



Taming the beast

What's it *really* like living with the **Panigale V4 S**,
Ducati's most refined road sportsbike to date?

£30,167

Ducati Panigale V4 S

- 1103cc liquid-cooled desmo DOHC 16v V4
- 213bhp @ 13,500rpm (197.4bhp @ 13,200rpm tested)
- 191kg wet weight, no fuel (201.8kg kerb, tested)



Sexy as hell but
what is it like
to live with?

By **Jon Urry**
MCN CONTRIBUTOR

Ducati aren't shy about revealing where the focus of the heavily revised Panigale V4 S lies. Described by the firm as a bike that 'pushes the limits of road sportsbikes even further', it can trace its evolution directly back to the racing V4 R that Alvaro

Bautista took two consecutive World Superbike titles on before being slapped with a hefty weight penalty in an effort to curb his dominance. Not only that, but this seventh generation of Ducati superbike (851, 916, 999, 1098, 1199, Panigale V-twin and Panigale V4) has evolved with developments in modern technology integrated *Continued over*



Agile, yet more composed

‘Super flexible and easy-going, it is far from intimidating’

throughout its entire design. Where previous generations of the Panigale V4 were well into their development schedules before aero became commonplace (leading to wings being ‘add-ons’ at a later date) with the 2025 bike, aero was integrated into the design from day one. And that doesn’t just go for its wings either, as the shape of the fairing and how it protects the rider, as well as the seat unit’s vents, were also developed by the brains from Ducati Corse. There’s now no more single-sided swingarm, which was something of a trademark for Ducati’s superbikes (851/888 and 999 aside...) but is now deemed as a hindrance in modern times. Add to this a Euro5+ compliant engine with even more claimed power (more on this later...), a 2kg weight loss, uprated brakes and a highly evolved electronics package that includes Race eCBS which trail-brakes into bends for you and it is hard not to be incredibly impressed by the new Panigale’s spec sheet. But is it all just too track-focused for road riders to truly appreciate?

Visually, it all works MotoGP bikes are anything but pretty. Downforce-creating wings,

‘stegosaurus spikes’ on seats, funny mudguards; gone are the elegant lines of yesteryear. It’s function over form but if it saves a fraction of a second per lap, that counts for more than exterior beauty in these days. This look has filtered down onto the WSBK grid and therefore the road-based siblings, most of which certainly don’t benefit visually from the addition of aero. But with the Panigale V4 S, it is the first time I’ve seen a modern aero-enhanced superbike and stopped and stared in admiration. It’s beautiful, just like a Ducati sportsbike should be. Unlike the new BMW M1000RR’s hideous carbon moustache, the Panigale’s nose aero is elegantly blended into the fairing and being painted the same Ducati red as the rest of the bike helps ease its lines. It’s a bike you park up and give an admiring glance of approval as you walk away, which I feel is something that has been missing of late in the Bologna firm’s model range. The fact it has a double-sided swingarm is no visual impediment either, and at a recent Ducati trackday I attended, the general Ducatisti consensus was the same. But does it go as brilliantly as it looks? Of course it does.

FUEL FACTS

147 miles
17 litre tank

39 AVG. MPG

106 MILES TO RESERVE

WEATHER WATCH

Sun and cloud
10-degrees 6mph
north east wind

Engine
The majority of the Desmosedici Stradale 90-degree V4 engine is unchanged, and it still runs counter-clockwise with Twin Pulse timing, but its cams have new profiles with higher lift, the alternator and oil pump are taken from the Panigale V4 R, the gearbox drum is from the Supertleggera and the variable height intakes’ lengths altered.

Suspension and wheels
As before the stock Panigale V4 runs Showa forks with a Sachs shock where the S model comes with Ducati Electronic Suspension (DES). The Öhlins S-EC 3.0 event-based semi-active suspension is now in its third generation. The S also runs lightweight 5-spoke Y-design forged aluminium alloy wheels.



The latest and greatest Öhlins

Easy-going V4
With the peak power and torque sitting relatively high but with a little dip in the bottom end from the tightening emissions standards (see the dyno boxout), I wasn’t quite sure what to expect from the Panigale’s engine, but ultimately I was left pleasantly surprised. With a genuine 197.1bhp and 87.31lb.ft on tap the V4 is hardly short of power, but it is the way that it delivers this performance that impresses. The tweaked engine feels noticeably less spiky than before, which could be down to the new Euro5+ cam profiles or its more refined electronics... or a combination of the two, looking at

the curve on our dyno graph. Whatever has changed, I like it. Super flexible and easy-going, it is far from intimidating to ride and aside from that hesitation on the throttle at low revs, it is remarkably refined. And deceptively fast. Very, very, deceptively fast. Wind on the power and the Panigale doesn’t leap forward with aggression, it picks up pace with a constant surge of acceleration that builds with such fluidity that when you glance down, the numbers on the speedo are a genuine surprise. You never feel like you are thrashing it and yet it is blisteringly quick, and should you feed it gears through the sublimely smooth updated

