

This Boss deserves respect

Neil Vorano takes to the open road on the back of a supersized cruiser

The long strip of black tarmac stretched on for kilometres ahead, beckoning me to continue. I had notions of actually going somewhere on this Friday morning; perhaps Al Ain or Hatta. But that would have meant stopping on the side of the road to look at a map, and that just didn't seem right. It was a beautiful day, the traffic was light, and I had all the power in the world underneath me to go wherever I wanted to. I haven't felt freedom like this in a while.

I also haven't felt this conspicuous in a while, either.

I've never ridden something as ridiculous before. I'm astride a Boss Hoss motorcycle, a humungous cruiser that's forcing me to stretch all of my limbs just to reach the bars and footpegs. Why is it so big, you ask? It needs the space for the 450-horsepower V8 engine, lifted from a Chevrolet Corvette, that sits

between my legs. The exhaust manifolds are cooking my calves.

It's so colossal, this bike could only be made by the people who brought us the Whopper, the Super Bowl and *Roseanne*. Yes, the Americans do excess like no one else. Well, save Dubai, perhaps, so it's fitting I'm cruising just south of the city on lonely desert roads.

Crack the throttle and this bike does nought-to-60 kilometres an hour in two seconds. Yes, two. To get up to 200kph, it takes about another three seconds. I would love to be more accurate, but it's hard to click a stopwatch while using all of my strength to hang on to the handlebars and curling my toes around the pegs – the small backrest behind the rider is an absolute necessity. But the power is laid down smoother than any other bike out there, thanks to the number of cylinders.

I'm also thankful that it has a



if you are an attention-seeker then the Boss Hoss is the perfect bike for you, although at Dh250,000 the price may be prohibitive. Paulo Vecina / The National

If you go easy with your right wrist, this bike is surprisingly easy to ride

semi-automatic transmission with a torque converter. This dumbs down the massive amount of torque a bit, otherwise I'd have shredded the tyres at the first traffic light. Or, just sent the bike flying without me.

But if you go easy with your right wrist, the bike is surprisingly easy to ride. At more than 500 kilograms, you would expect this to be a handful at low speeds, but it's one of the easiest bikes to balance I have ever ridden. That's because the few hundred kilograms of the engine and the rider's seat are pushed low to the ground – the rider gets a face full of the massive petrol tank, making

it feel like the dashboard of a car. The suspension, however, is harsh – the front forks have little give, and a short, low-speed ride over rough pavement had the bars literally jumping out of my hands.

But a big bike deserves a big sound, and this one just doesn't deliver. There is no thump-thump at idle, or a burly growl under acceleration. Instead, it just has a low whine, combined with the constant whir of the cooling fan. The aftermarket exhaust pipes also ride too low, scraping the ground in moderate turns. Bernhard A Schuler, the boss of Boss Hoss Middle East in Dubai, says he is still tink-

ering with the exhaust set-up, so all this may change, hopefully.

Despite its shortcomings, the Boss Hoss can guarantee one thing – people will notice you. I have never driven or ridden anything that had so many people asking me about it, or pointing at it. You want attention? Buy a Boss Hoss.

But the Americans have a saying: Freedom isn't free. In the case of the Boss Hoss, that's an understatement. Depending on options and styles, the bikes go for around Dh250,000.

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