

Ducati launches Panigale V4, creates film to capture sound

Ducati has finally unveiled the much-anticipated Panigale V4 superbike. This is the first production Ducati with a four-cylinder engine, which is said to be "a delight to the ears" of any superbike fan.



According to Andrea Ferraresi, design director of Ducati, the team managed the new volumes whilst maintaining the previous model's appeal by "following the handbook of the good Ducati designer".

"We created proportions that would immediately convey that this is a racing animal: an exciting bike, materialising the idea of power. Anybody looking at this motorcycle, even if he does not know its technical characteristics, knows that it is going to be amazing on the track... We then applied the curves of the Panigale to these proportions and lastly we finished the details that needed to communicate refinement and elegance," Ferraresi says.

Film

In addition, Ducati partnered with PAG and Blackboard to create a film to capture the sound of the bike. London sound design and music production studio, String and Tins, was tasked with recording the unique 'orchestra' of the bike. Sound is a huge part of the appeal when it comes to superbikes and it was important that Ducati's fans would get to hear the true sound of the Panigale when it was finally unveiled.

"The brief from the very first conversations on this project was to capture the bike completely authentically," comments sound designer Joe Wilkinson, "So the objective was to harvest everything we could record as fully as possible."

However, recording the roaring harmonies of a superbike is apparently not so easy. Unlike a car, which can be rigged with mics around the engine, and protected by casing, a sleek motorbike design doesn't leave much excess space for recording equipment.

Says Wilkinson: "Our biggest challenge, when it came to record the epic sound of the Panigale, was where do you mount a recorder securely on a machine where every piece of faring is designed to be as aerodynamic as possible? Secondly, how do we rig our microphones so that they are protected from the wind, but still offer a recording with rich harmonic content?"

"After numerous tests with different mics and placements, we found a couple of sweet spots. Just underneath the riders' boot seemed to offer us an exciting perspective of the exhaust note - with the boot itself offering some natural wind protection. The second was inside the bodywork, capturing the clatter of the pistons and rasp of the engine. These two together offered a nice blend across the frequency spectrum. Along with this, we had two more perspectives, one on top of the chain guard at the rear, and the last with a contact mic placed near the fuel tank for some low-frequency rumble."

With the bike securely rigged, the String and Tins team also needed an on-track perspective to replicate the natural sounds you would hear if you were to see the bike go past from different angles and directions. In order to capture this, the team collaborated with location sound designer, Simon Koelmeyer, who has worked on a number of heavyweight motorsport broadcasting, including *Top Gear* and *The Grand Tour*.

Wilkinson concludes: "Fortunately, as we had many different perspectives on and off the bike, we had a wealth of material to choose from. It was incredibly rewarding to have a palette of sounds entirely of our making and it was also a pleasure to work with a client who was so enthusiastic about the importance of the sound."