Chassis
While the design of the Panigale’s front chassis is unchanged, the main frame is 730g lighter and has 40% less lateral stiffness to improve feel. The subframe is redesigned with integrated ducts to help cooling of the rear cylinder, and a new double-sided swingarm fitted with 37% less lateral stiffness.

quickshifter and gearbox, you certainly need to be on your toes... or in an area free from prying eyes and speed recording devices. Arguably, this linear character makes it less exciting than some rivals which are more feisty, but I’d take it over them as I prefer to go fast while not feeling like I’m working hard, rather than constantly fighting against the machine below me. And that very same philosophy rings true of the Panigale’s new chassis, too. **Now with added flex** On the road, the older Panigale models still feel like you are riding an argument, because they are stiff,

● THE HOTTEST BIKES
● EVERY WEEK

Electronics
The evolved 6-axis IMU-controlled electronics package includes Ducati Vehicle Observer (DVO), which can simulate the input of 70 sensors. It includes Race eCBS, traction control (DTC), wheelie control (DWC), slide control (DSC), launch control (DPL), an up/down quickshifter (DQS) and engine brake control (EBC). There are five default riding modes – Race A, Race B, Sport, Road and Wet – all of which are customisable.



A lot of money, but a lot of bike

REVEL IN THE DETAIL



Euro5+ has necessitated the use of an even more complex exhaust, impressively packaged around the new swingarm. Naturally, there are Akrapovic aftermarket options, too...



The Ducati’s new five-spoke tangential Y-spoke wheel design saves weight. The pair of wheels tip the scales at just 7.1kg with the front 150g lighter than before.



The new 6.9in dash has two modes – Road and Track. Adding connectivity costs £242.88 extra via the Ducati Multimedia System.



Ducati Hollow Section Swingarm (DHSS) set-up saves 3.8kg in unsprung weight when compared to the previous Panigale’s single-sider.



Brembo Hypure monobloc calipers make their worldwide debut on the Panigale. They are 30g lighter than previous Stylema units thanks to a clever asymmetric design.



The Panigale V4 S’s seat unit is both wider and longer than before, giving the rider more room to move around. In addition, the rider’s pegs are moved 10mm inwards.



Pirelli rubber brings the grip

uncompromising and aggressive. But the new generation completely changes this attitude, making it far easier to ride in all conditions. It’s as if the Panigale has been to anger management classes and has emerged a far calmer individual. I’m no MotoGP rider so I’m not going to pretend I can pin-point the chassis flexing more than before, but all I can say is that where the Panigale of old would kick and protest over bumps, the new model is far more compliant. The chassis now absorbs more of the jolts rather than transferring them directly to the rider, and the overall ride quality is vastly improved as a result. You are no longer left feeling battered and physically tired after (and during) a brisk ride, but instead you are more relaxed, allowing you to focus your attention on what matters, such as the feedback from the sticky Pirelli Diablo Supercorsa V4 tyres and the semi-active Öhlins suspension. And this new compliance has been achieved with no loss in agility. While there is still a definite feel from the front end that it wants to be thrown towards an apex rather than gently encouraged (which is a lot to do with overcoming the momentum of its fat 200-section rear tyre) the Panigale’s handling is as responsive as ever and its **Continued over**

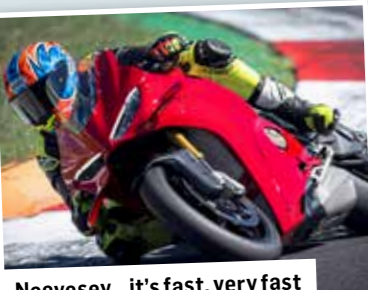
WHAT ABOUT THE TRACK

'Incredible - but lacks jeopardy...'



Michael Neeves, Chief Road Tester

"The Panigale V4 S is operating at such a level that it is impossible for anyone outside of a MotoGP grid to criticise it from a dynamic point of view. It does everything better than anyone aside from Pecco Bagnaia and Co. could ever get close to testing. While that's fine, what makes the new Panigale so impressive is the fact Ducati have made it so easy to ride even if you don't have the skill of Bagnaia. And ride very, very fast. "On track, with the amazing electronics doing their thing, you do start to feel a bit like a passenger. This feeling means there is a slight lack of jeopardy as if you want to go faster you



Neevesy... it's fast, very fast

just brake later or corner harder and never think you might crash, you just think you need to be a bit braver and the bike will sort it all out for you as you are so within its limits. If you just want to go fast this is a good thing but it does leave you feeling a bit cold and disengaged, almost like you are in a computer game, where the older bike was more thrilling and visceral to ride quickly. But, ultimately, it was slower as it was less forgiving.

