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Brand identities are defined and refined over decades, and then they assume these unerasable proportions on their way to becoming icons. There are few that can lay claim to that status of being legends. Fewer still that can sway an entire population despite their imperfections, both real and presumed. A Royal Enfield motorcycle is probably the only one from the Indian automotive space which has stood the test of time and shares that exalted stage. It is a unified image in your mind's eye which hints at the experience that awaits on one of RE's bikes. For me that image will eternally be the sight of a Thunderbird cruising by in full throttle leaving behind collective sighs that are louder than its trademark exhaust thump.

For a brand that conjures up such a singular character, Royal Enfield has still managed to widen its portfolio of motorcycles without any dilution of its core brand promise. That is a rare achievement. And in its upwards evolution from the lower-end (350cc) of the mid-displacement motorcycle market to the upper-end (650cc), RE has added a cafe-racer and a roadster to its portfolio. A cruiser was a natural progression and the Super Meteor 650 that RE had unveiled at the AICMA last year, and even later at Rider Mania 2022 in Goa during December, is one more organic addition to its product constellation. I had previewed the Super Meteor 650 from Rider Mania. Last week, I travelled to Jaisalmer to be part of the first global test ride event for the new motorcycle and here are my first impressions.

DESIGN

Royal Enfield's motorcycles have had sway over the heart more than the head. It has been changing over the last decade, with improved reliability and build quality bringing more rationalism to the purchase decision. And that has been the reason why a lot many more younger buyers and first-time riders have chosen the brand. It is also the path that led RE to discover a global audience. The Continental GT, the Interceptor 650, Scram 411 and the Hunter 350 had set the bar higher, and it is good to see that the quality levels have been raised further in the new Super Meteor 650. The improvement is evident across the board in cast parts, electricals, even the chrome-finished and painted panels, and the trim

TEST RIDE.

accents are much better.

RE's legacy and its history of design often mean its newer bikes are merely being benchmarked to an icon from the past. The new Super Meteor 650 is one more in a long line. After the Meteor 350 and its success, the Super Meteor 650 represents a return to roots for RE. This is the addition that brand's portfolio needs today, and it will truly represent the essence of RE. There are a few angles from which the new Super Meteor's design really stands out, and a few from which it seems to look like a bigger displacement motorcycle.



NEW HORIZONS. Riding into the sunset never looked as classy. This new cruiser from Royal Enfield is built to please even enthusiasts



The asymmetric placement of the analog-digital meter also delivers some visual impact, and though it seems similar to the ones in some of RE's other bikes, the Super Meteor's is entirely different

The design is classic Cruiser styling. Low stance, heavy-set rear half and the steeply raked front fork leading to a reclined riding position are the ideal design metrics for a big cruiser.

The Super Meteor delivers all of that and that sit-in, scooped out saddle adds to its charm. The Super Meteor's proportions are just right. And the design language has been executed to flatter even hardcore cruiser fans. The straight, tubular exhaust pipes in chrome have been bolted close to the body and there is near-perfect symmetry when the motorcycle is viewed from the rear or from the top. The only change I would have liked is for the neck of frame behind the headlamp and front forks to have been a bit less prominent.

BUILD AND FEATURES

Unlike what the rumours before the unveil may have had you believe, the Super Meteor has been built on a completely new chassis, even though it shares the 650cc engine with the Interceptor

and the Continental GT. The frame and swingarm are completely new and co-designed with Harris Performance in UK. The classic triangular frame enables the Super Meteor to deliver its cruiser geometry. RE quotes a 27.6-degree rake angle and a 118.5mm trail. To enhance the cruiser feel, the rims are 19-inches at the front and 16-inches at the rear. The alloy rims in my test mule didn't seem like a mismatch, instead they manage to merge with the cruiser character. I would still bet that the Super Meteor will look stunning with the classic spoked rims in chrome.

There are a few firsts that the Super Meteor gets, including 43mm upside-down front forks, the headlamp is the first LED unit for RE, the tank badge is exclusive for the Super Meteor, and the tripper navigation pod is standard fitment. Round is the shape of all things retro and in RE's case it is even more of a brand attribute. Yet many of the features have been reinterpreted to give them a retro-modern

twist. Some of these include the satin silver fuel tank cap, the LED headlamp and its configuration, the instrument cluster and tripper pod and the tail-lamp with its light ring.

