

DUCATI PANIGALE V4 S, 8452 MILES

Wheels of fortune

Carbon wheels add an extra layer of sophistication to our Panigale, but can they justify such a high price?

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Yes, I know, carbon wheels are an expensive indulgence on a bike already costing the national average wage for a whole year, but if you're in a position where you can afford to splash out £2937 on these ten-spoke BST Rapid Tek's, you'll want to know what they're like? At your service...

BST worked closely with Ducati (with Audi looking on) to meet the exacting standards required to supply carbon wheels for the current Superleggera. These Rapid Tek's are produced using the same manufacturing methods, so they're not only bombproof, they elevate my V4 S to new levels of sexiness and improve performance, too.

A few years ago at Rockingham we tested a set of BST carbon rims back-to-back with cast aluminium wheels on our long-term test Ducati 899 Panigale. They were 0.7 seconds a lap faster, which might not sound a lot, but during a 10-lap trackday session you'll be seven seconds ahead on the lighter items.

The Rapid Tek's are just as impressive for the road, too, as I discovered when I fitted them just before a ten-day, 3150-mile ride around Europe. They don't make a huge difference to the way the Ducati turns at sensible speeds; the V4 S doesn't have any problems in that department, anyway. But they let you run a softer suspension set-up, which ultimately gives you a plusher ride and more grip.

It's easy to get to that perfect setting, thanks to the way the semi-active electronic forks and shock are adjusted. Scroll through the colour dash menu and you're greeted with a pictogram of the V4, annotated with the suspension



Nearly £3k a pair but they are gorgeous

functions you need. It describes things in terms of 'support', rather than rebound and compression damping, to make it easier to understand. Preload is still mechanically adjustable, but it's bang-on for the road and doesn't need tweaking.

This easy adjustment let me nail a perfect set-up after a few hours of fitting the wheels, just by pulling over to the side of the road every so often and pressing a few buttons and taking away the support from the forks and shocks (basically knocking off the compression damping each end). Now my V4's ride is so plush and controlled it feels like a factory race bike and all because of those sexy wheels.

Those settings are stored in my Street riding mode, so if I want to stiffen it up to let my hair down a bit on a nice piece of road, the setting is just a flick of a switch away in Sport or Race mode. Clever, eh?

It's not just on the track where the BST wheels pay dividends



No need for spanners with the V4 S suspension



The Ducati's dash is sophisticated and intuitive



The BSTs allow a softer suspension set up



● 'On a ten-lap track session you'll be seven seconds faster'



Ducati Panigale V4 S



Engine 1103cc 8v V4



198.58 bhp

Power @13,000rpm

87.35 ft lb

Torque @12,000rpm



195 kg (kerb)

Mass (dry)

16 Litres

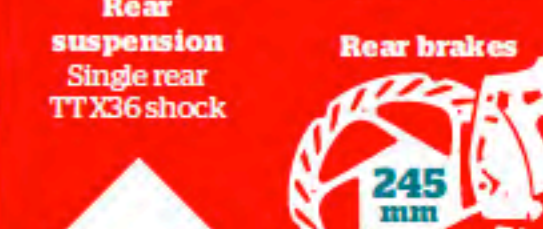
260 miles / 49mpg



Front suspension Semi-active Ohlins NIX 43mm forks.



Frontbrakes 2x front discs with four-piston Brembo Stylema monobloc radial calipers



Rear suspension Single rear TT X36 shock



Rear brakes 245mm rear disc with twin piston caliper.



830mm Seat height

What it costs

£23,895
On-the-road price

£268.23
PCP per month x 36

£575
HP finance x 36

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