"When the electronic assists kick in on the Panigale they do so softly you hardly notice them and the V4 motor is just beautiful, so smooth and tractable. And the brakes are on another level, staggering.

"After riding the Panigale V4 S on track I left the circuit unbelievably impressed but also a bit cold about the bike as it was a touch too easy and there was zero drama. There again, the whole point is to lap a track quickly so how can you criticise it for being too good?"

electronic assists are faultless, to the point that their interference goes unnoticed. It's still very much a full-on Ducati sportsbike, just one that is now more inclined to work with you rather than buck you off its back when the pace inevitably increases. And it's one that scrubs off speed better, too.

Staggering stoppers

I expected the Panigale's engine and chassis to be amazing, but the real eye-opener was the performance of the new Brembo Hypure monobloc calipers. I've never before ridden a bike with such an incredible braking set-up. Not only remarkably powerful, they deliver bags of feel, a factor often overlooked on top-spec race-derived brakes with braided lines. On the road two-fingered braking seems almost too much, yet thanks not only to the highly advanced ABS system but also the fluidity and feel from the lever, they never appear devoid of feedback. Even in damp or cold conditions you aren't afraid to use them hard.

It's quite thirsty...

During a spirited ride, the Panigale averaged just 34mpg, giving it a tank range of 127 miles and only 90 miles until the reserve light illuminated. That's not great but is at least longer than the maximum distance of a WSBK race, which is 68 miles - or a couple of trackday sessions. Taking things a bit easier, I managed to up this to 39mpg, which is an improved range of 147 miles, but still not fantastic. There



Red wings for the win

again, it's hardly a tourer and the Panigale's sporty riding position and rock-solid seat mean you aren't that upset to see the fuel warning light illuminate. If you spot it,

Dazzling, but impractical

The new 6.9in dash is clever with a plethora of (pointless for road riders) data such as braking force, lean angle, throttle position and more - but there isn't a fuel gauge (apparently the shape of the tank makes accurate readings tricky). It's a display that feels designed with the track in mind, meaning you're often left questioning if the indicator is on because you can't

easily spot the flashing green arrow, and the low fuel warning light is miniscule. But the rider interface is good, the sheer amount of data impressive and the way the speedo and revs take precedence in 'Road' mode helpful, but, it is frustrating that road practicalities have been overlooked for track bling.

It's all a bit of a blur

It wouldn't be a Ducati sportsbike without useless mirrors and, true to form, these show a blurred vision of your elbows and not much else. **● Thanks to the Cuckoo Country Pub in Alwalton for allowing us to take pictures in their car park.** MCN

The best brakes in the business



THE HOTTEST BIKES EVERY WEEK

'I've never ridden a bike with such incredible brakes'



MCN VERDICT

JON URRY
MCN CONTRIBUTOR



'Explore the power'

It seems a strange thing to say about a sportsbike but it isn't the Panigale V4 S's outright performance that leaves you so impressed, it is the new-found compliance as this is the factor that allows you to actually exploit the mind-bending power and handling on offer.

Far less aggressive than before, the updated chassis adds a welcome element of ease that stops the Panigale feeling like it is protesting at every bump on the road, rather than being on a smooth race track. As many Panigale owners tend to stick to the road, this is a very important moment in the evolution of the Ducati sportsbike. Yet it certainly hasn't lost sight of the fact it needs to perform on track.

As Neeves says, the very compliance that sees the new Panigale so good on the road also translates to a faster lap time. Arguably one that possibly isn't as involving to set as before but undeniably faster and safer. So it is an easier-going road bike and a faster trackday bike, what more could you ask for? Aside from maybe a fuel gauge...



