

**I** get to ride a lot of bikes and my dreamcycle pushes 40 grand. Guess I better get a day job. We all have dream bikes but let's get back to reality. The Yamaha Star 950 is very appealing, low and lean, this V-Star looks deceptively long and relatively expensive. But at less than 8K brand new it can't be all that and a bag of chips? Everyone knows Yamaha makes great bikes, but could this be your bike?

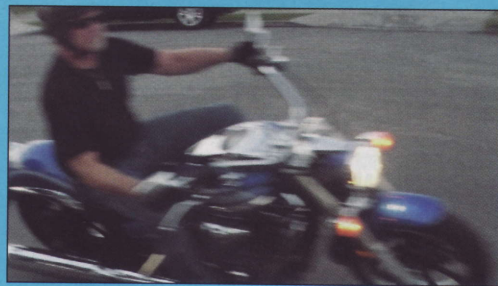
With 27 years of V-Twin, air-cooled experience (1981 Virago), esthetically Yamaha got this right. The 130/70/18 front tire and a rear 170/70/16 rear creates a well balanced good handling machine. A 942cc, air cooled 60-degree V-twin is a respectable jump from baby brothers 649cc. Yamaha intentionally kept it under 1000cc for insurance reasons. This in not a scaled up 650 nor scaled down 1100, this is a new bike. The steel double-cradle frame is long and low, contributing to the bike's longer wheelbase and spacious 95.9-inch overall length.

Yamaha generously loaned me a V-Star 950 at their '08 press event, so I get to run this star down. We all see bikes differently and immediately want to make it ours. After ditching the back seat and side-mounting the license plate my version is beginning to evolve. I wanted to get impartial reactions from other riders to this brand new, very nice looking motorcycle so let's ride.



15 minutes later she's my customized Lucky Star

I'm gonna rock this baby to Idyllwild. Hitting the freeway onramp she pulls to speed very nicely, I am a BIG fan of a fat front tire, kudos to Yamaha. It really improves handling and freeway cruising. This is a 5-speed tranny and the V Star 950 gear ratios spread nicely and allow freeway speeds without feeling strained. The V-Star easily held its own at 80 mph, keeping up or passing at high speed was not a problem. Large 320mm front and 298mm rear discs provide strong braking capacity with excellent feel. This bike is one of the most maneuverable, well mannered I have ever ridden. The clutch is butter; only 613 lbs wet and a seat height of just 26.5 inches off the pavement and low center of gravity it just slips through the mountain twisties. I like floorboards; they afford lots of leg options but the above-mentioned qualities had me scraping the replaceable sliders. I enjoyed blazing trails of sparks tossing her into the twisties. The rear mono shock is adjustable which may alleviate clearance issues.



A shooting Star, no worries, its not hard parts

# YOUR LUCKY STAR?



This Star handles effortlessly, masterfully bred from her perfectly trained V-Star pedigree. You will find that the engine, brakes and tranny are so well tamed you're instantly at home on the freeway or the twisties. Exactly what Yamaha intended to do, create a viable entry level cruiser.



View from the 243, the Banning Idyllwild Panoramic Hwy

Idyllwild is a rider's paradise on weekends; people from San Diego, Riverside and L.A. come here for lunch. With V-Stars gas sipping 47mpg you'll have ample spare change for a gourmet meal



Every restaurant and bar is packed with riders on weekends (until it snows)

Once in town I asked everyone their impressions of this bike - do you like the design? How much do you think this cost? Who makes this bike? Big Harley dudes immediately noticed it was air-cooled, and thought stylistically it looked very good. The women flipped; I had several female Sporty riders' saddle up and fell in love with the low seat height (By the way Yamaha, this Tommy Blue is a big hit with everybody). Most people guessed between 14 and 18 K as the price range and were floored when I fessed up. I had people ask me for my card as if was selling it! As a middleweight contender The V-Star 950 can hold its own in a heavyweight arena. Not at all out of place or embarrassed to be hanging with this crowd.



