



KAWASAKI KLR650E



ENGINE

Engine type Liquid-cooled, four-valve single-cylinder four-stroke

Bore x stroke 100 x 83mm

Displacement 651cc

Compression ratio 9.8:1

Ignition Digital

Fuel system 40mm CV carburettor

Fuel 95+RON

TRANSMISSION

Type Five-speed, constant mesh

Primary drive Gear

Clutch Wet, multiplate

Final drive Chain

CHASSIS AND RUNNING GEAR

Frame type Semi-double cradle, high-tensile steel

Head angle 28°

Trail 112mm

Wheelbase 1480mm

Suspension Kayaba

Front: 41mm telescopic forks

Rear: Monoshock with Uni-Trak, adjustable preload

Wheels Wire spoked, aluminium alloy

Front: 1.6 x 21 Rear: 2.5 x 17

Tyres Dunlop F750/K750

Front: 90/90-21M/C (54S)

Rear: 130/80-17M/C (65S)

Brakes Nissin

Front: 280mm disc, two-piston caliper

Rear: 240mm disc, single-piston caliper

DIMENSIONS AND CAPACITIES

Weight 173kg (dry, claimed)

Seat height 890mm

Fuel capacity 22L

HOWSITGO?

Power Not available

Torque Not available

Fuel consumption 5.4L/100km

Top speed Over 160km/h

WHAT'SITCOST?

Testbike Kawasaki Australia

Contact www.kawasaki.com.au

(02) 9684 2585

Warranty 24 month, unlimited km

Colour options Galaxy Silver/Candy Green

Price \$7990+orc

■ TEST MICK MATHESON ■ PHOTOGRAPHY MATT SHIELDS

AWESOME ALL-ROUNDER

Kawasaki's go everywhere, do everything dirt-tourer proves that green is good

What an absolute bargain. Eight grand plus on-roads. That's all it costs for a brand new KLR650 — a motorcycle that's good on the open road, good on dirt roads, a fine commuter, an excellent tourer, learner-approved in LAMS states, cheap to run, proven over almost two decades and, now, good looking and more refined thanks to a heap of updates.

The changes are too numerous to list in detail on a page, but begin with the new look. The fairing suddenly makes the KLR look young again as well as producing a smooth and comfortable flow of air over the screen — it's an excellent design. The seat is lower and the suspension travel is reduced but your bum is no closer to the ground because the suspension is firmer, with less sag, and so is the seat foam. I actually found it a bit too firm for comfort.

Normally, I'd look at a bike like this and think Kawasaki had done the wrong thing by reducing suspension travel. Surely long travel is the point of it, if you still intend to do decent off-tar touring. But dirt roads quickly revealed the revised rates work so much better than the old KLR's spongy suspension that this new one is superior on both gravel and tarmac. On the road, as long as you're half smooth, the KLR650 sails through corners on a solid line and, if you need to adjust with brakes or power, it'll stay steady instead of becoming unbalanced. The big improvement on loose surfaces is the extra feedback you get and more direct reactions to your inputs. Traction was never an issue, not in the context of a touring dirtbike with these tyres.

The tyres are adequate for adventurous riding but borderline if you really want to explore back country or the outback. Unfortunately, it looks like there's so little clearance between the tyre and swingarm/exhaust that knobby tyres might not fit.

New cam timing and other engine upgrades are probably aimed more at current emissions laws than anything. While I can recall the chassis feel of the old KLR, I couldn't pick a difference power-wise. The 650 single certainly has the kind of grunt you'd live with but a roll-on against a BMW G 650 X left the heavier Kawasaki trailing way behind very quickly. It's adequate, but no powerhouse.

The real attractions, apart from price, are range and carrying ability. The KLR's massive 22L petrol tank took me almost 400km before I considered refuelling and will potentially go 450km on a gentle tour. The big rack on the back is a perfect platform for a mountain of gear.

This robust and simple machine is honest, cheap and very bloody practical. 🏍️

