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# JUKEBOX HERO

Royal Enfield brings back the retro rock and roll image back in fashion with the new Continental GT



Gentlemen start your engines. Royal Enfield boss Siddhartha Lal (right) leads the pack

FHM CRUISING IN GOA



Modern day cowboys ride on their metal steed



International media couldn't wait to get the Continental GT ride started

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FHM GUY: Tummy in and act cool in front of the camera



All eyes on the road or trying recall where the room key is?



Are we there yet? Hope not! Don't want to part with the bike yet



SANDY MOMENT: Doing the balancing act on the beach



WORK IN PROGRESS: A passionate biker's attempt to make a customised Cafe Racer

## A rider's guide to Enfield's GT

What makes the Cafe Racer different from other motorcycles

Words: Anup Das



The Continental GT gets a twin pod cluster nestled between the clip bars. The left one has the speedometer, which reads both in kilometres and miles (keeping in mind the international markets). It also comes with a small LCD screen with a digital display showcasing twin tripmeters, odometer and fuel gauge. The right pod houses tachometer. Enfield has made sure that Cafe Racer's instrument cluster pods get a chunky chrome finish which looks premium and at the same retains its true retro image. The clips bars add the brilliant handling aspect which lets you zip by mad rush hour traffic.



The handle edge mirrors are extremely classy and believe it or not it does not hinder your rear view. The mirrors have titanium dioxide coating on them but unfortunately they do not come standard with the bike as it is mandatory to have rear view mirrors with an 80 mm circular design and these are smaller. These optional mirrors cost Rs 4000 and yes even the pillion seat is also optional. The additional seat also comes with pillion footpegs. Fit and finish levels are the best for an Enfield and the paint quality is comparable to any international level. The sheen on the paint makes the GT stand out.

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## The Continental GT handles like a charm. You can lean on and take a turn unlike other Enfields

Leather jacket, open face helmet, metal stand and Steppenwolf's Born To Be Wild blaring in the background makes a perfect setting for Enfield's GT Continental. This is the ultimate bad boy statement one can make. Don't get us wrong, there's nothing negative about the bike, as it is all about attitude and is in a league of its own because the Cafe Racer is its own competitor. If you're expecting a typical lazy Enfield thumper or breakneck speed bike because of the "racer" tag, then you might as well not read any further. The GT is about bringing back Enfield's heritage and the cool '60s'.

Just looking at the bike will tell you that it is a completely different beast. Everything here is about aerodynamics, a topic that Enfield is not traditionally associated with. It's about riding hard and fast in the streets, so GT's riding stance is very different from the usual upright position. With the signature two-piece clip handles and foot pegs swept back, you are "tucked in" and this posture reduces wind resistance and increases better handling.

This might sound a bit re-worked and look slightly uncomfortable, but trust us, after riding the Cafe Racer for over 500km on the winding roads of Goa, we can tell you it doesn't demand much from your body.

Press the engine start button and the bike fires up. It doesn't have the traditional Enfield boom boom thump, which personally was a good sign as the company has moved on to new uncharted territory. Another important step Enfield has managed to take is that for the first time they have made a brand new chassis. And the difference is easily felt as it more agile and lighter than any other bike in the company's portfolio. This was evident at the rim roads where sweeping turns seemed like a piece of cake. This was never the case on other Enfield bikes, so as long as you don't go overboard by going knee down and taking turns, the bike holds its own comfortably.

The GT feels spirited for a 184kg bike because of the re-worked shot gear ratio. The new 535cc engine on paper has a mere output of 2 bhp more compared to its

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Time to get back on the road



Loose sand isn't easy to ride on



Quick check on the photographs



Gordon May, the famous Royal Enfield historian, is suited and booted

| SPECS OF BIKE  |                             |
|----------------|-----------------------------|
| Engine:        | 535cc                       |
| Power:         | 29.1 bhp @ 5100 rpm         |
| Torque:        | 44 Nm @ 4000 rpm            |
| Weight:        | 184 kg                      |
| Tank capacity: | 13.5 litres                 |
| Price:         | ₹2.05 lakh (On road, Delhi) |

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Royal Enfield has done away with the standard MRF tyres which were dodgy while taking sharp turns. The new set of Pirellis provide the additional grip which lets you tame curves at ease. Enfield's Achilles heel has always been spongy brakes but the Continental GT shatters that image with Brembo. The bike actually stops rather than taking its time in slowing down. The bike's ride quality also stands out as it cushions most of the potholes and ditches. This is all thanks to the larger 41 mm telescopic front forks with 110 mm travel and rear suspensions made of PAIOLI twin gas charged shock absorbers having 80 mm travel.



Just can't keep my eyes off the Cafe Racer

FHM CRUISING IN GOA

## The Continental GT feels spirited for a 184kg bike as it gets short gear ratio and the RPM needle zooms off at 4000 rpm

current 500cc power plant but the way the needle rapidly reaches 4000-4500 rpm lays the lazy Enfield tag to rest. The initial pick is

responsive and lets you weave your way out of traffic quickly. The elation dissipates a bit as the handle vibrations become more and

more jarring, and this continues to be Enfield's Achilles' heel as it takes a severe toll on the arms and shoulders over long distance rides. The 5-speed gearbox isn't as precise as one would have liked it to be as it is still clunky, but it's still better than other bikes from the Enfield stable.

But yes, we need to change our expectations, as this gorgeous looking bike is not a typical Enfield that is perfect for cross-country cruising. It is an urban lifestyle bike and is elegant enough not to leave oil marks on your favourite pair of jeans.

It is quite evident that a lot of thought has gone into making the Continental GT and no short cuts have been taken. It uses Pirelli tyres that provide great grip while taking turns even on gravel. The Brembo discs (both front and rear) provide responsive bite when you slam on the brakes. What is more heartening is that the bike remains stable when the brakes are applied. Another feather in the cap is the great ride experience it provides with the Paioli gas shock absorbers making sure there is no spine jarring movements.

The machine is also fantastic to look at. Many Goans and foreigners stopped us on the road and asked about the bike and when it will be available at dealerships. Enfield has added a bit of modern touch to the GT, but it predominantly retains the '60s' design. Our main criticism is that the blokes at Enfield need to iron out the vibration issue. This slick urban hipster could have been faster but it still has adequate performance. We have to keep in mind is that it is not a slam bang Japanese bike. Another worry is that Enfield bikes come with a long waiting period. So it will be interesting to see how the company will tackle this problem and deliver this showstopper within an acceptable time span without putting off potential customers. Once considered the granddaddy of motorcycles, today this Enfield is the bike to own in its segment.



The Cafe Racer shares the same engine with the Thunderbird 500 and Classic 500 but Continental GT's power plant has additional 35 cc with 2 extra horses. But in terms of acceleration, the 535cc is a complete different beast as it is more responsive. As a matter of fact this is the fastest power train in the Enfield portfolio. This is also the first time the bike maker has made chassis along with Harris Racing. This twin down tube cradle frame increases GT's handling ability. Unfortunately this has not reduced the vibrations as it can be felt withing 2500-3000rpm and can be quiet unnerving.