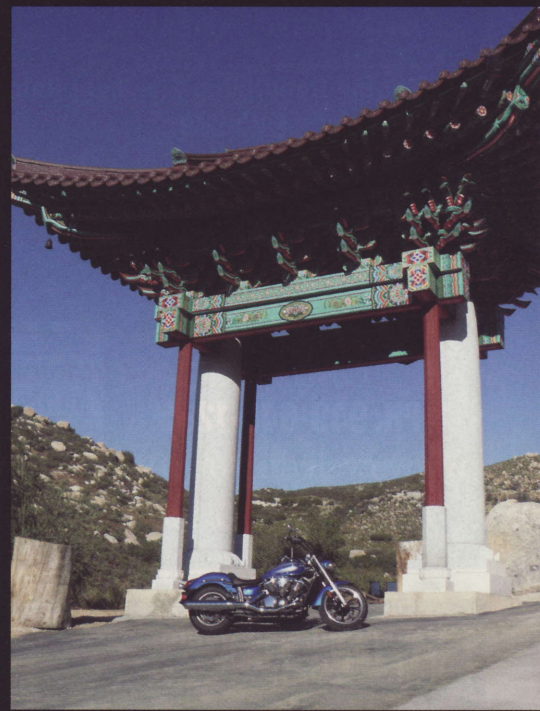
This middleweight cruiser looks at home with the big boys

At the Zen Center in Idyllwild the V-Star dream is attainable



So is the V-Star 950 all that? Esthetically the bike looks great, again I commend Yamaha, and they nailed it. The V-Max and Raider also look really cool, but they cost twice as much and are not my personal style; the V-Star 950 is. The 942 cc is a very respectable power plant. The instrument control functions are well designed allowing the rider to select multiple trip meters, fuel reserve trip meter, adjust display brightness and set the clock. The seat is removed by use of the key which also cleverly hides a helmet holder keeping it virtually theft proof. This was my first experience with a kickstand kill switch. Riders can't start the bike while the kick stand is down, a pretty cool safety feature. They use plastic for cosmetic parts but it makes the bike lighter and more affordable. The seat could use a little more cushion for pushin' the long miles, but that's a real easy fix. Finally, if your actually touring (tour option includes a windscreen saddlebags and backrest) make sure the rider, passenger, cargo and accessories are within the maximum weight restrictions.

So could this be your Star? Without a doubt, it's the best middleweight cruiser to date. If you're in the market for such a motorcycle give this Star a spin. It's the perfect motorcycle for the next generation of riders, men or women. Even as a returning rider as the saying goes "just like riding a bike" was never truer and come on, with a base price of \$7890.00, this very well may be your lucky Star.



## ENGINE

Type	942cc air-cooled 4-stroke, V-twin, SOHC, 4-valve
Bore x Stroke	85.0mm x 83.0mm
Compression Ratio	9.0:1
Fuel Delivery	TCI
Ignition	TCI
Transmission	5-speed; multiplate wet clutch
Final Drive	Belt

## CHASSIS

Suspension/Front	Telescopic fork, 5.3-in. travel
Suspension/Rear	Single shock, 4.3-in travel
Brakes/Front	Hydraulic disc, 320mm
Brakes/Rear	Hydraulic disc, 298mm
Tires/Front	130/70-18M/C 63H
Tires/Rear	170/70-16 M/C 75H
Wheels	8-spoke cast

## DIMENSIONS

Length	95.9 in
Width	39.4 in
Height	42.5 in
Seat Height	26.5 in
Wheelbase	66.3 in
Rake (Caster Angle)	32.0°
Trail	5.7 in
Fuel Capacity	4.4 gal
Fuel Economy**	47 mpg
Wet Weight	612 lb

## OTHER

Warranty	1 Year (Limited Factory Warranty)
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New wheels, rims, paint, pipes powder and parts



These cool decorative covers are Palhegyi Designs, available at your local Yamaha dealer

