. On circuit, it may be a little undersprung for fatties, but for Average-Joe, it's perfect: Ducati, take note.

The chassis itself feels stiffer and more responsive than standard, with the Promach adjustable yokes reducing flex and generally tightening-up the front end. The best way that I can describe it is that it's like someone has tightened the headstock and left a trail of superglue on the road for you to follow.

All you need to do is just slam this bike in and sling it around. This lends the K5 a more race-bike feel and in turn, you have to be more precise with input. It may be an expensive mod, but it adds a subtle performance gain.

Another bank-breaker that Dave has treated his ride to comes in the form of the Braketeck ceramic discs. Suzuki are well-known to have always suffered from brake fade, but this is doing it the proper way. Biting the ceramics are Brembo HPK pads and calipers, and they do so with unbelievable vigour. The terracottas might not need the warm-up time of carbon,

but they are every bit as bling, not to mention pricey, too.

While the K7 brought user-friendly power to the masses - in other words, read 'Boring as fuck by comparison' - the K5 fraternity were still revelling in that stimulating power delivery.

While we know from longterm experience here at Fast Bikes that removing the cat' boosts the K7's midrange, this also dulls-down

the kick in power. Saying that, anyone with two working retinas would re-mortgage their house to scrap the standard cans.

Mr Cowley's experiments with different exhausts along the way have journeyed through the likes of Yoshimura and Racefit, before he ended up with this Akrapovic full system. It has to be said that this system, in combination with the Factory Pro bellmouths, has lost the engine some of its former razzmatazz. The familiar sharp top-end has now been rounded-off for a much smoother delivery, with a plumper midrange.

It's still a far more involving thrash compared to the K7-spec model, but I'm sure there are some of us who could argue that it's just a tad bland and that something's been lost in the process. Some of the K5's raw, animal appeal. There aren't any mad rushes or jolts, but smooth is fast, and it's still gonna dick pretty much anything else that you might come across.

Slamming on an extra couple of teeth to the rear sprocket has obviously livened the gig up, too. Then there's the Cordona quickshifter for back-up. These are two relatively cheap modifications that go a long way to slash lap times and make Sunday hoons

MEET DAVE, DAVE COWLEY...

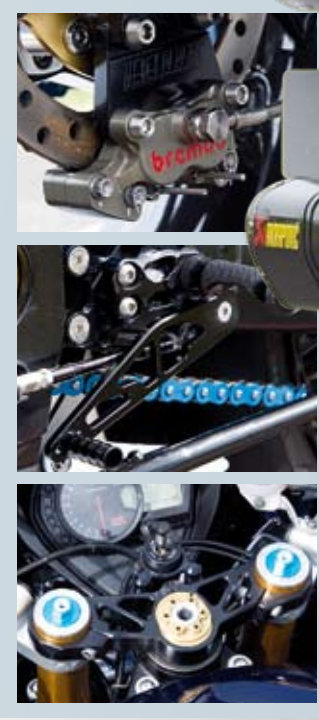
Man Behind The Machine
Before purchasing the K5, Dave had already restored a Honda NS400R. That's a long shot from a GSX-R1000, isn't it? So, what's the story, Dave? "When the K5 was released, it was so far ahead of its rivals. At 55-years old, I wasn't getting any younger, so I went to DK Motorcycles and bought one. I had to have one. I wanted to be able to do whatever I wanted to it, but I didn't have an open cheque book, otherwise I would have gone to Crescent or Harris." Nice work there, fella. Is it finished yet, then? "No! I don't want to go overkill, but I'd like a small bit of engine work done this winter. Cams and some head work would do nicely, and 190bhp is the number we're after. I've also sourced some spare bodywork, including a tank, so I'm thinking about going for 2009 Team Jordan colours (AMA team)." And then? "I'm going to keep it forever. Maybe place it in a museum, but as long as I can still ride, she's mine."



MODIFICATIONS

DAVE COWLEY'S GSX-R1000 K5

| Suzuki GSX-R1000 K5 | | £7999 |
|--|--------------|----------------------------------|
| Performance | | |
| Dynojet Power Commander PC III | £280 | Öhlins steering damper £195 |
| Dynojet Ignition Module | £265 | Gilles adjustable yokes £700 |
| BMC Air Filter | £52 | Gilles rear wheel adjusters £120 |
| Factory Pro bellmouths | £226 | Gilles rear sets £295 |
| Akrapovic Evolution titanium full system | £1390 | Roby clip-ons £125 |
| Cordona quickshifter | £225 | Pazzo brake lever £70 |
| Dynojet quickshifter switch | £80 | Pazzo clutch lever £65 |
| Afam 520 chain and sprockets | £170 | |
| Pirelli Supercorsas | £200 | Aesthetics |
| Dyno work | £400 | Skidmarx screen £65 |
| | | Carbon fibre front hugger £125 |
| Chassis | | Carbon fibre rear hugger £140 |
| BST carbon fibre wheels | £1950 | Carbon fibre chain guard £125 |
| Braketeck ceramic floating discs | £1700 | Carbon fibre tank sides £140 |
| Öhlins Road and Track forks | £1750 | Carbon fibre exhaust hanger £65 |
| 100% Suspension re-valve | £400 | Carbon fibre engine covers £145 |
| Öhlins 46 PRXLS Shock | £690 | Yoshimura stand bobbins £72 |
| Brembo master cylinder | £225 | R&G crash protectors £120 |
| Brembo HPK calipers | £995 | R&G tail tidy £65 |
| Brembo four-piston rear race caliper | £500 | Thatcham Alarm £299 |
| Harris carrier | £125 | Datatag £89 |
| Hell titanium brake kines | £175 | |
| Brembo rear floating disc | £160 | |
| | Total | £21,267 |





that bit more 'hoony'. With the dramatic difference they make to performance, it's getting to the point that quickshifter need to come as standard on production machines nowadays.

It would take one massive

the package is bang-on.

Here lies a stealth warrior, waiting to fool the fool who wants a battering, either on-road or track. Just make sure you look twice next time you see a plain-clothed K5 pull up. Unless Terry-

you're not going to better the chassis and handling either. It has an intravenous drip, trickling confidence into your veins.

There may well be cheaper ways to fix the Suzuki's inherent braking problems, the 520 chain conversion is a bit anal unless you're solely circuit-based, and only Sylvain Guintoli will get a real boner for the adjustable yokes, but I personally haven't ridden a better GSX-R.

There aren't many exotics that can match performance versus pound. Its open-mindedness, and a reminder of the K5 generation, make it a winner. This might not look like anything special, but it just reminds us that beauty is more than skin deep. **EB**

« I PERSONALLY HAVEN'T RIDDEN A BETTER GSX-R »

Gareth Hunt to pimp a K5 Thou' and fuck the job. Thankfully, Dave has conjured up a gem that's more capable than Derek Redmond with two hamstrings, whether it's brushing hedges on UK roads or taking on race bikes at a trackday,

the-250bhp-Turbo comes past on the motorway, you're not going to be left having sleepless nights with 175bhp, although Dave does want some top-end stuff done soon. And realistically, without fine-tuning and more big-buck expenditure,

