

SMALL BIKES

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Sinnis Trackstar 125

£1549

1 PRODUCED BY Brighton-based Sinnis, but manufactured in China, the Trackstar is a cheap, trendy 125cc alternative to mainstream Japanese rivals. It's very easy to control and manoeuvre, making it an attractive option for learners or novice bikers. Its also has the looks and charm to interest scooter riders, commuters or city-dwellers who are won over by its unassuming, low-power appeal. Price is the biggest selling point, at £1549 new, it's simply unparalleled. If sales take off Sinnis may just redefine our perception of Chinese-made bikes.

The single-cylinder, air-cooled, four-stroke 124cc heart is based on Suzuki's GS125 engine. Sinnis use more or less the same design across its range – and the motor seems to do the job perfectly well. Vibration becomes quite off-putting and uncomfortable at the top end of the rev range, but cruising at 55mph is perfectly smooth and manageable in fifth gear.

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The brakes are gentle but effective, the riding position doesn't put any stress on your back or legs and the bars are halfway between street bike and cruiser. It's easy to lean around corners, has a fantastically small turning circle and the springy suspension is aimed more at comfort than performance. It's extraordinarily light and manageable, making it good for the commuter, rookie and petite alike.

The retro styling is cute and appealing, with a pleasing little speedo, digital gear indicator and

comfy, stitched seat. The mirrors are large and well placed and the electric start is welcome. The best word to describe the bike is compact. It can't carry much weight, but it's frugal, good looking and has a good deal of charm.

Quality is good for a budget bike, though it is obviously built for affordability, not luxury. Sinnis offer a two-year warranty, which offers peace of mind and shows that they're confident in their product. To keep the warranty valid, they ask that you have one service at 635 miles followed by another at 2000 miles. There haven't been any reported problems with the other models in the company's range and they claim they've never had a case of engine failure.

The Trackstar is superb value. By trying to prove that Chinese-built bikes can be as reliable and attractive as their Japanese or European rivals, Sinnis have given themselves a difficult job. However, with such aggressive pricing and a bargain little product, they might just be on the verge of doing it single-handedly.

PROS: *Fabulous value, OK spec, cute and charming, ease of use*

CONS: *Fairly basic and dinky*

SPECIFICATIONS

- **Engine** 124cc air-cooled single-cylinder four-stroke
- **Power** 11bhp (claimed) ● **Torque** 7ftlb (claimed)
- **Chassis** Tubular steel frame ● **Dry weight** 107kg
- **Seat height** 760mm ● **Fuel capacity** 10.5 litres
- **Top speed** 65mph ● **Insurance group** 3



AJS Regal Raptor DD125E
£1999

70mph ● 249cc ● 17bhp ● 11ftlb ● Ins group 8

2 THE REGAL RAPTOR range has now been reduced to just one model, the DD125E, which is also the most learner-friendly. Made in China, Regal Raptors are cheap, cheerful and have the advantage of a UK importer for spares/warranty back up. The Regal Raptor motor is old hat, no two ways about it. The 125cc engine is OK in modern traffic, but soon runs out of steam. The gearbox is fairly crude, too. On the upside, the unit is based on a proven Honda motor and the bike actually handles

quite respectably. The frame appears to be strong, it steers nicely and the 15-inch rear wheel doesn't cause any wobbles on the open road. The recently-updated Mk2 version also features new alloy wheels, a disc rear brake and more. For two grand, the DD125 Mk2 makes a decent workhorse and is reasonable value. For £3000 AJS now do full-on chopper-style Daytona and Bobber versions, too – the most outlandish 125 cruisers you can buy.

PROS: Style, value, adequate mechanicals
CONS: Performance

Daelim Roadwin 125
£2499



135mph ● 124cc ● n/a ● n/a ● Ins group 4

3 ESSENTIALLY a naked version of Daelim's Roadsport 125, the Roadwin is a traditional, straightforward but reasonably stylish commuter. It's powered by an air-cooled, single-cylinder four-stroke engine running through a five-speed gearbox, has disc brakes front and rear and decent ergonomics including a pleasantly low seat. The pillion has a separate seat pad and the fuel tank is a usefully large 15-litres. Overall, the Roadwin is nothing extravagant, but it is pleasant, straightforward and a very reasonable all-rounder.

PROS: Decent all-round ability, reasonable value
CONS: Lacks truly compelling features or abilities

Suzuki RV125 VanVan
£3065



60mph ● 124cc ● 12bhp ● 7ftlb ● Ins group 5

4 The VanVan is an enigmatic 'beach bike' for whom, farm hands, gamekeepers, race teams and surf dudes would be the ideal customers. It's perfect for whizzing around country estates, race paddocks and beaches. It's light, low, cute and a doddle to ride, making it ideal for novices. On the downside it's quite pricey, although fuel consumption, cheap parts and low insurance keep costs down. They are used as commuters by those whose ride to work is entirely within speed-restricted, urban areas. Newcomers like their ease of use.

PROS: Style, ease of use, charm
CONS: Struggles above town speed, not cheap

ALSO CONSIDER

CPI GTR50
£2099



30mph ● 49cc
● 6bhp ● n/a ● Ins group 2

5 Another take on the scooter/bike hybrid, but with 17-in wheels for better handling and a modern liquid-cooled engine. Not the cheapest example of a 50cc two-wheeler, but has bags of style and a decent spec.
PROS: Style, handling, pose value
CONS: Still only a 50, not the cheapest



Jinlun Hornet 125
£1399

60mph ● 124cc ● n/a ● n/a ● Ins group 4

6 Scooter-cum-bike along the lines of Gilera's old DNA. Not as practical as a scooter, but better handling and finished off with bags of youth style.
PROS: Dual-purpose ability
CONS: Lacks scooter practicality

Honda ANF125 Innova
£2270



65mph ● 125cc ● n/a ● n/a ● Ins group 3

7 The replacement for Honda's legendary C90 step-thru is based on a very similar powertrain with semi-automatic transmission, disc front brake along with updated styling and equipment.
PROS: Simple design, versatile, durable
CONS: Drab style, unexciting

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