Ducati's sensible superbike

DIVE IN TO THE DETAIL

★★★★★



£30,167 2025
Ducati Panigale V4 S

Engine 1103cc l/c desmo V4 DOHC 16v
Frame Aluminium alloy front frame, engine stressed member
Suspension 43mm NXP25/30 Öhlins forks, Öhlins TT336 monoshock. Adjustable preload, semi-active damping.
Frontbrake 2x330mm discs with four-piston Brembo Hypure calipers. Race eCBS
Rearbrake Single 245mm disc. Race eCBS
Seat height 850mm

213 bhp*
@13,500rpm
*(CLAIMED) TESTED 197.4bhp @ 13,200RPM

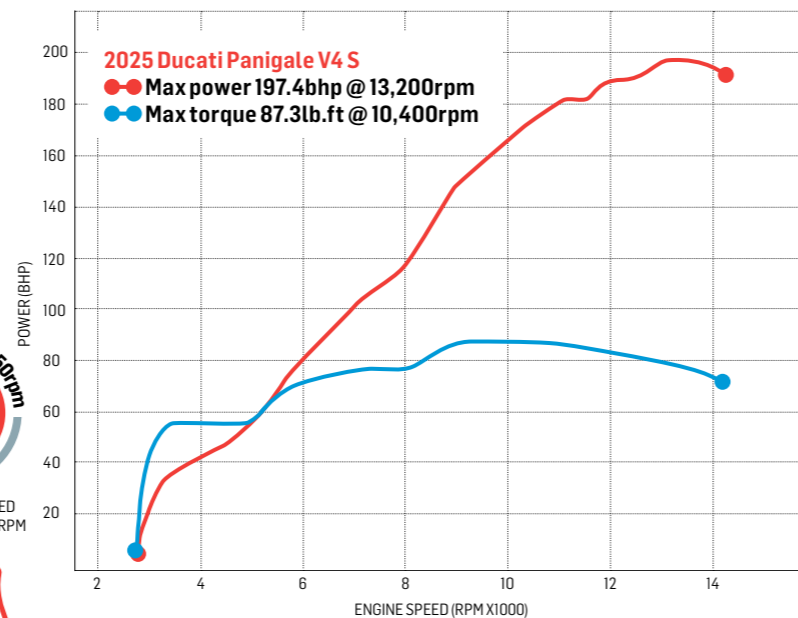
89.2 lb.ft**
@11,250rpm
**(CLAIMED) TESTED 87.3lb.ft @ 10,400RPM

191 kg (wet)*
(CLAIMED, TESTED 201.8kg, KERB)

17 litres

PCP DEAL £316.01 per month x36
£6000 Total deposit payable
4000 Annual mileage
7.9% APR fixed
£17,733 Optional final payment

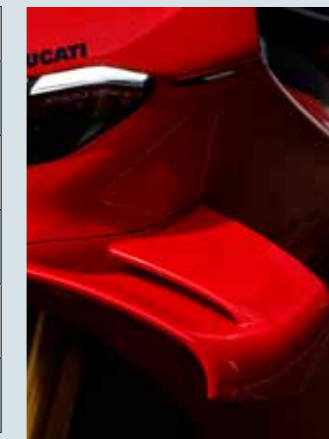
ON THE DYNO



The 2025 Panigale V4 S made 197.4bhp with 87.3lb.ft of torque at the rear wheel, which is in a similar ballpark to the 197.7bhp with 87.2lb.ft that the outgoing model recorded on the same dyno. At low revs the V4's motor looks to be almost strangled at the bottom end, but it picks up above 6000rpm for a strong curve up to, and beyond the 13,000rpm mark. However, to get this result took a serious amount of dyno time, due to the complexity of the Panigale.

PERFORMANCE DATA

Top speed	183.74mph
0-60mph	3.15 sec in 43.88m
0-100mph	6.08 sec in 137.54m
Roll on in top gear 40-80mph	5.51 sec in 147.57m
Standing quarter	10.22 sec @ 149.63mph
Braking 70-0mph	3.48 sec in 55.52m



FUNCTIONALITY AND FEATURES

Clocks ★★★★★
Switches ★★★★★
Mirrors ★★☆☆☆



OPTIONS AND EXTRAS



Room for one more £172.80

If you want to take a pillion, you need to buy a £43.20 passenger seat as well as a set of £129.60 pillion pegs, because they don't come fitted as standard. Raised extra-soft padded rider and pillion seat options cost £216 and £118.80 respectively.

Pipes without peace £7776

There are three Akrapovic exhaust options. A complete race titanium system is £7776 and adds 12bhp while shedding 6.6kg or twin racing silencers are £3564 and add 8bhp and save 6kg. Road-legal titanium silencers are £5076 and save 1kg.

A lighter tail £421.20

A carbon number plate holder is £421.20 and is available in two styles, as road-legal or track-only. The road-legal one uses the standard Ducati indicators while the track-only component comes with compact racing turn indicators instead.

SERVICING COSTS

£325
minor service every 7500 miles

£1200
major service every 15,000 miles

LIKES

- Flexible engine and far less aggressive chassis
- It looks stunning

DISLIKES

- Poor fuel economy
- Dash gives track data priority over road data

PRICES FROM: CHRIS WALKER MOTORCYCLES. 01476 850644.