

News monitored for: Royal Enfield

● ROYAL ENFIELD HUNTER 350

A new roadster in town

Royal Enfield launches the Hunter 350—its second roadster after 650 Twins

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ON SUNDAY, ROYAL Enfield launched its second roadster motorcycle, the Hunter 350, priced ₹1.49 lakh onwards (ex-show-room). Also called naked bikes, roadsters are versatile, general-purpose street motorcycles, targeted at the younger customer, such as college students and young executives. The Hunter 350 competes with motorcycles like Honda H'ness CB350 (₹1.98 lakh) and CB350RS (₹2.03 lakh).

B Govindarajan, executive director, Royal Enfield, told *FE* that the Hunter 350 is targeted predominantly at the young urban rider who wants a motorcycle that is powerful and yet nimble enough for everyday riding. "The Hunter 350, we believe, is also far more accessible as compared to our current model range. We also believe it will attract the attention of non-Royal Enfield customers who have considered the brand but perhaps didn't find the right model earlier," he said.

According to a recent study by JD Power—the consumer research, data and analytics firm—the median age of premium motorcycle (150cc and above) owners in India is just 24 years, and 31% owners are students.

The Hunter 350 shares its engine (349cc air-oil cooled; 20.2 bhp) with the Meteor and the new Classic. We briefly rode the bike and the refinement shows: The Hunter 350 doesn't have a kick-start,



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only electric, and at idle the vibrations are minimal. That peculiar Royal Enfield 'thump' sound is there. The maximum torque of 27 Nm is achieved at an early 4000 rpm, and this means even in low gears, at slow riding speeds, you won't feel lack of power. The fifth gear is an over-drive—engine speed can be reduced at high cruising speed to lessen fuel consumption—and this means you can shift into the fifth gear as early as 40 km/h.

"The key attributes while designing the Hunter 350 were that we wanted a bike that is accessible, agile, comfortable, light in weight, and stylish and modern," said Govindarajan. "It also has the small-

est wheels (17-inch) ever designed for Royal Enfield motorcycles and has a low, 800mm, seat height."

Thanks to all-new product launches (the Meteor 350 in 2020, the new Classic in 2021 and the Scram 411 earlier this year), Royal Enfield has seen a pick-up in sales. In July 2022, it sold 46,529 units in the domestic market (growth of 18.4% over the year earlier). "With the launch of the Hunter 350, we expect to get an altogether new set of customers into our fold," Govindarajan said. "The Hunter 350, we expect and aim for, will not impact sales of our other models, but will bring us a new set of customers."