The asymmetric placement for the analog-digital meter also delivers some visual impact, and though it seems similar to the ones in some of RE's other bikes, the Super Meteor's is an entirely different unit. So is the case with the switch cubes which get a unique, shiny, plated-aluminium finish even though they seem to be very familiar with their integrated switchgear. The clutch and brake levers are adjustable and finding the right position for each rider should be easy. Barrel profile grips and in the bar-end mirrors in the accessorised variant solo-tourer look smashing.

The design of the all-new teardrop-shaped steel fuel tank flows perfectly onto the scooped-out seat. The 15.7-litre fuel tank also gets a classy paint finish with the winged RE logo curved to



The engine covers are new and the matte-black finish with the contrast cut RE logo gives the Super Meteor more panache

match lines. The saddle height is 740mm and the quality of stitching, logo embroidery and materials used is excellent. Seating position and comfort experienced during the ride (Tourer) was also good. Some of the forged aluminium parts like the yokes, handlebar risers and clamps get an anodised finish. The wide handle bar, the rear-set seat and the forward positioned foot pegs offer the perfect cruiser riding position. You can choose from either a rider-pillion combo seat with backrest (Tourer) or a split seat with the option of removing the rear seat and replacing it with a dummy panel.

The engine covers are new and the matte-black finish with the contrast cut RE logo gives the Super Meteor more panache. RE officials insist that the new LED headlamps can light up entire neighbourhoods; must take their word, since my test ride was only during the day.

PERFORMANCE

Getting on to the saddle of the Super Meteor gives me

the first real taste of the bike's cruiser persona. The foot pegs are set forward and in the same line as the frame downtube. The gear selector is a heel-and-toe unit and unlike the high-set, over-up-right posture in the Thunderbird, this one allows for a more relaxed riding pose. The Super Meteor's engine is the same 648cc, parallel-

twin unit that is air and oil cooled which the current Inter and Conti 650 twins already sport. The fuel-injected engine is paired with the 6-speed constant mesh gearbox and is now even easier to engage with the heel-and-toe unit. The output of the engine is the same, though there is some minor variation in engine speeds when

peak output is delivered. Peak power is 47PS and peak torque is 52.3Nm.

What you see me riding in these pics is the Super Meteor 650 Tourer in a dual-tone red and white colour combo. The fly-screen and the rear backrest are part of this package. On the empty, nearly desolate stretches of road outside Jaisalmer, the engine comes alive with a new level of refinement. This mill is a perfect fit for a cruiser, with a wide power band in the mid-range.

It starts off with lesser gusto, but there is a lot more performance to be had in both the mid and higher rpm levels. The air-box, intake and exhaust are all unique to the Super Meteor. The exhaust thump seems to have a deeper note, though with a sort of rounded edge. The engine mapping and gear ratios have also been redrawn for it to be a better fit for a cruiser. Much of Rajasthan's highways are ideal for full-throttle cruising with cattle and camels being more often the reasons why you'd have to slow down. So, hitting 3-digit speeds and staying there is easy.

Compared to the 650 twins, the Super Meteor feels less vibey. Once past the 110-120 kmph mark mild vibrations set in at the bar. But it is not very intrusive. The new cylinder head mount has also contributed to improving refinement. At 241 kg, this is a heavy cruiser, but thankfully, its heft is felt only when static. Turn-ins are wide, so you will need to plan U-turns and overtakes. The ride itself felt stiffer than I'd have liked. Some of that seat feel coming also from the contact patch of the 150/80 B16 tubeless tyres. Of course, the twin shocks for the rear suspension offer 5-step preload adjustment and offer 101mm travel. The front USD forks offer 120mm travel. Braking performance is good coming in from the dual-channel ABS and single discs — 320mm for the front and 300mm for the rear.

BOTTOM LINE

The Super Meteor 650 is being offered in three variants - Astral, Interstellar and Celestial. The Celestial Tourer variant gets the contoured single seat with backrest, and the others get the split seats. There's a whole range of genuine accessories also to choose from, including touring panniers and a top-box. Prices for the new Super Meteor 650 start at ₹3.49 lakh and go up to ₹3.79 lakh, making this the most expensive Royal Enfield. But, it feels like a flagship, and is a big step up for RE and its fans, with all-round improvement in build quality, ergonomics, performance and reliability.

news

EPCG scheme: Export obligation eased for hotel, health sectors

Our Bureau
New Delhi

The government has relaxed the export obligation under the Export Promotion Capital Goods (EPCG) scheme for the hotel, healthcare and educational sectors which were badly hit by the Covid-19 pandemic.

