



By Elm Valle

Two Women, Two Bikes, Two Experiences

This month I wanted to depart from the heavier, larger displacement bikes that most of us ride. Though nothing compares to that deep rumbling sound that Harley's and Victory's produce, those same (1200cc to 1800cc) cruisers are like turning boats on the corners. Even with that much displacement, they will never have the same top-end speed as a sport bike. Don't think I am bashing cruisers either, as I am a proud owner of one. You cannot deny the power, agility, speed, and overall sleekness that a sport bike can offer. If you ever thought about owning a sport bike, then I have two bikes in mind.

I also did something a little different when I looked at these two sport bikes. I wanted to get the perspective of the riders as well. What makes it more interesting is that the riders are both women, with riding skills that match their bikes. It is very interesting to compare two completely different bikes and skill levels at the opposite side of the spectrum!

The 2009 Kawasaki Ninja 250R is one of the best entry level sport bikes around. It is equipped with a 249cc, liquid-cooled, parallel twin, DOHC, 4-stroke engine, and a 6-speed manual transmission. It has a telescopic fork front suspension while the rear suspension consists of a twin-sided swing arm. The Ninja 250R has front hydraulic disc brakes and rear disc brakes. In terms of real world performance, the little Ninja engine is a scrapper. Too often we want bigger, faster, and more powerful over practical, affordable, and simple. The press is just as guilty, if not complicit in these prejudices, but the bottom line is that if you are riding the Ninja 250R and not having fun, the problem lies with the rider, not the machine. Martha Ferraro is a 23-year-old female motorcyclist, with less than a year riding experience. The Ninja 250R is her very first motorcycle and she is extremely happy with it. Martha started riding motorcycles this past March on a spur of the moment. She is an Motorcycle

Safety Foundation (MSF) graduate who emphasizes safety and fun over speed and danger. "I highly recommend the Ninja 250R for beginners because it handles well, is lightweight, provides good speed, and has the sporty body style," states Martha. As a fairly new female rider, Martha says most other riders are very supportive of her. Martha and her Ninja 250R seem to be a perfect

match. It matches her skill level as well as her style.



The Ninja 250R is a beginner bike, with a beginner price tag of \$3,999, but with a well refined advanced look. Furthermore the Ninja 250R can achieve between of 55 to 75 miles per gallon.

- PROS**
- Lightweight, Agile, and easy to Handle
 - Natural riding position with raised handlebars
 - Styling bodywork match its Ninja SuperSport siblings

CONS

- No EFI: Carbureted

The Suzuki SV650 is considered a top notch mid-weight naked standard motorcycle. It's a great balanced bike with a light weight, rigid chassis, strong handling and a 90-degree V-twin 645cc, producing strong mid-range torque. It's addressed to beginners or experienced riders alike. From 0-60mph, the bike is a rocket ship. It combines crisp, lightweight handling with all-day riding comfort. Its fuel-injected V-twin power plant offers crisp throttle response, strong torque and a stunningly wide power band. In 2006, it was named Cycle World magazine's Best Standard Motorcycle. No wonder this is Pamela McCoy's choice motorcycle for track.

Pamela has 21 years of riding experience and is an instructor for the Lone Star Track Days (LSTD). She is one of the few women riders I know that can run circles around a lot of male riders, literally. She has been riding motorcycles since the age of 15! Now at age 36 (though she looks 28), Pamela is a wealth of riding knowledge. Her street survival instincts have been honed over the years. She views riding as a game with no rules. "Every time I get on the bike, I treat it as game of Frogger; dodging, evading, and even lane splitting," says Pamela. Good thing her SV650 is up to the task since it delivers light and agile handling, along with great engine performance.

Being an LSTD instructor, Pamela knows the importance of constantly improving her riding techniques and skills. You can find her at any given weekend at the track, either riding or running the track. The SV650 is a fast bike because of its light weight and flexible bullet proof engine. Furthermore it is great

looking, sounds good, and handles nicely. All these qualities make the SV650 a perfect match for someone like Pamela who likes to push a motorcycle to its limit, but also practical on the super-slab and the streets. At an MSRP of \$5,949, the Suzuki SV650 is an outstanding value.

- PROS**
- Wide Power Band, Lightweight, Good Torque
 - Great All-Around Motorcycle

CONS

- No 2009 model available. Discontinued in 2008.

Conclusion: Both the Ninja-250R and the SV650 are great bikes to have fun on. Both are lightweight and friendly to the rider. To me a motorcycle is a motorcycle. So it doesn't matter if you ride a sport bike or a cruiser. The important thing is that you are having fun on whatever you are riding.

