

FIRST LOOK

WORDS: Aaron Frank PHOTO: Ter Sagen



SUMO DORSODURO

Aprilia takes it to the street with its new SMV750

Aprilia has more than a little expertise in the world of supermoto. Last year the Italian company won the manufacturer's title in the FIM World Supermoto Championship, as well as the team and rider's titles in the AMA Supermoto Unlimited Championship. Aprilia presently offers road-going versions of both the SXV 4.5 (450cc) and 5.5 (550cc) supermotos. Now, with the introduction of the new SMV750 Dorsoduro, the company looks to expand its reach into the maxi-motard category to compete with the bikes featured in this month's "Sumo Supermoto" comparison.

Derived from the SL750 Shiver standard, the Dorsoduro (literally "Hard Back," inspired by a popular riding area outside of Venice) should be a much more practical and comfortable streetbike than the lighter-weight, off-road-based SXV machines. Expect the

Dorsoduro to deliver a riding experience more along the lines of the Ducati Hypermotard. In fact, the SMV's styling very much resembles the HM's, with a similar pointy-proboscis front fender, broad radiator shrouds concealing a larger fuel tank to deliver acceptable range, and a wider, more supportive saddle set atop faux numberplates/heat shields surrounding the underseat exhaust.

Underneath that aggressive-looking plastic is a cast-aluminum/tubular-steel trellis composite frame similar to that of the Shiver and SXV, complete with the side-mounted, direct-acted (non-linkage) rear shock and a cast-aluminum swingarm with fancy-looking cut-outs on each spar. Up front is a long-travel inverted fork fitted with Brembo radial brake calipers that chomp on wave rotors. Aprilia appears to have cut no corners on the SMV, choosing quality components throughout.

In the center you'll see the same proprietary, liquid-cooled 750cc V-twin as the Shiver, complete with sophisticated fly-by-wire throttle actuation. This electronic aid determines throttle body opening based on engine speed, throttle position and gear selection to deliver optimal acceleration, at the same time minimizing emissions. Claimed output is 95 horsepower at the crank, which would put it in the same neighborhood as the Hypermotard.

Aprilia USA tells us the Dorsoduro will appear in U.S. dealerships this fall as an early-release 2009 model. American pricing hasn't yet been announced, but the bike should be on sale in Europe by the time you read this for the Euro equivalent of roughly \$12,750. That's a bit more than the Hypermotard's \$11,999, but you do get more technology. Too bad one wasn't available for this issue's comparo...