



# Rocket to the Crypt



**Triumph's Rocket III is a bike that already teeters on the brink of madness. TTS's 245bhp supercharged version goes right over the edge. Al tries to tame it, and fails**

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I t seems that I'm dead. I'm balanced, seemingly weightless, and time has stopped. In front of my eyes, all is black. Behind me, I hear a slow sssccccrrrrrunch, as if the Reaper himself is dragging his big old claws

down his black marble clipboard of doom. Everything else is silent. Limbo? Hell? Somewhere else?

I'm not surprised. Ever since I got on today's test bike, I've had a dream-like sense of foreboding. Part of that is down to

simple disbelief at the facts of the situation: Richard Albans, owner and resident mad scientist of Northants tuning firm TTS has developed a supercharging kit for Triumph's Rocket III.

Yes, that Rocket III. The 2.3 litre, 140bhp cruiser that weighs about the same as a Challenger main battle tank and has almost as much torque.

Yes, that supercharger. A belt-driven positive-displacement blower that pressurises the engine's inlet air, allowing power boosts up to 100bhp. And in this install, it's added 100bhp and almost 70 lb-ft of torque to the Rocket.

The bike we've borrowed belongs to one of Richard's customers, Kevin Munday from Bedfordshire. He makes stained-glass windows for a living, a profession that's perhaps as far from this bike as you can imagine.



Above: Dave agreed to act as start judge for the speed run. That was before the 500kg combined weight of Al and the Rocket III came within inches of his left arm on its way to a ten-thirty

Apparently one of TTS's other supercharged Rocket customers is an army bomb disposal technician: a much more appropriate profession for a Super Rocket owner.

Kevin's very proud of his Rocket (rightly so - it's immaculate) so as I pulled away from the TTS unit at Silverstone, I'm keen not to either crash or scratch the bike. So I wait until I'm on a very straight, very clear section of dual-carriageway A43 before I slow down to walking pace in first, and give the big Trumpet full beans. Next thing I know, I hear a wild giggling inside my lid. It takes me a second or two to realise I'm hearing myself, making that sort of nervous, stupefied laughing people do when something utterly mind-numbing has just taken place.

### Fast Forward

Put simply, this Rocket presses the proverbial fast forward button more severely than just about anything else I've ever ridden. Your brain can scarcely comprehend that this gigantic lump of metal you're grimly holding on to can move so quickly, lifting the front end off the deck in second gear, purely off the throttle. Even the wide-spaced, cruiser gearbox can't cope with the speed of the rev increase, and you have to kick up gears as fast as you can, more like a close-ratio racebike gearbox.

This is a bike that needs plenty of breathing space, so we headed thirty miles up the M1 to Bruntingthorpe testing ground. We brought along a GSX-R1000 too, to give us some sort of benchmark against which to measure the Rocket's acceleration. Triumph has restricted the Rocket to





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130mph as a safety measure, and (thankfully), Richard hasn't worked out how to bypass it as yet. The big bruiser gets to 130mph in the blink of an eye though, easily keeping pace with the GSX-R in casual roll-ons. The datalogging (see box) shows how close the 320kg Rocket is to the 165kg GSX-R in terms of sheer arm-pulling acceleration.

We've done some head-to-head drag starts – which nearly gave our starter, young Dave Bradford, a heart attack. One exuberant launch on my part has the massive black form of the Rocket slowing sideways, and heading (momentarily) straight for our Dave before I managed to manhandle the behemoth back into line.

But the evil big bastard has one more death-dealing trick up its sleeve. Riding back to the startline, I have a quick go at an experimental

wheelie or two. Damp patches have the rear Metzeler spinning, then I hit a dry patch and give it a big handful in first. Well, you'll need a big handful to wheelie such a big bike, eh?

Which takes us back to where we



Even the huge 240-section Metzeler Marathon back tyre gets murdered by the Super Rocket. But as Al can testify, the German hoop still heels up, even with 260bhp ripping through it. Excellent work from Metzeler, thanks for supplying a new set after we, er, brake the ones on it. [www.metzeler Metzeler.co.uk](http://www.metzeler Metzeler.co.uk)

came in. Two hundred and forty pissed-off, supercharged gee-gees suddenly arrive at a warmed and willing Metzeler Marathon rear tyre, which is happy to engage every single one of them with the Cold War concrete of Bruntingthorpe's runway. The gigantic torque of this motor would be able to wheelie the Space Shuttle, and my hamfisted throttle jockey has the Rocket pointing skyward in microseconds. Some self-preservation lobe of my brain kicks in, and before I know it, I'm off the gas, and waiting for the front wheel to come down.

That indescribable, floating sensation of an incipient flip surrounds me, as I wait to see what

### What makes it tick?

## TTS Triumph Rocket III

Richard at TTS has developed his supercharger kit using the Rotrex supercharger

This is basically one half of a turbocharger – the compressor side, but instead of being turned by the engine's exhaust gases spinning a turbine wheel, it's turned directly by a belt from the crankshaft.

This belt drives a special spycyclic gearbox inside the supercharger, which multiplies the rpm by a factor of nine or ten, giving the necessary 80,000-odd rpm needed for a turbo compressor wheel to effectively pressurise the engine's intake charge.

Pumping in more air with the compressor, matched to an increased amount of fuel, means a bigger bang from each combustion cycle, giving more torque, and thus more power. In order to get enough fuel into the Rocket's combustion chambers, Richard has fitted bigger (80cc/minute (stock is 36cc)) injectors, with a Power Commander altering the fuelling to suit.

The Rocket installation is really neat, helped by the engine layout and easy access to the crankshaft. The supercharger has its own oil supply and built-in pump, and a small tank/oil cooler is fitted on the left hand side, behind the radiator. A smart chromed air filter finishes off an install that's almost factory in its understated style. Expect to pay around £3,900 fitted, depending on

final spec. Owner Kevin's also fitted a Corbin seat, which weighs about 15kg, and cost him around £700. Triumph's official race pipes look identical to the stock parts, but emit a crazed noise that's not unlike the sound of our Challenger tank destroying a small city block.

Kevin reckons the Rocket owes him nearly £20k. "I'm not looking to sell it any time soon," he said. "There's no way I'll get back the money I've spent on it anyway."

