

News monitored for: Royal Enfield

AUTO FOCUS.

Super Meteor 650 represents a return to a cruiser as one of the core offerings from Enfield **p4**

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Over the past decade, mid-displacement motorcycle market leader Royal Enfield has steadily replaced its older models with upgraded, updated new versions and launched brand new motorcycles too. While on that path, RE filled gaps in its portfolio and went global; it has also revived iconic bike brands from its past.

Royal Enfield's appeal continues to hinge on its ability to reinvent itself for a modern audience while staying true to its heritage. That is exactly what the just-unveiled new Super Meteor 650 will attempt. The Super Meteor 650 represents a return to a cruiser as one of the core offerings from Royal Enfield. At the heart of all REs is this easy-riding character that sets them apart from competing motorcycles, and the new bike will now be the pinnacle of the brand's line-up.

DESIGN

The Super Meteor 650 has the proportions of a classic cruiser and is laden with character carried over from RE bikes of the past. Walking up to the motorcycle after the official India unveil at Rider Mania 2022 in Goa last week reveals that low-slung, squat, and yet muscular cruiser character in the Super Meteor 650.

The rear-set, scooped-out rider's seat, forward-set footpegs, and steeply raked, upside-down front forks come together to deliver that cruiser stance. While Super Meteor 650's design effortlessly draws me to swing my leg over, it is hard not to notice the purity and precision in its lines.

There is uniformity and symmetry in its slender mid-section and wider aft and front ends. The pen stroke curved line follows from the fuel tank profile onto the seat. The other obvious characteristic of the new Super Meteor 650 is the fit and finish quality. RE's bikes of the recent past have already delivered remarkable improvements in quality, and the Super Meteor 650 looks and feels like it has taken this as a step up.

Materials used and finish quality for cast parts, electricals, and body panels certainly feel premium. There are quite a few shared parts, especially for the electricals and controls. Similarly, the integration, ergonomics, and attention to detail have also stepped up a notch.

The Super Meteor 650 gets the RE signature circular headlamp construction with a thick chrome bezel, and it features LED light elements. The wide, teardrop-shaped fuel tank can store almost 16-litres of petrol and sports a premium winged version of the RE logo. Design matte-aluminum fuel filler cap adds a touch of retro-modern style to the Super Meteor.

The off-centre instrument pod sitting on top of the headlamp is a digi-analog unit with a floating LCD multi-info display in the centre. The smaller tripper navigation pod was also fitted on to the bikes on display at Rider Mania last week, a first for a RE 650.

The tail-lamp and turn-indicator housings are classic RE designs and feature LED elements, delivering a minimalist light signature.

BUILD

The chassis on which the new Super Meteor 650 has been built on is new, though there were rumours that it may be just a modified version of the existing 650 twins — the Conti-

Super Meteor 650: A return to roots

ICON REBORN. Royal Enfield's new cruiser marks not just a comeback for a legendary motorcycle, but also a return to the brand's stronghold



CHARACTER DEFINING. The 648-cc, parallel-twin engine and the two straight-tube exhausts with their "Bullet-tip" like end cans have been tuned differently, and the exhaust is just a shade louder and adds to the cruiser's character. S. MURALIDHAR

ental GT 650 and the Interceptor 650. The steel tubular spine frame for the Super Meteor 650 has been developed to suit the cruiser and its weight distribution. Adding to the handling needs, the front suspension now features a 43mm upside-down fork (compared to the telescopic units in the other 650s). The rear suspension continues to feature twin shocks with pre-load adjustment.

Braking performance will be taken care of by dual-channel ABS with a 320mm disc for the front and a 300mm disc for the rear (larger than the current 650 twins). The other changes in the new cruiser are the new alloy rims and tubeless tyres on offer.

And in keeping with the Super Meteor's cruiser profile, while the front wheel is a 19-inch unit shod with 100/90 profile tyres (the same size as the current 650s), the rear features a smaller 16-inch wheel with a wider 150/80 B-16 CEAT tyre.

There are several bolted-on

members that have been aesthetically finished in matte aluminum, and the way the wide handlebar has been bolted on is also unique. While I could try on the seating posture in a static position, the pulled-back handlebar and the cruiser-style low seat height of 740mm did seem like it will be perfect for relaxed riding. The wide, scalloped seat should also make it comfortable over long rides.

Ground clearance is a bit low at 135mm, but a wheelbase of 1,500mm could enable it to handle the average speedbreaker. And with 101mm travel for the rear suspension, ride comfort can be expected to be decent. RE claims that the Super Meteor's ride handling will also be nimble, but we'll have to wait until the official test ride to confirm this. This is also one of the heaviest bikes from RE, with a kerb weight of 241 kg when filled with 90 per cent fuel and oil.

POWER UNIT

The 648-cc, parallel-twin engine in the Super Meteor 650 is the same es-

sential unit that is offered in the INT 650 and the Conti GT 650. In fact, the output figures are also the same, though there are some minor changes to the output characteristics.

Peak power is the same at 47 PS but is delivered at a slightly higher 7,250 rpm; similarly, peak torque is the same at 52.3 Nm but gets generated at a higher 5,650 rpm. The good news is that nearly 42 Nm is available from as low as 2,500 rpm, according to RE.

The air- and oil-cooled engine is paired with the same 6-speed gearbox as the current 650 twins. Ratios may be different, but given the general, unhurried riding character that the power unit has, it may be perfectly suitable already.

The two straight-tube chromed exhausts with their "Bullet-tip" like end cans have been tuned differently, and the exhaust note as a result seems just a shade louder and adds to the cruiser's character. Overall, I can't wait to get my hands on the new Super Meteor 650 to ex-

perience it on the roads. The first ride experience is likely to be curated by RE by mid-January 2023.

SHOULD YOU BOOK ONE?

The new Super Meteor 650 joins the Conti and INT 650s and now creates a trio of offerings for buyers in the segment. It looks primed to deliver the quintessential Royal Enfield experience, something many are aware of given the brand's deep, storied history and its many cruisers of the past.

The Super Meteor 650 will be offered in two basic variants: a standard and a tourer, and in multiple colourways. There will also be an extensive range of customisation possibilities with genuine accessories that have been specially developed for the bike. Expect prices to range between ₹3-4 lakh.

If I were in your riding boots, looking for an affordable premium cruiser, I would put down my money on the Super Meteor 650. Deliveries are due to begin in February 2023.