"For the years 2020-21 and 2021-22, these sectors will not be required to maintain average export obligation for EPCG authorisations issued to them. These sectors will also have the option to extend the export obligation period for a longer



HELPING HAND. The relaxation is provided to ease the pain caused by the economic slowdown, a Commerce Ministry statement said

duration, without having to pay any additional fees," according to a press statement

issued by the Commerce Department. The EPCG scheme is a trade promotion scheme

implemented by the Centre that allows duty-free import of capital goods for the purpose of export production in India.

For EPCG authorisations issued for the hotel, healthcare and educational sectors, the export obligation period would be extended from the date of expiry for the duration equivalent to the number of days the export obligation period falls within February 1, 2020 and March 31, 2022.

NIL COMPENSATION

This extension will be granted without payment of composition fees. "However, for

EPCG authorizations issued for sectors other than hotel, healthcare and educational, the export obligation period may be extended for the number of days the existing export obligation period falls within February 1, 2020 and July 31, 2021. This extension will be granted without payment of composition fees, but with a 5 per cent additional export obligation in value terms on the balance export obligation as on March 31, 2022," it said.

This relaxation has been provided in light of the economic slowdown caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, the statement added.

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NOTICE

Transfer of Equity Shares of the Company to Investor Education and Protection Fund Authority (IEPFA)

Shareholders are hereby informed that, pursuant to the provisions of Investor Education and Protection Fund Authority (Accounting, Audit, Transfer and Refund) Rules, 2016 and amendments made thereto ("the Rules"), the shares on which dividend was unclaimed for seven consecutive years starting from 2015-16 will be transferred to Investor Education and Protection Fund Authority (IEPFA) as per the procedure set out in the Rules.

The Company will not transfer such shares to the IEPFA where there is a specific order of the Court/Tribunal restraining transfer of such shares or where the shares are hypothecated/pledged under the Depositories Act, 1996.

The Company, vide registered post letter dated 20.01.2023, has already communicated individually to the shareholders concerned and the details of such shareholders whose shares are liable to be transferred to IEPFA are uploaded on the website of the Company at www.geojit.com. Shareholders are requested to verify the details.

Shareholders holding shares in physical form and whose shares are liable to be transferred to IEPFA, may note that the Company would be issuing new/duplicate share certificate(s) in lieu of the original share certificate(s) held by them for the purpose of dematerialization and transfer of shares to IEPFA and upon such issue, the original share certificate(s) which stand registered in their name will stand automatically cancelled and be deemed non-negotiable. Shareholders holding shares in dematerialized form and whose shares are liable to be transferred to IEPFA, may note that the Company shall inform the depository by way of a corporate action for transfer of shares in favor of the DEMAT account of the IEPFA.

The shareholders may further note that the details uploaded by the Company on its website should be regarded and shall be deemed adequate notice in respect of issue of the new/duplicate share certificates(s) by the Company for the purpose of transfer of shares to IEPFA.

Shareholders who have not claimed the Interim Dividend for the financial year 2015-16 and onwards are requested to claim the same on or before 19.04.2023. In case the Company does not receive any communication from the concerned shareholders on or before 19.04.2023, the Company shall transfer the shares to IEPFA as per procedure stipulated in the Rules, without any further notice.

Shareholders may note that both the unclaimed dividend and corresponding shares transferred to IEPFA including all benefits accruing on such shares, if any, may be claimed back from IEPFA after following the procedure prescribed under the Rules. Please note that no claim shall lie against the Company in respect of unclaimed dividend amount and shares transferred to the IEPFA.

For any queries on the above matter, shareholders may contact the Company's Registrar and Transfer Agents at S.K.D.C Consultants Ltd., "Surya" 35, Mayflower Avenue, Behind Senthil Nagar, Sowripalayam Road, Coimbatore - 641028. Phone: +91 422 2539835 | Fax: +91 422 2539837. Email: info@skdc-consultants.com.

For Geojit Financial Services Ltd
Sd/-
Liju K Johnson
Company Secretary

Place: Kochi
Date: 21.01.2023

