

2008 Kawasaki Ninja® 250R Q & A with Sportbike Product Manager Karl Edmondson



Since its debut in the mid-80s, the Ninja 250R has developed quite a following. What is the reason behind this model's market dominance – this is the best selling Kawasaki motorcycle, right?

In a nutshell, the Ninja 250 is priced to attract a lot of first time buyers and those on a budget. Its easy handling, beginner friendly personality and excellent reliability increase the perceived value of its low purchase price. This is Kawasaki's number one selling motorcycle and one of the few bikes from any manufacturer to show positive sales numbers, while the industry as a whole dropped an average of about seven percent in the last year.

How has Kawasaki factored this legacy into the redesign for 2008?

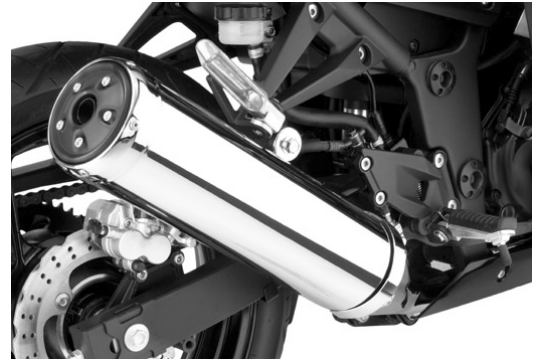
Utilizing the lessons learned with the outgoing Ninja 250R, the designers strove to retain its positive traits and keep the price low, while improving its beginner-friendly attributes and updating its sportbike styling.



Besides the obvious visual (bodywork) updates, what are some of the other key changes?



The engine received a major work over; it now produces more torque earlier in the rev range, meets ever-tightening modern emissions requirements and produces less noise.



Updated brakes with petal style rotors, and 17-inch wheels round out the significant changes.



What obstacles did the engineers face when they created the 2008 Ninja 250R?



Modernizing the styling, updating the suspension, wheels, brakes, bringing the engine into compliance with tough (50-state legal) emission standards and improving real-world power delivery, all while keeping the price down was a quite a tall order to fill.

Who are the target markets of the 250R? Is more than one market focus unique to this model?

The most obvious sales demographic for the Ninja 250R are young, beginning riders. However, we found that it has quite a broad appeal, including men and women in age ranges throughout the scale. It boasts one of the highest percentage of women riders as well – fully 33 percent of Ninja 250R owners are female.



Is it safe to label the Ninja 250R as “a do-it-all street bike”?



Yes, its excellent mileage, low cost to purchase/insure, improved power delivery and easy handling mean it’s certainly at home in the urban jungle. Furthermore, the Ninja 250R isn’t just a great city bike, it’s also a fun sport bike – even a great club racer for some.

What accessories are planned or already exist for the Ninja 250R?

Right now we have an accessory seat cowl that enhances the sporting appeal of the new bodywork and will be available for \$99.95.

